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'YOLO so Party Like a Swazi': Youth and Digital Space

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Abstract

There is a culture arising among young people in Swaziland that believes that to be young and Swazi is an ephemeral, temporary, and directionless existence, and having sex and 'partying like a Swazi' is desired, celebrated and the fashion. I illustrate that this construction is a reaction to the banal, routine and regulation of their social spaces. Furthermore, in addition to the spaces being limited in number, imbued within each are structures and routines that reproduce discourses that privilege performances surrounding their normative behaviour and development (including the development of their sexualities). As a result, Swazi society has excluded young people from being active agents in the very discourses that govern and inform their lives, status, agency and citizenship.

Drawing from a phenomenological analysis of WhatsApp conversations combined with fieldwork in Swaziland, this dissertation explores the locality of digital space via WhatsApp in the landscape of the lives of Swazi young. The data illustrated that digital space is residual and resistive, as a reaction to the regulated and restricted spaces in their lives, in digital space young people enact performances of masculinity, secrecy and morality. As well as determined values systems and currencies around sex (and sexual status), vis a vis the exchange of social capital (nude and semi nude photos)- all of which are inherently self destructive. Lastly, in their resistance, Swazi young people are the local agents of their self-destruction.

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Glossary of Terms,
Slang and Abbreviations

AIRTIME	Units of purchased minutes to make phone calls and text messages on on a mobile phone
APP	A self-contained program or piece of software designed to fulfill a particular purpose; an application, especially as downloaded by a user to a mobile device. WhatsApp is an app.
BISH	A slang word for 'bitch' but not as offensive
CAKE	A slang word for a vagina
CRIB	A flat or house
DATA	A unit of internet on tablet or smartphone that is purchased.
DIGITS	Slang for phone number
DUCKFACE	Duckface a term to describe the face that is made if one pushes their lips together in a combination of a pout and a pucker, giving the impression you have larger cheekbones and bigger lips. Is often linked to taking selfies.
EISH/EYSH	A Southern African (informal) exclamation expressive of surprise, agreement, disapproval, etc.
EMOJI	A small digital image or icon used to express an idea, emotion, etc., in electronic communication.
FB	Abbreviation for Facebook
FLAS	The Family Life Association of Swaziland
HUD?	How you doing?
KB	The nickname I had in Swaziland, short form for my first and last name.
LOL	Laugh out loud
MEME	An activity, concept, catchphrase or piece of media which spreads, often as mimicry, from person to person
PLEASE CALL	It is a free cellphone service whereby an individual sends a code with the recipient's mobile number and the recipient receives an SMS requesting that they phone the sender.
PP	Profile picture or profile pic
SELFIE	A picture one takes of themselves.
SEXT	A digital recording of naked, semi naked, sexually suggestive or explicit images.
SEXTING	"a term to describe the digital recording of naked, semi naked, sexually suggestive or explicit images and their distribution by e-mail, mobile phone messaging or through the Internet on social networks sites such as Facebook, MySpace and YouTube" (Lee & Crofts et al. 2013: 36)

	In Swaziland the term also applies to the textual description to simulate sex over e-mail, mobile phone messaging, or social networks. Most Swazi you people do not consider sending nude photos, sexting.
SIDECHICK	A female that is neither a girlfriend nor a wife, with whom an individual is having (most commonly) a sexual relationship. There is also an inference that a relationship with a side chick is temporary and predominantly meant to satisfy a need or desire.
TWEET	An entry posted on the microblogging service Twitter
UNISWA	University of Swaziland
YOLO	You only live once

Mbongiseni had been describing a nude photo he had once been sent by a female classmate. He had told me he was 18 years old but only admitted that he was actually 15 after my fieldwork had nearly come to an end. He explained that he had changed his age so that I would take him seriously, because "noone listns to a child" (No one listens to a child).

It was a Friday evening and at that moment Mbongiseni was doing what he normally does when he was not at school or Church, "lyin on m bd, listning to music nd chatng wit m frendz," (lying on my bed, listening to music and chatting with my friends [on WhatsApp]) in a little room of his parent's home on the outskirts of Mbabane, Swaziland. This is mainly the only way he 'sees' his friends. He changed schools four times now because his parents are afraid of him falling with the wrong crowd. His parents forbid him from socializing with his friends from his first school, unless he lies or his parents are away from the house for the day and he can see them.

The nude picture he continued, had been sent a month prior and was the result per the rules of a WhatsApp game he had been sent by a friend which he then sent along. It was the first time he had been sent a nude photo, although he had had to convince his ex girlfriend to send nudes, 'jst t kip n ma fone, just to luk at" (Just to keep on my phone. just to look at) but she refused and it hurt his feelings.

He sent me the first part of the game to illustrate and we played a mock round. 'Choose a tennis ball and c what's behind it." Underneath there are twenty little tennis ball emojis with the numbers one through twenty. I choose tennis ball number sixteen and indicate such to Mbongiseni. He then sends me the second part of the game.

"Do what the game says, Remember NO CHEATING."

I scanned down the list for number 16 and found it.

"16. What would you do if I would spend the whole night with u?"

"Uhhhhh, I think I understand the game now Mbongiseni." He laughs.

I continued to look at the other commands, deeds and questions on the list.

3. Tell me that you luv me

5. Send me ur naked pic

6. Admit U love sex

8. When dd u loose ur virginity

11. Let's have sex

12. Admit dat U slept with ur bro/sister

13. Kiss me 4 one hour etc."

He explained, that the classmate had chosen tennis ball number five and had accordingly, as per the rules of the game, sent her nude photo.

Mbongiseni: She hd to, cz ders no cheatng. (She had to because there is no cheating)

Kristiana: But what would have happened if she had picked 11?

Mbongiseni: Lol, idk (laugh out loud, I don't know)

Previously, Mbongiseni had told me that he had never had intercourse and wanted to wait until he was married. He has said on many occasions (without including his own experiences) that anything 'sexual' prior to marriage is "barbaric" except for hugging and kissing which he thinks are both enjoyable and his favourite things to do with girls.

Kristiana: Ok so, what did you think? Did you like her pic?

Mbongseni: *Eysh ya it ws so gud. It made m t feel like dating her. (Eish yes, it was so good. It made me feel like dating her.)*

Kristiana: *So you enjoyed looking at the photo? For how long did you keep it and when would you look at it?*

Mbongiseni: *It ws vry nice. Shiz sexy, shiz yellowbone. ummm I kpt it fr two weeks den I deleted it cz I dnt kep that srt of thing on my fone. Id luk at t a night twice bfr bed. (It was very nice. She is sexy, she is yellowbone. Umm I kept it for two week then I deleted it because I don't keep that sort of thing on my phone. I would look at it at night twice before bed.)*

Kristiana: *And the classmate was she shy when she sent the photo or did she enjoy it?*

Mbongiseni: *Nop she sent wth confidence. (Nope she sent it with confidence)*

Kristiana: *If she sent with confidence it is like she has done it before*

Mbongiseni: *Yeap she hs, she's used to it. (Yep she has she is used to it)*

Kristiana: *What do think about that?*

Mbongiseni: *Eysh it's not gud at all cz she will be damaged goods (Eish, it's not good cause she will be damaged goods)*

Kristiana: *How will she be damaged goods?*

Mbongiseni: *Having sex with many guys*

Kristiana *How do you know she is having sex with many guys?*

Mbongiseni: *She told m dat I'm nt only one who got de pic. (She told me that I'm not the only one who got the picture)*

Kristiana: *But how do you know she is having sex? Just because is sending her pic around?*

Mbongiseni: Yah I think so.

I asked Mbongiseni if he felt that this whole interaction was common among his age group or just an isolated case. He told me that it was common, that most of the girls he knows have sent nude photos before and have had sex. He also told me that all of his friends have had sex apart from him. When I asked him how he knows this, he gave me an example of a WhatsApp group he was once a member of.

"Bt only fr a short time because dey were born naughty."

It was a group of young people from his class but he has heard of other similar groups from friends. The group, as he described, was a mix of both boys and girls. The basis of the group was to talk about sex, sex tips, drinking and partying.

Mbongiseni: The boys would send pics of girls nt in the group then comment (The boys would send pictures of girls that are not in the group and then comment)

Kristiana: Who are these girls? What kinds of things do they say?

Mbongiseni: Der gals that the membas know and get them to tak noods den they share wit the group and dey say naughty things. Lik they say may b this one has t come to dis party cz she has a good body so we could cut off her viriginity. Dey sumtyms jst hv parties nd d guys wil all try a game to c who wil cut hr virginity d first. (The girls that the members know and get them to take nudes then share with the group and the say naughty things. Like they say maybe this one has to come to this party because she has a good body and we could take her virginity. They sometimes just have parties and the guys with all play a game to see who will take her virginity first.)

Kristiana: Really? And the guys once they take the girl's virginity, what then? What

about the girl? What would happen if she said no to sending a nude photo?

Mbongiseni: *Crc! Dey dnt tlk to her afta (Serious! They don't talk to her after)*

Kristiana: *So they don't care about her?*

Mbongiseni: *Yeap they care only abt having sex, cz thy live YOLO they dnt care. Lik wat is there fr us, lets jst have fun. (Yep they care only about having sex because they live YOLO and they don't care. Like what is there for us, lets just have fun.)*

Kristiana: *And where does this idea of YOLO come from… why don't they care?*

Mbongiseni *I'm nt sure wher it comes bt de is dis slogan that says YOLO so party like a Swazi der is evn dis t-shirt two f ma frendz have it. (I am not sure where it comes from but there is this slogan that says YOLO so party like a Swazi. There is even this t-shirt, two of my friends have it.)*

Kristiana: *Sorry what? Party like a Swazi? How does a Swazi party?*

Mbongiseni: *I think the statement means that it ur a Swazi you party more dan other ppl who are nt swaz like hv mr sex nd drink mr. (I think the statement means that if you are a Swazi that you party more than other people who are not Swazi, like have more sex and drink more)*

Kristiana: *But don't think that is dangerous, living as if there is no tomorrow. What about HIV or unplanned pregnancy? Or rape?*

Mbongiseni: *Dey don't care, all thy wnt is to hv fun.*

Kristiana: *YOLO….so you agree with that?*

Mbongiseni: *Yeah I think it is true. ma frnds keep on telling me t start having sex cz sex*

is fashion dis days, even ppl u may nt think of hv startd

Introduction:

YOLO means 'You Only Live Once', it is a motto that has existed for decades but was rendered popular through its inclusion as a lyric in the 2011 song "The Motto" by Canadian rap artist Drake. Since, it has become an immensely popular social media phrase, commonly expressed as a hashtag (#YOLO) to instantaneously connect all those that live by its ethos, a global imagined community of a unified (youth) cultural ideal. Similar to the notion of carpe diem, YOLO in essence celebrates the belief that in not knowing what the future holds one must live in the moment. At its core, it has the potentially positive undertone of privileging agency over one's life and making the best of every moment in living to the fullest.

However Mbongiseni's understanding of the phrase reflects the attitude that being young and Swazi is an ephemeral temporary, and directionless existence, and having sex and 'partying like a Swazi' is desired, celebrated and the fashion In other words, to be young and Swazi is to have sex and fun, no matter the risks or outcomes, for no other reason than life is short, our futures are uncertain, and we have nothing better to do. The other ramification of this attitude is that the very tenets that constitute being Swazi and young, are inherently self-destructive.

In this thesis, I argue that the construction of young Swazis as hyper-sexed and unconcerned is a reaction to the banal, routine and regulation of their social spaces. To commence with the socializing spaces that young people have ease of access to are limited and their lives generally revolved around the movement between their home, Church, school, and to a lesser extent, work. Further access to and inclusion in the public sphere as equal citizen and equal status within the state, is also hindered along lines of

age-grades, gender and economic status.

In addition to the spaces being limited in number, imbued within each are also imbued with structures and routines that reproduce discourses and privilege performances surrounding their normative behaviour and development (including the development of their sexualities)As a result, Swazi society has excluded young people from being active agents in the very discourses that govern and inform their lives, status, agency and citizenship.

As an illustration, on reading Mbongiseni's narrative, a custodian[1] of young people in Swaziland would react with shock, followed by denial or vilification. This is because custodians tend to frame young people, like those described by Mbongiseni, as an anomaly. *Those* young people are an exception and their behaviour is re-framed as misguided, delinquent, naughty, bad, out of control, sex crazed, influenced by (bad) friends, and/or a dependency on drugs and alcohol, or are victims of negligent parenting etc.

This is despite Swaziland still having the highest HIV infection rate in the world at 27.7% (UNAIDS, 2014), with over sixty percent infected being female. According to UNICEF (2015) adolescent death from AIDS has tripled in sub Saharan Africa since 2000, and there are 26 new infections per hour among that age demographic. Seventy percent of all new infections of 15-19 year olds are female. (UN, 2015) In addition, the preliminary findings of the Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey released in 2012 found that females 18-24 were three times more likely to be infected with HIV than their male counterparts. (ICAP, 2012)

[1] The English term commonly used in Swaziland in reference to any individual of society that is responsible for the growth and development of young people: teacher, parent, civil servant, church leaders etc.

There are no statistics on rates of unplanned pregnancy in Swaziland. A search of "abortion" and "Swaziland" in Google brings up an article published in The Times of Swaziland on November 2012 entitled, "1049 Abortion Cases Handled in September." In the article, the Communication Manager of the Family Life Association of Swaziland (FLAS), Mancoba Mabuza, reported that the youth organization documented receiving 1049 patients in a single month that required care. FLAS does not provide pregnancy termination, the service is only provided 'legally' in South Africa but many seek 'unsafe' alternatives. FLAS only provides pre and post abortion care to those that experience complications from unsafe abortion. Therefore, the number in the article reflects those that sought these services in one month, and does not reflect the actual number of young women that chose to terminate or chose to keep the child. A doctor at the emergency gynecological ward of Mbabane Government Hospital once revealed at a values clarification session[2] on abortion I attended in 2013, that in 2012 he had 11 young women die in his ward from complications from unsafe abortion. Moreover, complications from unsafe abortion were the leading reason women were admitted for care. Unplanned pregnancy continues to be the leading contributor to school drop-out (Sukati, 2014; UNFPA, 2011) and the highest contributor to economic inequality among young women.

What the above suggests is that the activities of young people described in Mbongiseni's narrative are not an anomaly. However instead of asking why these prevalences are occurring these statistics, or why it may be that young people find agency in the act of sex, or why their group culture celebrates self destructive activities as the

[2] A values clarification session is a term introduced by international NGOs that comes to mean a session in which belief systems around a topic are drawn out in order to identify bias, at the same time the participants are provided facts and information, in order to provide 'clarification' on the topic. Generally they are conducted on controversial or polemic topics such as abortion and sex work.

tenets of belong; custodians instead fuel moral panics around young people and calls for greater controls and regulations in young people's socializing spheres and further limitations in accessing social spaces that are believed to be associated with deviance.

In Bourgois (2002) he presents an alternative perspective to the highly politicized debate around poverty and how varying state structures, academics and policymakers tend to further marginalize or obscure people of poverty by attempting to understand or structure the phenomenon within particular frames of morality, race, or a result of neo liberalism etc. And treat poverty either as a socioeconomic disease or a byproduct (victim) of a flawed system. Bourgois argues that as a result of the impoverished resisting these constructions (and subsequent institutionalization and marginalization), they become the agents of their own and communal destruction. (Bourgois, 2002: 21)

The chapter proceeds to demonstrate how self destruction has utility and function among drug dealers in the Puerto Rican neighbourhood of East Harlem, New York, as resistance to the state, economic mobility as well as maintenance of status and credibility as a drug dealer on the street.

Moreover, self destructive activities – like performances of violence and dealing drugs – although incredibly dangerous and pose a high risk to health, safety and their life - provide a means and mobility that circumvents the social, political and economic restrictions that yielded their subordination and inequality. Therefore, the benefits (which often manifest more readily than "playing it safe" or "following the rules" or finding "legal jobs") outweighed any potential adverse outcome or risk of their destructive activities.

This argument is a useful point of departure to begin to understand why young people identify with and garner meaning from behaviour and meanings that seems to glorify self-destructive activities and further what role, therein, digital space may function.

In this thesis I make four interrelated arguments. The first is that within the group of interlocutors, their sociocultural lives predominantly (sometimes, solely) existed in digital space, and that this space functioned as a "landscape" for the production and reproduction of young people's culture.

Second, as resistance or a reaction to the regulated and restricted spaces in their lives, in digital space young people enact performances of masculinity, secrecy and morality. As well as determined values systems and currencies around sex (and sexual status), vis a vis the exchange of social capital (nude and semi nude photos), and also, the possibility for transactional sex and economic mobility- all of which are inherently self destructive. However the promise of status and gain in currency within the performances and exchange create opportunities to attain status and mobility in an environment where young people were ostensibly status-less, unequal and not included as participants in the very discourses that concern them and their development

Lastly, both the performances and the exchanges are inherently self destructive. Therefore from my findings I present an alternative perspective to the debates around young people and sex: through their resistance to Swazi society young people are the agents of their own destruction.

Thesis outline

In Chapter one, I begin with some background and the problem statement to illustrate the origins of this research. I move from there to unpack the literature regarding young people and digital space, specifically situating my inquiry within the body of work on mobile phones and the potential they present young people for new scripts and forums for the expressions and definitions of love, intimacy, and relationships. However alternatively presenting the need to explore new media like WhatsApp or smartphones within a broader social and cultural context. From there, I consider the theoretical framework, using Bourgois (2002) as a conceptual framework in which the theory will correspond – exploring theories of space as landscape, resistance, performance, and informal exchange such as social currency. Then move onto the methodology used in accessing young people and the digital space created by WhatsApp.

Chapter two begins to draw from the data to create a picture of the banal, routine and the restricted elements within the social spaces in the young people's lives, with focus on the barriers to access and movement. In contrast I then situate digital space within the restrictive and limited spaces, and present the argument that digital space is a reactionary space, like "the street" which provides a sphere where status and mobility are negotiated and manifested.

Chapter three is the first 'reaction' chapter, in which I will draw on significant examples of performances among the interlocutors, specially within the three predominant forms of performance I observed: performances of morality, secrecy and masculinity. Further, I argue that the performances have currency as well, often play to (on differing levels) dominant norms in Swazi society, as well as are indicators of membership and status within the young people's community

Chapter four concomitantly illustrates the informal economies of displaying and exchanging tokens of sex (nudes and semi-nude photos), as well as transaction sex: both of which garners vary degrees of status and value, opportunity for economic gain as well as maintains hierarchies/and relational power within the social scene.

Chapter five is the discussion, in which I attempt to explain why young people place significance on these performances and exchanges, within a broader theoretical discussion regarding resistance, and the self destructive implications of young people's performances of morality, masculinity, and secrecy, and currencies of sex in digital space as it relates to a culture among young people that renders them the agents of their own destruction.

Chapter One:

Young people and Digital Space-

Considerations of Literature, Theory and Methodology

From 2011-2013, I worked at the Family Life Association of Swaziland (FLAS) as a Communications and Marketing Advisor with the Communication and Marketing Unit. FLAS is a Swazi non-governmental organization that specializes in youth focused sexual and reproductive health and rights. The organization provided services, outreach, as well as various interventions (communication and programmatic) with the aim to prevent or mitigate the issues and outcomes that surround youth sexual and reproductive health – with particular focus on family planning (prevention of unplanned pregnancy and information/education on contraceptives) and the prevention/treatment of HIV/AIDS.

When I arrived (and throughout the work) it was apparent to me that despite the fact that HIV/AIDS had been a focus of immense aid programming (donor funding) and intervention, something was not working. Even though reports and statistics drew positive conclusions from the increase of uptake of services or commodities (condoms), or by the number of people that participated in activities, or that the national HIV infection rate had decreased since 2006 (yet still the highest in the world at calculated 27.7%): all of these statistics were poorly ascribed. While for instance more condoms may be taken from varying monitoring points, there was no indication of whether they were being used correctly and consistently, or if they were all being used by a small group of people frequently or a large group of people scarcely. Further, statistically people may be going to activities more frequently but the statistics do not reflect the rate of resonance or whether the attendance was related to other factors like incentives (food, clothes, free blood pressure checks etc.) or something to do. Indeed, the rates of HIV

infection are decreasing in the entire population since the epidemic became a national concern, but in specific demographics like young women 18-24 years of age, they are skyrocketing, women 18-24 are three times more likely to contract HIV than their male counterpart. (SHIMS, 2011)

Also significant is the undocumented phenomenon rates of unplanned pregnancy. There is data that illustrates the rates of contraceptive uptake and also the rates of women (and their partners) that access pre and post natal care (FLAS, 2012c), but there are no clear indications of how many of those pregnancies were planned and how many pregnancies were terminated.

Nonetheless, clues can be drawn from other reports and anecdotes. The Swaziland Demographic Health Survey (2006) found that nearly half of Swazi women have sex before the age of eighteen but the rate of contraceptive use for those aged 15-19 is just over fifteen percent. Further, over fifty percent of Swazi women (have reported) to have given birth to or are pregnant their first child before their 20th birthday. (SDHS, 2006)

A review conducted by the Ministry of Education in 2011 found that pregnancy was the leading cause of high school dropout nationally. (FLAS, 2012b) The staggering findings motivated the Ministry of Education and training to immediately gazette a mandatory weekly period in schools to teach comprehensive sexuality education, however they are still working on the curriculum for this period. (2012b) An article in the Times of Swaziland in 2014, they reported that 338 primary schoolchildren dropped out of school due to pregnancy in between 2009-2011 ranging from the ages of 11-14. (Sukati, 2014)

Another indicator of the rate of unplanned pregnancy is the rate of those that seek

post abortion care. Even so, this number only captures those women that access care if they have experienced adverse outcomes from unsafe abortion, it doesn't for instance reflect those whose unsafe abortions occurred without complication or those that sought safe abortion in South Africa. As mentioned previously, it was reported by The Times of Swaziland, that in one month alone, the Family Life Association of Swaziland treated over a thousand young women for complications from unsafe abortion. A colleague of mine at FLAS confidentially described going to South Africa once for an abortion.

With this in mind, it had been my aim in my two-year placement to find new and better ways to access young people, not just with messages that reflected their reality but also in the format and manner that they communicated. The immediate challenge to this was that a significant amount of communication strategies in Swaziland relied heavily on findings of media consumption in the Swaziland Demographic Health Survey of 2006, which had identified radio as the preeminent mode of access. At the time of the survey Internet and mobile phones were not prevalent.

Yet, attempts to innovate and draw on new media or messages that were more realistic, first commencing from the position that we knew young people were having sex and second, using social/mobile media to communicate, were met with resistance. We often found that we had to censor some of the more candid messages to satisfy the sensitivities of varying custodians and partners.

Moreover, at junctures when we attempted to bring in new strategies that incorporated elements of social or mobile media, there was no data that could be drawn to cite our justifications for the approach in the concept note. As such donors were resistant to funding new strategies without a baseline.

This was the original motivation for the current research, to explore the media use patterns among young people in their sexual relationships in order to offer data for new approaches in communications.

Following this, the other barrier to communicating to young people was the young people themselves. Often we would call on them to assist in brainstorming concepts or campaign strategies, and ask them their opinion, view, feedback etc. Many would come to these sessions and contribute nothing, they would sit slouched in their chair or on their phones, giving the impression that they felt forced to be there. Then often, upon their departure, would ask for transport or airtime reimbursement or free lunch – bookending the session with, "Don't I get something out of this?"

Alternatively there were individuals that dominated the conversation in a 'showboating' manner; by making broad hyperbolic statements about other young people or giving immensely personal testimonials that illustrated that sexual and reproductive health and guided them away from a life of sexual deviance.

However it was after I had gained some distance and spoke to young people it emerged that often their behaviours were performances or pretending, and they were saying exactly the right thing to make us (me) believe that our message was resonating. One of the rudest realizations of this occurred after I left Swaziland.

Two months after my departure, a young person that I worked closely with in Swaziland posted a new profile picture on WhatsApp of herself and her baby girl. I wasn't aware that she was pregnant or that she was having sex.

I had met Simphiwe when she was fifteen years old. She had been one of the 'star' participants of twenty, in a child-to-child weekly radio programme I co-coordinated

with a international NGO. The program used a peer to peer communication strategy which had two functions: first it would teach, train and 'empower' young people to explore and present the topics that concerned their lives and development in a weekly radio program directed at a young audience; second, they would be provided psychosocial support to develop as young leaders in their respective peer groups and schools. The participant's ages ranged from 13-17 years.

Simphiwe was excellent. She excelled in the program. She was always on time. She was easy to get a long with and worked well with all the varying groups. Plus she was quite knowledgeable about the varying topics that the program covered.

The program never spoke about sex directly nor prevention measures of pregnancy and HIV transmission (condom use, contraceptives, consent or negotiating saying NO, emotions, responsibility and preparedness for sex etc.) as the UN agency felt that such conversations would promote the desire to have sex and wasn't an appropriate topic for children to discuss. However despite this I felt Simphiwe was aware of the realities around sex and I had no doubt in my mind that when she felt she was ready to engage in sex, that she would do so understanding the potential implications, outcomes and responsibilities etc.

In that WhatsApp conversation with her, the reality was quite different. She became pregnant only months after the program ended. She was having sex the duration of the radio program though "always used a condom." She felt that sex was fun and it brought her a lot pleasure, especially with guys she was having sex with on the side (not her boyfriend). The evening that the child was conceived she was drunk, but as she elaborated, she had often been drunk during sex because it made the act more pleasurable

and she felt more at ease with her body.

Subsequent conversations with her revealed that at least half of the participants of the radio program were already having sex, some times with each other. Simphiwe was the second female participant in that program year to become pregnant. The first one had left before I had joined the programme, have been asked to leave when she became pregnant. The other participants were told that she quit for personal reasons.

It was in hearing this story that the second motivation for this research arose: If the performance of young people is incongruent with the reality that young people face, what is the utility of these performances, and where and in what spaces are young people negotiating, producing and reproducing their self determined status and systems of value?

Problem Statement:

The predominant belief still remains among custodians of young people, that '*our children are not having sex',* and/or *if we talk about it, they will want to have it*.' (NERCHA, 2011) Further, custodians do agree that sex and sexuality should be addressed but that children should be made aware of it from a medical perspective. Moreover that abstinence should be the pre-eminent disseminated message because because '*promoting condom use would encourage children to have sex'.* (NERCHA, 2011; PSI, 2013; Cobbett et al., 2013: 74; FLAS, 2012b)

Further, teachers and parents, if the topic is even broached tend to utilize 'coded language', 'euphemism' or an 'appropriate' lexicon to speak about sex and sexuality, that shrouds the topic in nuance, obscurity and secrecy. (NERCHA, 2011; Cobbett et al, 2013;

Golomski, 2011) Pupils and young people therein are taught to mimic, mirror and perform this rigidly "prohibitive discourse" (Cobbett et al, 2013:71) as the only 'normative' inculcation of being young (inclusive to discourses on sex and sexuality).

Within the dominant discourses of the state, young people are continually framed as victims to be protected, and legal documents set into policy gender bias, subordinate status, lawful obedience. (DPM, 2012) Moreover, the state relegates the final word of 'what is best for the child' to the guardian and state, allowing for considerable room for interpretation where those boundaries are drawn. (2012) Lastly, young people are often spoken about in the public sphere, but rarely spoken to or allowed to speak for themselves.

