Adult Education, Gender and Violence in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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I, Charlotte Clare Nussey, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Signed:  
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Abstract

This doctoral study is concerned with questions of what education is, the role it plays in women’s lives, and why it might be considered valuable. It asks whether and how adult education, gender and violence are inter-connected, through in-depth qualitative research in a single community in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The original contribution of this thesis is to show that the connections are profound. It argues that multidimensional forms of violence and intersecting inequalities are both empirical phenomena that shape everyday lives but further offer theories of disadvantage that help understand the social processes of being an ‘adult-learner’.

The study draws on ethnographic strategies to locate these questions in the discursive terrain of a South African mass adult education campaign, delivered at the community level but designed and managed nationally. It takes a post-structural approach to the meanings made through the campaign around ‘education’, ‘gender’ and ‘violence’, supported by reflexive analysis. At the heart of the study and the analysis of this thesis are thirty life-history interviews undertaken with female adult-learners participating in the campaign. The thesis contributes an innovative form of inter-linguistic discourse analysis, working with signifiers across translated English and original isiZulu data.

The thesis considers ways in which ‘being educated’ was understood as leading to ‘good work’, ‘speaking for –self’, and recognition through ‘official’ knowledge represented by ‘schooled’ literacies, as well as access to material goods, status, and forms of mobility. It explores how ‘being uneducated’ was conversely constructed as individualised ‘failure’, in which the intersections of gendered, raced and classed structural violence were commonly misrecognised, and enacted as symbolic violence through blame and internalised ‘stress’. The study finds that the adult education space offered valuable ways to mediate forms of physical, emotional and symbolic violence, but did not challenge the structural violence that underpinned them.
Impact Statement

The impact of this doctoral research is spatially differentiated, in ways that map against the spatialised power dynamics with which this thesis is concerned. Dissemination of this thesis should begin (in a reverse of my research journey) not in London, where this thesis was written, but in the community in South Africa where this research was conducted, which I have given the pseudonym throughout of Endaweni. Working with co-constructed knowledge, as this thesis aims to do, extends to co-constructed impact, and collective engagement with the 'findings' and potential 'benefits' of this work.

The first part of that journey will begin where I ended, in the community of Endaweni itself. I will offer space for collective engagement with the findings of this thesis from the participants themselves, working to speak to representational concerns around doing a thesis such as this from a perspective and position such as mine. The opportunity to consider the findings of this study from the distance of four to five years aims to understand what elements of the short-term adult education campaign with which this thesis is concerned are most durable. In a return to Endaweni, I will explore whether the original contribution of this thesis around the potential for the adult education spaces to foster social networks and mediate violence was long-lasting, or limited to the period of the campaign with which the thesis was concerned.

Building on this first stage of community-level dissemination will be work with policymakers and practitioners at the provincial and national levels. This second phase will aim to offer a bridge and a point of advocacy by returning to spaces which I name in the thesis as ‘official’, including sites of national adult education planning which I visited in 2012. As I discuss in the thesis, the adult education campaign with which this thesis is concerned has now come to an end. Nevertheless the key policy recommendation that more training for adult educators on gender and violence in contexts like Endaweni would be advantageous, extending a technicist focus on ‘delivering’ literacy, is relevant to future adult education planning. This finding could also be useful to practitioners and policymakers in sectors other than education, building on arguments within the field that more joined-up approaches to development are necessary. These findings may also extend beyond the rural KwaZulu-Natal context, both to other provinces in South Africa, and to other similar contexts elsewhere.
Beyond the national impact of this research, there are aspects of this thesis that speak to broader concerns and agendas within the field. A methodological paper building on the importance afforded to language in this thesis will aim to challenge both practitioners and researchers in the development sector who only work in dominant languages within multilingual settings. Two theoretical papers will also contribute to the field: first, by extending the theory of symbolic violence to focus on relational as well as internalised processes; second, by extending theories of intersectionality to include age and generation.
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Introduction: Adult Education, Gender and Violence in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Reflections on/in a thesis title

The title of this thesis is, in some senses, not mine. This research was funded by a Bloomsbury Scholarship, for which the original title was designed by my three supervisors, and which gave me my three key terms and the national context within which I would explore their force. The journey of this thesis has been to make the title mine, to shape, conduct and own the research myself. Related concerns have been to narrow the scope, to focus within the frame of these three key words, to find a coherence and to ask and answer questions that take forward academic theories and knowledge. These concerns are not mine alone – in many senses they are those of all PhD students – but the specificity of these questions of scope, focus and coherence in this thesis is related to the overall logic and rationale for doing the work.

Each of the three terms of my title could have formed an individual thesis in and of themselves. In this thesis, I will consider them together. At different times, I may foreground each of the three signifiers, but the reflections and mirroring of each, through layered analysis and a theoretical framework that is concerned with inter-connections, will occur throughout. The dynamism which I am interested to explore lies both in the ways in which inequality operates in each space separately but also in the interactional space within and between them. The aim of this thesis is to explore and to theorise how adult education, gender and violence are together implicated in processes associated with inequalities and social exclusion in a rural community in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

In this introduction, I will begin this layered analysis by looking at power and resources associated with inequalities and social exclusion, asking how divisions have been drawn in the international literature within the adult education field. I will continue by layering gender and violence into and against the concerns of adult education, to explore how including these dimensions might help to add depth to questions of inequality within the field. I will close by bringing these layered questions around adult education, gender and violence together in the socio-cultural and historical specificity of rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, asking what ‘locating’ a study in this context demands theoretically.
In each of these layers, a key concern will be the ways in which talking about inequalities of power and resources itself can be subject to naming problems and to the articulation of divisions in dichotomous ways. Adult education, gender and violence are all too often reduced to binaries of educated/uneducated, literate/illiterate, male/female, or perpetrator/victim, but these binaries fail to capture the complexities of inter-connecting inequalities. In the mirroring of power and resource associated with these binaries, and the mirroring of my three signifiers, I will both unpack and (re)connect these dichotomous categories, and argue that the lines or thresholds of inequality that can result from these binaries give only minimal and static accounts of justice.

The central concern of this thesis is thus the dynamism of this ‘inter-’, a prefix that is rooted etymologically in ideas both of ‘between’ and ‘among’. This dynamic mirroring process I see as in water, not in glass: adult education and the inclusive processes it often aims towards will not always be neatly reflected in concerns about addressing gender inequalities or reducing violence. Gender inequality may not always be perfectly or solely implicated in accounts of violence, whether in terms of violent acts or structures. Water, with eddies and flows, and reflections that can be refracted and distorted, offers a useful metaphor for me to engage with the imperfect overlapping of multiple and intersecting inequalities. A layering approach to inequality demands attention to inter-connections and intersections in dynamic and multi-dimensional ways; I will set out in this introduction a theory of intersectionality that aims to capture these concerns.