Moving forward, when presented with statistics or evidence of the realities experienced by young people, the reaction is either to frame it as a form of delinquency (Foucault, 1976; 1977; 1990), they are wild, 'out of control' 'misguided'; or alternatively, that young people are victims (Foucault, 1976; Lee et al., 2013), of bad parenting, deficiencies in the education system, the media or the West[3], generally. (Mdluli, 2011; Lee et al. 2003) Both frames, however, fuel moral panics (Cohen, 2011) and rationalize increased regulation and control over young people's socializing spheres that are link to access to as well as their access to alternative discourses and scripts surrounding sexuality, sex and the development of the self. (Foucault, 1990; Simon & Gagnon, 2003) Which tends to translate into calls in the public sphere for less sexuality education in

[3] After observing that young people tended to be framed as deviants or victims , I asked several young people and custodians informally what they felt were the influencing factors that contributed to young people's delinquency or victimhood, and further, what they thought others believed were the contributing influences. Their answers were mostly unanimous. "Parenting" "Deficits in the school system" "Internet/social media" "the West" "bad friends" etc.

schools, harsher treatment of delinquent behaviour and discipline, more involved parenting (parental controls), greater action by the state to 'protect' children etc. (Dlamini, 2013; Mdluli, 2011; Cobbett et al. 2013; Foucault, 1990)

An additional by product of these "continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms" (Foucault, 1990: 144) is that young people's mobility within different spaces is progressively limited and hindered, and their relative position as citizen and participant in the public sphere is further marginalized and subordinated. To such a degree that the construct of "youth" is rendered a faceless and voiceless demographic to be dealt with or "treated with the utmost care and concern." (DPM, 2012)

Literature review

Research on young people and new media goes as far back as there have been "concerns about the impact of new media on children's morality, ethical principles, and on their exposure to illicit sexual and criminality behaviour." (Lee et al. 2013: 40; Livingstone, 2002) Every new technology that emerges is trailed by a wake of attention, debate and research that is polarized around the same question: are young people victims or at harm of this technology? Or are they active consumers and agents in the use and meaning of this technology?

For example there has been extensive work on the impact of television, video games, the Internet, (Livingstone, 2002) and more recently, social networks like MySpace, Twitter, and Facebook (boyd, 2014; Mallan, 2009).

More recent media research tends to position young people as active consumers. For example, how mobile phones and mobile media are providing scripts and forums of

re-imagined subjectivities – re-situating young people as agents in their consumption and meaning making. " (Ringrose et at., 2013, boyd, 2014; Livingstone, 2006) Or alternatively, providing a platform in which the subject is capable of forging new connections from the resources and knowledge embedded within digital spaces of, which are, not governed by particular sets of discursive relations. (Hine, 2000; Hall, 1990; Wood, 1998)

Further looking at how mobile media has the ability to "permeate physiological and geographical barriers", "empower young people" to be "active agents in society" and expands concepts of "the self and the corporeal identity" and subjectivities, including new notions of sexual subjectivities and sexual scripts. (Pertierra, 2006: 27; Wallis, 2010),

There has been expansive work on mobile media in relation to new notions of intimacy and sexual materiality in social relationships (Pertierra, 2006) to new notions of the erotic between sexual partners (Humphreys & Barker, 2006), to even, new notions of kinship networks (Horst & Miller, 2005), and new indicators of relationship and dating. (Humphreys & Barker, 2006) simulate sex and act as indicators of intimacy. (Humphreys & Barker, 2006)

Within the Southern African arena, Frohlich et al. (2012) explored the use of camera phones/mobile media in a development project in South African communities. Specifically, to explore how poor townships imagine their community through visual material culture, and whether it could empower elderly citizens to resume culturally iconic roles in community life.

Skuse (2006) focused much of his ethnographic work in South Africa among the

rural poor and the use of the mobile phones in townships specifically in relation to families broken by labour migrancy. Both his studies explored ways in which the rural poor could surmount or negotiate conditions of poverty through the mobile phone and the mobile phone infrastructure. (Skuse, 2006; 2007)

The closest example of current scholarship on the relationship between sex/relationships and mobile media in the African arena, is Motau (2013), explores the role the mobile phones in the maintenance of intimate relationships spanning geographic and socioeconomic limits. Motau's findings demonstrated that mobile phones allowed the construction of new indicators of intimacy and intimacy maintenance vis a vis the asynchronicity of the technology. (Motau, 2013)

There is however a lot of opportunity for more research in the African arena, especially in moving away from research on mobile media being in relation to international development projects and the possibility to use mobile media as a prism to understand greater social and cultural discourses, especially among youth and youth cultures.

Pertinent to this research is the growing body of work on sexting, a term used to describe "creating, sharing and forwarding of sexually suggestive nudes or nearly nude images through digital technologies such as mobile phones and the internet.[4]" (Ringrose et al. 2013: 306) With the growing onslaught of lawsuits connected to child-to-child pornography and cyber bullying in North America, sexting has been placed at epicenter of debates around young people and self objectification and the risks (and agency) involved, particularly among young women. (Karaian, 2009; Mallan, 2009; Lee et al.,

[4] Though in Swaziland sexting mainly refers to the textual description/textual simulation of an act of sex through a digital technology such as mobile phones and the Internet.

2013; Salter, 2015)

Debates are polarized between the view that sexting is oppressive and harmful, and exposes a young person (particularly females) to pedophilia, sexual abuse and harassment, and possibility of a tarnished (sexual) reputation in the present and the future. (Ringrose, 2013; Karaian, 2009; Mallan, 2009) Alternatively, others argue that young people are aware of the risks involved and within have peer community moral economies, that often assist in the navigation of pleasurable and coercive digital use and meaning making. (Salter,2015; Mallan, 2009) Moreover, digital space is an essential forum for "sexual liberation, value and pleasure". (Gill, 2007) That "young people are deeply attached to digital communication and technology and find digital flirtation and sexual communication pleasurable, exciting and fun." (Ringrose et al., 2013, 308)

In the context of my research I find the way that Ringrose et al. has dealt with the topic of sexting helpful, by positioning the phenomenon within a larger conceptual frame. For example by asking, what are "the underlying gendered discourses and power that enable a context where girls' mediated body parts (eg. images of breasts) are highly valued commodities, where it is possible for such images to be traded like currency, which then constructs a situation where girls stand to lose something (namely reputation) when images are shared?" (Ringrose, et al. 2013: 319)

Therefore I will attempt to situate findings drawn from the data within a larger discussion about the underlying discourses that 'enable a context' where certain performances and/or certain token exchanges are privileged and to have value.

Theoretical considerations

To be young is to be powerless, to see one's own life controlled by other forces than one's own. It is not only one's parents who have power, but also institutions such as school and leisure organisations. The market and the state also intervene in young peoples' lives.
(Ganetz, 1994: 87)

Economic, political, and social mechanisms place limits on responses, "but those limits are wide and within them, human actors fashion their own responses, their own experiences of class, and their own history." (Scott, 1985: 42)

Bourgois (2002) approaches the polemics concerning poverty and drug dealing in a deconstructive way by demonstrating how drug dealers, in their resistance to their political, economic and gendered subordination by the state, in fact are the "local agents administering the destruction of their surrounding community" (2002: 21)

Bourgois expands on two spheres of self destruction: performances of violence and drug dealing – both are harmful, dangerous, and perhaps fatal, but offer opportunity (of status and fast economic growth) that outweighs the risks, and allow a way to circumvent restriction and marginalization of status and economic mobility, by the state. For instance he asserts that "street culture is more than economic desperation or greediness; it is also a search for dignity and a refusal to accept the marginalization that mainstream society imposes on children who grow up in the inner city… it can be understood as a culture of resistance, or at least opposition." (2002: 23)

Further, self- destruction (and destruction of surrounding community) is

reproduced via the 'culture of the street'; moreover, both performances of violence and the informal economies (drug dealing) constitute the tenets and discursive indicators of 'being street' or belong to the street culture.

This argument provides a creative point of departure for understanding the locality of digital space in young people's lives, and where it situates in regards to how young people navigate their environment, identity, system of values, and materiality of relationships.

The Street- Conceptualizing digital space

In order to situate young people's uses and meanings of digital space within broader questions of underlying discourses around gender, sexuality, economics, childhood etc. (Ringrose et al., 2013) it is helpful to have an approach to media analysis that combines both the technology-centric (technological determinism) and the sociocultural-centric (social or cultural determinism) perspectives (Livingstone, 2001; McLuhan, 1964), which looks dually at: how media and technology is used and the possible impacts it has on the individual and/or culture, society, economics and politics (Cohen, 1978; Postman, 1992) and; why it is used, why certain meanings are derived and which social , cultural, economic or political forces motivated or determined these uses and/or meanings. (Livingstone, 2001; McLuhan, 1964) For example, "the digital is not a space of self contained culture… to observe online phenomena in isolation discounts social processes offline which contribute to an understanding of use of the Internet (or mobile media) as a meaningful thing to do." (Hine, 2000: 36)

For this reason, and in lieu of how the interlocutors conceived digital space, there

is utility to conceptualizing digital space as both a technological interface (created by the WhatsApp) but also a locality; a virtual location or landscape – which encompasses digital space as residual and resistive and also a sphere where scripts and indicators are drawn upon, applied, negotiated, accepted or rejected. In other words, not just how the space is used but how those uses and meanings in that space in turn constitutes the tenets of belonging and status. Etc.

A concept of media and space that combines both perspectives is a 'digitalscape'. (Ingold, 1993), an adaptation on the concepts of mediascape and ideoscape (more specifically the suffix –"scape") from Appadurai (1990), to reflect that space is one of a constant flux and negotiation. A 'taskscape', evolved by Ingold (1993), is "neither built, nor unbuilt, but perpetually under construction" (1993: 162) Which coincides nicely with Stuart Hall's conceptualization of identity, which are more "about questions of using the resources of history, language, and culture, in a process of 'becoming' rather than 'being" (Hall, 1990: 4)

As Appadurai elaborates, "mediascapes are not fixed or essential forms but rather carry meanings across human-made boundaries and infiltrate, mediate and shape our understandings, and hence, our production of place and self." (Appadurai, 1990: 299; Engleton, 2013) and one's role and place within a broader hierarchal network or community. And further, provide "a large and complex repertoire of images, narratives" (1990: 299) and new "scripts" wherein individuals reproduce and recognize a repertoire for particular acts and performances, for instance sexual acts, as well as a set of rules and expectations surrounding those acts. (Curtis, 2004) Conceptualizing digital space as a combination of mediascape and taskscape, as a digital scape, recognizes the dialectic

process involved in the use of digital technologies and digital space, and the intrinsic production of multiple performance, subjectivities and meanings, and how that in turn constitutes being and self (Hine, 2000; Foucault, 1976)

In the realm of this paper, it is useful to think about the digital space (digitalscape) in the same way 'the street' is situated in Bourgois (2002). The street, as he illustrates, is where the performances of violence play out to fortify or gain credibility among other drug dealers and placate (through deception) expectations of the state. (also see, Mbembe, 2001) It is also a space for an "underground economy that offers – primarily males- a career with real possibilities of upward mobility." (Bourgois, 2002: 22; Macdonald, 2001) And lastly, that both the performances (violence) and exchange (informal economy of drug dealing) in that space come to constitute 'being street', a street culture and a sense of community and belonging. (Macdonald, 2001; Lombard, 2013) In this regard, it is a taskscape, a locality that serves to provide scripts, acts, performances, hierarchal network and rules of exchange and production, that constitute and reconstitute self, identity and culture. (Appadurai, 1990; Ingold; 1993; Hall, 1996)

Resistive and Residual Spaces

> '*One of the distinguishing features of youth culture is just this search for places where one can be in control; a place to be alone and with friends; a place free from parental and other adult interferences'* (Ganetz, 1994: 87)

Like 'the street', digital space in Swaziland is residual and resistive, and provides an arena, for the "search for dignity and a refusal to accept the marginalization that

mainstream society imposes." (Bourgois, 2002: 23)

This mirrors Nancy Macdonald's (2001) illustration of the subcultures of graffiti in New York and London within a context of young people and resistive spaces. She argues, that graffiti culture is as sphere where danger, risk, illegality and possible fatality is constitutive. Moreover that status and mobility are 'built' and "earned" via performances (masculinity through resilience, bravery and fortitude, and violence through graffiti wars and fights) and exchanges (of mediated display – graffiti art: tags, bombs, throw ups, artist's name; and codes of a moral economy). Put simply, "the graffiti subculture has its own status structure, its own criteria for placing individuals on this and its own symbolic, but highly valued, rewards." (Ibid. : 68) Moreover, the act and the space it occupies on the "walls and surfaces of the city", (Ibid; 70) "offers fame, respect and status – real and immediate rewards that play a centrally important social role, with regards to their lives of young people." (Ibid: 68)

Lombard (2013) identifies this in context to young male African Americans graffiti and hip-hop artists in the ghetto of New York City, "the hustle". "Life on the edge", she elaborates, "is inevitably an existence bound up with violence and crime." (2013: 182)

However 'the hustle,' similar to Bourgois' 'street culture' is intertwined with opportunity (for increased status, respect, celebrity, visibility and personhood) via violence and illegality that are in direct contrast and circumvention to the subordinate status and limited mobility of Black American youth. (Ibid.: 2013)

While these are all extreme examples and in no way speak for all kinds of resistance or all groups that constitute and are constitutive of spaces of resistance, these examples,

however, provide some clear illustrations of the interface between self destructive risk taking that serve as a mode and mechanism for status and mobility in the wake of reactions and resistance to social marginalization and inequality. As well as the resistive spaces where this negotiation, construction and meaning making occur and informs notions of membership within that group.

As an aside, it seems common in the literature and theory that resistive spaces (and thus resistive cultures) are gendered, (Salter, 2015) and the habitants and members tend to be male. Macdonald (2001) argues that there may be several reasons for this, the first and the more obvious is that often the group-determined performances and exchanges that become constitutive of the community are violent, dangerous, and sometimes fatal – and therefore, in essence do not appeal or are not accessible to females. The other possibility is that female resistance may be more nuanced, less observable and more in line with prevailing dominant discourses. In other words, do not *appear* to be resistance. (Scott, 1985) However, if observed, are more likely to be a more powerful indicator of the greater discourses that inform and motivate resistance within society. (Salter, 2015; Ringrose, 2013)

Performance

Returning back to Bourgois' (2002) discussion on inner-city poverty, he remarks on the utility that performances of violence provide drug dealers in negotiating, fortifying and gaining status on 'the street'. As an example, he draws from an event in which an interlocutor, visibly and dramatically beats up another drug dealer for surrounding people to observe, which seemed senseless and brutal, but in fact had a binary function. First, as the byproducts of structural violence, in their institutionalization (categorization,

incarceration, ghettoization), and sociocultural, economic and ethno-racial marginalization; performances of violence are the manner in which drug dealers (the poor) placate state expectations within a language that is structurally and normatively understood. (Foucault, 1977). For instance, in the case of Caesar (the visibly violent drug dealer), the performance of violence was partly in order to satisfy expectations of the state social medical system to maintain his certification as a "nut case" and to continue receiving his monthly Social Insurance Cheque. (Bourgois, 2002)

The other function of the performance was to maintain and affirm his professional legitimacy and to ensure his "long term credibility in his social role" in his social scene. (Ibid, 2002: 17) Bourgois notes, "When Caesar shouted his violent story out the door of the crackhouse for everyone in the vicinity to hear, he was not bragging idly or dangerously; on the contrary, he was advertising his effectiveness as a lookout, and confirming his capacity for maintaining order at his work site." (2002 : 17) Moreover, his violence "allows him on a personal and emotional level to overcome the terrified vulnerability he endured growing up in East Harlem." (Ibid.: 17)

According to Victor Turner, a "performance is often a critique, direct or veiled, of the social life it grows out of,… reflecting consciousness and products of such consciousness." (Turner, 1987: 22) Concomitantly, not as passive agents but as "active agents of change." (1987: 22) Further, "that the 'discontinuum' of action among the same collection of people, culturally made possible by setting aside time and places (spaces) for cultural performances is equally part of the ongoing social process – the part where those people become conscious through witnessing and often participating in such performances of the nature, texture, style, and given meanings of their own lives." (Ibid:

23) In other words, performances are forms of embodiment that makes culture real, lived and observable. (Csordas, 1994) and reinforce and come to constitute meaning for the individual and their 'being in the world.' Adding to this perspective, Singer (1995) further states that performances are "cultural media," essentially "modes of communication which include not only spoken language spoken language, but non linguistic media [that includes] songs, dance, acting out, graphic (photographic) and plastic arts." (Ibid : 76) and "these forms [carry] content of belief and practice, expression the living outlook of the population." (Ibid.: 76) Other non linguistic media that can be included here are dress and distortions of the body. (Mbembe, 2001; Golomski, 2015: Lombard. 2013)

In the scope of performance as resistive, I look to the work of Achille Mbembe (2001) '*Aesthetics of Vulgarity'* and James C Scott (1985), *'Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of resistance.'*

Mbembe, explores the banality of post-colonial Togo and the use of the vulgar, obscene and disgusting by the Togolese to violate and mutate dominant discourses and discursive practices of power by the state. Moreover, render the power state and its 'officialese', "an object of ridicule." (2001 :104) It is important to note, "in this context all dissidence was denied, if it had not already been administratively repressed or forcible killed off. Contrary to expectation in a society so deprived of resources, there remained considerable disparity between the images that he state projected of itself and society, and the way people played with and manipulated, these images." (Ibid,: 105) Cited examples of this are the association with official party names with the sounds of fecal matter dropping or farting sounds, and official poems or songs with words substituted for the

names of genitalia, smells (Ibid.:106). Just of few of "the myriad ways ordinary people guide, deceive and toy with power instead of confront it directly." (Ibid.: 128)
The other important point to be drawn from Mbembe's illustration is the notion of multiple performances in different spaces. As he noted; "the people splinter their identities and represent themselves as always changing their persona, constantly undergoing mitoses whether in official space or not." (Ibid.: 109) Which is to suggest that resistance isn't necessarily binary or counter to a force or institution, and that performance is rather active change – active resistance – "not built, or unbuilt but always under construction." (Ingold, 1993: 163)

James C Scott (1985) parallels this by asserting that oppression and resistance are in a continual dialectic and that effective resistance draws from the everyday, from routine and the banal, from the moment, the incidental, the individual rather than the organized and planned.

As stated, it is typically postulated "that elites dominate not only physical means of production but the symbolic means of production as well – and that this symbolic hegemony allows them to control the very standards by which their rule is evaluated" and resisted. In this regard the elite also control meanings and significances of resistance, and effective forms of resistance would fall outside the frame of normative definitions and signifiers of dissent.

Therein leading Scott to note that people have "achieved far more in their unannounced, limited and truculent way" (beyond the normative evaluations of resistance) "than the few heroic and brief armed uprisings." (1985: 34) Such incidental or everyday modes of resistance include foot dragging, stealing, evasion, lying, deceit, petty

arson, false compliance, pilfering, infanticide, feigned ignorance, suicide, slander and sabotage.

Further, mirroring the observations of Mbembe, resistence is draws from 'public transcripts' including prescribed roles and language subtle form of contesting 'public transcripts' by making use of prescribed roles and language and non language symbols like "rumour, gossip, disguises, linguistic tricks, metaphors, euphemisms, folktales, ritual gestures, anonymity" (Ibid: 137).

Both Mbembe and Scott take differing approaches to articulate similar notions about resistance, and it is important to draw from it however the notions that resistance is in constant flux and not necessarily a dichotomy of one force and a counter force, but resistance occurs in all spaces and against all systems, and performances are agents of change. Further more, it is also important to note that often the most effective resistance doesn't appear to be resistance and this has important implications for understanding the performances of young people of Swaziland in digital space.

Exchange

The final element of Bourgois (2002) that is to be expanded on theoretically is the self determined economy of drug dealing in the streets of East Harlem, and how, despite the observable risks involved, drug dealing offers an avenue for significant 'economic incentives' that is contrasted to the limited economic opportunity presented by 'legal jobs' for those from their community. Further, explains Bourgois, "males who are not longer effective heads of households often experience the rapid structural transformations of their generation as a dramatic assault on their sense of masculine identity." (2002: 30) Therein, drug dealing, provides a means of gaining status and to re-assert their

masculinity and roles of authority, vis a vis the diminishing significance of "autocratic control" in the larger socialeconomic sphere.

In Swaziland, among young people, there exist also an manner of informal exchange that occurs predominantly through the exchange of social capital (mediated body parts [nude or suggestive photos) that play a role providing opportunities in the pursuits of status, mobility and economic gain; vis a vis a sociocultural and economic sphere that avails limited status and economic opportunity/mobility among its young people.

Capital, as Lin (2001) delineates, "is intrinsically a social notion, and entails processes of social activity." (2001 : 7) through systems of reproduction. (Bourdieu, 1986) In terms of social capital, social relations are the integral component "to the aggregate of actual or potential resources" (1986: 88) to those of "mutual acquaintance and recognition." (Ibid: 88). Moreover, the amount of social capital that a given individual can accumulate is directly correlated to "the size of the network of connections [they] can effectively mobilize" as well as amount of capital that is possessed by the respective members of the network. (Ibid. 88) Adding to this, the exchange of capital within that same network, "transforms the things exchanged into signs of recognition." Furthermore, that through a process of collective recognition, and "the recognition of the group membership which it implies, reproduces the group."(Ibid : 89) In simpler terms, groups recognize symbols of value through exchange, and in turn symbols and the exchange of symbols, reproduces the existence (and definition) of the group.(Bourdieu, 1986; Lin, 2001) Within the scope of social capital these symbols can be monetary or they can be other forms of currency or token. (Lin, 2001) As well, the group/community

with promote its self-interest in accumulating symbols, by elevating those individuals/members with more valued symbols to higher ranks within the group. Additionally, those occupying higher ranks tend to be given decision-making on behalf of the entire group. (Ibid. 2001)

A particularly important element of social capital is the notion of 'acquaintance', which in simple terms means, an individual/actor's association with a member that holds more valued symbols, can enhance the individual's social status by association, through the inference that association means a share or enjoyment of that member's accumulated value symbols. (Lin, 2001) As Lin asserts, "letting others know about one's social capital maybe sufficient to promote one's social standing". (Ibid. : 44).

In the context of Swazi young people and the accumulation of social capital as a means to social and economic mobility, I look to the work of Ringrose et al. (2013) vis a vis the currency of mediated bodies (the exchange, accumulation and distribution of nude and semi nude photos) and Hunter (2002) in his investigation of the material and economic logics of transactional sex.

Ringrose et al. (2013) explores the gendered double standards of sexting, specifically looking at how "visual images can promote hierarchical comparison, ranking, and competition." Further demonstrating that body parts, and I argue 'nakedness' more generally, are given codes of attractiveness, which signals value.

She argues that young female's gain currency by way of her mediated body being coded with high value, either through scarcity or group determined value. Lin (2001) labels this latter process, as either the product of 'persuasion' or 'petition'. Persuasion is the "process by which fellow actors (members) are convinced through communication

and interaction of the merit of a resource, resulting in the internalization of the value of a resource among actors" (2001: 30) and as such members 'see' the "inherent value of a resource." (Ibid: 30) Petition works differently, in as much as a member of group will "accept the value of a resource" because they want to "remain a member of the group or identity with a group." In other words, they wish to 'fit in'. (Ibid: 30). "Symbolic value is generated by exchange processes", therein "it is the process of exchange that value is generated." (Ringrose et al., 2013: 309)

It is important to also draw out from this that a young female's relative ability of gain currency through exchange in part relies on *how* it is produced and distributed as well and whether that fits within the normative codes production and exchange within the members of the group. Some of these codes, for instance, are moralized, raced and gendered. As an applied example of this; 'low class' morality is coded on girls and women's bodies through practices of revealing too much of the wrong body part or distributing too much within the network (ostensibly extracting the element of 'limited access' which is intrinsic to performances of masculinity in his comparative abilities to negotiate access); "marking their bodies as tasteless and sexually shameful." (2013: 309)

Males gain currency in this exchange, first and foremost, in the accumulation of the valued resource, the mediated body part. This accumulation of the mediated body is a testament to his ability to mobilize within his network, (Bourdieu, 1986) in other words, "to negotiate the 'ask' for the photo". (Ringrose et al., 2013: 312), which, acts as "proof to his friends, revealing his popularity and power." (2013: 313). Moreover, the scarcer the image, the more it "demonstrates his power of persuasion". (Ibid : 313) as well as gives him authority and power vis a vis the image's distribution. Lastly, his self-

validation as ‘desired and desirous’ is achieved in the recognition within the group that the image by way of exchange and ‘being looked at’ has value/currency. (Ibid: 313)

In this scenario, the young people can accrue and build status within their respective network in spite of their possible sub status within the larger socioeconomic sphere.

The Dialectics of Politics, Economics, ‘Youth’ and the ‘Everyday Materialities of Sex’

While Bourgois (2002) offers an interesting conceptual framework as a starting point to deconstruct how young people in Swaziland use digital space to navigate and resist the restrictive, structured and limited social spaces in their lives; it does not provide a potential explanation as to why.

I turn to Mark Hunter’s book ‘Love in the Time of AIDS’ in which he explores the potential reasons why in a post-Apartheid and democratic South Africa, under the banner of “Better Life for All”, where (supposed) equal rights for every citizen, access to health interventions and preventative commodities are being prosletyzed, there remain the overwhelming reality and impact of AIDS.

In order to tackle this question, he moves from Bourgois, Farmer and Scheper-Hughes, to explore the dialectic relationship between politics, economics and geography in what he views as the new definitions of intimacy – which he coins as the ‘everyday materialities of sex’

He began his review of looking at shifting geographies. First how migrancy changed people’s intimate ties with each other. Moreover that migrancy shifted the gendering of different localities, for instance spaces that were ‘traditionally’ masculine

were now occupied by the feminine which changed the gender dynamics as well as internalized notions of 'being masculine' or 'being feminine' in occupying the new geographies/spaces.

Shifting to economics, he demonstrated that the rise in unemployment, and the increase in female mobility and economic independence, both, made saving for marriage impossible for young men and "undermined rural men's role as breadwinners, and thereby the basis for their provider masculinity." (2010: 96) In parallel, women's independence diminished the economic and material significance of the institution of marriage, and "what emerged was a shift towards flexible intimate alliances and geographies spanning multiple connected households" (individuals). (Ibid: 96)

While politically, South Africa became a democratic state that touted equal rights for all, and new found access to the free market and the promise of a middle class life. On one hand the conflation between freedom and consumption, placed new meaning on the body, the consumption of sex, and a femininity tied to consumption and sexuality. Moreover that this had newfound implications for both genders in relation to each other and their expectations/relationship.

In summation he identified that the resulting 'everyday materiality of sex' was a form of intimacy based on transactional sex. (Hunter, 2002; 2010) Which he describes is a form of sex "enmeshed in new forms of emotion and reciprocity—exchanges more akin to gift relations, marked by mutual, if uneven, obligations that extend over time." (2010: 180)

Hunter (2010) therefore provides an interesting basis to explore the relationship between the context of Swaziland's political and economic background, within the

locality of digital space, and how, that dialectic is arguably a new 'everyday materiality of sex'.

Methodology

The young people

The eight interlocutors (five young men and three young women; ages fifteen to twenty-four) were all individuals I had met previously during my work placement in Swaziland from 2011-2013. I had remained in contact with me them in the interim period between returning to the Southern African region. I felt it was important and beneficial given the intimate nature of WhatsApp that I had a pre-existent rapport with potential interlocutors.

All the interlocutors are from middle class upbringings and were raised in Mbabane or Manzini; Swaziland's two largest urban centers. Four of them were raised by both parents, two only had one parent and the remaining two were taken care of by the boarding master/matron of a boarding house while they attended school in the city because their family home was too far to commute daily. A large part of their allowances or earnings goes towards purchasing airtime[5] or data for their phone to ensure that they are always online.[6]

In addition to the eight, I also met a young person while in Swaziland, Happiness

[5] Airtime and data are the terms given to the purchasing of minutes to make phone calls, send text messages, or in the case of data, access the Internet on a mobile or smart phone. Airtime however can also be used to access the internet but it is used at a higher rate, and is comparatively more expensive. Having data alone does not allow phone calls.

[6] For instance, Mbongiseni foregoes buying lunches at school and instead buys airtime, and Takhona, who often lamented about not having adequate funds for her nana, yet never had a moment where she wasn't online and available on WhatsApp, in other words, always had airtime/data.

(female, 19), who I didn't apply the same methodological analysis but I tended to rely on to provide context. Lastly, I hired a research assistant, Honest (male, 26), who provided all the translations of siSwati to English where necessary. We also met weekly to touch base and have conversations about the varying observations that I had noted, again to put into some context.