In the setting out of the argument of this thesis, a second echo of this mirror motif is a concern with reflexivity, and reflections on my own place in the (re)production of meaning around adult education, gender and violence in rural KwaZulu-Natal. This reflexivity offers a challenge to the ways in which this thesis can said to be ‘mine’, and demands attendance throughout to the extent to which the three terms of this thesis have become indivisible. My own understanding of the ways in which these three signifiers associated with power and dis/advantage are interlocked was shaped by the act of doing the research: these terms were both ‘given’ to me, and seemed to ‘emerge’ from the conducting of the study. I will question how far a sense of emergent categories is possible, and reflect on ways in which the doing and writing of the study challenged my assumptions and beliefs about what I was looking at and for. I will try to make this challenge visible throughout this thesis, in asking “are adult education, gender and violence inter-connected, and if so, how?”
The initial act of naming the ‘problem’ with which this thesis is concerned raises a naming problem. The process of naming a ‘problem’ or ‘lack’ can be stigmatising: a problem of ‘educational exclusion’ can slip to position ‘uneducated’ populations, groups and individuals as ‘problematic’; a problem of gender inequality too often places great burdens on women themselves; the very process of identifying gender violence can (re)inscribe notions of victimhood, locating the ‘problem’ within acts of violence and the bodies of those upon whom acts fall. Identifying ‘deficits’ or lacks can lead, through complex processes, to identification with deficit, in which subjectivities can become constrained, shaped and (re)produced by these deficits: “labels are by no means neutral, they embody concrete relationships of power and influence the categories with which we think and act” (Escobar, 1995, p. 109). Understanding the relationship between inequality, power and categories is central to the question of naming and to the questions which this thesis asks.

Processes of identification and internalisation of deficit have been theorised as forms of symbolic violence, in which structural inequalities are misrecognised and turned in against the self (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2004). The social and relational dimensions of these processes of internalisation have been further explored through the concepts of stigma and shame, particularly articulated through the poverty literature that explores how naming and blaming processes that fail to recognise structures locate the problem of inequality within individuals and groups (Chase and Walker, 2013, Walker et al., 2013, Unterhalter et al., 2012). These concerns are central to the field of development, which is inherently concerned with identifying and addressing disadvantage, and therefore particularly subject to the (re)production of labels, stigma and shame (Aikman et al., 2016). Drawing on these arguments and theorisations, this thesis will argue that the language of deficit and a focus on individualised experiences of disadvantage and violence obfuscates the structural, relational and symbolic contexts of injustice and inequality, and fails to locate solutions at broader levels of social institutions.

Questions around the naming problem have been further powerfully articulated through postcolonial and feminist lenses that take a related, but differently positioned approach to concerns around power and the (re)production of inequality. These critiques highlight that to name can itself be colonising: “Westerners are quick to appropriate the power to
name, while remaining totally oblivious of and/or insensitive to the implications and consequences of naming” (Nnaemeka, 2001, p. 178). Naming-as-colonising can be seen through the double prism of representation, in which concerns to represent politically (in the sense of ‘speaking for’) as well as concerns to (re)present (in the sense of ‘making visible’) can themselves work to deny agency to marginalised subjects, (re)producing epistemic violence and mechanisms of Othering, particularly in postcolonial contexts (Spivak, 2010). The need to recognise these processes applies not only to those who are marginalised, but to those who benefit from structural privilege in unjust social arrangements, and to those who work to challenge them (Kamola, 2015). These questions of position, voice and perspective in the (re)production of knowledge and power around constructs of marginalisation and exclusion, and my own place in this process, will hold a central place in the reflections and analysis of this thesis.

Naming a ‘problem’ is thus central to policy development and to planning and working towards social justice aims, but the very act of doing so impacts the scope and shape of possibilities for social justice. Reflecting on the naming problem requires attention to the concepts, to the discursive constructions of the concepts, and to the material and embodied lived realities and experiences of exclusion and marginalisation. In the following sections, I will therefore briefly tease out ways in which each of these three signifiers of power and resource is subject to specific and distinct naming problems, and then ask how they might be inter-connected. In doing so, I will attempt to avoid the (re)production of inequality that naming has the potential to enact.

**Adult Education**

From the outset of this study, adult education has represented the primary term of the thesis, first in the title and first in my thinking. Adult education is the field in which this research was conducted. This thesis will be concerned to ‘map’ this field in different ways, through different engagements with the official constructs of a PhD structure, i.e. through discussion of theoretical and empirical literature, through methodological reflections, and through the presentation and conclusions drawn from data. Through these mappings, I will try to understand the meanings made around and within an adult education campaign and the broader international discourses which frame it, and to question ways in which gender and violence might be implicated in this field. Adult education represents the boundaries of the thesis and the knowledge that could or has been (re)produced within it.
The boundaries of this field are both literal and figurative. Adult education in this thesis operates as an ethnographic terrain: I located my research within a national South African adult education campaign, and conducted in-depth qualitative research within a specific community in one province in which this campaign was delivered. It was through an adult education campaign that I did the work of the field, and can write the ‘tales of the field’ (Van Maanen, 2011) that have resulted from the study. But adult education as a field is also a set of discursive boundaries: forms of knowledge about learners, power and inequalities are both challenged and (re)produced in contestations around the constructs of ‘educated’ or ‘uneducated’, ‘literate’ or ‘illiterate’ (Street, 2011).

Defining the field of adult education inclusively, however, is perhaps an “impossible task. It is such a multivalent and amorphous field, comprising different traditions, that definitions are bound to be exclusive, often deliberately so” (Mayo, 2009, p. 269). The multivalence of the field has shifted over time, paralleling broader socio-historical moments around modernisation, liberation struggles, and a neoliberal drive towards individualisation that have shaped how adult education has been conceptualised, and how adult education policy and programming has been developed (Rogers and Horrocks, 2010, pp. 1-10). The work to define the field is thus inherently political work, concerned with power and modes of inclusion and exclusion both theoretically and empirically. A focus on power, inclusion and exclusion underpins this thesis and the bounding of the field.

Within the work to define the adult education field, a key set of potential binaries emerge that speak to the concerns about naming outlined above, and that inter-relate with concerns about the political direction of framings of adult education. These binaries particularly emerge when adult education becomes filtered through a focus on ‘literacy’, as the unit of measurement, level of attainment, outcome or product of adult education. Adult education programmes may often involve a literacy component, many exclusively so (UIL, 2015). While what constitutes ‘literacy’ is contested, as chapter two will explore in detail, it is often named and measured in its ‘basic’ or ‘functional’ form as the capacity to sign a name or to read and write a simple a sentence (UNESCO, 2017). The deployment of literacy rates, in which individuals, groups and populations are defined in binary ways as either ‘literate’ or ‘illiterate’, continues to dominate ways to measure ‘progress’ in the field, as well as ‘progress’ within and between groups and nations (Robinson-Pant, 2008). Literacy rates (or sometimes a proxy of years of schooling) are one of the ways in which
education has been represented in composite indices such as the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI), as well as in measurement against the targets of the Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) frameworks (UNESCO, 2015, UNDP, 2016).

Literacy rates help to name or identify those who have been historically excluded from education, or who have experienced education of poor quality. For some, they represent “focal features of deprivation” (Sen, 1999, p. 103). In the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), whose conceptualisations of ‘literacy’ and ‘education’ have dominated and shaped the field, ‘basic’ literacy, often represented by literacy rates, is a “fundamental human right” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 136). Those without access to ‘literacy’, this dominant perspective argues, are among those “left behind,” the “most marginalised” or “hardest to reach” (UNESCO, 2006, UNESCO, 2015, UN, 2015). Naming ‘illiteracy’ is both conceptual, and a call to action: “any theory of justice that proposes political principles defining basic human entitlements ought to be able to confront these inequalities and the challenges they pose” (Nussbaum, 2006, pp. 224-5).

The dichotomy of literacy/illiteracy, however, while offering one way to name and identify inequality, is nevertheless subject to naming problems. For some, this adheres to the dichotomy itself and is addressed by the increasingly dominant notion of lifelong learning, which theorises skills, learning and literacy on a continuum, and challenges the idea that there exists a “definite line between a ‘literate’ and ‘non-literate’ person” (Hanemann, 2015, p. 299). Lifelong learning aims to challenge how ‘literacy’ is measured, and the spaces and mechanisms by which learning can be said to take place. It is lifelong learning that has been translated into the most recent iteration of the global development frameworks, that in the language of SDG4 aims “to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN, 2015). Nevertheless, the metrics of the indicators focusing on adults in SDG4 prioritise ‘functional’ forms of literacy and narrow notions of ‘life skills’ over more substantive forms (Unterhalter, 2017a, King, 2017).