The field – Swaziland on WhatsApp and Swaziland

All of the interlocutors had access to and use of smartphones[7] and regularly used them for communication, socialization and entertainment between 2-6 hours everyday. I only asked individuals whom I knew used WhatsApp regularly or whom I was already WhatsApp "friends" with. The reason for this where two fold: first, I was intending to observe existing behaviours and uses, rather than introducing new ones (as much as possible). Second, I did not want to create a financial burden in order to maintain participation.

WhatsApp is an app that can be downloaded to a smartphone (Android/Apple)[8]. It is "a multiplatform mobile phone messaging service that uses [a] phone's Internet connection to chat with and call other WhatsApp users." (WhatsApp, 2016) In addition to text based chatting, users can make WhatsApp calls between WhatsApp users, send voice notes, videos, photographs, links from the internet, directions with Google Maps,

[7] A smartphone is a mobile phone with an advanced mobile operating system which combines features of a personal computer operating system with other features useful for mobile or handheld use.

[8] There is apparently a web based version that allows an individual to download to their computer with their mobile phone number.

emote with emojis[9], and create a personal user page with an uploaded profile picture and (if desired) a status update. The profile picture is visible as an icon next to the user's name on others' WhatsApp contact list, and the status update is visible when the user's profile has been expanded.

To add other WhatsApp users, one saves that the other user's mobile phone number to their phone and then "add" them to WhatsApp by searching them in their available contacts, granted they have also downloaded WhatsApp. Therefore there is the additional ability to create 'group chats' with saved contacts or send broadcasts to all contacts on the list. Users have the ability to choose and control who comprises their WhatsApp contacts by a) not providing their mobile phone number to anyone they do not wish to speak to, b) having the ability to block and/or delete contacts.

Concurrently, from the first of November to mid December I was also residing in Swaziland. I stayed in a guesthouse in Mbabane where the majority of the interlocutors lived. I felt that proximity would allow me to be more ad hoc with our meetings and social outings. Having this additional field site was intended to situate the WhatsApp conversations and observations in context, and what I believed would be an observable or traceable dialectic continuum between young people's performances and use of digital space, and their social lives, and back again. (Hine, 2000)

However I ended up interacting with them on my phone just as much as I had when I wasn't in the country. Despite my proximity, there remained limitations in accessing the interlocutors in other social spaces (which will be addressed) and this revealed the significance of digital space as a particularly unique and unchartered field

[9] Emojis are a small digital image or icon used to express an idea, emotion, etc., in electronic communication.

site.

Language

Conversations on WhatsApp and during unstructured face-to-face interviews occurred in English, as my grasp of siSwati is limited. Initially this was problematic because I had planned to conduct a discourse analysis of the media text captured which often was intermittently in siSwati and English. This had been the primary reason I engaged a research assistant to assist with translation. However before the fieldwork in Swaziland commenced I decided that given the timeframe, a discourse analysis, although potentially insightful, was not feasible. As such, I shifted to a phenomenological analysis. However if there was an instance in our conversations where English was the limiting factor in self-expression, I often had the interlocutors express it in siSwati and then I would have it translated later. However this only occurred once.

The other reason for the use of English as the main language choice is that WhatsApp has its own location and culturally specific linguistic form. (Perret, 2012) The young people in Swaziland refer to the predominant language utilized as "WhatsApp English", which is a combination of predominantly English, sms language (text speak – draws on slang, acronyms, abbreviations; and the reduction or substitution of characters and/or shortening of words. For example: hud? r u awek? [How are you doing? Are you awake?]) (Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011), and a little bit of siSwati. For purposes of clarity and a unified interpretation, I treat Swazi WhatsApp English as a foreign language and provide translation through out when necessary.

Methods

The research period roughly started September 2015 and spanned to January

2016. I had originally intended to conduct a full digital ethnography (Hine, 2007), which would have drawn from perspectives of discourse analysis and ethnomethodology. The sheer amount of data collected, however within this approach, was beyond the scope of this thesis.

Taking from the perspectives of phenomenology, which let me capture the lived moments and experiences of the interlocutors in digital space as well allowed me to be inclusive to that space. (Desjarlais & Throop, 2011) I was particularly interested in performance, self display, articulation of emotions, judgments, signification, opinions, outlook and reactions, as they are constitutive and constitute, modes of being in their daily lives.

I conducted four months worth of loosely structured conversations/interviews on WhatsApp, which also doubled as participant observation. The conversations/chats would occur sporadically throughout the day as I did not want to structure how and when we interacted. Initially when I was building a rapport I drew from a topic guide, which I felt encouraged reflection and input, but this quickly shifted to casual chatting and daily 'catching up' and socializing. This informal method was well suited for the interlocutors in their lives and asynchronous relationship to media.

In addition, I captured screen shots of newly posted WhatsApp profile pictures and status updates, and I use elements of discourse analysis of images, that looked at location and context, composition and framing, text or other material goods, either in the frame or added in post production. (Christmann, 2008; Fairclough, 2013) These photos are drawn upon for example purposes, as they related to greater "systems of representation". (Weintraub, 2006: 201)

When I met them all individually in Swaziland, I continued with the loosely structured conversation, however, was at a juncture where I knew them on an intimate level via prolonged interaction, and meeting was a continuation or adjunct to the established relationship online.

Ethics and Dilemmas in Accessing Digital Space, Young People and Sex Cultures

Throughout the research, there were varying limitations and advantages that either increased or abated access to young people. As well, introduced the need for greater discussions around fieldwork in digital space, with particular reflections on the conceptualizations of digital space as sphere of observation within the relatively unchartered understandings and ramifications of being a participant-observer of an asynchronous participant created field.

Race

I didn't want to discuss race as a factor to accessing young people, however to leave it unacknowledged would be naïve and myopic. It is certainly true, that my race was an initial factor in my access to the interlocutors. As well it was an undeniable factor that I was constantly negotiating with and self reflecting on, that created opportunities for access and hindered also, at moments hindered them.

In Swaziland, while there is a small community of people that self identify as 'white Swazis', the majority of white people are expats directly connected to development and global health interventions. During the 1970-80s, there was an influx of foreign interest in Swaziland's Family Planning and Reproductive Health sectors, in response to the high birth rates and 'fears' of unsustainable over population of the small

country and region. (Booth, 2003; Hunter, 2010) These interventions only grew in magnitude following the declaration of the HIV epidemic in Swaziland in 1999. (Reis, 2007; Golomsky, 2011) As was previously outlined, imbued within these interventions and the predominantly white foreigners that mediated, were western liberalist ideals privileging human rights over cultural rights, and new (prescribed) discourses of social behaviour and sex. (Golomsky, 2011; Hunter, 2010)

As I observed, white foreigners are viewed with mixed receptions; on one hand intervention has the potential for financial gains, stimulation of the job market (Brixiova, 2012), opportunity and providing access to services and treatment that may have otherwise not been available. On the other hand those gains are viewed (sometimes) as coming at a price, for instance, opening Swaziland up to cultural imperialism, unwelcomed pressure/arrogance/influence, and the (often unintentional) continuation of certain structurally violent institutions that perpetuate poverty, social ills and gender/class inequality. (Booth, 2003)

And lastly, while Swaziland was never officially colonized, the country's proximity to South Africa, relationship with the British Empire, (Kuper, 1963) and cooperation with South African forces in providing access to African National Congress and Pan Africanist Congress operatives during the Apartheid struggle (Masilela, 2007), has entailed that Swaziland is both an actor in and has been influenced by ongoing race politics and racialized institutions of colonialism, apartheid and the "post-apartheid" democratization of South Africa and the region.

All of which, although admittedly a simple overview, illustrate how race and being white, as well as being female and a foreigner, has varying constructions that at any

point rendered me a novelty, an anomaly, an outsider, a source of resentment and distrust, a symbol of power struggle, an embodiment of privilege, an unforeseen confidante, a target of admiration, and an object of sex.

After a rapport was built, I believe I was more broadly viewed as someone that was both an insider/outsider. I wasn't Swazi or part of their (homo)social spheres and this provided a sense of distance or disassociation. However, I had been in Swaziland long enough to build relationships on mutual interest and shared experiences in shared spaces. They were more readily able to speak about themselves because of that relationship without the fear of recourse (public scrutiny, peer judgment, social ostracization etc.).

More often than not, when I asked why they enjoyed talking to me, their response was, "no one has ever asked me before." There was, then, also an element of the confessional of having someone giving them their full attention.

Alternatively my race (and perhaps age difference) played a hindering role in accessing their private spheres, for instance, in the female interlocutors' homes. After some avoidance of the subject, it emerged that both females living with their families were nervous about what their families would think about a visit to the house. Particularly believing their parents would be distrusting of my intentions and would invariably pressure them to discontinue with the research. Despite offers to speak to their parents, both felt it was easier just to avoid that outcome altogether.

The third female participant articulated that she was too embarrassed and ashamed to show me her home, that her home was only a 'shack' with one room, dirt floors and a mattress and an embarrassment. Again, although I reassured her that I did not mind, the idea made her uncomfortable.

Gender

My gender created distance and barriers, more so with the males but to an extent with the females. Even when the male interlocutors didn't see me as a potential sexual partner, my gaze as a female superseded my gaze as a researcher, especially in moments were masculinity was being performed and negotiated. This sometimes played in my favour because the male interlocutors were actively trying to impress me and 'win me over', either consciously or subconsciously, and they were incredibly 'chatty' and readily accessible.

For the females, and only really with one, there was an element of internalized judgment that I think is the product of a existence of relational aggression among female peers and the propensity to 'slut shame' other women to self-validate. She would often self correct and return to performances of morality, making sure it was clear that certain actions conducted weren't 'naughty' or 'bad', or 'like those other women.' Also in a way, I felt the female interlocutor consciously or unconsciously didn't feel they were going to get anything out of the interaction with me, and while they were more candid and open in their disclosure and display, they were as a whole far less chatty and responsive. As an example, I chatted daily with my male interlocutors but days may have passed before a female interlocutor responded to a question or continued a conversation.

Young people and vulnerabilities – Ethical considerations

I had a few individuals in other academic fields and within Swaziland approach

me to provide their view regarding how I was meant to treat young people and private lives – specifically in regards to the vulnerabilities surrounding adolescent sex and sexuality. I understand that both are a concern and I went to incredible lengths to protect their anonymity and observe the privacy of each individual. This included the constant use of pseudonyms within this paper (in the notes, saved on my phone and on WhatsApp) and changing the names of locations where we met.

With that said, this paper is a rejection of the prevailing mentality that tends to treat Swazi young people as if they are not aware of their actions. That they are not active agents in their own meaning making and that sex is not a part of their development into self, citizen and adult. Therein, I approached young people as "sexual beings with rights to communicate in privacy so as to explore their sexuality, intimacy and relationships." (Ringrose et at., 2013; 308) With every effort made not to glorify this reality (Bourgois, 2002) and center discussions within the social, political and economic context to avoid, firstly, the historical epistemological tendency to paint people from Africa as innately promiscuous or hyper sexed. (Hunter, 2002; Cole, 2009; Spronk, 2012) Secondly, the tendency to fall into clichés around young people as both, part of an imposed structural and political construct (youth as essentialist) (Durham, 2004; Macdonald, 2001) and linked to universally stereotyped behaviours of deviance, apathy, victimhood, idleness etc. that function to subvert and marginalize.

Blurred spaces and the dynamics of power

Despite this I was confronted with ethical dilemmas regarding sexual intimacy with the interlocutors throughout the fieldwork, particularly at the juncture where I

resided in Swaziland.

This dilemma stretches as far back as anthropologists have been negotiating participation (Malinowski, 1967) especially in matters of the intimate. Debates are drawn along an axis between the demands of research (needing to access information) and how far one is expected to go to access it. (Archembault, 2009)

When I arrived in Swaziland it became overtly clear that two of the male interlocutors had sexual intentions that involved me. While it had been mainly flirtatious during our WhatsApp conversations while I was still in South Africa, I felt it was 'safe'.

In Swaziland, however, it took on another form. From day one, attempts to engage in WhatsApp conversation with them were marred by confessions of arousal, and attempts to persuade me for reciprocity in the form of sexy pictures or sexting, matched by requests that I invite them to my guesthouse to partake in activities that they would only be allude to as being sexual (this gets discussed in Chapter three); paralleled by the increasing intensity, aggressiveness and abusive. Which finally ended with me having to delete one interlocutor before the fieldwork ended and the other, deleted me just following, because I apparently teased him, cruelly lead him on, and in the end, gave him nothing.

As sex is such a guarded topic that is shrouded in secrecy and veiled in performance, I knew that if I were to send the two males nude photos or allow them into my private space, I would ostensibly buy their intimacy and their trust, as well as garner key information about sexual actions and the sexual cultural of young people.

Christian Groes-Green (2012) touched on this dilemma in his work studying young people and sex cultures in Mozambique. He describes a moment months into

fieldwork where he had achieved a certain degree of intimacy with his interlocutors. One evening he was brought to a party whereby one of his female interlocutors made a sexual pass and tried to have him join her in an orgy in the next room. He politely pulled away and left the party, however the action was a signal of rejection and that 'he wasn't one of them' to his other male interlocutors, which disbanded their trust and the rapport he had built.

Despite this, I didn't feel that it was appropriate given my relationship to them as researcher. A growing number of anthropologists especially those that study sex cultures often argue that 'the only way to really know is to participate' and that the situation is only unethical if consent isn't given. This may be true but it is also problematic: first, it doesn't factor in the very real risks (especially as a female) especially in regards to sex with interlocutors. Second, can it really be informed consent, even if both parties agree, when the pretense is research and not mutual lust or interest?

I do feel that there is room for further conversations in this realm, not particularly about ethics, but rather whether there should be more transparency in these matters: to acknowledge our roles as seducers and in turn can be objects of seduction (Groes-Green, 2012) and how we best navigate that.

Further, I feel there is a need to confront normative values in the field of Anthropology that tend to celebrate risk as a currency of valued fieldwork – having heard a colleague say, "Be brave, take risks." Which can be especially traumatic to those who are beginning their careers in Anthropology and come to believe that being at risk is a marker of a legitimate academia.

Chapter Two:

Everything in its right space….

The Location of Digital Space in Young People's Lives

Mbongiseni had been focusing on his schoolwork in the past couple of weeks because it was the exam period. Now school was over and he was bored. He was often bored but now he was REALLY bored. Since school had ended I had received an influx of messages from him and other content. The day prior he had sent me a photo of his face with make-up on – bright red lipstick, blue eye shadow, and blusher. He sent it then wrote,

Mbongiseni: Luk wut boredom s doing t me (Look what boredom is doing to me)

Kristiana: LOL Did you put make up on Mbongiseni?

Mbongiseni Nop its a app I downloadd. (Nope it is an app I downloaded)

Kristiana: Oh like you upload a picture and it converts it?

Mbongiseni: Yip lol eish am so bored (Yeah, lol eish am so bored)

Since having finished school five days ago he had changed his profile picture two or three times a day: a picture of him kneeling in the garden, posing outside his house, posing in a different outfit outside his house, different poses with the same outfit outside his house, reclining on the grass, dancing on the grass, standing on the street outside his house; close ups of his face, close ups of his face wearing a hat, close ups of his face distorting his face. Shirtless poses staring longingly at the camera. Then an assortment of modified pics with graphics and words, mosaics with multiple photos or warping tools (mirroring, vignetting, fish eye) etc.

I had once asked him why he changes his photos so readily, especially when nothing has changed significantly since the last photo apart from wardrobe or time of

day. All of his photos were taken in and around his house, and most likely within the same three to four hour 'photoshoot' time frames.

He told me that he gets bored, that he doesn't like to have the same image for too long because it is boring, Also he likes to show his friends what he is doing. Lastly, taking photos is fun and something to do.

In response to getting sent another image of Mbongiseni, this time an image of himself shirtless against an Internet generated vista of a tropical beach. I asked him why he wasn't trying to meet up with friends and make a plan to get out of the house and socialize now that school was over.

Mbongiseni *Ay I dn't knw der offline. (Ay, I don't know they are offline)*

Kristiana: *Oh so, why don't you call them?*

Mbongiseni *Nah, der probably bizy. (No they are probably busy)*

Kristiana: *LOL so if they are offline, you don't don't talk to them? What if they are in trouble or sick and can't go online?*

Mbongiseni *I hr abt them at skul. (I will hear about them at school)*

Kristiana: *But you are not in school now. How would you find out?*

Mbongiseni *I dn't knw. Gues I wldnt. (I don't know. I guess I wouldn't)*

Kristiana: *Really you wouldn't call if you hadn't heard from your friend?*

Mbongiseni *Yah mybe I wuld. (Yah maybe I would)*

Kristiana: *After how long?*

Mbongiseni: *Myb a wik. (Maybe a week)*

Kristiana: *So what's the plan for the day then?*

Mbongiseni: *Lye on m bd and listen to music. chat wit friends wen dey cum online. (Lie*

on my bed and listen to music. Chat with friends when they come online.)

Kristiana: But you are free to go outside and do whatever you like. Why don't you phone your friends to meet in town or go see a movie?

Mbongiseni: Eysh, am broke, wat is der t do in twn wit no money? (Eish, I am broke. What is there to do in town without money?)

Kristiana: Yah I don't know.

I told him that I would be in town later and if he was around that he should try and visit me. He told me he would try but only if he could make a plan to get transport money to join me in a couple hours.

I left the guesthouse and I walked towards town down the sloping street to the main road. At the bottom of the road is a park. It is generally full of young people hanging out or older people meeting friends.

Today as I passed, there was an ambulance and they were attending to a young man, around fourteen years old, lying face down in a pool of vomit. Beside him was a still opened and mostly drunk 2L soft drink bottle of a soapy looking liquid. His friends were standing around looking at him with sheepish, giddy, and somewhat unabashed smiles on their faces, as the attendant tried to roll him over and make him conscious enough to drink some orange juice. Her face was blank as if the action no longer had meaning. I continued past, watching the people that were watching the commotion and the variation of expressions on their faces. It felt weird to me that I wasn't surprised or shocked.

I arrived to the café and sat at a table that allowed me to see the entire corridor of the area. An hour later Mbongiseni came.

"You came! Look at you. You got so tall! So grown up. How did you manage to get

transport money?"

"Yah I am a man now."

He gave me a hug and sat down in chair across from me.

"I told my mom I was going to the school to check my exam results."

"Oh did you go already? How did you do? I remember you said that you thought the exams were hard, did you do ok?"

"Nah they aren't ready. They won't be ready for two or three weeks. I just told her that so she would let me leave the house. She doesn't like me seeing my friends. She gave me transport money. It was nice. I bought airtime with it and walked, it's not so far."

I asked him if he was hungry and if he was up for having a bite to eat. He looked at the menu while we chatted and caught up. We ordered and we continued our conversation. A lot of the things we were discussing were regurgitations of previous WhatsApp conversations.

The food arrived and I asked him if he had finally spoken to his friends and if they would be joining us in town. Between dipping chips in tomato sauce he disappointedly told me that they were all busy or broke like him, and that he would chat with them ~~as~~ later at home.

I changed the subject to the kid in the park.

"He was drunk?" He asked and he perked up.

"I think so, I am guessing. He had this soapy liquid in a bottle. Maybe Marula liquor?"

"Eish that's bad. Drinking is bad. Yah, maybe, don't know what booze looks like."

"Yah well I think he definitely drank a bit too much of whatever it was."

"Ya, eish that's bad. Young people have not much to do. So they take booze in the park

then have sex."

Then silence. He quietly returned to eating his chips while I tapped my fingers on the table gently and scanned the surroundings looking for a topic of conversation.

"So hey, I have been sitting at this café the past couple of days and I noticed that there are a lot of young people that hang around and just walk through the mall in circles. Do they do this all day or? Are they shopping or just chilling? Do you do that sometimes? Is it fun?"

"They just walk around and window shop. Or chill. They have no money. So they walk around."

He finished his last chip, then added. "Its boring that's why I stay at home."

"Ah yah." I said scratching my forehead now with completely nothing to talk about.

The server returned to our table and informed us that the café was closing soon. I checked my phone and it was ~~only~~ three. I turned back to Mbongiseni and asked him what he thinks we should do.

"We could walk around and look at the shops?"

I paid and we started walking.

The conversation was strained, so I asked him about things we had already talked about. How is your best friend? When did you last see him? How did your sister's exams go in her new school? Has she made new friends? How is church?

We walked around the mall three times, and saw the same young people over and over and over. The same shops over and over and over. The same corridors over and over and over.

After thirty minutes, I couldn't take a fourth tour of the same shopping area. I

asked him what else we could do.

"That's it. We could get icecream?" he suggested.

"Do you want to eat icecream?" I asked.

"No not really. I don't want to be fat."

I suggested then that we just head home. His face elongated with disappointment but he nodded. He offered to walk me all the way to the guesthouse because he had nothing else to do.

We arrived at the turn off where we were meant to part ways.

"Okay well, this is my stop. Thank you for walking me back," I said.

"Thanks so much for the fun time. I really enjoyed it. Can I see you again soon?"

I told him that I hoped so too. Twenty minutes later Mbongiseni was back online again.

"hy am bck online, hud?" (Hey, I am back. How are you doing?)

I only saw Mbongiseni in person that one time. Remaining attempts to meet up were marred by household rules prohibiting him to leave the house or visit friends, and the responsibilities of school and Church. When I did 'see' him, it was only online.

This didn't solely apply to Mbongiseni, after six weeks in Swaziland I saw each of the interlocutors only once, and two others one more additional time. This was despite every effort made on my part to see them. When I originally arrived in the country November 1, 2015, there was a sense of excitement marked by an increased frequency that the interlocutors had messaged me. "Whr r u nw?" "Where r u staying?" "Wil I see you soon?" "Am glad your here sista" "KB!!! R U HERE!!??!" (Where are you now?

Will I see you soon? I glad you are here sister. KB, are you here?)

I had been chatting with all of them on WhatsApp for three months already but somehow being there made it real or more real. The preliminary days were spent setting up a schedule and making plans. Simphiwe had told me that she looked forward to having me over to her parent's house one afternoon, to chill and meet her child. Takhona had similar plans. Tanele had spoke of the possibility of a 'girls' night' because she had not had the chance to out with friends in several months and needed it. Mbongiseni and I planned to catch a movie in Ezulwini with his friends and all have lunch together. Senzo wanted to show me the music he was working on and maybe we could chill and listen to music at his flat. Themba wanted to give me a tour of his city and show me all the places he liked to go and see, and the spaces that comprise his development and growth into the person he is. I was looking forward to seeing them: in their lives and with their friends, and outside of the digital space that our relationship, and we, had mainly existed.

This initial sentiment faded quickly; as the days started passing, plans began to be waylaid, postponed, avoided, and/or, to fully disintegrate. The reality was that my physical proximity did not change the real economic, social and gendered boundaries and restrictions in their lives. They were all still 'broke' and still subject to the rules and structures of their home lives, and I remained steadfast in my personal ethics surrounding sexual intimacy with the male interlocutors. This meant that there were a limited number of possible spaces of interaction.

Eventually the necessity to 'see' them motivated me to blatantly manufacture social spaces where we could meet. I paid for their transport, their food and/or often was the front or false pretense of deception. Some may argue that this renders any observation

captured during these moments as null and void but I did it illustrate a point, that if I didn't enable it or create it, these social spaces wouldn't have existed.

For young people in Swaziland, digital space *is* that social space: it is a space of refuge and reaction; it is where they socialize, are entertained, where they create and share, a space that allows them 'see' and 'be seen'; it is a stage for performance, a conduit of exchange and meaning-making, and it is as much a part of their life as it is a part of who they are.

In this chapter I draw from the data, and begin to illustrate the banality, routine and restrictions that limit alterities of self and spatial mobility in the reality of young people's lives. For the interlocutors those restrictions surrounded relative economic restrictions and the varying normative behaviours and routine intrinsic to their home spheres, which both limited their alterities at home but also their access to a limited number of other social spheres, for instance only Church, or only Church and school etc.

Concomitantly, I attempt to situate digital space within the daily routine of each interlocutor as a scape of refuge, production and reproduction of meaning and status. (Mbembe, 2001; Scott, 1985; Macdonald, 2001)

This is evidenced by the way young people speak about their access or arrival/departure from the space: "I am back," I can't *go* online", "see you online", "I don't know where they are because they are not online," "I never see her any more because she doesn't come online." "I have to leave now but I will be back later", "I can do whatever I want *here*," "we can do whatever we want *here*" "we spend time together online". There was even an extreme example of a interlocutor changing his WhatsApp profile picture to black because he "wanted to know what it would be like not to exist" as

if to commit suicide in that space and also suggest that that space even supersede terrestrial existence.

Their language around space indicates imagined spatial movement and the existence of a distinct locality. (Lefebvre, 1991) Digital space remains largely unregulated and despite the potential of parental controls and requisite access to monies, it is a place young people go to, where they can be, to see and be seen, to negotiate status and situate themselves within larger notion of being and belonging in a space. Also by contrast to the spatial and discursive restrictions throughout the varying spaces in their lives, digital space is the only remaining unregulated space, a final refuge, and as such, resistive.

Therefore, I intend to demonstrate the environment from which digital space is rendered residual, resistive, and a last refuge, in order to dovetail in illustrating how it functions as a stage and a conduit of production and distribution of meaning which in turn is constitutive of membership to young people's culture in the following chapters.

Am broke

I was finally in a public taxi on my way to see Takhona. It has been three years since I had seen her last but the last three days had felt even longer. Three days prior, a Monday, we were meant to meet. That morning I had messaged her to confirm the time and location for later that day but she was offline. She was offline all day. I debated about calling her but that felt weird and too intrusive somehow.

We were supposed to meet near her house halfway between Mbabane and Manzini. I knew she was really low on money – complaining to me previously that she

didn't even have money for diapers for her baby although was still able to buy airtime to keep chatting with me and her friends - so I had believed that going to her would be easiest and would be less of a burden for her. Also, admittedly, I wanted to see her flat; she had moved there since I had left Swaziland and I wanted to see her in her own space.

Now, however, the plan seemed uncertain and I spent the entire day waiting to see if she would come online. That evening, she finally did.

'Oh hey, sorry I ran out of airtime but now I am back."

'Okay,' I typed, 'but we had a plan to meet today and then I ended up having to wait to see what was happening."

"Yah sorry, hey. No airtime. Couldn't leave the house because of Noni (her daughter)"

"I understand, that's fine. So can we meet tomorrow?"

"Yah kewl." (Yah, cool)

I messaged her to ask what time on the following day she was able to meet and where near her house, had been good for her. Again, she was offline.

I awoke the next morning, Tuesday, still no response. I decided to carry out my day as if plans had been cancelled and began to get ready to go to town. As I was walking out the door, I received a notification. I reached in my bag and read the message.

"Hi ya, let me just organize transport money to come to Mbabane."

I was bewildered because I had thought we had agreed to meet her near her house.

"Oh okay," I typed. "I thought I was going to come to you. Did you want to come to Mbabane? Cause I can come to you."

"Ya I need sumeting fresh." (Yah I need something fresh)

"Ok well then, if you can find transport money to Mbabane I will reimburse you."

"Kewl. Lt me make a plan." (Cool, let me make a plan.)

I decided to go to town regardless because if she arrived I would be close to the bus rank to meet her. I sat in what had now become my usual place at the café in the mall. Ordered a coffee and wrote some notes. An hour had passed and still no word from Takhona. I wrote to her to ask how the search was coming along because it was now nearly midday.

I ordered lunch and continued with the notes. My phone buzzed and I thought it was Takhona, but it was a different interlocutor saying hello. I chatted with this individual as I ate my lunch, periodically checking the time. At 2:15 pm I messaged again;

"What's happening Takhona? Look if getting transport money is going to be a challenge I told you I can come to you."

She came online.

Takhona: *Fine come then*

Kristiana: *Well I can't now, now it's too late. Even if wrapped things up and got to the bus rank as soon as possible, I wouldn't that side until 3-3:30 or later, and then I would only have an hour or two before I would have to head back.*

Takhona: *yah i guess hey (Yes, I guess hey)*

Kristiana: *Can we not just make a solid plan? Set a time and a location.*

Takhona: *Owk…Fine. (Okay, fine)*

Kristiana: *Are you okay? It doesn't seem like you want to meet.*

Takhona: *Yep i do hey. Am broke as hell…nd i dn't wnt to meet at the flat. Believe me*

theres nothin to see. (Yes, I do hey. I am broke as hell and I don't want to meet at the flat. Believe me there is nothing to see.)

Kristiana: Oh okay, we can meet for lunch and I will get it, don't worry. What's good at near your house?

Takhona: Galitos

Kristiana: Okay Galitos then, at noon

Takhona: Owk love (Okay love)

WhatsApp Chat, Nov 15, 2015

Three days later, I disembarked from the public taxi at the shopping area near her house and set out to find Galitos. I was early. I messaged Takhona to tell her I had arrived. She responded moments later to tell me that she was five minutes away. I arrived at Galitos and found us a table. I sat for twenty minutes, waiting. I messaged her again to see if she was close and if I should order us something. She responded that she wanted a half chicken. I went up to the counter and ordered, then returned to the table.

Another twenty minutes passed and I was starting to suspect that I had been played. Food for two and half people arrived, and I sat taunting me for being so stupid and debated about getting it packaged to go. I started packing my things and Takhona walked in the door holding Noni.

I tried to mask my irritation.

"Sorry, " she said with a weak smile, "Noni's dad wanted to see her and we had a talk about the money he owes me for her. It took more time than I thought because he is being an ass."

Takhona's ex boyfriend and Noni's dad, left them after Takhona had read

WhatsApp messages and sexts on his phone from three other women. After his initial anger, he confessed that he had been cheating on her for almost a year (from four months after Noni's birth) – that her body wasn't sexy and she was too needy. Then he packed up his things and left. The flat they are in they moved to when Takhona became pregnant and her family told her that she must go and be responsible. Since then, he hasn't paid his portion of the child support. Takhona has said that he always has an excuse not to pay: lost his job, couldn't sell his car, other costs came up. Despite this his parents are paying for him to attend UNISWA.

She spends most of our chats telling me about how worried she is about money and finding another job. The challenge being that she can't leave the house to go to town to search because she can't afford a nanny or a babysitter. None of the other single mothers that live close by will help her because they judge her for being broke and make comments about Noni being filthy and Takhona is dirty for sleeping around.

I had not seen her in nearly two years and her face looked tired. She hunched forward when she sat and her skin was dull. She had developed a wrinkle marking a horizontal trench over her brow She sighed often.

I tried to keep the conversation light.

"Have you seen your friends recently?"

She gave me a blank stare.

"Well… do you need money to see you friends? Surely they can come visit you, no?

"My flat? It is one room hey. I share an outside toilet with like fifty people. How can I have people over?"

"Yah" It was clearly not the best topic of conversation. I moved on.

"So I haven't been able to speak to you much recently, how is your love life?"

She picked at her chicken and spoke.

"There is one guy but he only wants sex. All the guys these days. All they want is sex. They used to show some interest in my well being, like they would take me out, spend time with me... now it is like ' are u in the house, can I come by', when they get at the house they come empty handed not even chocolates or sweets. Or like airtime."

I tore another piece of chicken off of the leg and continued.

"Oh so do you even like this guy? Is there more than one guy?"

"Yah there are a couple hey."

"And it is just for sex?"

"Well like they used to bring things. Now they don't they just show up at my door."

"And you let them in?"

"Yah…. Like.. if someone is already at your door steps what can you do?"

"Uhhhmmm not open the door?"

"Yah I guess hey."

"Well its fine for now, sometimes they bring things for Noni. That's nice.

There was a pause while she adjusted Noni who she was breast feeding at the table.

"Sorry hey."

"Oh no I don't mind."

"She is too old to be breast feeding, but…." Her scrunched up and she looked away for a moment. I could tell she was crying. I put my hand out and touched her arm.

"I know it's stupid ok." She took her hand away to wipe one eye.

"What?"

"I know they are using me but what do I have? I sit at home and each time there is a new guy I think, maybe this one is different, maybe he…" Her eyes filled with tears again. " And you know…" She said putting on a brave face." it is nice being wanted hey."

Takhona's life and mobility are direly restricted by her economic situation, which she has in turn perceived as a weakness and something to be ashamed of. Her pregnancy was not planned and changed her life drastically. When I used to mentor her she was planning to be a nurse or to go to school for IT. She had been looking for a part time job to pay for the school fees when she became pregnant. Moreover, upon revealing to her parents that she was pregnant and keeping the baby, her parents asked her to leave their house and start a new life with her boyfriend and child, somewhere else.

Economics and access to employment played a significant role in creating vast restrictions of access and mobility among the interlocutors. At one point or another all of them citied access to money, "no money" or "being broke" as the primary reason they could not leave their house, participate in an event, go to varsity, advance their career, and even, the reason they can't leave their house to find work.

The rates of unemployment in Swaziland for young people are extremely high, especially in lieu of global cuts to funding in aid and development as well as a general downturn in the economy. (Tegenfeldt, 2012; IRIN, 2011, 2012, 2013; Brixiova et al., 2012; Benoit & Smith, 2014) Young people who had volunteered or interned at civil society organizations with the hope of eventual full time employ are increasingly finding less opportunity. (Brixiova et al., 2012) Further, government funding or loans to pay tuition for post-secondary education are minimal and limited to particular sectors or industries (Magagula, 2013, 2014). When a young person finishes high school and if their

parents are not wealthy, their choices are limited – they have to find work or volunteer/intern to gain experience in lieu of inaccess to post secondary education – both options are increasingly scarce and often do not pay sufficiently to gain financial independence from guardianship income and support. (Brixiova et al., 2012)

Additionally, economic restrictions and access to employment are further drawn down lines of gender and age. (Ibid. 2012) For example, the eldest interlocutors, Takhona (23) and Tanele (24) had both finished school and career development opportunities (internships) and were now struggling to find work. When Takhona, for instance, returned to work from having her child and just after her boyfriend left her, the NGO she worked for told her that in lieu of retrenchments they had to make her position "on call". The scarcity of work, having been ostracized by her family and Church, and the departure of her boyfriend (who had been paying for half of the costs for the child and rent) altogether has rendered her house bound. In December, she admitted that she had been three months behind on rent and couldn't afford babysitting or a nanny or the cost of transport to be active to look for work elsewhere.

Tanele similarly was laid off by an NGO though she is in a better position than Takhona because she doesn't have children and she has her family's support. She lives with her family and they are paying for her school fees while she pursues a diploma in Marketing and Branding. Even though this provides her with security, she also feels obligated to them and guilty having to ask for extra money to go out with friends or to participate in activities that extend past school and her ongoing job search. She wants to move out and have her own place but her parents don't think it is 'right' until she is married. However, she doesn't know how she is meant to meet someone when she the

only place she can socialize is church or online.

Contrasted to Tanele, Mandla (18) graduated from high school the previous year. Also, lives in his own flat in Mbabane that he pays with a spending allowance he receives from his mom. She is also paying for his tuitions to pursue a three year degree in software programming. Despite this, he also feels housebound. Often when he isn't in class he says he is "too broke" to do anything except 'chill' at his flat. He tends to spend food money on beer ('"to escape this place"') and most times when we chatted he was "at his flat, chilling on his bed, chatting", "hung over", "drunk", "tired" or "bored". The only time he claims to go out and socialize is when his cousin is deejaying at a local bar, and Mandla knows there will be free beer.

Additionally Senzo (18) also lives away from home in a flat paid for by his parents so that he may be closer to his 'piece meal' job while he saves up to attend University. The shifts are at night and he spends most of the weekdays sleeping, and doesn't leave the house unless he is going to work or getting groceries. He is required however to return to his family's home (over an hour away) over the weekends, "to keep [him] out of trouble". (WhatsApp Chat, Senzo, Sept. 21, 2015)

Simphiwe (18), Mbongiseni (15), Siyabonga (18) and Themba (23) are all still in high school and are still considered children (Booth, 2003) even though Themba is 23 and returned to finish high school at 20 years old; he lives with his mother and relies on her income for his mobility and school fees. Conversely, Simphiwe is a year behind in high school because of her unplanned pregnancy. She now attends a special school for "adulterers" – for young women that dropped out of school because of pregnancy. Her parents provide her an allowance for transport and airtime. The expectation is that when

she is done school she will find a job or get married but as articulated that she doubts a man will be seriously interested in her after her pregnancy.

Finally, Mbongiseni and Siyabonga both live at their parents' homes, and plan to leave as soon as they are done school and find work. In the interim, however, they get allowances from their parents for transport and airtime.

The general outlook shared by the interlocutors regarding their life and future was a combination of concern, frustration, boredom and restlessness; for the females their concern was grounded predominantly in their security/stability and whether they could be independent from their families and raise their children (future and current). These concerns were bookended by feelings of being locked up and powerlessness.

The males were more concerned about success and 'having something to do', or the fear of feeling idle and useless. Sometimes in chatting about their future or their current situation they became snappy and angry, and once or twice they lashed out at me. Also significant was how their concern for success, which seemed to relate more to perceived social constructs of status and masculinity (which are explored in Chapter four), negatively contributed to accessing employment. For three of the male interlocutors, they continued to choose unemployment, being homebound and being immobile, over having to do a job that was below them. Which also seems to hint to implicit gendered privilege.

I am not allowed to be here

We met outside Mr. Price. Her choice. I hadn't been in a Mr. Price in ages. Nothing seemed to have changed. Similar colours different styles. She squealed as she

saw me and ran over to give me a hug.

"Eeeeeeek I can't believe you are here. I have missed you! This is so exciting. I really can't believe it." Each sentence expressed with a new burst of energy.

I smiled and said hello, and told her that I missed her too. I never know what to say. We started moving towards the store and I asked her the whereabouts of her daughter. She told me that Sihle was with her grandma.

"Oh so your mom is okay with you being here?"

She smiled and looked away.

"Let's go look at the shoes!" She said excitedly.

I laughed to myself. " Simphiwe, what did you tell her?"

She walked rapidly ahead with a focus directed at the shoe section, as if it were a race for the last pair. I caught up to her and she had already selected a pair of bright pink sandals.

"It is fine. Don't worry. I just said that I was meeting an old coordinator from (name of a UN agency), so it's fine. She is cool with it. (beat change) Oh looooook."

She pointed her toes forward to show off the sandals with the smile.

"They are pretty."

"I like them. Pink isn't my colour but they suit you."

"I know!"

I walked over to the wall of sandals to see if there was something I could try on too. I selected a little strappy black sandal with little square mirrors like a tennis bracelet.

"Oh I LIKE those!" She said and she jumped up from the bench to grab a pair of the

same.

Simphiwe plopped down and carelessly continued to take off the pink sandals in exchange for the new flashy mirrored ones.

With the sound of struggle in her voice, she squeezed the new selection on her foot uttered aloud, "This is the first time I have been out shopping in like a year."

"Oh?"

"Well ya you know with Sihle and school. I don't see my friends."

"Have you asked your mom if you could go out with your friends?"

She pulled on the second sandal with far less struggle and stood up to admire her feet in the little floor mirror.

"Well," spinning around in front of the mirror to see her feet from different angles,"they think that they were the reason for the pregnancy and the drinking, so ya."

"Oh right, yah."

"Yah…. Yho! These are nice ~~nje~~!" Switching the conversation back to the shoes. We both plopped back down and removed the sandals. I looked back at the wall but Simphiwe stood up hurriedly.

"Let's try on dresses!" Then walked away leaving the pile of sandals she had tried on, on the floor.

"Uh okay… I don't really need a dress. You know if you wanted to invite your friends to join us then you could." Then stood up to return the pair I tried on to the wall. Mid way there she quickly ran back and grabbed my hand to pull her towards a different area of the store.

"Nah they're a bunch bishes, I am not talking to them right now. Saying all this what

what to me on whatsapp, like ooooo I am such a bish. Whatever..”

I was trying to listen to her and get away to hang up the sandal on the wall.

“Just LEAVE them, (attempting to grab the sandals out of my hands) they have people to clean that up. Come!”

“But, okay. I will just.” I placed the pair neatly atop I different display.

“Come on. Lets go. We don’t have a lot of time.”

“Okay, okay, we are not in a rush.”

Ignoring me she continued leading me by the arm.

“If you are going to be boring and OLD! Help me pick some dresses then. I want to look sexy. I need a sexy dress.”

“Okay, sure” We started wandering around the store as she selected dresses and added to the pile on her arm.

“So what exactly did you say to your mom about me? Didn’t she wonder why you were visiting with me?”

“Why are you worrying? I told her you were back in the country for work with (insert name of international NGO) and wanted to meet to get my views on a new project that you were organizing. That you thought I was a good person to ask and that I might be able to participate in the new programme.”

I laughed out loud, “No…. You can’t say that! What if she calls (insert name of UN agency)? I could get in trouble.”

She turned on her heal towards the change rooms with her pile of dresses and smiled.

“My sista she won’t call. I told her if she wanted she could call me on my phone and

could talk to you."

I rolled my eyes and inhaled slowly.

"I wish you had asked me first."

"It's FINE," with a tone of exasperation, "you wanted to see me soooo, ya. I said what I said. She won't call." She swirled around gently.

"But with a lie? She wouldn't have let you come if you had just told her that you were seeing an old friend or a researcher and you are part of research or something?"

She laughs. "NO!"

"Alright"

As we waited in the queue for the change rooms. Simphiwe hooked her arm around mine and leaned her head on my shoulder. As we slowly inched towards the front of the queue she told me about how Sihle was growing fast, and she had to buy new clothes for her 'all the time'.

Her phone made a sound in her purse and she lifted her head off of my shoulder, unlinked her arm and reached for it in her bag. She typed something and then plopped the phone back in her purse.

"Can we get something to eat after this?"

"Sure, where?"

"I like Finesse."

"Finesse, the shebeen? Do they have food there?"

She laughed with a dramatized shocked expression and slapped my arm playfully.

"It's not a sheBEEN, it's cool."

I laughed and told her it was fine, that we could go after she was done trying on

the dresses. She tried each one on and emerged from the change room using the hallway like a runway, asking me for my opinion time and getting me to take a photograph of each one to post on Facebook or WhatsApp.

"So people think I have money."

"Who are you chatting with?" I asked.

"My boyfriend."

"Oh, how are things there? Was that who you were talking to before?"

"Yah I told him I was with you. We are fine, I still want to break up with him but I can't yet. He is at Finesse with his friends."

"Oh?"

"Yah he said that he wants to buy us drinks. He will give me a ride home after."

"But you don't even like him."

"Yah but he going to buy us drinks" She said with a smile.

"But if you want I can buy us drinks, you don't need to involve him."

She laughed as we both arrived at the cross walk.

"Come on, I don't want you to pay. He owes me anyway" As she grabbed my arm again and pulled me across the street. The walk sign had not changed and I found myself scurrying as cars and trucks approached. A truck honked at us as it nearly missed but Simphiwe unphased yelled over the horn.

"AND HE IS GIVING ME A RIDE HOME SO YA"

After a second to catch my breath I responded.

"Ok"

"Kris, my mom thinks we are in a meeting. Let's have some fun! We don't have much

time. So lets get DRRUUUUUUUNNNKKK", in a low dramatized announcer-like voice.

Of the eight interlocutors Simphiwe was one of five that lied or obscured the truth in order to meet me. Senzo told his parents he was too tired to return to the homestead for the weekend, as is required of him every week. Tanele, told her parents that she was meeting a career counselor. Mbongiseni, lied about the exam marks being posted at his school, and Themba told his mom he needed transport money to attend a Church meeting.

I met Senzo near the University of Swaziland; he lives close by. It was a Saturday late morning. Usually he would already be at his parent's home almost an hour away but in order to see me, this one time, he told them that he was exhausted and needed to rest.

Since graduating from high school almost a year ago he had found a 'piece meal' job to save up for tuition to go to varsity. He wants to study music production but his parents want him to study something more employable. He supposes that he will instead study software design even though it doesn't interest him. During the week he works shift work at night and he sleeps during the day.

His parents have been paying the rent of a one bedroom flat, by coincidence near where his girlfriend lives but they don't know about her. They were aware that the commute to and from their homestead would render it impossible for Senzo to find work.

Despite this, they expected him home every weekend to attend Church and stay out of trouble. He told me that he often does go home because he respected them and needed them to continue their financial support. ~~but~~ Once every couple of months, however, he contrived a lie so that he can stay in his flat and spend the whole weekend with his girlfriend.

We sat on the side of the road, wiping grease off of our faces with the backs of our hands, trying to eat tasty chicken dust. Conversation came easy, as he told me that he had told his parents that work had been hectic during the week and he was exhausted. He had a planned to go see his girlfriend after our meeting. Usually she would walk over to his flat in the afternoons, after he was finished sleeping from the night shift and they would chill on his bed and listen to music. However because of her school exams he had not been able to see her and only talked to her on WhatsApp for the past three weeks. He had missed being able to see her and now they both were free.

He smiled and said cheekily,

"But yeah, I am here, I hope you appreciate that."

Similarly, the second time I met Tanele it was also under a false pretense. The first time had been purely by chance; I saw her on her way home from the bus rank and she could only chat with me for half an hour before she was certain her family would be calling her to see where she was.

Tanele has told me that while she is looking for work she assists with chores and cooking at home but the primary expectation is that she spends her time looking for a job. As such, she spends 'A LOT' of time at home and she hasn't seen her friends for months.

> *"I hvn't gone out nd jst hd a good time wit ma frendz, jst the gals. Pls wit ma phone gone we dn't tlk as much its lik I dn't even matter to them anymore. Dey don't evn call. What's with that? You dnt hav a phone and then bam ppl disappear. I miss hving money. I need to get of dis house."*
>
> *(I haven't gone out and just had a good time with ma friends, just the girls. Plus with my phone gone we don't talk as much. It's like I don't*

even matter anymore. They don't even call. What is with that? You don't have a phone and then bam people disappear. I miss having money. I need to get out of this house.) (WhatsApp Chat, Tanele: Oct 2, 2015)

Therefore the primary reason she hasn't been able to socialize is because 'she's broke' and can't ask her parents for money to go out 'to see her girls'. Second she generally feels guilty about being a burden to her family and doesn't want to be seen to be wasting her time. In our brief chance run in town she expressed her frustration with the situation.

"I spend a lot of time in my room with my sister. I lost my phone remember? So I have to borrow hers with my SIM card. It is such a bother. But what choice do I have? I can't buy my own phone. I hates it. Everyday we fight about it. Plus there is no privacy cause guys will message me in the middle of the night and she will be like, "who's that? who's that? who's that guy?' Uuuuuuug, none of your business."

This had been the first time she had mentioned a potential guy to me since her disastrous break up six months earlier and I asked her if she is seeing someone. Her face brightened as she told me that it was a secret but that she sometimes used the job search as a front to meet a new no strings[10] guy.

"I tell them I am going to the print shop or a meeting with a potential employer and then he is waiting around the corner in his car. It is a secret though KB they can't know."

"So you are not really looking for work then or?" I asked now confused.

"Oh no! No I am definitely looking for a job but there really isn't anything, you know, you have seen how hard it is for us youth, its sooo baaaaaaad. Plus how else will I get to

[10] No strings is a slang term for a relationship, often sexual, that is by definition non committal. Having no strings means that the relationship cannot tie anyone down. This type of relationship is generally formed to fulfill a mutual sexual need or desire.

see him? Imagine? Them finding out? (she laughed) Murder KB, they would murder me."

When we met for dinner officially a week after the chance meeting, she had told me that she "kinda lied" to her parents about who she was going to meet, that I was a career advisor from the University of Swaziland and that she wouldn't be home until eight o'clock. They gave her money for a cab so that she didn't have to worry about taking a public taxi or coming home before it was dark.

"How did you explain to them that you were meeting me in the evening?" I asked when she told me how she was finally able to meet me.

" You know they didn't ask hey. Probably thought cause I never went to UNISWA that you were doing me a favour and could only meet after hours."

"Does UNISWA even have career advisors?"

She laughed. "I don't know hey. It was all I could think of" (laughs)

"No it was clever. Why couldn't you have just told them the truth? That you were coming to see me and that I am doing research that you are participating in it."

"Uhhh KB they wouldn't understand they'd probably want to know why I am doing this and if I am getting paid or at least a job. Why are you wasting your time Tanele blah blah blah. It was easier just to say you are someone going to help me find a job."

Both Mbongiseni and Themba had also made up pseudo lies to be able to visit with me. For example, Mbongiseni isn't allowed to meet friends outside of school. He doesn't have many friends at school to begin with because in the last four years he has changed schools three times, each time because his parent's were not comfortable with the peers he chose to spend time with. At his new school they have a woman that they

have asked to watch him and report back if she feels Mbongiseni is speaking to the 'wrong crowd.' Mbongiseni has one friend from his primary school that lives down the road. He only sees this friend once and awhile when his parents are not home for the day and are not aware that he is visiting. Otherwise he only gets to see his best friend in passing on the way to and from their respective schools.

As a response to this, the day he came to join me in town he told his mom he had to go to his school because he had heard that the exam results were posted. She allowed him to go and also gave him transport money. He saved the transport money to purchase airtime and walked to town instead.

Lastly, Themba told his mom he had to meet some 'guys' from his Church youth group in town. Even though she wouldn't have a problem with him seeing someone from FLAS ("I'm a man now, I can do what I want") he lied because he needed the transport money and he knew that saying it was a 'Church thing with guys' would be easiest and often was more lucrative.

"She likes that I am being a good boy now, so she gives me money all the time whenever I want. I even have enough to buy you a present if you are a good girl." He said smugly with a smile.

"Uhhhh yeah… I am okay hey, thanks though. So DO you actually go to Church, or is that pretend too?"

"Are you serious? Who do you think I am? You really don't think I go to Church, you think I am like that?" He said angrily.

"No I was just checking okay."

"Oh", he laughed and took another bite of his hamburger. Then continued with his

mouth full," I am here to do God's work, he has blessed me, he blesses us daily with his grace. (laughed again, mouth now emptied) Jeez ha! Do you go to Church?! (laughed) Of course I go to Church, sexy. errr sweetie."

These narratives of deception or use of false pretenses demonstrate two key notions: The first, by way of contrast, sheds light on the prohibitive norms and routines of their private spheres (home) which strongly indicates which (homo)social spaces are accessible and normal, and which are restricted. (Foucault, 1976) The second element of note, is *how* the interlocutors respond to and navigate access to prohibitive spaces, by drawing from normative performances and scripts, as well as modes of exchange from the their 'allowed' spaces. Which begins to provide hints and insights into how their environment is reacted to and resisted.

To commence with there are common threads throughout these narratives that reflect the routine, banal and restrictive. (Foucault, 1976, 1984; Mbembe, 2001) The first and predominant surrounds the attitude and inaccessibility to 'friends' and friendship- and how friends are signified as being deviant and the primary conduit to deviant behaviour, or are a distraction from normative responsibilities. Therein, in order to control and prevent deviance, access to friends is limited.

To reiterate, Mbongseni's parents as one extreme example, have moved him from four schools and have asked a person to monitor him at school, in order to prevent him from mixing with the 'wrong' crowd. Even though he has never given them any reason to believe this. Mbongiseni has shared that his parents feel that friends will influence him to have sex and drink. All he fantasizes about doing is chilling, listening to music, cooking together, playing instruments and playing sports.

Simphiwe's parents decided that it was her connection to her ex best friend and friend group, that was the primary cause of her unplanned pregnancy. As a result she has not seen her friends officially for over two years but remains in contact via WhatsApp. Now in the role of a 'good mom,' friends are no longer framed necessarily as a bad influence but as detractors from the responsibilities of being a motherhood.

There is a general notion that friends are viewed as 'excess', unnecessary, a waste of time and money. One example of this was on the evening I met Tanele; she couldn't tell her parents that she was meeting a friend because anything outside the pursuit of finding work is viewed as a waste of time and money.

Due to link of friends with deviance or squandered time, young people shelter and keep secret their interactions with friends even when they are only interacting on their phones. As Honest, my research assistant once noted, "Haven't you ever wondered why so many pictures on WhatsApp are taken in bathrooms and bedrooms? They go to where they can lock the door." Both Simphiwe and Mbongiseni have told me on separate occasions that if their parents were to know that they were talking to friends or rather, what they were talking about on their phones, they would have their phones taken away. With Mbongseni adding, "Nd dat wld b bad cause den I wld b so bored."

Next, when they are not chatting with friends or with me, there is also a notable repetition of the same normative routines over and over: going to school, going to church, going to work, finding work, coming home from school, going to class, doing my homework, coming home from church, calling to see if I will work etc. With very little to almost no variation in that routine, to such an extent that the banality is engrained as a part of the normative discourses of being a young person or being a child in society.

Senzo once articulated this,

Senzo: *Not to sound racist but…*

Kristiana: *But…*

Senzo *in a black family like mine… u live to work… not work to live… tho we modern most of the time but i can't jus leave and say im going to see friends… Ryt now im washin dishes I just finished cleanin… then im going to the wedding… then i come straight bak…my parents are over protective… they want me home all the time… I don't chat on WhatsApp cuz its my favorite thing… its just <u>something</u>… (In a black family like mine you live to work, not work to live. Though we are modern most of the time I can't just leave and say I am going to see my friends. Right now I am washing dishes. I just finished cleaning. Then I am going to the wedding then I come straight back. My parents are over protective. They want me home all the time. I don't chat on WhatsApp because it's my favourite thing, it is just something.) (WhatsApp Chat, Senzo: Oct 31, 2015)*

This leads me to the second sentiment of banality, which are the constant articulations of boredom, idleness and the articulation that there is "nothing else to do." Moreover that digital space is the only place to go and to be. Mbongiseni has commented on multiple occasions when he gets frustrated that he doesn't get to see his friends, "well at least I will see my friends online". Even Themba, noted once that the only place he feels at peace, where he can just be himself, is on his phone chatting with his girlfriend (who is a secret). Similarly, Simphiwe has noted that everyone just judges her and always has something to say to her about her mistakes, and she is only happy. And Senzo has

said the only place he feels like he can just be himself is online to be the kind of person *he* thinks should be Swazi.

Lastly, the other notable point to draw from these narratives is how they respond to and navigate access to prohibitive spaces. At its core, the deception was a response to navigating and accessing a social space that, by way of varying restrictive measures (routines, rules, prohibitive discourses, limiting number of social spaces) or socioeconomic barriers (money, gender), had been rendered off-limits, prohibitive or non-existent. This was evident in the narratives of Tanele and Simphiwe. Indeed, both lied about whom they were meeting but the lies were part of a larger false pretense. Tanele was using the 'job search' generally, to get space from her family and to obscure a sexual relationship, and I fit within that false performance. Conversely, Simphiwe capitalized on the pretense of our 'fake' meeting to meet her boyfriend and get drunk. In other words, to navigate or access alternative or "unrestricted" social space, the interlocutors had to lie, obscure and pretend.

A telling indicator of this was *how* they deceived, by drawing from the lexicon and prescribed performances drawn from their normative (homo)social spaces: home, church, school and work. (Mbembe, 2001; Scott, 1985). As an example, Tanele, Senzo and Simphiwe used indicators from their work spaces – a career advisor, a past coordinator, or the arduous nature of piecework etc. Mbongiseni drew from school scripts and routines. Further to this, whether this was conscious or not, he also used the normative performance of 'going to school' or 'being studious' as an exchange for money. Along similar lines, Themba used the performance of morality and a normative church construct, the youth group, to acquire money and circumvent the economic

restrictions to his mobility.

In this chapter I attempted to illustrate with the data, the banal existence of the eight interlocutors. I drew from their specific situations to show common themes of limited access to money (via unemployment, gender norms). Then I outlined the routines and restrictions that exist in their home lives that limit access to alternate social spaces other than those that are deemed normal: school, church, work. Moreover, that this environment creates a sentiment of futility, directionless, powerlessness and general boredom. That within the limited access to and restriction with the varying social spaces of their lives, digital space often is the only space of refuge.