For others, naming problems of the literate/illiterate dichotomy centre not on the product of adult education or the spaces of learning, but on the process of education itself. These critics trouble the ways in which the notion of ‘illiteracy’ positions adults and challenge the identity work that ‘being illiterate’ might do. They argue that ‘deficit’ models of adult
education position ‘uneducated’ or ‘illiterate’ adults as lacking agency, knowledge or power, treating them as “empty vessels” whom teachers or literacy facilitators should fill with pre-defined knowledge (Freire, 1970, p. 52-67). Alternatives to this “banking model” (Freire, 1970) argue that processes of adult education should recognise the specificity of adults and adult learning, and start “with what they know and are already doing rather than what they cannot do” (Rogers and Street, 2012, p. 4). These kinds of models draw links between ‘reading the world’ and ‘reading the word’ (Freire and Macedo, 1987), linking adult education with empowerment and citizenship through critical literacy, particularly in the context of liberation and independence movements (McCowan, 2006, Stromquist, 1997, Stromquist, 2006).

These concerns about power and the position of ‘illiterate’ individuals and groups are taken up by a third set of responses to the naming problem, by those arguing that naming what ‘literacy’ is and does is itself subject to naming problems that are embedded in global and national power hierarchies, and who call for not ‘literacy’ but diverse ‘literacies’ and ‘literacy practices’ as the object of analysis (Street, 2011, Bartlett, 2008). Drawing on rich ethnographies, these studies recognise the heterogeneity of adult learner subjectivities, and question the assumption that ‘literacy’ autonomously leads to benefit as a universal, neutral and objectively valuable good (Street, 1984, Street, 2001, Robinson-Pant, 2004c, Robinson-Pant, 2008). These critiques argue that the very act of naming, identifying and aiming to address ‘illiteracy’ through dominant structures and languages can serve to entrench rather than transform inequalities for marginalised groups (Street, 1984, Dyer, 2008, Holland and Skinner, 2008). These theorists argue for a notion of pluralised, socially-situated practices embedded in context (Barton et al., 2000, Prinsloo and Breier, 1996, Maddox, 2008).

Naming the ‘problem’ of educational exclusion can thus position ‘uneducated’ and ‘illiterate’ individuals and groups in different ways that raise questions for social justice. What is not contested is that adult education is a process that should aim at social inclusion; the contestations lie within how to understand and name exclusion and how to measure and work against it. It will be the work of chapter two to map in more detail these contestations. In the following section, I want to first introduce some of the ways in which the ‘problem’ of illiteracy and inequality in adult education can be understood to be gendered, in ways that are themselves subjects to naming concerns.
“Looking back over nearly 30 years to when I started working in ‘women’s literacy’, the picture is surprisingly similar: around 775 million people who cannot read and write, two-thirds of whom were/are women. [...] Even more striking than these statistics is that we development workers still talk about ‘women’s literacy’ in the same way. [...] Social change cannot be understood in terms of only one factor - literacy. Life is not so simple as being ‘empowered’ or not” (Robinson-Pant in Eldred et al., 2014, pp. 662-4).

A consideration of the gendered dimensions of the field of adult education, or ‘women’s literacy’, is not new. As Anna Robinson-Pant highlights above, it has been discussed for too long ‘in the same way’, reducing the complex gendered processes of development, social change and empowerment to just one unit of education (literacy) and just one ‘target’ (women). Women’s education is seen as a particularly valuable focus of development through correlation analyses in advocacy documents that correlate years of education or women’s literacy with a wide range of positive development outcomes: improved health outcomes for women themselves and their children, economic growth and income equality, better participatory and representative democracy and care for the environment to name just a few (UNESCO, 2013, UNESCO, 2014b). But in analyses of the ‘returns’ to literacy and/or education, women become both the target and the means of development, in instrumental benefits for their children, families and broader societies. These analyses have driven a focus on the benefits to women’s empowerment in policy and practice, particularly in the form of adult literacy programmes (Robinson-Pant, 2014).

A ‘unit’ approach to literacy and to gender is furthermore often brought together in the language of the goals and targets of international development frameworks. Adult literacy rates, as with other forms of educational metrics, have been overlaid by gender parity, measuring the ratio of men: women who are defined as literate (UNESCO, 2015, p. 139). In each of the three education and development frameworks that have dominated the sector since 2000, gender parity and literacy overlap in either the targets or goals themselves: MDG 3 (“to promote gender equality and empower women”) included a gender parity indicator for the youth literacy rate (UN, 2002); EfA Goal 4 aimed to “achieve a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women” (UNESCO, 2000);
and SDG 4 (cited above) includes a provision in target 4.6 to “ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy” (UN, 2015). These goals and targets layer literacy and gender together, with some attention to age – differentiating ‘girls’ from ‘women’, and as ‘youth’ – but they rest on a construction of both literacy and gender that is subject to binaries in counting ‘units’ of literate/illiterate, men/women.

Critiques of the reduction of complex processes of gender equality and empowerment to the numerical units of gender parity are widespread not only in the literature on women’s literacy, but also in the literature discussing these international frameworks from a gender and education perspective more broadly (Unterhalter, 2005, Unterhalter, 2012c, Unterhalter and North, 2011, North, 2010, Kabeer, 2005, Kabeer, 2010). At the same time, however, many of these authors acknowledge the dilemma of working towards social justice in a climate of ‘what gets measured, counts’, and stress the importance of striving towards connecting “what is measured with what is valued” (Unterhalter, 2017c, p. 3) in both education and gender development work. The dilemma is the advocacy space that such frameworks and measurement mechanisms offer to “critical friends” (Unterhalter, 2012d), valued for driving policy and diverting funding and attention, but critiqued for ways in which social justice goals can become attenuated. This dilemma is echoed in the adult education field, as critiques have been levied against the orthodoxy of universalised approaches to literacy exemplified by these goals, simultaneous with concerns that adults and adult literacy rates were neglected from the MDG goals and targets (Tagoe, 2008). Naming problems adhere to measuring and advocating for social justice around both adult education and gender.

The place of women as the ‘target’ of literacy programmes for women’s ‘empowerment’ adds a second threshold to be crossed, and a second naming problem to consider. Just as ‘literacy’ can be constructed as a line, so too gender equality and/or female empowerment can be constructed as a threshold, drawing a line that names literate women as ‘empowered’, and others as not with “artificial neatness” (Greany, 2008, p. 57). As Priti Chopra articulates usefully: “conceptualisations of power as a commodity, through which the ‘disempowered-as-illiterate’ subject moves towards becoming an ‘empowered-as-literate’ subject forces constructs of identity into a powerful/powerless dichotomy which does not always do justice to diverse experiences” (Chopra, 2011, p. 635). Too often, female
empowerment as the aim of women’s literacy and adult education programming have worked to treat women as a homogenous group (Robinson-Pant, 2014), and reinforced the stereotype of the ‘illiterate third world woman’ (Robinson-Pant, 2004b). These critiques of the empowerment discourses problematise the ways in which women might be named as ‘empowered’ or not, ‘literate’ or not.