Chapter 3:

Real or pretend? Fractured Performances in the Digital Space

Themba's current WhatsApp profile picture is of himself making a speech at school. His profile pictures rotate daily between notable achievements at school, at church or pictures with his family. His WhatsApp profile status is the same it has been for the past week or so. "If God is for it, then no one will stop it…. You have GREATNESS within you." (WhatsApp Profile, Themba, December 13, 2015)

He has told me that it is important for him that people see him as a "God fearing person, that is inspirational, creative, ambitious, loving, caring, honest and passionate about young people…and just a young boy making his mark in the world as a role model and mentor." Which he is achieving, "by the things that [he writes] on [his] page and even the kinds of pics that [he] posts." (WhatsApp Chat, Themba: Sept. 21, 2015)

As I am looking at his profile picture, squished up against the window of a kombi/public taxi speeding along the bumpy MR9 on my way to the south , I can't help but feel nervous. After three years, chatting on WhatsApp and the odd Facebook interaction, I am going to see him in person and I am not looking forward to it.

Themba is 22 and has had a girlfriend for two years that no one knows about. He has "hundreds of pictures of her on his phone" but purposely does not post them anywhere 'public' (WhatsApp or Facebook) because he is trying to maintain the impression that he lives the "born-again" life. The Church that he belongs to upholds him as a success story and he is often called upon to share his testimonial of his 'wild' and "uncontrolled" history of early sex [from the age of 13], and hyper promiscuity combined with alcohol abuse, as an example to other young people of the behaviour to avoid and the power of faith and prayer. He says though, more importantly, he keeps his

relationship private because he "just [doesn't] wanna be a bad role model" to all the young people that seek his mentorship. (WhatsApp Chat, Themba, Sept. 22, 2015)

As the captain at his school he also doesn't want any of his fellow classmates or the school staff to know about his girlfriend because "pupils are not meant to be dating". Lastly, his mother whom he lives with, also does not know and "would kill [him] if she found out". (WhatsApp Chat, Themba, Sept. 22, 2015)

His girlfriend lives in the United States. He enjoys their long chats on WhatsApp and feels she is the only person that really knows him. (WhatsApp Chat, Themba: Oct. 20, 2015) The distance has been difficult for him because although he initially claimed to 'not even want sex anymore' he has admitted to cheating on her with multiple girls in other cities. (WhatsApp Chat, Themba: Oct. 30, 2015). He usually begins the flirtation on Facebook to get their attention, then he would get their numbers and continue the conversation from there on WhatsApp. He added that it is too bad 'women are women' because the 'arrangement' always goes well until they get too clingy or demanding, and he then to cut if off because they get crazy. (WhatsApp Chat, Themba: Oct. 30, 2015)

Incidentally Themba also confessed to his love for me. At the beginning he framed it as admiration but it slowly evolved into something much more lustful and obsessive. It reached its peak when I was in Swaziland, and he knew I was alone and away from my boyfriend. I was asked daily) to send nude photos to him so that he may keep "them on his phone to look at" and "use". Attempts to tell him why it wasn't appropriate to send nude or suggestive photos because I have a boyfriend and I felt it was unethical, were met with "Well I know you secretly want to fuck me so why are you resisting it?" (WhatsApp Chat, Themba; Nov 4, 2015) or "Well your boyfriend isn't here. Why do we

have to involve him? Tell him I want to fuck his girlfriend and eat her pussy" (WhatsApp Chat, Themba: Nov. 19, 2015); just a few of the equally illustrative examples.

Due to his aggressive behaviour towards me it took me a long time to muster the courage to go and see him in person. I finally agreed to meet him but only if he agreed to meet in a public place and if he realized/acknowledged it was strictly for research and nothing else. He finally and reluctantly acquiesced after attempts to convince and beg me to come to his house instead.

I arrived in Nhlangano and walked from the bus rank to the mall. He was sitting waiting for me at the Wimpy's. As I approached the table, he stood up and hugged me. He was dressed in a sweater, a tie, dark grey slacks with pleats and a dark brown leather belt. He looked like he was going to a job interview or to Church. The last time I saw him he was wearing a t-shirt and shorts.

He told me I looked beautiful and invited me to take a seat. After a quick glance at the menu, we placed our respective orders, and he began the conversation. He asked how I was, how my boyfriend was, about school, and how I was doing with my research in Swaziland. My answers were met with nods of acknowledgement and smiles. He then spoke about a recent debate at school and how he had won. How he had been speaking to one of his teachers about providing him with a reference letter for a scholarship to attend University of the Witwatersrand for law. He suggested that, "maybe when [he] moves to Johannesburg we (my boyfriend, him and I) could all go out for some Chicken Licken and ice cream." Throughout the conversation he never made any mention of the things we had talked about over WhatsApp, the utterances of lust/obsession previously made nor his utter disregard for my boyfriend.

A young male passed our table and said shyly, "Sivusele Pastor Themba ngiyetsemba kutsi uphilile" (Greetings, Pastor Themba, hope you are well?) He laughed and replied, "S'phililе, nkulunkulu usigcinile kute lokubi". (Yes, we are well, God has kept us, and nothing is going wrong). As the young male continued, Themba leaned in closer and said, "They think I am a junior pastor" He laughed and pointed to his casual sneakers, which I hadn't noticed he was wearing. "But pastors don't wear sneakers, I wear these everyday!"

After our lunch at Wimpy's we walked around town 'window shopping'. People looked at us as we walked. It made me self-conscious. He smiled as I spoke and opened the door for me when we entered shops. Throughout the passing hour, he continued to ask me things as if we hadn't spoke since the last time we saw each other three years prior. "So what did you do in Canada? How did you find that? Interesting, well good for you. How are you finding Wits? Do you recommend it as a school? How difficult was it to get in?"

At one point I laughed and said, "Themba you are acting like we haven't spoken in forever, I was talking with you on the way here to see you."
And he laughed, "Well this is different, I wasn't talking to you in person until now."
"Oh, I see." I responded trying not to show bewilderment with my tone.

On my way to the bus rank to catch a kombi back to Mbabane, he stopped for a moment on the side walk and said, "Are you sure you don't want to come back to my house? My mom is not there; she is gone all day. I would love to show you where I live and where I grew up. It would mean so much to me."

I debated the idea for a brief moment but decided ultimately to stick by my decision not to be anywhere private with him and replied,

"No Themba I really need to go back to Mbabane. I have another meeting."

"Fine," He replied with a blank slightly disdainful look.

He gave me a hug, made a comment about us not waiting three years again to see each other, and stood to watch until the kombi drove away. Forty minutes into the trip my Themba sent me a message.

"You made me so horny for you today. I wanted to rip that shirt off and fuck you so hard until you scream. Why do you keep doing this to me? Why don't you just let me jam my long huge dick into your nice pussy. You're really not fair do you know that?" (WhatsApp Conversation, Themba: Dec 13, 2015)

I put the phone down. My face red, I was suddenly very aware of the two sets of eyes that I was sandwiched between on the small-benched seat of the kombi back to Mbabane.

A reader of this excerpt may think Themba's behaviour is odd, fractured and almost schizophrenic, and may perhaps view him as deceptive, dishonest or a hypocrite. However Themba's behaviour is the result of years of practice, of adaptation to, and reaction from, the spatial definition and regulation of sexuality, and concomitantly, his Self. Each space has a performance of normative indicators and a prescriptive lexicon, and as he moves from one space to the next he self-adjusts accordingly: from the Born again Christian- playing in the Church band and routinely providing his testimonials that renounce his over-sexed and out of control ways; to the student leader – making speeches as captain in front of the school, and offering to mentor other young people 'who just

need someone to be there for them to help them realize their potential', and to the polite obedient young person in public – opening doors and listening intently with words of encouragement and support.

It may also seem to this reader that in digital space Themba becomes free to express how he really feels, and that he is in actuality hyper-sexed, aggressive and disrespectful, and is only just performing morality in his everyday life to placate normative discourses; and it part that may be true but it is not the whole picture. Themba's behaviour towards me is just one performance among many that could be drawn upon depending on their utility in that interaction. The significant difference between digital space and the other spaces of Themba's life (that restrict and limit alterities of performance and discourse), is that digital space is a residual space that is predominantly untouched by the regulation of the state.

This has two significant ramifications: the first is that this means that a variety of performances may be drawn upon, again depending on the interaction and the utility; the second is that what are deemed valuable or significant performances are determined by the young people themselves. What I observed was that young people draw on performances that have currency, which in the same manner that performances of violence functioned in Bourgois (2002), have a binary function: to placate or respond to larger and dominant normative discourses and prescriptive lexicon; and offer the ability to gain and fortify status among other young people vis a vis the relegate position young people inhabit in Swazi society.

In this chapter, I will draw on significant examples of performances among the interlocutors, specially within the three predominant forms of performance I observed:

performances of morality, secrecy and masculinity (that draws heavily on performances of hyper sexuality) . Further, I argue that the performances both play to (on differing levels) dominant norms in Swazi society, as well as are indicators of membership and status within the young people's community

Performances of Morality

I hadn't seen Tanele for three years and even though we had been chatting for months over WhatsApp I was really excited to see her. I had arranged to go out for dinner at a restopub in Mbabane. We hadn't been able to meet until then because 'she was broke' and didn't really leave her house unless she was in town looking for work. I finally offered to take her out, my treat, so we could see each other.

She wasn't very active on Facebook, not since she and her boyfriend broke up. She also hadn't changed her WhatsApp profile in months from a picture of her sitting pretty, knees crossed with her hand on her knee and straight back, head tilted slightly and chin down looking straight into the camera and smiling, with an updo of big chunky braids. This is how I remembered her, so when she came in with a short and cropped hairstyle I barely recognized her. She saw me, rushed over to the table excitedly and we hugged.

She sat down and we ordered drinks. I told her she looked fantastic and she should update her WhatsApp profile picture because to new hairstyle really accented her beautiful face. She laughed and said that she liked the one she had, "It's old but I had a job and money then."

We looked at the menu and started to catch up. Since this was the first time I saw her in person in awhile, I apologized again for her ex boyfriend. She sighed and said, "it is fine, I am really over him. He was such a jerk." She took her phone out of her purse, out in on the table, and her purse beside her on the floor.

She had been together with a Swazi guy who worked in South Africa, for two years, semi-secretly – her sister knew, and so did all of her friends, but not her family because she wasn't meant to be with anyone until she was engaged to get married and until then she had to act like she was a good girl that wasn't interested in men.

Her ex and herself would see each other every couple of months when he came back to Swaziland, otherwise they spent hours together chatting on WhatsApp everyday, and posting pictures of each other on Facebook; at one point, he changed his WhatsApp profile picture to a picture of her and kept it for months. This was special for her because she said it meant he was serious about her.

They had been having sex from the first weeks of the relationship. It wasn't Tanele's first time but that wasn't something she really talked about with him because he didn't need to know.

Despite thinking that this was the man she was going to eventually marry, she began noticing him becoming 'distant': he was less available to chat, wouldn't respond back in a timely way, stopped posting pictures of her to Facebook and when she tried to talk to him he wasn't responsive,

Tanele: Like he wld giv one word answers nd nt asking me questions bck. When I called he never answered. I tried everything. Nd den he stoped Calling. Blockd me on WhatsApp nd ignored my massages on fb. He posted more

about work nd nothing about me. Oh he then posted pics of him nd his new woman. He ws hugging hr from behind nd kissing her neck nd u could see dat she ws pregnant. He ddnt hv the balls t tell m frst, nd I hd t find out frm fb. (WhatsApp Chat, Tanele, Sept. 25th 2015)

We got our drinks. Her phone buzzed and she picked it up. She read something and she smiled and put the phone down. I wondered who it was on the phone and asked her about the new guy she was seeing that she told me about briefly on WhatsApp. She smiled mischievously, "that was just him actually… ya its good hey, its just this sort of like, like nothing official, like no strings thing. Just sex." She began to tell me the details. Her eyes widening and narrated the peaks of intrigue in the story. The guy, as it turned out was a bit of well-known socialite, I even knew of him. When I lived in Swaziland I had gone on a date with him but he had a reputation for being with a lot of women and I wasn't interested. I decided to keep my mouth shut.

"Yah so he sort of has a girlfriend that lives in Jozi, he is going to marry her when she comes back but they all say that… now!... he is just looking for some fun. Annnnd I am single so, why not right? And to think that he wants ME? Like this guy could get any girl he wants. (She smiled giddily) And he thinks I am hot."

I laughed and asked her how she knew she was the only one he was "just having some fun" with. She shrugged her shoulders and took another sip of her wine, "I don't need to know. I don't care"

"But you are doing with him what your ex did with some else."

"Yah." She said emphatically.

After ordering the food, I told her I was actually surprised at her news because she always seemed like the type to be in serious relationships, and in previous conversations she had seemed only interested in guys that were the committing type.

"Well it is still new KB, I wasn't sure how to tell you about… and what you would think.

I laughed. "Ha ha me?I only want you to be happy."

"Yah I know. Okay. Good cuz I just didn't want you to think that I am now like sleeping with lots of guys."

"Oh! Ha! I don't mind. (chuckled) Look I mean, even if you were, having sex with tons of guys I would only be worried that you were taking care of yourself, but… otherwise, like its okay to have fun."

She giggled. " Okay…. But I am still that girl. I do still want that, you know to get married. But sometimes I think you know whats the point. Swazi guys you know they're…they're all with girlfriends that they are cheating on. Even my ex! I thought he was different…I was so committed to him."

"Committed like you were planning to get married or?"

"Well like you know I didn't cheat on him… ever. I was good. I didn't even flirt with another guy, like ever KB… (she laughed) Can you imagine, ncaa… guy's would message me and be all like, 'is your bf there, it's cold why don't you come over and stay in the blankets with me?'(she laughed again) And KB it wasn't like it was like so easy cause sometimes I missed him and missed being with someone, so I am not going to lie but I sometimes even wanted to."

"Yah, that's normal though. I think."

" Yah, I guess it is. Yho! KB these guys tho were like guys I used to even like and am

like, why now? Why couldn't you want me when I wanted you? Yah but I never did anything with them cause I loved him…. aaand I am not like that you know? (she sipped her wine) Yah…. and… even like, any pic that I posted of me on fb that was you know kinda flirty (she smiled, I laughed) was meant for him and I would tag him in it cause I wanted to show other guys that it was serious that I was you know taken and they must stop messaging me. they didn't stop though… (Sigh)

I laughed. "Yah they are pretty persistent hey."

"Yep…. So where was I…right! Then he just messes around with some other woman. I was soooooo mad, KB well you know. I told you about it. And you know what… (she reaches for her purse on the floor) what's the point in being good and nice… (begins to rummage through her purse looking for something) you still get cheated on… (Starts applying her lip gloss and talking) Am having fun and the sex wena! OH… MY…. LORD, the SEX!"

At a decibel that captured the attention of the people sitting close by. Her face scrunched with embarrassment and the she half smiled as she used the opportunity to put her lip gloss back in the purse and put the purse on the floor, to hide her face.

Our meals arrived and she continued telling me about the details of the relationship. She told me that they chat a lot because they don't see each other often. They have even tried sexting when her sister is out, which she felt was kind of weird and sort of like 'teasing'. "I like real sex better but he seemed to REALLY like it." (She laughed)

She continued to tell me that when he isn't busy with work or if his girlfriend isn't in the country, and if her parents are not home or busy with something, she will tell her

sister that she has to go to town to run an errand, often something related to her job search, and he picks her up around the corner out of sight of the house. He then takes her to a flat that he rents with another guy friend, a place they have that their girlfriends don't know about.

"So all that stuff you are telling me about how hard it is to find a job… is that even true?" I asked.

"Ja KB of course, it is hard, just that there is nothing… I have no idea what I am going to do… but as well wena like when else could I see him?" She smiles.

The Good Girl – Female Performances of Morality

For all the time that I knew Tanele she projected herself as a 'good girl'. She kept a Bible in her purse and would read from it when she had free time. She described her family as very religious and valued Church immensely. When we talked about relationships she talked about her ideal husband, the kinds of traits he would have, that waiting until marriage was important. Pictures she posted to WhatsApp or Facebook were "pretty", most were full body and fully dressed, with her face standing out with her beautiful smile and big sparkling eyes. She would be either sitting straight back politely or making her signature curtsy and 'peace sign' with her hands.

After I got to know her better throughout our WhatsApp chats she revealed more about her secret relationship. She revealed that she had been having sex since she was seventeen. That she respected her parents but wished they would stop treating her like a child.

I inquired about this after our dinner together and if she was aware of the image she portrayed and if so, what was the purpose.

Tanele: *Wll I ddn't think abt it that mch bt I guess ya. Mostly I jst want to seem lik I am gud person that is responsible nd respectful. Like what wld ppl thnk if they knew about my ex? Or even Kibza! Ehheeeee! They'd be like hw is dis girl a Christian hving sex, ppl would judge me nd I'd be seen as one of those girls… nd I swear that I am not.*

(Well I didn't think about it that much but I guess ya. Mostly I just want to seem like I am a good person that is responsible and respectful. Like what would people think if they knew about my ex? Or even Kibza! Eheeee! They'd be like how is this girl a Christian having sex, people would judge me and I'd be seen as one of those girls.)

(WhatsApp Chat, Tanele: Dec. 12, 2015)

Even so, she told me that she thought the sex was exciting and fun and admitted to enjoying the newfound pleasures of new sexual experiences. Simphiwe would often also refer to this notion of being 'good', being a 'good mother' and that she was not 'naughty' because naughty was something that other women were. An example from one our WhatsApp chats.

Kristiana *Before you were pregnant when you used to post things to get guys' attention on FB and WhatsApp or whatever, would you consider those as 'naughty'?*

Simphiwe: *No way I respect myself.*

Kristiana: *Okay, okay… so what do you consider naughty then?*

Simphiwe: *Lik grls posting naked pictures and sex videos to fb to get sex. (Like girls posting naked pictures and sex videos to fb to get sex)*

Kristiana: *There are naked pictures and sex videos on fb?*

Simphiwe: *Are you serious….Just check my wall sometimes I get tagged in those pics and videos.*

Kristiana: *Oh? Who tags you?*

Simphiwe: *Some guys, friends, it's because we always talk about this (these) things… What else is there to talk about?*

Kristiana *LOL true. Now I am curious, if you talk about porn and naked photos with your guy friends, do you ever watch any of these videos?*

Simphiwe: *No I can't. I mean don't.*

Kristiana *LOL why tho? You already seem interested or else why would you be talking about it?*

Simphiwe: *Because i'm not interested in those kinds of things (see no evil monkey emojii five times)*[11] *I tell them that they should stop cause it's bad.*

Kristiana: *So naked photos and porn are naughty?*

Simphiwe: *Yah they naughty… for me though some may think it's not but to me it is*

Kristiana: *Okay, can I ask you something? Would your family think the photos you post to FB or WhatsApp, are naughty?*

Simphiwe: *Yes!*

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[11] The monkey emojii that hides its face is originally derived from the three wise monkeys, see no evil, hear no evil, say no evil. WhatsApp has an emojii that represents each. However the interlocutors used the see no evil emojii in context with things that they were ashamed of, embarrassed about, were shy about, or in saying something that was sort of revealing, like a secret or confession.

(WhatsApp Chat, Simphiwe: Jan. 12, 2016)

Despite that in 'reality' Simphiwe has been having side relationships with multiple partners even while pregnant and while in a relationship with the father of her child. She has at different times spoken about how she was trying to break up with her boyfriend and this was the reason for the side relationships. Even shrouding her pregnancy with one partner so that he wouldn't leave her. (I touch on this further in the performance of secrecy portion). On Sunday she goes to Church with her boyfriend to appear to the Church that although she had initially sinned by getting pregnant (and is still made an example of in front of the congregation), she/they are working towards getting married with her after they both finish high school. This was the only way she would be allowed back to the Church.

Simphiwe *My parents let me see him after cause they think we are getting icecream or lunch. But we go to his house or his friends flat and hv sex, we don't eat, he just wants to have sex… and then drops me home cause he wants to go get drunk with his friends.*

Kristiana *Your parents have no idea?*

Simphiwe *LOL No!*

Similar to the fractured performances of Tanele, Simphiwe also projects ~~this~~ chaste person that is working towards being a good mom and pursuing marriage, and is observing the tenets of the Bible by appearing to abstain through her testimonials to the congregation.

However morality isn't just performed in those spaces of Church and home, but is observed even when she is interacting with me on WhatsApp or with her friends on Facebook. For instance she told me that she speaks with her guy friends about nude pictures and porn videos. Yet when they post them to her FB page, she makes a point of telling them (on her Facebook wall) that it is wrong and that 'she isn't like that'. She also persistently tried to make the clear distinction that she is 'good', in conversations with me.

More recently I asked her if she ever gets harassed on Facebook by men. She told me that since she gave birth, random men get her mobile number and message her on WhatsApp looking for sex.

Simphiwe: *It maks me so maaaaaad. (angry face emojii) They say 'come lets have sex' and when I say no, am not like that, they say 'come on why r u acting like a virgin you have a child, I'll pay you' It is as if they take young people with kids as prostitutes. It makes me mad cuz Im not like that. (It makes me so mad. They say, 'come let's have sex' and when I say no they say, "come on you are not a virgin you have a child, I will pay you. It is if they think you people with kids are prostitutes. It makes me mad because I am not like that.)*

Kristiana *Oh I am sorry. Have you gone to the police or?*

Simphiwe *Yah I went once but they didn't take me for serious, said, 'why did you give your number to these guys?' But I didn't I don't know how they got my number. I don't even post pictures of myself on my WhatsApp pp anymore just pics of Sihle or like me but am wearing like Church clothes cause maybe*

they will see am not like that.

Kristiana *Has it helped?*

Simphiwe *No nothing helps.*

Here she draws on the photographic script of her baby or herself in Church clothing, which is coded as evidence of her role of a mother, devotion to her daughter (through repetition of differing posts of her daughter implying time spent together and attention), conservativeness, chaste and as well perhaps innocence, by association. And again, she made the distinction in through our conversation that 'she is not like that.'

It is interesting to note that her performance of morality was received adversely by the male counter part. When she said that she said, "no, I am not like that." He reacted by saying, 'don't pretend to be a Virgin, you have a kid." Inferring that he viewed her performance of morality as an act towards him and the response did not fit within his expectations of that exchange.

For both female interlocutors, performances of morality have a binary function. On one hand they play to dominant (gendered) expectations that they are chaste and working towards finding a partner for marriage. This performance maintains the status quo and access to continued support (and currency) in their families and church. These performances also coincide with expectations of morality among the young people themselves. For instance to maintain the respect and acceptance of her guy friends, Simphiwe participates in conversations about pornography. Yet when they post pornographic content to her Facebook page, and the gaze shifts to the larger peer group, she performs disapproval in line expectations of morality. Therefore, each performance seems to reflect what is normative for that respective audience and space.

Church Guy – Male Performances of Morality

Performances of morality were not merely evidenced by the female interlocutors. It was common among the males to glorify or draw heavily from their Church persona. In the opening vignette, Themba describes a kind of celebrity or fame that he enjoys in his Church. This was common throughout our conversations, often he would casually brag about varying achievements within the church: being asked to speak at a Youth Christian convention, invited to speak on the Swazi Christian radio station about young people and Christianity, that he was made a youth mentor in his Church and 'a lot of young people rely on him for guidance and support… too many than he can deal with'. Concomitantly, he would post WhatsApp profile pictures of him speaking at Church, or playing keyboard at Church, wearing his 'Sunday best', or a picture with the pastor or with a group of young people from his Church.

His status updates on WhatsApp are mostly inspirational and spiritual, "You have God Within you, Let him do his Glory." "You have Greatness within you" "If God is for it than no one can stop it", "Don't lose your Hope in God, have a way of making 'Not Enough' to 'More than Enough' "Never give to receive but give to SERVE" etc.

As a result of this, most of his 'friends' (followers) on Facebook or WhatsApp are young people from his Church that he mentors and he is aware that he needs to present a certain image of himself.

One day we were having a conversation about his girlfriend, who he keeps a secret.

Kristiana: *Why don't you post pictures of her to WhatsApp?*

Themba: *Lol noooooooooo, I have young people looking up to me, I don't want to be a bad example for them.*

Kristiana: *But it is a real example for them, wouldn't that be better? To see the real you?*

Themba: *Noooooo lol never*

(WhatsApp Chat, Themba, Oct. 14)

Another notable instance arrived when I was asking the interlocutor's generally about their position on masturbation, particularly in order to gauge the role that digital space had in self pleasure and self stimulation, especially in lieu of limited mobility and often sporadic clandestine sexual meet ups. His response was:

Themba: *I don't masturbate, it's wrong. I don't care about sex anymore. I am a born again Christian. I don't even think about sex. I am saving myself for God.*

Kristiana: *Oh? That's odd because you have asked me for a sexy photo, and I remember once asking why you were going to do with it.*

Themba: *Lol oh*

Kristiana: *And you said something like, you know what I will do with it. Remember that?*

Themba: *Lol (see no evil monkey emojii) Eish you got me there.*

Kristiana: *And the photos you said you downloaded of me from Facebook, 'just to have'? What did you do with those?*

Themba: *Eish okay, you made your point.*

(WhatsApp Chat, Themba: Nov.18, 2015)

Over time when Themba was more open about his affections for me, he shifted away from performances of morality and began telling me how horny I made him, how much he wanted to have sex with me or confessed to using a photo that he downloaded from my Facebook page (he had all of them on his phone) for masturbation.

Siyabonga also derived a lot of notoriety from his Church. He played in the Church band and he was often sent to Youth Leadership Summits in neighbouring countries as a representative of Swaziland. He wasn't shy about telling me how much he was liked and revered in his Church, that he was highly respected.

Similarly, yet to a lesser extent, he also used his WhatsApp profile page as a stage for his performance of morality. Like Themba he had pictures of himself playing drums at Church. How they differ is that most of Siyabonga's updates were about God, "See why I love God, he never changes," "When God is at work nothing stands in the way," "God does that which seems impossible to do" "(smiley face emojii) its Not over ,until the Lord says so # (smiley face emojii) Drummer boi (smiley face emojii) #all the way (thumbs up emojii), among many other examples.

Also similar to Themba, Siyabonga has a girlfriend as well as 'side chicks' because his girlfriend is 'churchy' and doesn't put out (and he has needs). His church and parents do not know about the girlfriend because as Siyabonga stated. "It wouldn't be right for them to know. I respect my parents and the people at my Church. It isn't right to insult them."

Maintaining this particular view of him is so important that he doesn't go out in public with his friends because he didn't want to tarnish their perception of him.

In summation, for both guys they have fame and prestige in connection to their status in their Church. Therefore they both go to great lengths in performing in accordance to the acceptable and the moral, and in return they retain status. This also extends to their performances on WhatsApp that shroud the behaviour or action that would negate or undermine that projection of morality.

Naughty/Not Naughty

In general most performance of morality appeared to exist at the level of the subjective and was a form of self-regulation. (Foucault, 1977) One over arching example was the 'naughty/not naughty' dichotomy, which was often applied to women or to the female interlocutors, subjectively. The only exception was Mbongiseni, who believed that anything sex-related was naughty (read: anything more than hugging and kissing). Further, that young people male and female, that date, send each other nude photos (sender and receiver), and enjoy it, are naughty. This is in spite of having three ex girlfriends, has been sent a nude photo by a classmate and enjoyed it, watched pornography on his friends phone at school, and "very much" enjoyed that, but none of this he considers "naughty". Some days later, he would label the very same action or feeling that he experienced, as "wrong", "barbaric," "naughty" but only when it was in regards to someone else.

Takhona defines naughty as something sexy, fun and rebellious, and wishes that she could seem more naughty in her interactions and the way she self-represents because being naughty attracts men and gives women the power. 'Wen a man thinks ur naughty and will do anythng wit him, he will do anything 2 get u. This is how u can control him

by make hm wnt u." (When a man thinks you are naughty and will do anything with him, he will do anything to get you. This is how you can control him, by making him want you.) (WhatsApp Chat, Takhona, January 13, 2016) Yet for the male interlocutors, naughty meant "girls that post naked pictures," "have lots of sex," "have no self respect." "trying to have more sex." Etc.

The naughty/not naughty dichotomy was not static and was in constant flux. It carried significant meaning and weight in encapsulating boundaries of moral distinctions and signified of a particular kind of person or group. This also seemed to shift depending on what and who was being spoken about; or if the interlocutor was speaking subjectively or about others, thus naughty/not naughty was a gauge for relative morality. (Foucault, 1977)

Performances of Secrecy

During the research period her WhatsApp profile pictures were mainly of her baby, or herself dressed up looking like she was going to Church or the prom – dressed in long flowing dresses, and day make up (no dark colours, subdued lip and eye-colour and light blusher). Many of the pictures were taken in the yard, with plants and flowers in the background. Or in the living room amongst family, or just a mosaic of her and her toddler smiling and making funny faces. It seemed that she was in a place in her life where she was happy, that motherhood really suited her.

Towards the end of the research period however, I started noticing that the tone of Simphiwe's WhatsApp status updates were shifting towards language that was sad and a cry for attention. One day she updated her WhatsApp status to, "I keep a lot of things to

maself becoz its difficult to find someone who will understand (two unhappy emoji faces)." I inquired about it.

Kristiana: *Your statuses these days seem sad. Are you okay Simphiwe? Do you want to talk?*

Simphiwe: *Am fine. I dnt hv anyone to talk to. Evryone in ma family thinks they knw what it is like and dey dnt evn care to listen. (I am fine. I don't have anyone to talk to. Everyone in my family thinks they know what it is like and they don't even care to listen)*

Kristiana: *Well, okqy well you can talk to me but I understand. You want someone close to you to talk. What about your boyfriend, can you not talk to him?*

Simphiwe: *No, I dn't talk to him. I only c him on Sundays cuz dat is whn he cums to tke me to church nd den we hv sex, then he takes me home to go drinking wit his friends. I wnt to break up w him bc he is cheating on me w sme two girls. I sw on his phone, he hs bin chatting w dem bt I actd like I ddnt see.*
(No, I don't talk to him. I only see him on Sundays because that is when he comes to take me to church and then we have sex, then he takes me home to go drinking with his friends. I want to break up with him because he is cheating on me with some two girls. I saw on his phone. He has been chatting with them but I acted like I didn't see.)

Kristiana: *Why didn't you say anything to him?*

Simphiwe *Cuz am just pretending to be wit him fr nw cuz I need hm to help pay fr the baby nd I wnt to seem like I am being a good mother for my her, and do*

right… bt am scard his going to gv me HIV

(Because I am just pretending to be with him for now because I need him to help pay for the baby and I want to seem like I am a good mother to her and do right… but I am scared he is going to give me HIV)

Kristiana: *Huh, I am so confused, why wouldn't you leave him? He is putting your life at danger.*

Simphiwe: *Cause I need him to help with Sebe and I want to be a good mother.*

Kristiana: *Right I get that, kind of… But you seemed happy, you said that he was great, and was such a good dad, you even changed your Facebook relationship statuses. Now he could be harming you?*

Simphiwe: *(monkey emojii hiding its face[12]) Yaaaaaa I ws lying. He is a drunk. I nvr wantd to be wit him. Even when I ws pregnant I ws trying to break up with him*

(Yah, I was lying. He is a drunk. I never wanted to be with him. Even when I was pregnant I was trying to break up with him)

Kristiana: *Why did you lie?*

Simphiwe: *Cause I wantd to be good mom.*

Kristiana: *Ok and when you say you were with other guys, like in what sense?*

Simphiwe: *Lik sex dating. You knw. (Like sex, dating, you know)*

Kristiana: *While you were pregnant?*

Simphiwe: *Yah. Before too but ya.*

[12] The monkey emojii that is hiding its face is one of three monkey emojiis that represent the three adages of see, hear and say no evil. However when used in WhatsApp conversation it infers embarrassment, shame or shyness, literally read as, 'hiding my face'.

Kristiana: *Did these guys know that you were pregnant? And that you had a boyfriend?*

Simphiwe: *Dey knw I hd a bf but dey also hd gfs, so it wsnt like a big deal we jst ddnt talk abt dem. Nd no, I ddn't say abt being pregnant. Bt wit one guy I rily likd, I dd say bc I thot we cld be togthr after the baby ws born nd den he wld break up w his gf.*

(The knew I had a boyfriend but they also had girlfriends, so it wasn't a big deal we just didn't talk about them. And no, I didn't say about being pregnant. But with one guy I really liked, I did say because I thought we could be together after the baby was born and then he would break up with his girlfriend.)

Kristiana: *And what happened?*

Simphiwe: *He sd I ws disgusting for lying ad making hm fuck a pregnant girl. Bt I nvr mde hm do anything.*

(He said I was disgusting for lying and making him fuck a pregnant girl. But I never made him do anything.)

Kristiana: *I am sorry*

Simphiwe: *Yah.*

Kristiana: *How did you tell him?*

Simphiwe: *Over chat cause he lives far. He blockd nd deletd me right after.*

(He blocked and deleted me right after)

Kristiana: *If you could have would you have told him in person.*

Simphiwe: *Ummm nt sure hy (Ummmm not sure hey)*

Kristiana: *Why didn't you tell him sooner, at the beginning?*

Simphiwe: *Well cuz I rily likd him nd ddn't want to mess it up.*

(Well because I really like him and didn't want to mess it up)

(WhatsApp Chat, Simphiwe: Jan. 16, 2016)

It is important to note the degree to which secrecy is key to Simphiwe's self-preservation. During the research period all of her pictures and status updates projected a happy and supportive mother. However in secret though she doesn't love her boyfriend and wishes to leave him. She remains with him and doesn't confront him in relation to his suspected side relationships because the display and her sex has currency for her child and her future.

In Tanele's current situation secrecy is also significant. In the recent past she has been involved in two different sexual relationships both of which were shrouded in varying levels of secrecy. Most of her friends and her sister knew about her ex boyfriend and she posted pictures and statuses that related to being in the relationship. Evenso, it was not made obvious: her Facebook status remained 'Single', she never had a WhatsApp profile picture that had him in it or with them together. One of our WhatsApp chats talked about hiding things and secrecy and I asked her who had access to viewing her WhatsApp and Facebook profiles and why it was so important to keep her past and current relationships secret.

Tanele: *Eish KB… u know am nt sure hey am only fb friends wit people i knw nd ma sister nd brothers. i think. Nd am pretty sure i only hv my sister on WhatsApp. Ma parents don't have smartphones so they nver go online. LOL I wnt to gt her a new 1 but am broke… oh no that wld be bad actually… I hv heard of parents getting fb profiles…! Imagine!?!??*

(Eish KB, you know I am not sure hey I am only fb friends with people I know and my sister and brothers. I think. And I am pretty sure I only have my sister on WhatsApp. My parents don't have smartphones so they never go online. I want to get her a new one but I am broke. Oh no that would be bad actually. I have heard of parents getting Facebook profiles… Imagine?)

Tanele: *(shocked faced emojii) Hw do u keep things hidden? (How do you keep things hidden?*

Kristiana: *Oh well… not really. I just don't care anymore.*

Tanele: *WOW am shockd, I couldn't hey.. Like I wld stop using fb if my parents were there. (Wow, I am shocked. I couldn't hey. Like I would stop using FB if my parents were there)*

Kristiana *LOL well. So why is it so important to keep certain things secret?*

Tanele: *Well sumthings you just kip to urself. No one needs to knw your issues. Nd you never knw who is luking at ur page. Mybe not so much WhatsApp but FB who knws who my friends are friends with. Wht if they knw someone from my Church. (Well somethings you just keep to yourself. No one needs to know your issues. And you never know who is looking at your page. Maybe not so much WhatsApp but FB who knows who my friends are friends with, what if they know someone from my Church.)*

Kristiana *Yah I understand.*

Tanele: *Plus you knw ma parents are really Christian nd I go to Church with them every Sunday, and thy want me to gt married… nd am tryin to b a good Christian too but am also jst a regular person nd 23 nd sex is fun … bt ppl*

don't wnt to hear dat hey… Anywy, i guess i mean to sy u either keep it a secret or it doesn't happen. So to try ur best to keep it a secret…

(Plus you know my parents are really Christian and I go to Church with them every Sunday, and they want me to get married and I am trying to be a good Christian too but I am also just a regular person and 23 and sex is fun but people don't want to hear that hey. Anyway I guess I mean to say you either keep it a secret of it doesn't happen... So you try your best to keep it a secret)

(WhatsApp Chat, Tanele: Dec. 22, 2015)

Moreover in her current relationship, Tanele uses the pretense of 'searching for a job', to obscure her activity and the existence of the current relationship.

Performances of secrecy also plays not just a role in creating a certain amount of room in her life to have a no strings relationship, performances of secrecy are the very basis for its existence. In other words, by virtue that it is a clandestine relationship, the entire exchange is a performance of secrecy. A different performance of secrecy was observed through interactions with Siyabonga and Themba: avoidance and deflection.

From the first day that I stepped foot in Swaziland, Siyabonga had alluded to wanting to have sex with me. As soon as I got settled at my guesthouse and began talking to interlocutors again to set up meetings, Siyabonga's only request was that I invite him to come to my guesthouse to see me, 'in private'. I had said no, which was followed by begging and pleading and then promises that I wouldn't regret inviting him over because "[he] could do things to [me] that no man has ever done, that would make [me] unable

to ever forget [him] when [I] returned to South Africa and to [my] boyfriend." (WhatsApp Chat, Siyabonga: Nov 1, 2015) Despite explicitly saying no, I was still interested in the scripts he might draw on to express his attraction and desire; I asked him what he meant by, "do things to you that no man has ever done" and his response was, "You will only find out if you invite me over."

I told him that it was an impossibility but said that I was still very interested in hearing what he had intended to do. Again, he deflected

Siyabonga: Mmmm now aren't you curious, you'll just have to invite me over and experience all the things I am doing to you in my mind right now.

Another topic that Siyabonga would consistently avoid or deflect were any inquiries into his relationship. After my initial questions about her, further questions were met with deflection or straight out avoidance of the question.

Kristiana So how are things with you and your girlfriend?

Siyabonga: Why?

Kristiana Just want to know how she is?

Siyabonga: Why are you asking about my girlfriend?

Kristiana: Because I am interested in your relationships and how you communicate with her.

Siyabonga: I don't ask you about your boyfriend so we can leave my girlfriend out of this.

Kristiana: You could though, ask me, I don't mind.

Siyabonga: All you need to know is that we are good. End of conversation/

(WhatsApp Chat, Siyabonga: Oct. 2, 2015)

Or:

Kristiana; *Did you bring your girlfriend to the prom?*

Siyabonga *Wat did I say abt talking about my girlfriend?*

Kristiana: *Sorry, I just thought you might have her has your date.*

Siyabonga *What happens between my girlfriend and I stays between us, it isn't your concern.*

Themba was even more elusive about his girlfriend. Even after speaking with him for over four months, all I was able to discern was that she was part Swazi/part American and that he liked her very much. I never saw an image of her, I never learned her name, and I wasn't entirely sure she actually existed.

By contrast to Siyabonga though, Themba never reacted to questions about his girlfriend, and instead would blatantly avoid the question or not respond. On multiple occasions I would question him on the propensity to avoid questions about his girlfriend and his response was either further avoidance or, "Uhhhh can we not talk about this?" Eventually I stopped asking both of them.

However the most significant performance of secrecy was observed in relation to Mbongiseni who spent the entire research period lying to me that he was eighteen years old. At the end of the fieldwork, while in South Africa, I had been reviewing the print outs of our conversations and noticed that he mentioned that he was looking forward to being able to graduate in a couple years. This doesn't necessarily discount that he was eighteen as it is not uncommon for individuals to re-do grades again or return after dropping out. Yet, I asked him about what he meant and he admitted that he lied, that

when I had asked him his age he was actually fifteen and at this point he was sixteen. I asked him why he lied.

Mbongiseni: *Eish cuz I wantd u t think I ws old enuf cuz mayb you won't tek me serious cz am a child. Do u hate me?*

Secrecy in all these cases has important implications for the protection and maintenance of perception, as well as in negotiating or asserting control in the situation. The process of withholding is "a relational practice, embedded in a social milieu with particular repertoires of truth telling and histories of power" (Hardon & Posel, 2012: 7). In other words, just as performances of morality are in direct relation to prevailing normative definitions, so too are performances of secrecy. Both responding to dominant normative performances, as in relation to others, which maintain status and assert status over others through the decisive withholding and revealing of information.

Performances of Masculinity

We started at Finesse, a bar that is popular among young people in Mbabane. The music was too loud and wanted to talk to them but we had to wait while Mandla's cousin Phinda finished socializing with a group of girls at a few tables over from us. We eventually left, on foot, to another bar. I had never been there before, it was dark and grungy. The only other people that were there were middle-aged men sitting alone nursing a drink and staring off into space.

"Does this place ever get busy?"

"The women come here eventually." Phinda said with a smile.

"Oh did you invite those girls at Finesse to join us here?"

As if they were like twins they both shrugged and said, "nah" in unison.,

"Oh okay, are they friends of yours or do you like one of them?" I was fishing because I already sort of knew the answer.

Mandla piped up and said, "He is keeping his options open."

When we had been sitting at Finesse waiting for his cousin to finish up, Mandla had told me in between heavy beats of bass that Phinda was interested in one of the women at the table.

"Oh?" I said barely able to hear myself. "Which one?"

"That one." He pointed to the one sitting at the far corner that was on her phone looking disinterested.

"She doesn't seem to be interested in him." I yelled.

"She IS tho! He is talking to her friends on purpose. See? She is jealous and secretly she wants him so bad. Women are stupid they always want what they can't have and then they will spread their legs for anyone if it mean they get what they want. Even if she doesn't even really like the guy."

I took a sip of my wine at the grungy bar. I asked Phinda what was he keeping his options open for.

"You know to fuck one of them." Mandla added.

"One of them? Weren't you interested in one girl." I asked Phinda.

"Yah she's cute and I am sure she knows how to use that mouth of hers… but you never know, she might not give it up… And I have needs so yah, keeping my options open." He replied matter of fact.

"Needs?" I asked.

Mandla took a long drag from his cigarette and explained that Phinda's girlfriend lives in Jozi and they don't see each often, and therefore, he is forced to satisfy his needs.

"So, you are cheating on your girlfriend? Like often or just once in awhile"

Mandla smiled.

"Well we share an apartment right, and lets just say, I spend a lot of time chilling outside." He smiled again and flicked his cigarette ash into the tray.

"So like pretty often then?… So your girlfriend knows or?"

"Nah, but it wouldn't matter she couldn't say anything about it." Phinda shrugged indifferently.

"Ok so, if she had sex with someone in Jozi, you would be fine with it."

Mandla made a scoffing sound, "What are you saying woman? (Scoffed again.) Yho! That shit is cheating!"

"Yah I'd dump that bitch yesterday."

"It doesn't sound like you much like her." I added.

"Nah she is fine." Phinda shrugged indifferently and took another drag of his cigarette.

Mandla shifted in his seat and placed his elbows on the table.

"She's stupid though.' He asserted

Phinda looked at Mandla and feigned seriousness.

"My girlfriend is still better your ex. That bitch was crazy." Mandla laughed and agreed. Then they both had a moment of chuckles. At that moment, Phinda's phone buzzed on the table. He picked it up and he smiled, then showed Mandla, then Mandla smiled and nodded.

"Who is that?" I asked.

Mandla smiled and said, "Some girl that is into Phinda, she keeps messaging him wanting him to go over and fuck her, keeps messaging and begging for it, but she is gross." Phinda laughed and took another drag of his cigarette.

"Ah." There was a pause.

" Can I ask you something controversial?" The both shrugged in unison.

"Have you actually ever liked liked a girl? Like actually liked her?"

Phinda put his cigarette out and was the first to repond.

"I loved my first girlfriend, thought she was the one, we made a promise that we would wait to have sex till we were married but then the fucking bitch cheated on me with my friend and got pregnant. Now she is fat and alone, my friend dumped her months after he found out she was pregnant. Serves her right. Now she can't even get someone to fuck her if she paid for it. Her vaginas all used up. "

Mandla laughed in agreeance, and I looked to Mandla for his response.

"Uhh nah, you can't love Swazi women cause even the ones that say they are virgins have probably already had sex with all your friends."

The both laughed.

"Ah" I responded, taking a sip of my wine.

"Yah but you won't get it, cause you always defending women and you hate men, you think men are the problem and can't see that women are the problem."

I laughed out loud.

"Sorry, how do I hate men?"

"Cause you are always you never see it from the guys perspective and you just don't

want to see how girls are the problem. Like you must see that they are."

"They are." Phinda said smugly.

I have had discussions with Mandla on WhatsApp before about this and still I was unclear just how exactly women are the problem, or rather, what that problem was exactly. For what has felt like the thousandth time, I asked him again.

"Well", he struggled to find the answer. "Like stupid things to fit in, without thinking, and then they get pregnant, and ruin their lives. And cry about it like they didn't make it happen. If they didn't want sex why did she open her legs? She should have used a condom or just stayed at home. It's like that story of that guy that Zulu guy you dated, that you told me about, that one that hooked up with the waitress that was serving you when guys were on your date? "

"Uhhh how exactly?"

"That waitress was loose." Phinda chuckled with amusement.

"Ummm noooo, I think she was just flattered because he was flirting with her in front of me, and she probably thought that the guy and I were just friends because why would a guy flirt with another girl when he is on a date?"

"See!?!?" Mandla said exasperated. "You don't get it! She was the problem! She shouldn't have even showed interest, how else was this guy supposed to respond? She clearly wanted it. "

"But he flirted first…. He was acting like he was single. She was merely reacting to his interest. "

"Yah, you will never get this, you just like to be difficult."

This wasn't the first time Mandla spoke this way about women. His general view was that Swazi women (specifically) were stupid or disgusting, and "the problem". I once had a conversation with Mandla in which he stated as fact that women are at fault for the spread of HIV in Swaziland because if they weren't stupid they would wear a condom. ~~An argument between him and I ensued in which I argued that it is the role of both sexual partners to ensure that they are protected during sex, and therefore equal responsibility of both genders. To which he replied, "if they were not thirsty for sex, then why didn't they just stay home? You don't get it, women are the problem."~~

He told me during one WhatsApp conversation that "most Swazi girls", are prostitutes that are "so desperate for sex they can't keep their legs closed". (WhatsApp Chat, Mandla, Sept. 22, 2015) "They should keep their legs closed" was a common expression usually used in connection with women being the problem. On another occasion he said matter of fact that "all swazi girls have bad history" and if you have sex with them, it is like you have had sex with the entire male population of the country. "Girls are so stupid that they find it hard to get the hint and move on even if their bfs are beating them." (WhatsApp Chat, Mandla: Dec. 12, 2015)

I was never able to discern the origins of Mandla's deep dislike for Swazi women but he was not alone in this view. Themba, for instance, in reference to an ex girlfriend once stated:

Themba: *Let's just say she was bad company. Recently she has been posting to FB with the hashtag #teamskrew…. only girls who love sex and alcohol use that word…. No wonder she is pregnant…. Yesterday she uploaded a pic of her*

tummy as if she was saying, "I am proud I am a big slut and had unprotected sex" … kind of a desperate.

(WhatsApp Chat, Oct. 31, 2015)

At one point he even called his sister stupid for getting pregnant, that if she were smart she wouldn't have let "some guy into her pants". In a later conversation with him I had specifically asked him how he viewed girls/women that posted suggestive or nude photos of themselves to Facebook and WhatsApp.

Themba *Those girls think life revolves around Facebook, they aren't got dreams and ambitions. They are busy chasing boys with swag who can pay their bills and they forget their worth. They have no pride. Wasting their life and beauty. Actually these girls are stupid.*

Kristiana *Really? But what if she chooses to do that because she knows it works, wouldn't that make her clever?*

Themba *No cause she is actually saying "boys I need a penis, check what I have." She is desperate. Gives her cake*[13] *to anyone.*

Kristiana *What if she just likes to post photos of herself?*

Themba *Lol I don't like those kind of women*

Kristiana *You don't have to date them, so why do you care?*

Themba *Coz they shouldn't be posting such pics, its wrong*

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[13] Cake is a derogatory slang for a woman's vagina. Men often make jokes among themselves about having a piece of a woman's cake which infers having sex with her generally or oral sex specifically, "I'd like to get in all deep in that cake" followed sometimes with the audible smaking of lips.
, or 'that woman has the tastiest cake' or other remarks about serving up cake frequently etc.

Kristiana *Why is it wrong?*

Themba *Coz it makes her a slut … dirty.*

Senzo and Siyabonga also shared in these perspectives at times but to a lesser extent. Siyabonga generally just viewed women as stupid, and easily manipulated because they are not smart.

Senzo generally kept to himself and often articulated his affections for his girlfriend, and therefore tended to have a kinder view of women. However there were moments, for instance there were a couple times when we were discussing women's rights and ability to say no without repercussions, he tended to become more opinionated about women. "Yah well Swazi women, eish, bad news. If you want to get disease u know where to go." (WhatsApp Chat, Senzo, Oct.14, 2015)

Further, Senzo tended to post WhatsApp pictures of him pretending to smoke and drink (even though he doesn't), or jokes about 'bitches' and 'side chicks' (even though he doesn't have either). Once he uploaded a new WhatsApp profile picture that was a screen shot of a tweet[14] from a male comedian in the US which read: "These bitches be wanting Prince Charming in the flesh meanwhile there pussy be deeper than poetry" He updated his status to correspond: "Ha ha ha ha #truth". I wrote to him after reading the updated profile and asked, " Is this guy saying that girls want the good guys even when they are promiscuous." To which he responded, 'lol yah, sluts."

Concomitantly, this post resulted in a two hour debate between Senzo and myself (that I cover in full in the next chapter) which began with him stating as fact that most Swazi women are no better than prostitutes, and if they are going to act like prostitutes

[14] An entry posted on the microblogging service Twitter

than they had better ensure that they fulfill their part of the transaction. In other words, if goes to the bar and gets a guy to buy her drinks throughout the night, than the "slut better pay up at the end of the night." (WhatsApp Chat, Senzo: Dec. 11, 2015)

Hyper-sexuality

Despite having a girlfriend that he claimed to respect and love, Siyabonga commonly boasted about the large pool of women that made themselves available to him "all of them leave him satisfied". (WhatsApp Chat, Siyabonga: Oct. 10, 2015)

When I first learnt of his girlfriend I was surprised. The way he spoke about women made it seem like he had multiple casual sex partners and that was his 'thing'. Not a day would go by where he hadn't dropped the name of a girl that had just successfully snuck out of his parent's house without being seen. Followed by a description of how he had spent all night making her moan.

I asked him if his girlfriend knew about the other sex partners and he told me that she did, and she was fine with it and that they have an understanding. Citing it as more proof of his ability to get women to do what he wants – once gloating that he has a way of talking to women to make them understand things better.

Kristiana *How is that not cheating?*

Siyabonga *It isn't cheating it is just sex. Like if you would let me pleasure you, it wouldn't be cheating because neither of our partners would know. (WhatsApp Chat, Siyabonga: Nov. 15)*

However he didn't extend the same definition of cheating to her, or his previous girlfriend that was I asked him why he had to have sex with other women to satisfy his "unsatisfied" sexual need, why for instance he couldn't masturbate.

"Ha ha ha ha NOOOOOOOO ha ha ha ha ma boys shuld b drownin in vagina… grabbn ma own nuts nd beating ma own dick, hawu! dats fr gays." Following a brief back and forth about why he believes masturbation is homosexual, he even linked both to the spread of HIV in Swaziland and the reason the world was 'falling apart'. (WhatsApp Chat, Siyabonga, Nov. 18, 2015)

Throughout the three months or so of chatting with him for research our conversations followed the same pattern. First were questions proposing sex: "where are you, let me come over so I can pleasure your sexy body," "Id lv to make u boil for me, things that wil make u mic me evn if u in SA" (WhatsApp Chat, Siyabonga, Nov 2, 2015). Then after I said no, his tone changed to begging or coercion, "come on it is just sex, what is the big deal?" "cum say yes to the sex, I dnt byt". Following by vilification: "why are you so difficult, what's wrong with you? Any woman would be dying for me, for this cock. I guess you don't know what good sex is, your loss" or "I haven't even touched u yet and u already over reacting and complaining" followed by silence for several days, then "hey hope you are really well. Miss talking to you beautiful. Can't wait to see your pretty face."

Once I asked him why he needed to have a photo of me so badly, "so I can see what your sexy self looks like when you are not pretending to be serious." He replied. "Okay, but why? I don't understand. We are not in sexual relationship nor will be ever be, why can't you just accept that I will not be giving you a nude photo?"

"Come on, it isn't a big deal, I just want to see your naked body and to keep it on my phone so I can look at it whenever I like."

As I have mentioned prior, Siyabonga's girlfriend was spoken about only briefly in our conversations and any further questions about her were deflected or were responded to defensively. However it was notably important to Siyabonga that he appeared to have a lot of women and to have a lot of sex. In between the moments that he was begging me or calling me names in relation to providing him with nude photos, he was boastful about his female conquests and the things they apparently complimented on.

Themba commonly bragged also about his sexual prowess. After our interactions were no longer dominated by performance of morality, and the Born Again script he commonly drew from to deny any manner of sexual desire or sex. He was candid about his side sexual partners, and that he was very experienced. Often reminding me, like Siyabonga, that he was no longer a boy, and that he was a man, and could satisfy women. Without prompting him at one time, he described to me that his favourite thing to do to a woman was oral sex and how he had skills to make her lose her mind.

While both Themba and Siyabonga tended to direct their performances of masculinity towards me, through our interaction, Senzo provided an interesting contrast. As the only male in the group to be in a relationship with one partner, that he often gushed about being in love with; and the only other interlocutor that was still a Virgin, his performances of hyper sexuality were quite different and predominantly performed on the 'stages' of his WhatsApp and Facebook profiles.

On November 2, he posted a meme to his Facebook page that was a picture of a flight of stairs that ends at the ceiling, with words that read, "When your sidechick asks you, 'Where's this going?' His comment on the post was, "Bish[15] please!"

I asked him about the post, particularly making note of the mocking tone towards side chicks when he didn't have side chicks, and what was the purpose of the post. His response was that he used to have many side chicks, that back in the day he was a huge player and used to get all the women in his school. Whether this is factual or not is secondary in importance to his current desire to make a joke about side chicks, which both reinforces his player status as well as denigrates women through the jokes dismissiveness.

Another post of note on Facebook had six panes. In each window was a close up picture of a different woman, each one giving oral sex with the frame cutting out the penis and just showing the facial formations with words the read, " DUCKFACE[16] started from something." With his comment on the post being "HA HA LORD".

Lastly, the very first WhatsApp profile picture that I captured of Senzo's was a picture of the popstar, Rihanna, standing sticking out her chest in a thin white t-shirt without a bra with her nipples clearly visible through the shirt. He had five more WhatsApp photos of different female celebrities in revealing outfits.

However the most notable performance of hyper sex enacted by Senzo and Mandla was by contrast to their views on masturbation and homosexuality. As mentioned previously, I had

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[15] Bish is a slang word that is a softer or friendlier version of 'bitch'

[16] Duckface a term to describe the face that is made if one pushes their lips together in a combination of a pout and a pucker, giving the impression you have larger cheekbones and bigger lips. Is often linked to taking selfies.

The initial reaction was mixed and mostly shock, “lol Kris, u are so funny” “ha ha oh my, lol no.” “huh? Wena! R u src?” (Lol Kris, you are so funny. Ha ha oh my, lol) (Huh? You! Are you serious?) (WhatsApp Chat, Senzo: Nov. 18, 2015; WhatsApp Chat, Mandla: Nov 17, 2015)

When I began pushing more and asking more poignant questions, responses became irritated and abrasive. I “No fucking way.” (WhatsApp Chat, Senzo, Nov 20, 2015) “That’s for fools that are scared of women…. Masturbation is settling for less. The penis belongs in the vagina. What’s wrong with the guy? Just find another vagina, its not hard. There something wrong with guys that use their hand. Like his he a dude?”