In the language of empowerment, ‘illiterate women’ are held to be doubly marginalised by both their educational or literacy status and their gender. These inequalities are held to be mutually reinforcing and mirroring: a lack of education can be a barrier to gender equality, while gender inequalities can be a barrier to education. Many of the barriers to participation in adult education have long been understood through a gendered lens, as both structural and socially constructed concerns (Robinson-Pant, 2014). Layering gender into the field raises questions of whether to consider educational exclusion as a prior marker of inequality, whether gender inequality is more forceful, or whether inequality lies in an interaction of the two. The direction of causality is hard to prove: “literacy is a manifestation of inequality as much as a cause of it” (Hamilton and Pitt, 2011, p. 604); so too failure to attend to the structures of gendered inequality rather than its manifestations only offer truncated forms of female ‘empowerment’. Understanding the complexity of the relationship between gendered inequality and educational exclusion, and pushing forward how we name and (re)present this relationship, is an ongoing process and one to which this thesis aims to contribute.

Gender can thus serve as a lens through which to understand inequality within the adult educational space, but too often in superficial ways that do not reflect the complex processes that might have led to greater numbers of women being ‘illiterate’ than men. This thesis works to not only talk about ‘women’s literacy’ differently, but to continue to call into question and engage with the complex relationships between adult education, literacy, gender and power. In talking differently within the discursive boundaries of the adult education field, this thesis begins by asking where gender is located and how gender is understood, and in later discussion will make the case that violence enriches our understanding of this inter-relationship. This thesis aims to question both what gender ‘is’, and what it ‘does’ (Henderson, 2016). It looks not only for gender ‘in’ adult education frameworks, but also explores processes of ‘gendering’: how are women’s experiences
(re)presented and articulated? In what ways is female dis/empowerment, when seen through adult education, a relative and shifting position?

This semantic play on ‘gender in’ and ‘gendering’ is my own attempt to take forward the analysis of Elaine Unterhalter, who has asked questions of the ‘mutable meanings’ of gender in both international and comparative education contexts (Unterhalter, 2007b, Unterhalter, 2012b). In these mutable meanings, gender can be understood as a noun, adjective or verb, but, as Unterhalter argues, work with gender across these semantic and analytic spaces yields the richest forms of understanding. These rich engagements ask how gender is implicated in numbers and bodies (nouns), in structures and agency (as adjectives), and as practices and interactions (verbs). In theorising gender as both an evaluative lens and a political axis of inequality within the adult educational field, I will draw on post-structural engagements with gender that see gender as more than ‘women’, and the problem of ‘gender’ as more than ‘gender inequality’, asking questions of the implications of ‘gender’ in agency, structures, practices and performativity (McNay, 2000, Butler, 1990, Butler, 1997). Gender can be named not only as ‘women’, but as a socially constructed set of structures and practices that are performed and (re)produced.

[Adult Education, Gender and] Violence

The naming problems associated with violence add nuance and complicate the naming problems identified thus far. Attendance to naming violence gained in momentum at the international level through the 1981 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), both of which mobilised a human rights discourse with a broad base of signatories, but around which local translations and contestations have inevitably emerged (Merry, 2009, Tamale and Oloka-Onyango, 1995), including within South Africa (Meintjes, 2003). The goals and targets of the education and international development frameworks of the 2000s, however, were silent on questions of violence, in part reflecting the narrowed focus of both the EFA and the MDG frameworks on access to education and gender parity discussed above (Parkes et al., 2016).

As the 2000s progressed, the case was increasingly made that eradication of violence against women could and should be named as deeply embedded in the progress and
strategic commitments of all of the MDGs, in ways that saw acts of physical, emotional and sexual violence as both “an extreme manifestation of gender inequality and a means of perpetuating it” (WHO, 2005, p. 6). This focus on violence against women was paralleled by a growing base of literature that considered gender-based violence from a school-related perspective (SRGBV), highlighting the prevalence of gender violence in schools but simultaneously the potential space of schooling to challenge violence (Parkes et al., 2016, Leach et al., 2014). Such work explicitly aimed to address the gap raised by the critique of the absence of a gender lens in earlier work focused on violence in schools (Dunne et al., 2006). As with the absences in global frameworks on adults and adult education, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development attempted to answer these gaps, and to offer opportunities for both advocacy and action to eradicate violence against women and girls (Kjaerulf et al., 2016). Violence is embedded in both the gender goal of SDG 5 and the goal of SDG 16 which is concerned with peace, inclusion and justice. Links between education, gender and violence come too in target 4.7 of SDG 4 which includes gender equality and the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence in its definition of the necessary knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development (UN, 2015, Kjaerulf et al., 2016).

This burgeoning focus on gender-based violence in schools, however, has concentrated on spaces and gendered relationships and structures that have tended not to extend to adult education settings, as this thesis aims to explore. In the women’s literacy field, a much smaller set of studies have highlighted ways in which violence has limited women’s participation in adult education, and understood this violence as not solely physical, but through the lens of psychological and emotional, structural and symbolic forms of violence (Horsman, 2000, Duckworth, 2014). In work under the New Literacy Studies umbrella, verbal and physical conflict over women’s participation in adult education has been contextualised by negotiation over broader gender norms, in which “women see themselves as participants in a process of change that centres on family relationships, and as such, are redefining their places (and spaces) of social participation” (Kalman, 2005, p. 185). For Judith Kalman, a key part of these resistances is discursive, emphasising the role of laughter in contesting male resistance to change, through women learners’ jokes that named absence from class as mariditis or ‘husbanditis’ (Kalman, 2005, p. 197). Analysis of these forms of resistance have been echoed elsewhere such as in Brian Maddox’s research in Nepal (Maddox, 2008), and will be picked up in the analytical chapters which follow.
Beyond the women’s literacy field, concerns around gender, violence and forms of adult learning in South Africa (as elsewhere) tend to cluster in a range of violence prevention interventions that often combine economic or health-focused interventions with aims to reduce violence among and against adults. The Stepping Stones participatory programme, for example, which works with both women and men to build more gender equitable relationships, aims to reduce the prevalence of both violence and HIV, and has been shown to counter male risk-taking behaviours and the perpetration of inter-personal violence (IPV) (Jewkes et al., 2008, Gibbs et al., 2015). Other research has shown that the mass media intervention ‘Soul City’, which models positive norms through ‘edutainment’, has had positive effects on both knowledge of domestic violence and attitudes to its acceptability (Usdin et al., 2005). Interventions around micro-finance, accompanied by gender training, have also been shown to reduce IPV and behaviours associated with the spread of HIV (Jan et al., 2011, Pronyk et al., 2006, Pronyk et al., 2008). These violence interventions take a similar approach to many of the women’s literacy and women’s empowerment initiatives in which forms of development are seen as linked (UIL, 2015), an approach that increasingly characterises the “integrated and indivisible” approach of the SDG agenda (UN, 2015, p. 1), and ways to understand inter-linkages across the goals, including through attention to the underpinnings of gender equality (UN Women, 2018).

Attendance to violence in the South African context thus highlights ways in which the naming of what violence is and does, and how it is gendered, is subject to regional and national variations, contexts and histories (Parkes et al., 2016). In South Africa, inter-personal violence has been understood through a gendered lens in ways that have shaped national conversations differently and more urgently than those on the international development stage. This can in part be traced to the HIV crisis in South Africa (and the continent more broadly), and concerns to understand the complex inter-relationship of gender inequality, sexual violence and HIV prevalence at both school and community levels. Studies of HIV prevalence have highlighted that girls and young women are disproportionately impacted by this crisis (Van Loggerenberg et al., 2012), while the inter-relationship between HIV and forms of violence has also led to useful work reflecting on hegemonic masculinities and structures of patriarchy in the country, and the ways in which these can impact both women and men in negative ways (Stern and Buikema, 2013, Stern et al., 2015), as well as problematising the relationship between violent masculinities, passive femininities, HIV and schooling (Morrell, 2002, Bhana et al., 2009, Morrell et al.,
2009). Associated literature that takes a gendered perspective to naming and shaming has powerfully explored the stigma and shame associated with both disclosure of HIV status and physical and emotional violence, particularly sexualised violence (Wood, 2005, Strebel et al., 2006, Marks, 2002, Jewkes et al., 2000, Pantelic et al., 2017).