Mandla who had broken up with his girlfriend six months prior told me that he wasn’t having sex since the break up (WhatsApp Chat, Mandla, Sept 29, 2015). When I asked him the same general question about masturbation it had been his then situation of abstinence that motivated the general survey, as I was interested in knowing how he dealt with the physiological challenges of abstaining and what role, if any digital space function in that solution. His initial response was avoidance measures and deflection, for instance he told me that he wasn’t comfortable talking about the subject on WhatsApp because he didn’t want there to be any misunderstandings. After more attempts to get him to open up about it, I purposively struck a chord to see if he would react. Immediately and angrily he lashed back,

> *“No fucking way. Masturbation is pathetic… You know what? Fine! You think I masturbate because I don’t have sex? Well you just never shut up do you? You want to know the truth? I fuck a lot of chicks, all the time every couple of nights there’s a new one. You know those*

> *girls we saw the other night, I fucked two of them and they still want me, all of them… I don't need my hand because that is what mouths are for. So why don't you calm the "f" down and just stay out places you know isht about."* (WhatsApp Chat, Mandla Nov. 18, 2015)

Whether he was lying or not, again, is inconsequential. What is significant is that he would rather have had me believe that he is hyper sexed than for me to think that he masturbates.

In this chapter I drew on a few examples of the performances of morality, secrecy and masculinity that I observed, and how often the performances had a dual function of both placating or working within dominant normative performances to maintain a certain image or status within that space, and to play to indicators of membership and status with the young people's community.

Chapter Four

Do you see me? Mediated Bodies and the Currencies of Visibility

I chose a bar that I rarely went to when I had lived in Swaziland but remembered had an excellent Mozambican half chicken but most importantly would be quiet. I arrived before Honest and selected a table close to the balcony door to get the fresh air but also harboured from the wind outside. The table was in the far corner of the room and allowed me a significant purview of the inside area as well as the balcony.

It was around noon. Other than myself there were nine people plus the bartender. Eight women and one man, grouped in four groups but the place felt empty. Inside there was one woman sitting at the bar drinking a beer speaking intently with the bartender. He leaned against the bar polishing glasses and periodically adding to the conversation.

Three tables away were two women in their thirties. They were in business attire and it looked like they were on lunch break or meeting. One spoke loudly using her arms as accentuation, a cigarette in one hand soared through the air, forming an intelligible calligraphy. The other woman listened to her intently while dragging heavily on a cigarette, nodding periodically between drags and tapping the ash into the ashtray.

Outside on the balcony sat the other two groups. Closer to one end toward the street where it was harder to see them, were three young girls around the ages of sixteen and seventeen. They were dressed in short skirts and low cut tops. Their hair was up and they were wearing full make up. Two talked excitedly amongst themselves and one slouched cooly in her chair typing something on her phone with one hand while she pinched a cigarette and beer in her other hand. She periodically looked over at me

without an expression and back to her phone. One of the three would take turns getting more beer for the group.

The other group sat just on the other side of the wall from where I sat. I had glanced at them as I sat down. They were two young women in their late twenties and an older guy in his thirties. They were all sitting next to eachother but not talking, each one on their phone.

The coolly slouched sixteen year old (I'll call her "CS") stood up, crossed the room, left out the front door. Moments later, Honest arrived. We greeted with a hug and I offered to get him a drink. He got up and ordered from the bar and returned. We updated each other about the events of the past week since we last met. CS returned and walked past our table, smiled and said something SiSwati to Honest. He laughed and said something back.

"What did she say?" I asked.

"She said that I am trying to look important sitting with a white lady. I told her I don't need to sit with a white lady to be important."

"Cocky." I laughed.

"She wants me to buy her a drink."

"How do you know?"

"Cause that is why she is here, these ladies sit and have guys buy them drinks and then they choose one to go home with. That one was just outside kissing a guy."

"Oh? Is she not supposed to? Who was the guy?"

"Probably one of her boyfriends." With an expression on his face that he imparted great wisdom.

"One? You think there are more?"

"Yah… lots. You will find that KB, these girls that finish form 5, but their parents don't have money to send them to tertiary and there are no jobs, so they wake up and come here everyday, like it's a job."

"Oh, how common is that?"

"Very, trust me."

We ordered food and a group of guys came in the front door. I recognized one of them, Musa, a friend of my ex boyfriend's. He noticed me and came over to the table to give me a hug, while his two other friends went outside on the balcony to join the group of sixteen/seventeen year olds. CS was watching him as he spoke to me.

"Kristy, long time. Where've you been?"

I told him that I was in South Africa for school. He nodded but kept looking outside to CS on the balcony. He didn't seem very interested in the update so I shortened it.

"Cool cool well I am still here hey? Swaziland hasn't killed me yet. Good to see you hey." As he went outside CS smiled and opened her arms to him. He hugged her and picked her up, and she kissed him while straddling her legs around his torso. The other two guys were now settled in, with one of the girls on one guy's lap, and other one standing smoking a cigarette, with the remaining girl standing in front of him, gently dancing and rubbing her butt against his crotch, both were smiling.

I leaned in slightly to Honest.

"Musa is that girl's boyfriend?"

"No probably not."

'Oh."

Musa unraveled himself from the girl and came inside and nodded towards me as he walked by towards the bar. Our food arrived and I tried to focus on eating and the conversation with Honest. After bringing two rounds of beers for the girls, the three guys left the bar.

I noticed that Honest needed another beverage and I also needed to go the bathroom, so I got up and left the table to get use more drinks. When I returned, Honest was smiling to himself, looking very pleased, and busily entering something into his phone from the piece of paper. Then his phone buzzed and he chuckled.

I laughed at his preoccupation. "Honest, I got you a beer. What are you looking at?"

"Nothing" he smiled coyly, putting his phone down.

"What… why are you smiling like that?"

"Look." He passed the piece of paper to me.

"She gave this to me when you were in the bathroom, and said when I realize that I won't be satisfied with you, I should give her I call."

I laughed . "What!???"

He laughs. "Yah. Like if am not satisfied with sex with you"

I laughed, "No I get that but I am confused, isn't she with Musa?"

"Naaaaaah She will go with anyone, she was winking at me the whole time she was sitting on Musa's lap."

I looked at the piece of paper, which just had her name and phone number on it. Honest was on his phone.

"Look I found her on Fb." He showed me her Facebook page opened on her phone. In her picture she pouted with black lipstick and eyes staring down into the lens of the camera. Seventeen years old. Over two thousands friends. Forty two friends in common with Honest.

"Hmmm she's pretty."

"Pretty? Nah KB this girl is not pretty. She has ugly insides."

I laughed. "But you saved her number on your phone didn't you?"

He laugh. "Yah, so?" His phone buzzed again and he picked it up. Then his eyes widened with shock.

"WHAAAAAT? What's happening?"

"She doesn't waste time that one." And passed the phone to me. On the phone was a naked picture of CS standing in front of a mirror, her body weight shifted to one leg and her teeth biting the tip of her index finger as she stared expressionless into the mirror, the phone in her other hand, capturing the reflecting in the picture.

Honest swiveled in his seat to face her and said,

"Thanks, it's nice." She half smiled and turned her attentions back to her friends.

"What are you going to do with that picture?"

"Keeeeep it… for later." His eyes flared mischievously.

I laughed. "Oh, I see. Are you going to keep talking to her?"

"Nooooo I would never."

"Why?"

"No, this lady?" He laughed. "No KB not this lady. You only go for this lady if you want problems… or worse. "

Even though this was the first time I had noticed it, the scene described above is not uncommon in Swaziland. It illustrates how intrinsic these exchanges are to the social relations of young people. In less than two hours, I witnessed a whole exchange continuum, from the girl with multiple transactional arrangements, to the exchange of a nude photo and accumulation of that photo and a phone number, the boost it gave to Honest's ego, and finally the reinforcement of her ego through his enjoyment. Then, I observed how that exchange played out in digital space: the popularity on Facebook (amount of friends), the recognition of associations (mutual friends), then the display of the sent nude photo with me and back again to where we were, at the bar, where Honest assessed her value or not, and what that value was. It was clear that it wasn't merely about the exchange of those currencies but that this exchange played a role in the negotiation of hierarchies and value, in that entire interaction. As well as it played a role in the larger dynamic of being young in Swaziland.

In this Chapter, I unpack the second and final form of resistance that Bourgois (2002) outlined in his chapter: informal economy. To reiterate once more, he argued that drug dealing was a quick way to become wealthy and gain economic mobility vis a vis the barriers they affronted in access to the job market and the formal economy.

In the case that emerged from the data in Swaziland, this economy was less to do about money[17] as it was about status, or more appropriately termed, 'visibility'. That being seen had was very important and held currency. Also that appearing to 'be seen' by many others or notable others (that have this currency), also had currency (Lin, 2001) which in turn contributed to internalized notions of status and sexual status.

[17] There is however a prevalence of transactional sex, and while two of the female interlocutors were engages in transactional exchanges, it was difficult to mine out

To be seen

A week before Themba deleted me from WhatsApp, he started randomly sending me suggestive and nude pictures of himself unprovoked and unannounced.

I was cooking dinner at home in Johannesburg and my boyfriend was seated across from me working on his computer when my phone buzzed. I wiped my hands with a towel and checked to see who had messaged.

I opened up Themba's chat window to see that he had sent me a picture of himself reclined in a chair holding his penis through his sweatpants with the a photo caption that read, "I know you want this."

I didn't respond.

A couple hours later I received another message from Themba, in which he wrote, "Sweety, did you see my pic?" Again, I read it and didn't respond.

About to get into bed, my phone buzzed again. I settled in under the covers and looked at my phone to see who had messaged. Themba had sent another photo. This time he was completely naked with the picture taken from his sightline looking down. The light was low and the image was bad quality but it was clearly a photo of a half erect penis, with a caption that read. "Won't you come over and finish the job."

I selected his name from the list of contacts and my fingers hovered the 'delete contact' button. ~~I was tired. Tired of the harassment.~~ Yet I decided that would ignore it and maybe he would stop. I put my phone down and tried to go to sleep. My phone buzzed three or for more times during the night but I decided to wait and check till the morning.

I awoke, got out of bed. Picked up my phone to go downstairs to make coffee. Standing and waiting for the machine to warm up, I checked my phone. There were six messages from Themba.

Themba: Did you get my last photo? Did you like it?

Themba: Are you there sexy?

Themba: Wake up sleep head. Talk to me!

Themba: Why are you ignoring me?

Themba: Fine! Ignore me!!!

Then nothing. The last message came in at three am. I put down my phone and continued with the preparations for the day.

It was about four pm and I was doing some reading, when my phone buzzed again. It was another message from Themba, again another photo. This time he was lying on his bed naked; again it was from the angle of his sight line. In the photo I could see the length of his bad and his spread out atop and framed in the middle, a flaccid penis, with the caption that read. "Aren't you sad I gave him away to someone else last night?"

Kristiana Themba! Stop this! This is completely disrespectful and rude! And sexual harassment. If you do not stop I will delete you.

Themba: No no sweetie. Don't delete me. I am sorry I will stop, I promise.

Kristiana: Ok cause that did cross a line.

Themba I know, I am sorry. But can I ask you something?

Kristiana: Ok…..

Themba: Why can't you just want me? Am I not enough for you? I am not old enough

for you? Mature enough? I send you pictures and you say nothing! (sad face emojii)

Kristiana: *Themba…*

Themba: *Why won't you answer me?*

Kristiana: *Because it isn't all right. You never asked to send them.*

Themba: *I shouldn't have to ask. You should just want them.*

WhatsApp Chat, Themba: December 22, 2015

In this interaction it was apparent that Themba had placed a lot of expectation and weight on my acknowledgement of his image. In so far that the acknowledgement meant that he was "seen" by me, and that was an indicator to him that I desired him. A similar occurrence happened with Siyabonga but not as aggressively.

In December, Siyabonga had told me about his prom and how popular he was at it. Every couple of hours he uploaded a new WhatsApp profile picture of himself, standing with a different female. I made a comment about it and he thanked me for noticing. A few days passed and I received a notification on Facebook that Siyabonga had tagged[18] me in some uploaded photos. I scrolled through them and they included several different pictures of him at different locations around the hotel where the prom was being held. He messaged me a day later to ask if I had seen the photos, if I liked them and whether I thought he was handsome. Yet more to the point, why it was that I never made a comment on his wall or "liked."

Therefore Siyabonga didn't just want me to acknowledge that I had seen his

[18] To tag a photo is to create a link between a photo and another user, so that the photo is visible on the other users wall. My Facebook friends therefore can also see the photo now visible on my wall. Although this is beyond the purview of this paper, tagging on Facebook is a very common way that young people ensure that many people see their photo.

photo, he also wanted me to show publicly (on his Facebook wall) that I had seen it, and showing others that he is 'being seen'. Ringrose et al. (2013) asserts that the utility of this is twofold, an acknowledgement for Siyabonga makes him feel desired, but public acknowledgement shows others that Siyabonga is desired, which increases his desirability, and his social currency. (Ringrose et al., 2013; Lin, 2001)

A different example surfaced within the scope of 'being seen' and how it was linked to making the body or the corpus, real or legitimate. Below Tanele describes the first time she sent a nude photo to her ex boyfriend.

Tanele *I tuk a bunch, like mostly in my bra and panties. Like posing. Lying on ma bed. Sme jst my cleav. There were some where I ws totally naked bt I didn't shw my face cuz I wldn't wnt anyone to knw it was me. (I took a bunch, like mostly in my bra and panties. Like posing. Lying on my bed. Some just my cleavage. There were some where I was totally naked but I didn't show my face because I wouldn't want anyone to know it was me.)*

Kristiana *How did that feel?*

Tanele *Weird cuz it ws private and then sharing it with him ws scary… but then he saw them nd he likd dem. It ws weird bc I nvr felt like dis body ws good. I always felt ugly nd like no one wud ever think 'wow look at this woman.' Cuz I hav a funny shape like a boy nd ma boobs didn't grow in til real late. I ws awkwrd. Nd his reaction, lol wena… he ws soooo horny… my word. Sayn what what u do this to me, I wnt to do this to you. lol (see no evil monkey emoji). His reaction mad me feel like my body is good nd I am sexy'. lol Nd dat ws kinda sexy…u knw? (Weird because it was private and then sharing it*

with him was scary… but then he saw them and he liked them. It was weird because I never felt like this body was good. I always felt ugly and like no one would ever think, 'wow look at this woman.' Cause I have a funny shape like a boy and my boobs didn't grow in until really late. I was awkward. And his reaction, lol wena (you) he was so horny… my word. Saying that you do this to me, I want to do this to you. Lol. His reaction made me feel like my body was good and I am sex. Lol And that was kind of sexy… you know?)

Kristiana *Oh yah I could see how that could happen. Did he say what he did with them after you sent them?*

Tanele *Wll lol… I think he needd them for something, coz we ddnt see eachotha for awhile. He tld me tht he was going to keep thm on his phone to luk at at nite nd whn he missed me. (Well lol… I think he needed them for something cause we didn't see eachother for awhile. He told me that he was going to keep them on his phone to look at at night and when he missed me.)*

(WhatsApp Chat, Tanele, Sept. 9, 2015)

Tanele's answer indicates two things: First that there is a connection to being seen and her body being real. (Mallan, 2009; Ringrose et al., 2013) This may be more in line however with what Ringrose et al. (2013) found, that visual texts circulated amount young people are given different codes of attractiveness, which signal value. (2013: 310) Thus, it may be argued that Tanele's ability to view her body parts as real and sexy, was more to do with how they fell in line with normative codes of attractiveness. Secondly, the exchanged gave her significant amount of pleasure, and in talking about her body in normative constructions of sexy.

Being asked 'to be seen'

Ringrose et al. (2013) notes that as much as there is pleasure garnered from being seen, that there is currency in being asked to be seen; in other words, to be asked for a photo. Themba and Siyabonga had both asked me for nude photos, to be talked about further, but didn't find any pleasure in being asked, especially from someone I didn't like. I had asked the interlocutors at different points if they had ever been asked for a photo before and how it made them feel.

Takhona: *Yeap. I hv. (Yep I have)*

Kristiana: *By who?*

Takhona: *By guys.*

Kristiana: *So it has happened more than once?*

Takhona: *Yep*

Kristiana: *So what do you think? How did it make you feel?*

Takhona: *Wel it depends hy. Mst of the time it's nice bt also weird cause u hv to be carefl wht u send nd to who d guy is. if u dnt rily knw hm sumtims I dnt hv ma face. (Well it depends hey. Most of the time it's nice but weird cause you have to be careful what you send and who the guy is. If you really don't know him, sometimes I don't include my face.)*

Kristiana: *You send your pictures to guys you don't know.*

Takhona: *Wll lik guys I jst met who asked for a photo.*

Kristiana: *Anytimes where you feel happy or special?*

Takhona: *Ya usually if u lik the guy it feels nice, lik he wants me nd is attrctd. (Ya usually if you like the guy it feels nice, like he wants me and is attracted)*

(WhatsApp Chat, Takhona: September 9, 2015)

Takhona's answer suggests that the pleasure isn't unanimous but rather dependent on the person that asks, as well as the status that that person holds.

From my perspective, both Themba and Siyabonga both wanted my nude photo. They asked daily and it was the source of aggression, pleading and manipulation in the attempts to convince me to give them a photo.

At first Themba only wanted a 'normal' photo; a regular photo of myself that he could have that would remind him of what I looked like. He told me that he would keep it on his phone to look at whenever he wanted. However, it was also important that I took the photo *for* him specifically. He did not want a photo I had taken for someone else, or an old photo that I had shared on other social media, he wanted something that was taken with him in mind.

Over time the requests became more explicit. "Can I have just a pic of your sexy self?" "Give me a glimpse of what you keep secret". "Eish now you have made me horny, please send me a picture of your sweet body and lush breasts." "Give me something that keeps me satisfied at night."

Concomitantly, as soon as I arrived in Swaziland, Siyabonga also started requesting for nude photos. "Just send me some sexy photos." "Can you give me something nice, like a present? Maybe a pic of your sweet body?" "Why don't you show me the bad girl under your clothes?"

Out of interest I asked the interlocutors what the significance of 'having a photo' of me was. Tanele said that a man generally wants a photo of a girl because he wants to show his guy friends that he has a photo. Furthermore, he will probably lie about being in

a relationship with the girl, so he will seem 'cool' or 'more popular' than his friends. Takhona said, "The guy is probably obsessed and probably likes to fantasize about being in a sexual relationship with the girl." Honest, my research assistant, as well as Simphiwe and Tanele, all suggested that the guy wanted the photo to imagine having sex with the girl, but Tanele added,

Tanele: *He wants you to show him that you like him by giving him something that is just for him and no one else, not even your bf.*

Kristiana: *So the image of me taken just for him is like a gift?*

Tanele: *Yah like a gift.*

Kristiana: *Why though it is just a picture?*

Tanele: *Well maybe cuz it is like a piece of you that you are giving just to him. I guess that is special?*

(WhatsApp Chat, Tanele, Jan. 19, 2016)

In a discussion with Honest at one of our weekly meetings, I asked him about the girl at the bar that had explicitly tried to get his attention by flirting, giving him her number and then sending the nude photo. I had told him one of the interlocutors had sent me several nude photos without my having asked and what he felt was the thinking behind it.

"You are white! And beautiful and these young boys want to have your picture to show their friends and tell them made up stories that you are their girlfriend, or they want to make some girl jealous."

I asked him about the logic behind the jealousy. He explained that often guys will make the girl that he wants, jealous but having images of other women on his phone, so

that he gets 'caught' looking at other women. The girl gets 'so jealous' that she decides that she wants the guy. Apparently it works very well.

"But she doesn't really like him if she is only going out with him because she is threatened that some other woman might…"

"Well he doesn't really like her either if he uses other women's photos to make her jealous."

I inquired into whether I could see the pictures on his phone. He laughed nervously and made me promise I wouldn't tell anyone what I saw or judge him. He opened his gallery on his phone and passed it to me. I flipped through. I didn't recognize any of them. I sporadically asked about whom some of them were and their histories. There were probably sixty or seventy different pictures. Some were nude. Some were semi nude. Some girls were posing. Others were selfies. I asked him why he had them on his phone and he told me that most of them were to look at or to show others.

"Who do you show?" I asked.

"Like the small boys, thirteen, fourteen that live around my house. They come over and look at them, and my brother sometimes sends them to himself. They think that I am this big guy with many girlfriends. Ha ha, it is funny."

The pleasure in being asked for a photo appeared to be a common reason why interlocutors kept photos of themselves in order to give away. As well, taking these photos, selecting the best ones, then editing and adding effects, seemed to be all part of the pleasure.

My attention to this derived from a conversation I had with Siyabonga, which started from a question regarding the frequency of his WhatsApp profile picture updates.

His reasoning was that he liked looking at himself and he wanted to have photos on hand just in case a girl asked him for a photo.

I asked the group individually if they, like Siyabonga, had kept photos of themselves on their phones. Most of them had pictures on their phones of themselves, predominantly to use for profile pictures. The females also had additional photos to give away and would keep only the nicest ones 'for gifting' to boyfriends or guys that they like.

Simphiwe for instance had different kinds of photos for different guys. For guys she didn't really like she would find an old boring photo but if she liked a guy, she might give them the newest and best looking one, or take a new one. She said her favourite photos were of her lips because she likes her lips, and "lots of guys" have commented how she has nice lips. "That's why u'll see I wear lipstick a lot, to show off my lips."

The production and time involved in creating and keeping a library of photos to give to other people seemed extensive. It reminded me of what Honest had said about 'time'. As in the time that is invested into an image, especially one that had been doctored or taken for that person directly, is also coded with intention and thought, and therefore has more symbolism than just a plain photo. Time and creation of a symbol for that person appears to have currency within the definitions of the materiality of that relationship. (Hunter, 2010)

Given/ Gifted photos from a notable person or many people

She had just announced, far louder than perhaps appropriate within that space, that the

casual sex she was having with one of Swaziland's preeminent socialites is amazing. After her initial embarrassment faded She continued quietly.

"The things he does, you know…. and his (she leans in closer and whispers) penis, you should see this thing! (Her eyes flare up, as if telling me a secret) I have a picture he sent to me…when he said he was thinking about me, you want to see it?"

I laughed loudly, "No I don't want to see a picture of a penis of the guy that you are having sex with. Plus he probably wouldn't be cool that you are showing me."

"Wena, whatever, like they don't do it too. Plus how would he know? Just look at it."

" Does he have a pic of you?" I asked.

"No cause what happens if he loses his phone or his girlfriend sees? Or like he sends it to people maybe if he is mad?"

" Ok well, is his face showing?"

"No, just you know, his hand holding his penis." She laughed.

I laughed and acquiesced, apprehensively. She smiled excitedly and looked through the pictures of her phone. Then without warning, shoved the phone hurriedly across the table directly in my face. The picture was as she had described.

"Why do you still have that on your phone?" I asked.

"Ha ha, I don't know. Maybe I should delete it"

"Do you look at it… like for, like self pleasure?"

"Eww no, it's so gross to look at. I just think it is funny that I have it on my phone to show people, you know?"

I laughed, "You have shown this to others? Do they know who it is?"

"Yah, of course and yah they know. You can't be messing around with Kibza and not tell

people. That's kind of what makes it exciting. When you see him in town or in the papers with some girl, every body wants to know, ' oh who's that girl? Is that Kibza's girlfriend? People want to know her. Like what does that feel like?" She asked.

"Yah I don't. I once dated a celeb, it wasn't that great actually, sharing him with all these people and women… It got old FAST. Anyway.. It's weird though isn't it, to get a photo from a guy? Have you heard that before? But why did he send it to you? Did you ask for it?"

"Oh jeez, I am just so confused, was he trying to attract you by sending that?"

"Eish KB I have no idea. Maybe he was showing off his size? Thought that would make me… hot? " She replied.

There was an additional angle that emerged in the data and that there seemed to be social currency in either being sent a lot of photos or being sent a photo from someone of note (someone that has currency).

For Tanele having the photo of the socialite's penis was symbolic of her association with him. It was important for her to keep the relationship secret but also to maximize on the association to whom the relationship was with. As he held currency in his being seen and being known, her association to him, as Lin argues, gave her currency through the inference that she had access to his goods and capital. Doubly, in order for her to feel that she was wanted and desired, it was important that she shows others proof of that through the display of the photo. As she stated, "you can't be messing around with Kibza and not tell anyone, that's kind of what makes it exciting, it's like who's that girl with him." The photo is therefore evidence that she is indeed someone to desire and be desired, or as she aptly noted, "of all the girls he could have chosen, he chose me

As a final example Mandla shared a different perspective. In that it isn't as much who sends the photos but how the number of people that send their photos. Ringrose et al. (2013) argues that accumulation of photos, just as accumulation of a currency, also gives the person the person value and status.

Mandla: *They want me to be attracted to them and have sex.*

Kristiana: *And has it worked?*

Mandla: *Nah not interested. There usually like my friend's ex girlfriends that I am friends with. That's just not cool.*

Kristiana: *Maybe they like you and think you might like them too?*

Mandla: *Wll that's not my problem I didn't ask for them.*

Kristiana: *But why would they think that that worked, where would that idea come from?*

Mandla: *They do it cause they think that is how they fit in cause other girls do it so they all do it.*

Kristiana: *Like always just like automatically, all of them.*

Mandla *Yah that's why I say girls are stupid, they'd do anything to fit in, like take their picture and send it to some guy.*

But surely this isn't the only reason, I mean how many guys do you think, get photos from girls and think, "I want to have sex with her."

Mandla: *Like sooooo much. They send the pic. The guy goes over they have sex.*

Done. Move on to the next girl.

Have you kept any of the photos those girls sent you?

Mandla: *A couple, why?*

Oh just curious. What did you do with them?

Mandla: I mostly sent to my guy friends and my cousin.

With the girl's permission?

Mandla: Lol no! If she wanted permission she shouldn't have sent them.

Kristiana: Does it make you feel good though? I mean all these girls must be sending you photos for a reason. If there are a lot doesn't that mean something?

Mandla: Lol eish, ur making me blush. I don't know. I am not so popular.

(WhatsApp Chat, Mandla, November 24, 2015)

It was a notable challenge to demonstrate the ways that the exchange of mediated bodies creates systems of value and relationship between individuals, especially in regards to the potential this exchange has for mobility. To capture this one would need to view these exchanges within a broader context of an individual's network. Demonstrations of the significance of this system relied heavily on the interlocutors' descriptions and articulations of the norms surrounding their own exchanges, and this is only telling to a certain degree.

What was evident however is that 'being seen' has currency and it is notable element in the social relationship between young people especially in digital space, in a way exchange of mediated bodies has come to replace the interactions between real bodies.

The time spent and attention given, as well as the sphere in where the exchange occurs renders the mediated text an embodied representation of the sender. This has interesting implications in the following discussions about why.

Linking this back to the argument in Bourgois (2002), young people have limited mobility and limited access to currencies and formal markets of exchange due to their age, status and the rate of unemployment in Swaziland. In the face of having very little status or value that can be measured with monetary currency or wealth, young people have found or negotiated a way, whereby new forms of currency exchange can increase their value and worth in relation to each other and within the culture of young people. While it privileges the sexualization of bodies, and poses risks to privacy and abuse, the exchange, receipt and accumulation of nude or suggestive photos, can gain immeasurable worth and popularity within that community.

Discussion

Up to this point the paper has been exploring the location of digital space in Swazi young people's lives in contrast to the limited mobility availed vis a vis larger socioeconomic and gendered discourses, and relative subordinate status in the state and public sphere. Further, that digital space is a residual space, and last refuge for young people, in contrast to the continued reduction of, and mobility between available social spheres. I followed this by arguing that the predominant themes that emerged regarding the reaction to this limited and banal environment were that specific performances of morality, secrecy, and masculinity, and the exchange of photos and transactional sex, have opportunities for maintenance and increase in status and the possibility for economic advancement, as resistance to their marginalization.

In order to begin this discussion let me first make a note of the two large contentions I had with Bourgois' chapter. The first contention was that Bourgois does not clarify what he means as self-destruction. Indeed he alludes to a violent lifestyle, and the chances for harm, abuse, death etc. Yet does not clearly delineate what that destruction looks like and what that actually means in terms of a community of people whose cultural tenets privilege self-destruction. I believe however this was purposive.