Overlaying a concern with the prevalence of HIV and violence in the country has been a concern with how they manifest, represent and reflect deep legacies of gendered and raced social inequality (Ramphele, 2005, Gqola, 2015). A second layer of nuance to the international debates around violence thus comes through the evolving political economy of the South African national context. Gender violence in South Africa has a long history (Scully, 1995, Murray, 2010); postcolonial readings of rape and sexualised violence have traced the ways in which gendered and raced hierarchies and control continue to contextualise contemporary sexual violence (Mama, 1997, Coetzee and du Toit, 2017). So too readings of gender violence in the country have contextualised the levels of violence in histories of apartheid, and the intense negotiations and mobilisation of the women’s movement in the transition to democracy for gendered violence to be part of the legislative, rights-based agenda (Britton, 2006), including in relation to domestic violence (Meintjes, 2003), and to secure commitments by the Department of Education to address school-based violence (Chisholm and September, 2005). The National Constitution (1996) was a landmark progressive document enshrining rights to dignity, privacy and equality, and to be free from all forms of violence at the national level that reflected some of the broad coalitions that emerged around gender, particularly during the 1990s (Waylen, 2007, Goetz and Hassim, 2003). Women’s movements continue to engage with State legislature in pushing forward agendas to confront gender violence (Gouws, 2016).

There remains, however, a disconnect between the South African discourses and practice (Vetten, 2014, Hassim, 2009), and policies around gender violence and gender equity are not well enacted at the middle and local levels, including within the education sector (Parkes, 2016, Moletsane et al., 2015b). Cultures of blame and patriarchal values continue to enable, if not legitimise violence against girls and women (Moffett, 2006, Gqola, 2007, Jewkes et al., 2005), including amongst some professionals such as nurses or teachers who could be positioned to challenge this violence (Kim and Motsei, 2002, Bhana et al., 2009). While schools in South Africa are seen as a potential space in which norms and collective experiences of violence might be challenged (de Lange and Mitchell, 2014), adolescent girls
continue to be particularly at risk of inter-personal violence, including those at school (Petersen et al., 2005, Jewkes et al., 2011). Levels of violence in the country continue to be high, both in terms of gender violence but also other forms of violence and violent protest. The Marikana massacre on August 16th 2012, in which striking platinum miners were killed by South African police, and which has been read as a ‘turning point’ (Alexander, 2013) in democratic and labour relations, took place just as I began my fieldwork, initiating new conversations about the legacies of apartheid, and raced and classed violence (Bond and Motti, 2013, Mkhize, 2015, Ndlovu, 2013).

What much of the literature cited here does is to name acts of physical violence, at the same time as situating them in broader processes of social inequality. Consideration of violence in the adult education field is far less common than concerns around how gender is imbued in processes of adult education. But in asking how violence might be implicated in this field, particular attention to adults themselves - as bearers of agency and knowledge, and as subject to norms, structures and the perpetuation of multi-dimensional forms of violence - becomes evidently important, in ways that take forward some of the discussion raised in the previous section around the heterogeneity of adult learners, and that builds on the work cited here. In attendance to the space of violence and the interconnections between adults, education and gender, new ways of thinking about the field might be yielded.

My understanding of violence in this thesis thus articulates with my understanding of both adult education and of gender, in that it deploys a post-structural lens that takes analysis beyond questions of units – whether of literacy, men/women, or acts of violence – and reflects on ways in which meanings are made around practices within discourse (Heslop et al., 2017). I will draw on studies cited here that works across and beyond the gendered binaries of (female) victim and (male) perpetrator, instead seeing violence within its social context of relationships and nexuses of power, in which “violence is always linked in some way to norms, structures and subjectivities associated with gender” (Parkes, 2015, p. 9). This thesis will be concerned that acts of physical violence do not “obliterate...from view other forms of violence” (Žižek, 2008, p. 9). It will work to name the multi-dimensional inter-linkages between violence and gender through a theoretical lens that locates them in an “continuum” of physical, emotional, structural and symbolic violence and which is attendant to the “reverberations” of self-blame and shame (Bourgois, 2002).
“Much as I think about gender as em-bodied, I think about social history as en-landed” (Connell, in discussion with Livholts, 2010, p. 271).

Adult education, gender and violence are all concerned with social interactions and processes, but do not happen in a vacuum: educational exclusion, gender inequalities and patterns of violence are socio-culturally located in histories that are intimately bound by place and space. ‘Locating’ this study in the national context of South Africa and the provincial and local context of a single community in rural KwaZulu-Natal is thus not solely an empirical or descriptive move, but has theoretical and contextual implications: as far as gender is ‘em-bodied’, it is inscribed on bodies that are located in rich ‘en-landed’ social histories. These ‘en-landed’ histories raise new naming problems around marginalisation, and the social dynamics of space.

Naming these en-landed social histories without falling into the trap of stereotypes and pathologisation introduces the final set of naming concerns to this thesis, that relate to how best to name the racialised inequalities that have continued salience in both the forms of marginalisation and social exclusion in South Africa today, as well as in the measurements of inequality and the policies to address this racialised history. The four racial categories of White, Indian, Coloured and Black imposed and entrenched a colour bar and hierarchy through the 1950 ‘Population Registration Act’, which was introduced by the National Party elected in 1948; in signalling the “foundation of apartheid” (Seekings, 2008, p. 3) it shaped and segregated access to public and private spaces and social institutions. These imposed categories essentialised understandings of race in ways that create naming problems for those wishing to name racialised inequalities but without (re)entrenching a logic of difference (Gouws, 2017). Understanding inequality in South Africa is subject to specific naming problems that are shaped by the racist logic of the colonial and apartheid systems of governance and social relations, and by their contemporary legacies.

One way in which these racialised histories have been named and understood is with a lens of space and place, through which colonial and apartheid histories have been understood as imbued with “spatial characteristics” (Christopher, 2001, p. 8). The colonial
policies of segregation and the post-1948 policies of apartheid were rooted in an etymology and ideology of ‘apart’-ness, that divided the population and land of South Africa along racialised lines. This ideology was increasingly formalised in a raft of legislature that limited the movement of black Africans in laws that simultaneously exploited black labour (Wolpe, 1972). This legislature included the notorious pass laws in which every black African had to carry a ‘service book’ that indicated their employer and place of abode. Apartheid spatial and labour laws affected black African men and women differently; the resistance of black women was particularly powerfully mobilised against these pass laws, and the ways in which they entrenched gendered and classed differences among the black African population (Gasa, 2008, MacLean, 2004).

Overlaying the demarcation of space through racialised categories in everyday movement and interactions were ways in which the colonial and apartheid era limited black ownership of land and the profile of housing in both urban and rural areas, designed to limit black unified resistance to colonial rule and to apartheid by fuelling ethno-linguistic divisions and essentialised notions of ‘tribalism’ (Sithole, 2008, Beall et al., 2005). Forced removals typified the implementation of the segregationist policies both in KwaZulu-Natal and across the country more broadly (Smith, 2003). The spatial dynamics of poverty and inequality continue to have salience in contemporary dynamics of cities, suburban and rural areas of the country (Robinson, 1997), concentrating economic and social capital in historically white areas, and continuing to affect social and daily mobility of Black Africans (Turok, 2011), as chapter five will explore in more detail. Reflecting social segregation more broadly, the history of segregated schooling has meant that while historically better-resourced White, Indian and Coloured schools have become increasingly integrated since the transition to democracy, poor Black learners continue to attend under-resourced and racially homogenous schools of poorer quality (Soudien, 2004, Spaull, 2013, Yamauchi, 2011). These legacies of segregation and educational exclusion have had a profound impact on the shape of adult education, as chapter three will explore.

In the post-apartheid era, the salience of race continues to shape readings of public space. Symbolic contestations over naming of streets and public squares reflect a continued concern over racialised socio-spatial inclusion (Goodrich and Bombardella, 2012), echoed in nuanced analysis of the politics of memory invoked by particular monuments, memorials and museums in contemporary nation-building (Crampton, 2001, Schönfeldt-
Aultman, 2006, Hook, 2005). The interaction of space with the symbols of raced injustice was powerfully invoked in protests at South African universities, beginning with the #RhodesMustFall campaign at the University of Cape Town in 2015, in which the statue of the British colonialist Cecil Rhodes became a symbol of institutional racism and was removed after a month of student protest and activism (Bosch, 2017). These protests against the symbolic instantiation of raced injustice were quickly linked with protests against raced economic inequality, through the #FeesMustFall campaign and its rejection of “state-tempered” capitalism (Molefe, 2016), although with some contestations around the extent to which the protests were anti-capitalist, or concerned with inclusion into capitalist structures (Gouws, 2017). Links were further made through protest and social media to issues around sexual violence and rape on university campuses (Meth, 2017, Bashonga and Khuzwayo, 2017). Such protests have re-ignited a focus on the ways in which higher education across South Africa continues to be shaped by inequalities that fall along raced and classed lines (Nyamnjoh, 2016, Chetty, 2014, Soudien, 2015). They have prompted renewed debate in discussions around addressing epistemic violence and the need to decolonise higher education curricula (Prinsloo, 2016, Heleta, 2016, Mbembe, 2016), that parallels concerns to decolonise the (re)production of knowledge in research and publishing agendas (Epstein and Morrell, 2012, Moletsane, 2015, Moletsane et al., 2015a, Tikly and Bond, 2018).

Attendance to namings in spaces, through the symbolic and epistemic as well as the substantive and material forms of access, thus serves as a signal of complex processes associated with raced, classed and gendered inequalities that continue to resonate in contemporary analyses and political debate in South Africa. Within these concerns about space, however, the (re)presentation of rurality has at times been subject to binaries, deficit discourses and processes of stigmatisation that circle back to and reframe the naming problem which has threaded throughout this introduction. Rural spaces can be subject to “a fantasy whereby the innocence of the rural exists in binaries as a foil to the corruption of the urban; the naivety of the rural contrasts to the sophistication of the urban; the ignorance of the rural and the knowing of the urban” (Balfour et al., 2012, ii). This stigmatisation can be (re)produced through research which constrains the agency of rural participants and/or fails to recognise their knowledge: “we are required to ask questions with a focus shifting from the deficits in the participants and their communities, to the possibilities for social change even in the midst of adversity” (Moletsane, 2012, p. 6).
Partly in response to such concerns, I have therefore chosen to anonymise the community in which this field study was conducted, and present instead an account of adult education, gender and violence that is situated in a pseudonym, a place which I have named in isiZulu ‘Endaweni’ ('in the Place'). This community of Endaweni is located in the Valley of a Thousand Hills, between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, and sits in the valley and slopes of one of these hills, in rural KwaZulu-Natal. The process by which I chose to locate this study in Endaweni, through a series of pilot visits to communities in which the adult education campaign was being delivered, will be discussed in chapter four. In chapter five, I will offer an etnographic introduction to this community, drawing on both the academic history of research in this area of the Valley of a Thousand Hills and on a range of data from community interlocutors engaged with the adult education campaign and with whom I spent time during the period of the field study.

The process of 'locating' the study thus raises important questions of my decision to name just these three terms: why these three markers of inequality or marginalised subjectivities? Why ‘adult education, gender and violence’? (Re)presenting inequality in KwaZulu-Natal and in South Africa demands attention not only to gender, but to race, poverty, class, age, ethnicity and culture. To understand adult education, gender and violence together, therefore, this thesis looks for a dynamic theory of inequality that is attendant to interactions and intersections across different forms and dimensions of marginalisation, and that locates these forms and dimensions in their socio-cultural and political histories. It looks for a theory that is attendant to the complexities and messy realities of shifting, unfixed identities and lived lives, that can be simultaneously conscious of categories and look beyond them. It looks for a theory that can engage with structural constraints and political actions. In the following discussion, I will argue that intersectionality offers a way to name and to theorise the complex and dynamic inter-relationship of exclusion and oppression that underpins adult education, gender and violence in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

**Reflecting ‘between’ and ‘across’: an intersectional approach**

The theory of ‘intersectionality’ is etymologically grounded in the language of ‘between’. Intersectionality was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw as a spatial metaphor (drawn from the idea of an ‘intersection’ or crossroads) to describe the meeting and compounding
of gendered and raced discrimination experienced by “women who are Black and Blacks who are women” (Cho et al., 2013, p. 790). Crenshaw’s early work in the legal sphere in the United States aimed to challenge the notion of a universal subject of anti-discrimination and later anti-violence movements by explicitly recognising these intersecting forms of discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989, Crenshaw, 1991). Her work drew on histories of black feminist scholarship that critiqued a notion of marginalisation and oppression along a single axis, and which recognised and made visible the specificity of black women’s experiences of racism and sexism as distinct from those of both black men and white women (Hill Collins, 1989, Gines, 2011, Brah and Phoenix, 2004). In Audre Lorde’s words from her 1982 Harvard address, “there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not lead single-issue lives” (Lorde, 2012, p. 138).

Early critiques of intersectionality particularly engage with what Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and Leslie McCall name in their review of the intersectionality ‘field’ the “eponymous ‘et cetera’ problem” (Cho et al., 2013, p. 787). This critique was most famously voiced by Judith Butler, who argued that feminist theorists who try to elaborate on power differentials, such as what she names ‘colour’ or sexuality, “invariably close with an embarrassed ‘etc.’ at the end of the list” (Butler, 1990, p. 196). Responses to this critique from intersectional theorists argue that the notion of a list of positions and positionings suggests an ‘add and stir’ approach that fails to capture the dynamic and shifting nature of oppression, and instead propose the conceptualisation of a “matrix of domination” (Hill Collins, 1990, p. 276, Gouws, 2017, May, 2015). Intersectional approaches should not merely be additive (Hancock, 2007), although they do encourage us to “ask the other question” (Matsuda, 1991, p. 1189), and to critically engage with the inter-linking of social structures across the “imperialist white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy” (hooks, 2003). In the African feminist literature, these processes of decentring and reframing gender were further influenced by postcolonial critiques of Eurocentric conceptualisations of individuals and relationships (Oyèwùmí, 2002, Nnaemeka, 2004), that highlight both the globalised and the localised dimensions to this matrix.