The second contention was that he also did not explain why violence was used as resistance. The drug dealers in Bourgois (2002) weren't necessarily aware that their performances and informal economy had resistive utility, other than the observable currency vis a vis their marginal status and economic limitations. However, what I believe Bourgois is actually arguing, is not about how they are the local agents of their self-destruction, as much as why they use violence specifically. For example, these young

men have been raised within structural violent systems and institutions, and therefore, they are the product of a destructive system. Therein is the core of Bourgois' deconstruction of the polemics around how to categorize, politicize, and rationalize poverty and drug dealing, he argues that for the drug dealers to navigate and supersede the structural limitations they encounter (economically, socially and culturally), they use the discourses entrenched in the system.

This conclusion mirrors that of Mark Hunter's (2010) analysis of the prevalence of HIV in post – Apartheid South Africa, in "Love in the Time of AIDS". Like Bourgois, Hunter deconstructs the polemics around HIV transmission in South Africa, and attempts to understand HIV and AIDS from the perspective of the dialectics of politics, economics and geography. Furthermore, in order to understand particular outcomes like increases of HIV transmission, or in this research, the self-destructive behaviour among young people in Swaziland, the elements must be explored in terms of structural violence. (Farmer, 1996)

In the case of his research, Hunter explores through time, how: shifts in the geography of people, changes in the labour economy and the introduction of new discourses around rights and equality within the rhetoric of the new democratic state of post-Apartheid South Africa, changed the very definition and materiality of intimacy. Moreover, that this "everyday materiality of sex" which he identifies as the grounds for the definition and materiality of intimacy is perhaps a better explanation of why HIV rates are so high.

Of particular significance to this research was two findings from my data that paralleled Hunter (2010) findings: the first, that discourses and the politicization of gender rights became synonymous with the right to have multiple concurrent partnerships and sex for pleasure, and that gender itself was the grounds for hypocrisies in belief and performance; second, that what he identified as the 'everyday materiality of sex' involved new subsistence relationships that involved having multiple partners that provided varying material gains – from 'gifts' to 'money' to 'status' and even, 'love/care'.
Both these points are interesting to discuss further, the first, similar to how Hunter had found gender rights to rhetorically become synonymous with freedom to have sex with multiple partners for pleasure and accumulation of material goods, I argue too, that in Swaziland the idea of 'youth' and 'being a youth' has been politicized and discursively framed to be synonymous with sex and sexual activity, and to be youth and to be 'seen' by the political/economic and socializing spheres, means to perform, and appropriate and exchange the materialities of those sexual scripts and tokens. Secondly, that as Hunter describes the 'everyday materiality of sex' as consisting of a new form of intimacy that involves multiple different kinds of relationship with new symbols, and gifts and exchanges to satisfy or supplement a need, that what I observed from the data surrounding young people's performances and exchanges, is the 'everyday materiality of sex' within digital space.

The dialectics of politics, economics and 'youth' as unique and sexual

As I established in the background section of this thesis, young people's participation in the public sphere is limited, structured and marginalized. "Youth," an

English word adopted from the UN, quantifies a group of young people ages 10-24, with distinct rights of equality, freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of access. Youth are globally framed as politically powerful, active consumers, and decisive in their actions and choices – as is their right. Concomitantly 'youth' in Swaziland are categorized and politicized as unique and an important subset of the population of Swaziland and linked to distinct social and health issues.

In the political sphere, as was previously established, Swazi youth's importance and significance is predominantly rhetorical. For instance, the government has created a Ministry of Youth Affairs often pictured at media events giving out awards, yet otherwise provides little function or prospects for the development of young people in the country. On the other hand, young people are told they have rights and a voice within the political sphere, by varying public gestures of the Deputy Prime Minister's office or in the dissemination of the Child Protection Act of Swaziland 2012. However a closer read of the Act, which admittedly does not happen often, reveals that cultural rights or the will of institutions like 'guardianship' or 'government' still has final authority on the limits, interpretations and expressions of those human rights. Furthermore, Swazi young people have the highest rate of unemployment in the country and diminishing access to post secondary education. In parallel that government that has done very little beyond the rhetorical, in trying to stimulate the job market or make access to post secondary education more achievable for middle class Swazis.

This hypocrisy became apparent to me in relation to the radio program that I helped coordinate, in which I had met Simphiwe. The weekly radio program was a child-to-child weekly radio program that was giving twenty child 'producers' the ability to talk

about the issues that affected their lives. It was positioned as this new and innovative participation-centered approach that at its root was meant to give the children the platform to tell Swaziland what was important to them.

I attended a planning retreat where we took the young people away for the weekend and 'workshopped' what were meant to be the themes and topics covered in the show. The session was in siSwati and my role was limited. From what I could see however was that the participants were actively participating, they were laughing and enjoying themselves. Each week I would attend the work sessions for the upcoming show, I would be told the topic and was there as a resource and producer. I organized interviews for them with differing civil society organizations and could be asked for information. Over time I started noticing that the topics framed the chidren's realities within negative, static and morally judgmental ways: "Bad relationships" "Reasons young people drop of school" "Drug and alcohol abuse," "Peer Pressure," "Teen pregnancy".

When Simphiwe shared the news of her pregnancy (and of another participant's pregnancy), and her personal enjoyment in the act of sex and drinking, I was confused. If this was her reality, why was that not a topic that was talked about in the program? I spoke to Mandla who had been another participant in the program, to understand the hypocrisy.

Mandla *Yah… (insert name of program) was a joke. They always were like, 'this is your show do what you want' They never asked us what we wanted to talk abt.*

Kristiana *Never?*

Mandla *No I remember I wanted to talk about like things youth liked, like hip hop and chilling. They were like, 'no that isn't right for the show.' But wasn't it our show? I even asked them that and they ignored me.*

Kristiana *Yah I understand, sorry.*

Mandla *Whatever, they didn't care they were just a bunch of assholes. All they were needed were photos for their reports. They fucking used us. (WhatsApp Chat, Mandla: Sept 21, 2015)*

Simphiwe shared similar sentiments:

Simphiwe: *Yah dey didn't wnt us to tlk abt the hw it was for us. They were like ur children nd children ar like this, nd these are wht you talk about, nd we hd to look like it ws interestin. It ws weird cause it ws so fake.*

(Yah they didn't want us to talk about how it was for us. They were like you are children and children are like this, and these are what you talk about and we had to look like it was interesting. It was weird because it was so fake.)

(WhatsApp Chat, Simphiwe: Sept. 22, 2015)

In this program the young people were told that they were important and that their voices were significant but in practice that actualization was hindered by the institutional limits of that expression.

In contrast, the construct of 'youth' are associated with distinct social and health issues, more often than not, that are linked to their sex and sexuality- which either renders them a victim of sex/sexuality, or a deviant of sex/sexuality, or connects their body and development as a person, in terms of sex. (Spronk, 2012; Hunter, 2010) For instance,

adopted international rights-based health discourses, categorize youth as 'at-risk'. In Swaziland, currently UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, International Planned Parenthood Federation, World Bank, Global Fund, Population Services International, Clinton Health Access Initiative, PEPFAR etc. all currently have interventions specifically targeted at youth in the prevention of sex and sexuality based health and social outcomes – HIV, unplanned pregnancy, unsafe abortion, gender inequality, and poverty (connected to sexually transmitted diseases, sexual norms and unplanned pregnancy)

Therein the rhetorical construct of 'youth' in Swaziland, is: a member of the global western 'liberalist' 'youth' with equal rights, choice and power to consume, and a person, whose body and development are conflated with sex.

This is moreover solidified by the manner young people/youth are framed in the public sphere (Habermas, 1989) as victim, deviant or object of sex. (Spronk, 2012; Cole, 2009; Delius & Glaser, 2002; Lee et al., 2013) For instance, rarely are there articles about young people in Swaziland's preeminent newspapers that are not about sex or linked to sexual status, even more articles revolve around sexual deviance (Dlamini, 2014; Mdluli, 2011; Dhladhla, 2013, Makhubu, 2015), victims of sex and sexual abuse (Masimula, 2012, Dlamini, 2013b; Maseko, 2013) sexual scandal (Sukati, 2013; Malinga, 2016; Dlamini, 2013a), and object of sex (Ndlela, 2013; Manyathela, 2013; Manyathela. 2013a).

The latter framing of young people as objects of sex tends to link notoriety and fame with sexual appeal and 'being seen' on display. (Ringrose et al., 2013, Hunter, 2010) Simphiwe who had articulated that she felt the only way young women garnered recognition in Swaziland was through beauty and public display of that beauty shared this

view. As she once articulated: *'*they dn't care if a grl is smart only that she is sexy.*'* (They don't care if a girl is smart, only that she is sexy) (WhatsApp Chat, Simphiwe, Feb. 6, 2016) As opposed to this the male interlocutors look up to the Swazi celebrities like KrTC of Hip Hop or Mosaik, not because they are perceived as being talented musicians but because they fit within their conception of masculinity: popular with women, perceived to *have* lots of women, attractive, wealthy and fill the pages of the entertainment section of the newspaper daily. Young guys gauge their masculinity in terms of these archetypes. (Moss, 2011; Macdonald, 2001; Lombard, 2015; Ringrose et al, 2013)

It is also important to note that Hunter (2010) signals this in his analysis as well. Particularly that in post-Apartheid South Africa the media and advertisers, conflated 'being young' or 'youth' with being decisive, beautiful, sexy, wealth and most importantly, consumption. In Swaziland too, the interlocutor's identified those peers with worth or sexiness, as having 'things', and the socialite pages of the newspaper, rarely failed to identify or 'cover' individuals in terms of their fashion sense or beauty. This was also evident among the interlocutors, with their conflation between being 'broke' and not having a life. Or for instance, when Tanele chose to keep an old photo of herself on WhatsApp because it harkened from a time when she had 'money' and therefore she felt more worthy and attractive. Another example occurred when Simphiwe wanted me to take photos of her in different outfits at Mr. Price; she couldn't afford to buy the outfits but what was more important, was that she 'seemed' to be able to afford the outfits and in the display of that façade.

Shifting from the media sphere to other socializing institutions that contribute to this notion of a young person's status framed in relation to their sex. For instance, young people's participation and inclusion in the Church is contingent on them 'performing morality'. When this performance is obstructed, like the unplanned pregnancies of Simphiwe and Takhona, they are asked to leave or alternatively, made an example of, exemplified in the case of Simphiwe.

Alternatively some young people are elevated and given status, notoriety and a sometimes tangible celebrity, and are "seen" in actively repenting their sexuality coming to view their status in relation to their sex; or that their status of Christianity is in terms of their sex.

Lastly, in the education system, sex can be spoken about but only within the strict and prohibitive discursive framework and normative performances that are discerned by the curriculum or the normalizing gaze of the teacher. (Foucault, 1977; Cobbett et al., 2013; Booth, 2003) Like the Church young people that deviate from the norm are judged to such an extent that they feel they have to leave, as what Simphiwe experienced, and again come to see their status as a student in terms of their sex.

Therefore in line with Hunter's (2010) analysis of the political, economic and geographic shifts that had a mutually cumulative effect on definitions of intimacy and selfhood in post-Apartheid South Africa. I too argue that the political, economic and social environment in Swaziland, created a population that on one hand are socialized to internalize the western liberal ideals of choice, power and consumption, that they are important, distinct and entitled with the right to choose, to act, and to consume, and subversively (or otherwise) socialized as subjectively and objectively sexual. While on

the other hand are restricted by discourses, policies, routines, and unemployment that hinder their mobility as active citizen and participant, and the actualization of their lives. Yielding a population that is idle, broke and relates to themselves through sexual objectification.

I draw on this dialectical culmination of politics, economics and social construction of "youth', (Hunter, 2010) in order to provide an explanation of why Swazi young people's resistance, negotiation and new value systems within digital space resulted in performances of morality, masculinity and hyper sexuality; and why there is significant meaning and status in the exchange and accumulation of visual tokens of sex that emerged from the data. Put more simply, performing and navigating their sex and sexuality, is how young people have come to realize their personhood, status and relative value among their peers and within their varying socializing spheres.

Negotiating structures of violence: Resistance and Everyday Materialities of Sex

Kristiana: *Why do young people post 'naughty' things? Are they not worried that they will get in trouble?*

Simphiwe: *I don't think they care and u know that one of the reason we as youth post such things it's because we have nothing else to do… like we done with school for holidays and all we do is sit and do nothing so they think of something we can do for "fun" and then we post these naughty things.*

Kristiana: *Like what else is there to do, you mean? What about go to activities?*

Simphiwe: *Well we intend to do that but what is it that we can do? I mean the government of Swaziland does not offer much to the youth… there is no future… so that's why u find most youth dating older people trying to get attention… we drink, do drugs, be in love with sugar daddies and all sorts of things.*

Kristiana: *Do girls love these sugar daddies?*

Simphiwe: *No but what's in their pockets and the attention they get, yah they love that.*

Kristiana: *Even if there is a chance they will get HIV or pregnant?*

Simphiwe: *Yah, they don't care. Most of the youth get HIV anyway*

(WhatsApp Chat, Simphiwe; Dec. 1, 2015)

Resistance/negotiation – performance

In Swaziland, in which youth are celebrated, understood, classified, subjugated and 'seen' in relation to their sex, I argue, therefore that sex is the mode of communication for their resistance, and how they gauge and assert their belonging within the varying spheres in their lives. Moreover, when they shift from one sphere to the next, shifts in performances are directly relational to the intrinsic normative discourses around sex in that sphere..

This fits well with the notions of resistance put forward by Mbembe (2001) and Scott (1985). As Scott (1985) argued, often the most effective form of resistance is that which doesn't appear to be resistance at all, in other words it falls outside the bounds of the normative constructions of dissent from the state. In Swaziland for instance dissent is

often materialized through public protests or scathing pieces written about the state. In both instances, the people that participate in the state's construction of protest are squashed brutally, imprisoned or disappear. Therefore Scott (1985) argues that it is in the incidental, the personal, the informal, the untraceable whereby sporadically appears to be nothing, over time starts to topple entire systems.

I believe this applies in this situation specifically in terms of the incidental or the personal modes of resistance. For instance, I don't feel that young people are aware of their resistance, but they are aware of the utility of being 'seen' to be performing in accordance to dominant discursive and systemic constructions of sex within that space. As stated by Mbembe (2001) "the people splinter their identities and represent themselves as always changing there persona, constantly undergoing mitoses whether in official space or not." (104) Therefore this perpetual mitosis that is occurring from one space to the next, extracts from the dominant discourse 'enough' that it 'appears' to be normal behaviour.

For instance, within the context of Swaziland, young women they are being socialized in Church, school and their homes, to be chaste, moral and to avoid boys, meanwhile, they are being told by global western liberal discourses, the media, and their own government's rhetoric that they are distinct and have a choice, that they are equal to boys and there is personhood in being sexual. Hunter (2010) noted similarly that in South Africa post-Apartheid, that women were confronted with the need to embody dichotomous performances of femininity. For example, in order to navigate 'masculine norms' women tended to be constantly navigating "sexualized femininity" and being a "good woman". As he elaborates, "bodily practices, styles, and knowledges, although

partly unconscious, can in certain circumstances be redirected so that a woman can position herself as a "good woman" of pious, and thus marriageable, character." (2010: 152)

One example is Simphiwe, who on several occasions told me that she doesn't love her boyfriend and has multiple side partners. However, she is aware of the utility in performing morality in the spheres of Church and Home, as it puts her in good favour with both, as well as continues her access to child support from her boyfriend. Another example was Tanele, who while in one space with me, she would describe her new found sexual pleasures and excitement in her clandestine relationship with a Swazi celebrity, this was paralleled with her performances of secrecy and morality, in which she lied about looking for work, still attended Church every Sunday, only posted photos on her WhatsApp profile picture that made her look conservative, and she always kept a Bible with her in her purse.

Conversely, young men have been equally socialized to be pious and moral, to abstain from sex, and yet are told that there is power and significance in their sexuality. Further, to be seen as achieved, is to be, strong, wealthy, to *show* that wealth, to be attractive to women and to *have* women. This is perhaps why in the data I observed the shifts in the young male's performances from morality to hyper masculinity, or from secrecy to hyper-sexual, as they navigated/resisted those dichotomies through varying spaces in accordance to the dominant discourse of normative sexuality.

The easiest example to draw from the data is Themba, who had an immense amount of notoriety and celebrity within the sphere of their Church in presenting their sex within the performances of morality. Themba has followers and people that rely on him

for guidance and support. He was called up to the front of the congregation to testify and show how he has reformed, and people value this testimonial, and he is revered as a significant person in his Church. Moreover Themba is aware of this. He is aware of the status he garners in a particular portrayal of his sex. This is evidenced by his purposive secrecy around the existence of his girlfriend, and in what he choses as his display in other spaces.

Siyabonga, also, plays drums in the Church band. He has even capitalized on this by giving himself a 'stage name' and motto, "drumming for Jesus", which has conflated his love of playing drums with 'doing Jesus' work' and abstractly, a performance of morality. This position in his Church gives him alot fame. He is conscious of this evidenced by the fact that he doesn't disclose the existence of his girlfriend. As he moves from church to digital space, he shifts from morality to masculinity to secrecy depending on the construction of his sex he wants to achieve.

However the juncture where this resistance is most observable is at the intersection between female normative performances and male normative performances, and the tensions that arise. Hunter (2010) illustrates this tension occurring in Post-Apartheid South Africa, at the point were discourses around 'rights' collide. For example, as Hunter (2010) outlines, despite the growing rhetoric that male and female youth are equal and have rights. Young women practicing those "rights" entails that men are losing their authority and control, specifically in relation to the pursuit of having or being attractive to multiple women. In other words, "women who refuse to engage in sexual relations with men are a powerful affront… and a sign of men's reduced power." (Hunter, 2010: 174) As Hunter adds, giving up that power does not happen easily nor without a

fight and is one of the leading reasons for the increase in gender based violence, and women being 'corrected' violently through harassment and abuse by their male and female peers alike.

As a result, it is 'rights' are commonly interpreted not as a 'right to equality', but a right to 'do right' or 'do the right thing', which re-frames women's pursuit of rights along a moral-laden spectrum in variably meant to control and sublimate these liberal pursuits.

This was most apparent in the violent and abusive way the male interlocutors spoke about young women who seemed to defy gender norms. All of the interlocutors at one point of another re-framed women that asserted her choice or saw men in a utilitarian way, as 'naughty', 'sluts', 'loose', 'the problem', 'the reason why HIV is so prevalent' etc.

A particularly resonant example of this occurred during a WhatsApp chat with Themba. He had been telling me that they thought that young women that post nude or suggestive photos to Facebook are sluts and desperate, and that these young women should do what is 'right' and go to school to become nurses or teachers. I posited a rebuttal question.

Kristiana: *What makes her a slut though? I have been asked by multiple men to send my nude photo to them over WhatsApp… including you. I can only assume that having this photo gives you pleasure and I have been told that I would also get pleasure out of sending it because it would please me that you were excited. However if I refuse to take a nude photo and send it to you, as I have, I get told that I am "difficult", "stubborn", "probably a headache for*

your boyfriend to deal with" – your words.

The act of taking the photo and sending it, is really no different than the act of taking a photo and posting it to Facebook… but why if I agree to send it to you privately is this a good thing and not a headache but if I post it to Facebook, that would make me a slut?

Themba: *Ha ha ha these questions tho… of course sweetie. sending it to me doesn't make you a slut… but if you posted to Facebook ya you would lose my respect.*

Kristiana: *I see. So really the difference is whether I did something with your permission or without? If I send you a picture that you asked for, you have control over me, but if I post a picture because I want to, I have control over myself… and THAT is the problem… cause in both cases I have exposed my naked body to someone else online.*

Themba: *Ha ha ha yho! You see what I say about you… You must have been raised by your father with these sorts of questions… Don't think too much sweetie… Eish ur making me horny with all this talk about sending me nude photos. (WhatsApp Chat, Themba, January 12, 2016)*

In this example, one can observe the tensions that are occurring at the epicenter of these gendered notions of 'being young'. On one hand Themba wants to convince me to give him a nude photo as an emblem of his prowess, which is emblematic of his masculinity, that a nude photo is sexually simulating and desirable. He values the act of taking a nude photo, as in taking it makes me sexy, attractive and it is an respectful act,

but this is only permissible as long as he is the one in control of this activity. The moment a woman does this to achieve the same ends, to please a man and to feel powerful in that pleasure, she is a slut and she should stop.

I also want to note that when young women become enmeshed in the dominant discourses of masculinity, they also tend to 'punish' or 'correct' each other. This is not something Hunter (2010) spoke a lot on, but I found that particularly in the process of self-assessing moral correctness, young women would juxtapose themselves to the negative or misogynist constructs of women by men. This was particularly evident in Simphiwe's assessment of whether she was 'naughty'. Despite the observable fact that she posted content to her Facebook page and often shared with me that she enjoyed sex with multiple partners apart from her boyfriend, and that she drank and 'loved sex;' she was not naughty like 'those other women'. Naughty women, by her definition, were desperate for attention, would have sex with anyone, posted naughty photos on Facebook, liked sex etc.

Everyday Materialities of Sex – Exchange of Visual Tokens of Sex

As Mark Hunter states, due to the shift in the economic, political and geographic landscape of South Africa, "sex has become… enmeshed in new forms of emotion and reciprocity—exchanges more akin to gift relations, marked by mutual, if uneven, obligations that extend over time." (2010: 180) This 'enmeshing' is called the 'everyday materialities of sex'; the example of this that Hunter (2002; 2010) observed is 'transactional sex'. As he explains, " transactional sex has a number of similarities to prostitution. In both cases, non-marital sexual relationships, often with multiple partners,

are underscored by giving gifts or cash. Transactional sex, however, differs in important ways: participants are constructed as "girlfriends" or "boyfriends", and not "prostitutes" and "clients", and the exchange of gifts for sex is part of a broader set of obligations." (Hunter, 2002: 100)

While in the data there was evidence of transactional sex. For instance, when Simphiwe explained why she remained with her boyfriend, despite not liking him because he is cheating on her and she is afraid of getting HIV, she stated that she needed him to continue paying for the baby and would stay with him until she found someone else to support her and/or love. Also, Thandeka, similarly said that she didn't want guys to come over to her house anymore, 'just for sex' because more often than not in the recent past they arrived 'empty handed'. As she said, "they don't even bring chocolates or anything." In addition, this fact made her feel like she was being 'used' for sex because she wasn't getting anything in exchange.

Moreover, there seems to be a general cultural trend towards transactional sex reflected both by Mandla and Senzo. Both interlocutors at differing points expressed the view that if you buy something for a girl then the expectation is that she 'put out'. In fact Senzo became quite angry with me, when I suggested that regardless of whether a woman is bought or given something, she still ultimately has the choice to say no to sex; to which he replied, "if she doesn't give me sex then she can give me back my money." Then when I responded that it was still her right to say no, he angrily rebutted, "then she must just stay home and keep her legs shut." Insinuating on two levels that going out in public and opening her legs is a lure for money. Following this, when I asked him how

his view of women was different from seeing women as prostitutes, he said, "It isn't, Swazi women are all prostitutes."

That said, I would like to suggest that digital space provides another sphere or landscape for the emergence of a different form of 'everyday materiality of sex' and that is the exchange, accumulation and display of visual tokens, in this case, nude photos. While, accumulating social currency through visual tokens didn't seem to have a direct correlation to gaining economic currency or subsistence. It could be argued that young people who gain elevated status through the accumulation of social currency, may at some point see that currency translate into financial gain. An example being one of my friends, Chris Fleming who after some time, just by having progressive proximity to, and growing network of, notable Swazis, became himself as well, a socialite and is now sponsored by one of Swaziland's leading clothing lines – Mark Swag, and has a weekly editorial space in the Times of Swaziland.

However, I argue that in lieu of not having 'cash' and gaining 'wealth' through monetary currency, the exchange of visual tokens is in its own way, part and parcel of a large network of obligations that come to subsidize/or supplant gift giving or sex. This was especially apparent in the importance placed on 'giving' a photo to someone else, especially the process of taking a distinctly new and unique photo of yourself solely for the 'intendee'. As I noted in my data, both Themba and Siyabonga were quite adamant that if I were to agree to send them a nude or suggestive photo, it would be captured especially for them. Simphiwe also noted that she kept photos of herself, but those photos were given relative value depending on who they were meant to be sent to. In this respect, in isn't just about status and building status, but the 'gifting' of ones photo

to another person takes on a sort of 'Maussian' characteristic, in that the photo becomes an embodiment of the self that is gifted to another and it contributes to a larger system of reciprocity and negotiation of intimacy. (Mauss, 1967) This became more clear when I resisted the 'gifting' of my photo and it both created animosity but also resistance to perpetuate the reciprocity, for example both Themba and Siyabonga were hurt that I didn't 'gift' them with a photo and became angered when I instead (out of curiosity) asked them for a nude of themselves. Both responded to this by saying that only the gifting of my photo would result in a reciprocal gift of their nude photo.

What seems to be suggested by this, but requires further investigation, is that like transactional sex is a 'everyday materiality of sex' forged through the shifting political, economic and geographic environment in South Africa; in digital space, the exchange, gifting, accumulation and display of nude and suggestive photos, among Swaziland's young people, is a new 'everyday materiality of sex' that is ever emergent. Further, I argue, as young people's social spaces become evermore restrictive and limited in number, and young people turn to digital space as the only grounds for socialization, resistance, and negotiation of dominant discourses around their status as young people amidst themselves and the state, the geographies of intimacy will continue to flux in relation to these digital simulations and materialities of sex.

Conclusion: YOLO so Party Like A Swazi

The whole project was an interesting 'attempt' in study a field and technology that is still nascent in its scholarly explorations. This at points provided a lot of freedom to explore and immense access to the interlocutors but also created a significant amount of uncertainty especially in regards to how the space should be conceptualized.

Further the field of WhatsApp was difficult to write about because it basically draws from four months of interviews and observations were limited to what I could draw out from how they represented themselves and their interactions. Writing about the findings felt like one continuous WhatApp chat, and was challenged with 'letting the data speak for itself.' The other issue was that the architectural make up of WhatsApp is built on discourse and supplementation by individual cognition, meaning that the space doesn't exist apart from the interaction. As a result, this made it literally impossible to not be included in the writing and I argue that this presents some interesting dilemmas in the data because was the field site actually WhatsApp or was it the shared space build between myself and the interlocutor.

There is definitely a necessity for more research to be conducted on WhatsApp as all of my searches for literature returned with no results. Perhaps this is due to the very issues that I presented in utilizing this sphere as a field site. Along the same vein, I think conducting an analysis of youth sex culture entirely within the theoretical framework of Mark Hunter's (2010) 'Love in the Time of AIDS', would allow to really delve into the relationship between digital mobile media and 'everyday materialities of sex'. I think as young people become increasingly dependent on mobile technology for all of their needs, I believe we will see a significant shift in the definitions of intimacy and the materiality

of sex, and further how that plays a role in the continuation or alleviation of health issues, such as HIV transmission.

This thesis commenced with a vignette from a fifteen year old Swazi, that gave a glimpse of a rather shocking perspective of how young people in Swaziland view themselves and their futures. In Mbongiseni words, painted a reality in which young people do not feel they have future, and therefore live their lives in that moment; celebrating sex, drinking and doing drugs, in the face of the realities of high HIV infection and unplanned pregnancy. Therein the overarching question of the research was: why, when young people have access to preventative measures and education about their body and health; and know the risk factors involved in drinking and unsafe sex, are young people still celebrating the kinds of lifestyles that put themselves at risk of poverty, social ailments, suffering, or death?

I explored within the conceptual frame of Bourgois (2002) that young people utilize digital space as resistive grounds for the performance and exchange of the dominant discourse that govern the mobility and definitions of their status as young people within the social, political and cultural spheres. Invariably applying, the paralleling argument that despite the risk of self destruction, young people's performances and exchanges with their defined culture provides them with opportunities of increased status and validity.

On step further, Hunter (2010) provided a solid foundation to suggest that the reason why young people use discourses, performances and exchanges around sex and sexuality is because their sense of self and status within the state is in relation to the structural definitions of 'youth' as both significant and unique, but as well sexual.

The irony being that young people become the exact opposite in which the state and socializing institutions are intending to prevent, that they, as Bourgois (2002) states, ‘are the local agents’ in their own self destruction.

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