Since Crenshaw’s early articulations in the legal domain, the ‘intersections’ of different identities have been articulated with a variety of different metaphors, many of which have expanded the theoretical imagery to encompass the dynamism and flow of multiple and overlapping oppression. Some address the static and flat imagery of the intersection
through the addition of a “roundabout to the centre” and “mountains to add verticality”,
highlighting through the fluidity of a roundabout and the differentiations of a
mountainous landscape the ways in which “privilege in one respect can mitigate or modify
oppression in another” (Garry, 2011, pp. 831-33). Intersecting inequalities are both inter-
dependent, and operate through “different organising logics” (Phoenix and Pattynama,
2006). Intersectional social relations and forms of capital may be either reinforcing or
contradictory, in different contexts (Anthias, 2005). These logics are contingent and
relational, and shaped by socio-temporal context; Efua Prah envisions intersectionality as
“the roots of a tree with its multiple pathways that sustain the growth of an individual.
The root system is dense, inter-locking [and] inter-structured, shaped largely by the
surrounding environmental sphere, of which historicity is fundamental” (Prah, 2017, pp. 1-
2). Gender, race and class are all embedded in this system.

Although these metaphors develop the shape of these intersections differently, they share
a concern to explore the relationship between intersectional subjectivities, structures and
time, and to ask “whether there is an essential subject of intersectionality” and if so, how
this subject is situated and constituted (Cho et al., 2013, p. 785). Each of these theoretical
and metaphorical framings is concerned to look “beyond the more narrowly
circumscribed demands for inclusion within the logics of sameness and difference”, and
instead to address “the larger ideological structures in which subjects, problems and
solutions were framed” (Cho et al., 2013, p. 791). A critical stance is taken to the categories
themselves that interrogates “the boundary-making and boundary-defining process itself”
(McCall, 2005, p. 1773). In these processes of boundary-formation, ‘identities’ are both
material and “authentic instruments of inequality” that are “static and hard to move”
(MacKinnon, 2013, p. 1023), socially determined and situated in knowledge that is bound by
time and place (Haraway, 1988). Intersectionality is concerned with identities as far as they
are embedded in nexuses of power (Tomlinson, 2013).

While intersectional theorisations share the naming concerns discussed in this
introduction thus far, through their concern to trouble and theorise categories and
matrices of oppression, they have been deployed in many different directions. One
relevant set of work is through the way that intersectional analysis has usefully been
applied to narratives, often with an explicit focus on gender as one of the multiple axes of a
constructed subjectivity. These narrative explorations reflect on the ways in which
women’s subject positions shift dynamically across axes of difference during the telling of life histories, often through the agency of the story-teller (Buitelaar, 2006, Ludvig, 2006, Mirza, 2013). In some narratives this occurs in the foregrounding of alternate and alternative positions, in others through a deliberate blending that defies categorisation, such as through *mestiza* hybridities (Anzaldúa, 1987). Other narratives meditate on intersectionality from an auto-biographical perspective, exploring both representations of intersectional black identities and their performed, embodied (re)productions (Prah, 2017, Mthethwa-Sommers, 2014). Intersectional ‘meaning-making’ has further applied intersectional analysis to policy, offering critiques of policies that mainstream gender without attention to its structural and political intersections (Verloo, 2006). These qualitative forms of intersectional narrative and policy analysis often attend to the ways in which intersectional identities are inscribed in discourse, working not to (re)centre the subject but instead prioritising a post-structural understanding of shifting categories and subjectification, as this thesis aims to do.

A second set of relevant work takes an intersectional approach to analyses of social phenomena, including gender violence. Jasbir Puar, for example, re-reads the anti-violence work of Crenshaw with a new materialist perspective, and analyses an act of domestic violence through the lens of intersectionality as assemblage and “event”, troubling the complex interactions of categories in a unified subject through a suggestion of ‘becoming’ that draws in both relational dynamics and material objects (Puar, 2013). Others have used intersectionality to theorise and examine the political economies of violence at a macro-level, taking a matrix approach rather than detailed analysis of a single event or act (Anthias, 2014, Husso et al., 2016). Analytical work also builds links from the discursive space to praxis and activism, aiming to go “beyond [the] mere comprehension of intersectional dynamics to transform them” (Cho et al., 2013, p. 786), and to “dismantle the violent capacities of racialized-gendered systems that operate under the pretense of neutrality” (Spade, 2013, p. 1033). In recent years, intersectionality has held a central space in activist and protest discourses in both U.S. and South African contexts, engaging with structural violence around race, gender and sexuality (Gouws, 2017, Khan, 2017).

For some of these more activist approaches, however, the increasing prevalence of intersectional analysis has gone hand-in-hand with a de-politicisation and neutralising of the concept, as a “buzzword” in some forms of development and analysis (Davis, 2008).
This has centred both around work that deploys the notion of intersectionality poorly, as a ‘thin’ concept in the additive ways that have been discussed above in response to Judith Butler’s critique. But it also centres in analysis that moves to integrate theorisations of privilege into the intersectional approach, through reflections on whiteness and middle-class positionings (Levine-Rasky, 2011), or on masculinities, including in the South African transitional context (Moolman, 2013, Moolman, 2017, Swartz, 2013). Benita Moolman argues that this kind of analysis should be “parallel” to analysis of marginalisation, but others have raised concern at potential appropriations of the concept, arguing that extension of its use (re)erases the experiences and positionalities of black women (Alexander-Floyd, 2012, Bilge, 2013). I will reflexively engage with the concerns that these debates raise around positionality and the (re)production of knowledge in chapter four.

What intersectionality thus offers are multiple inter-linked ways with which to engage with the richness and complexity of categories, subjectivities and structures, and to ask how they are socially constructed and (re)produced in discourse as well as materially manifest. My understanding of discourse draws on the post-structural approaches to gender and to violence referenced throughout this introduction (Butler, 1990, Butler, 1997, McNay, 2000, Chopra, 2011, Heslop et al., 2017); I see talk and acts as mutually constitutive and shaped by power, but unstable and contested, allowing space for agency through the praxis of embodied norms in which struggle and resistance is possible. Underpinning each of the parts of my thesis title is an interest in practice, performativity and discourse, that ties together my understanding of adult education, gender, violence and embeds this understanding within a contextualised and dynamic intersectional matrix.

The aim of this thesis is thus articulated through an intersectional approach: this thesis will explore and theorise how meanings around intersecting dis/advantage are socio-culturally invested, how they are bound and regulated by educational processes, constructions of gender and violence, and constellations of space, place and time. The rationale for these aims is a contention that to answer the call of the SDGs to attend to the ‘furthest behind first’ (UN, 2015), we need to understand how intersectional forms of disadvantage as a symbolic, structural and material construct are articulated and experienced in “integrated and indivisible” ways (UN, 2015). We need to use this knowledge to progress social justice in the field of adult education, and to ‘talk differently’ about women’s literacy (Eldred et al., 2014, pp. 662-4). This thesis aims to do so, by asking
whether and how adult education, gender and violence are inter-connected, through a study located in a single community in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

**Structure of the thesis**

Unpacking the discursive space of adult education will be the focus of chapter two of this thesis. This chapter discusses three approaches to understanding literacy: the dominant agenda espoused by UNESCO and international development frameworks, including Education for All, the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals; the understandings of literacy and the theorising around adult education from the perspective of those concerned with ‘capabilities’; and, finally, the ways in which ‘literacies’, as practices and processes associated with socially situated understandings of adult education, are conceptualised in the body of work described under the umbrella of New Literacy Studies. The chapter asks how each of these frameworks understand gender, how they discursively position ‘learners’, and whether and how they are concerned with violence. It will reflect on what they raise for an intersectional understanding of the dynamics and social processes associated with being and becoming ‘educated’ or ‘literate’.

Chapter three draws down from these over-arching global frameworks to consider the specificities of the South African history of adult education, through analysis that socio-politically situates this study. It details some of the key discursive and policy touchstones that have shaped the evolution of adult education in South Africa, ending by setting out the conceptual and logistical structure of the *Kha ri Gude* (‘Let Us Learn!’) mass national adult education campaign, which ran in South Africa from 2008-2014, and which bounds the discursive and empirical terrain of this thesis. This chapter will question how the evolution of adult education in South Africa speaks to gendered and racialised histories of social and educational exclusion, and explore where and how violence is implicated in these processes and the studies that research and reflect upon them.

Chapter four of this thesis is concerned with methodology, and how I conducted research into adult education, gender and violence in rural KwaZulu-Natal. This chapter focuses upon gender, power, and position in the field. It details the methods that shaped the first and second phases of the data collection, setting out ways in which the study might or might not fulfil the requirements of a ‘true’ ethnography. It then moves to a reflexive
engagement with different readings of ‘me’ as a researcher, and how these readings were mediated and blurred by my work with Phili, my interpreter. It asks what it means to research violence without asking direct questions about violence, and considers some ethical concerns that doing this kind of research raised and continue to raise in the writing of this thesis. The chapter ends with reflection on ‘translating’, both in terms of translating the data into English from isiZulu but further in terms of translation as an interpretative, analytical process of (re)presenting meanings first co-constructed in the field.

Chapter five tries to make visible the staged processes of mapping the discursive terrain of the delivery of the *Kha ri Gude* campaign by detailing my ethnographic journey into the field as an embodied-researcher-subject. It locates the study in *Endaweni*, the pseudonym for the rural community in which I conducted the fieldwork, in the Valley of a Thousand Hills region of the South African province of KwaZulu-Natal. This mapping of the field includes hand-drawn physical maps, as well as psycho-social ‘reads’ of the space in which I conducted the research. It engages with how the single community in which I based the research was (re)presented to me, and explores the ways in which increasingly rich and detailed ‘reads’ of the space opened meanings around the intersecting forms of dis/advantage associated with education, gender and violence within this community.

Chapter six of this thesis populates the discursive terrain of the *Kha ri Gude* campaign with ethnographic data collected with actors at multiple levels of the design, management and delivery of the campaign, and with adult learners themselves. It explores how learning and learners were represented by these various actors in talk, training and in texts, before reflecting on some of the dynamics within one of the opening classes of the campaign which I observed as a participant. In these different discursive (re)productions of learners and learning, the chapter particularly explores how a set of meanings around ‘motivating’ learners were represented and contextualised differently at these different levels.

Chapter seven is the first of three chapters which explores data predominantly collected in life-history interviews with adult learners in the *Kha ri Gude* campaign. It asks how ‘being uneducated’ was discursively constructed in intersectional ways that drew in constructs of poverty, racialised inequality, and gendered norms and hierarchies. It begins by tracing the power of the signifier ‘uneducated’ to (re)present disadvantage through scripts that were written and read onto bodies and into (the absence of) material objects and access to
particular spaces. It asks how these bounded comparisons operated as imaginaries, with equivalence in these constructions of being ‘uneducated’ despite very different educational trajectories across generations of women aged 25-95. The chapter explores how for some learners being ‘uneducated’ was a way to mediate the shame and pain associated with poverty and raced inequality, while other learners mobilised forms of gendered status drawn with reference to marriage, motherhood and religious positionings.

Chapter eight considers the other side of the coin, by reflecting on adult learners’ understandings of being ‘educated’, particularly as it was constructed through a socio-economic frame of inclusion. The chapter questions how education was (re)presented as leading to better work, improved lives, and a range of communicative practices through English. It discusses how becoming ‘educated’ was constructed as ‘continuing forward’ in complex ways that might over-invest the signifier with multiple meanings associated with intersecting inequalities, particularly those associated with a nexus of gendered and raced structural inequality. The chapter asks to what extent these intersecting inequalities were (mis)recognised, and considers aspirations for education and decent work through a contextualised lens of structural and symbolic violence.

Chapter nine brings together these ideas in exploring the ways in which adult learning might act as an affiliative space, asking how practices and social networks might offer ways to mediate different forms of violence. It brings together accounts of physical violence with representation of the everyday structural violence of poverty, and (re)productions of symbolic violence within families. It looks at the embodiment of these forms of violence, borne in memories, pain and poor physical and mental health, and asks how the adult education space might offer the potential to mediate these inter-locking experiences of inequality through levity and laughter, and positive (inter)actions.

Chapter ten concludes the thesis. It returns to the title of the thesis to ask what has been revealed of adult education at the intersect of gender and violence in rural KwaZulu-Natal. It sets out some limitations of the study, as well as looking forward to future research avenues that might enrich the findings. The thesis concludes that intersectionally informed understandings of gender, and inter-connected understandings of violence both separately and together can offer heuristic devices to theorise and inform the work of adult education in more socially just ways.
2 Locating gendered learners in adult education and literacy frameworks

Adult education, literacy or development? Conflations and convergences

As I set out in my introduction, the field of adult education is a multivalent and contested space, which draws in different traditions and drives towards different political processes. So too the concept of ‘literacy’ itself is contested, and the processes entailed in ‘becoming literate’ are imbued with questions of power, political ideologies, and broader processes of social and educational inclusion or marginalisation. The work to define the field is thus complicated and blurred at the borders when processes of adult education are conceptually elided with or reduced to ‘literacy’. This chapter will therefore question what ‘literacy’ is and does, how it has been defined, and how ‘literate’ and ‘illiterate’ members of a population have been counted and accounted for. It asks questions of how ‘literacy’ has been seen to be delivered, learned, used, practiced or socially situated, and how the process of becoming ‘literate’ has been seen to inter-relate with broader questions of what it means to be or become ‘educated’. In this chapter I want to attend to literacy and adult education, considering them both separately and together, and exploring the multiple meanings and theoretical framings of ‘education’ and ‘literacy’ in policy, programming, and broader discourses of dis/advantage. I will ask what the potential conflations and convergences do, in their (re)productions of adult learner subjectivities, and how the purpose of adult education is constructed.

This chapter will consider these questions through three inter-related framings of adult education, asking how these framings develop and/or critique each other. In the first part of this chapter, I will explore the place of literacy and adult education in the international development architecture, particularly in the global conferences, goals and targets from 1990-2015, and looking forward to 2030 through analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals. A key part of this discussion will focus on the practical work and conceptual thinking of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the development organisation for whom literacy has been a central concern since its inception in 1946. This discussion will look at how these conceptualisations have tended to normative, universal constructions of literacy, underpinned by the language of
rights, asking how deprivation within these frames has been understood, and how adult education is understood to relate to formal schooling.

A related paradigm will be considered in the second part of this chapter, which looks at ways in which literacy and education have been understood by theorists and empirical researchers who are concerned with capabilities. The discussion will reflect on how literacy has held a place as a universal social good in this work, but also as a potential ‘conversion’ to access other resources that draws in broader understandings of education. It will ask how the conceptualisation of education and/or literacy through a capability lens as ‘fundamentals’, ‘basic’ and ‘central’ to human development expands the ways in which being ‘literate’ might represent a universal threshold for social justice, and situates being and becoming ‘literate’ or ‘educated’ within broader notions of dis/advantage and wellbeing.

The third part of this chapter will engage with a body of work grouped under the umbrella of the New Literacy Studies (NLS), which levies strong critiques against the framings of ‘literacy’ as a single ‘good’ that ‘confers benefits’, and which can in many ways be seen to develop both conceptually and methodologically as a research framework in response to critiques of universalising approaches to adult education. This set of ethnographically informed studies aims to trouble the universalist monolithic idea of ‘literacy’, which populations, groups and individuals are constructed as either having access to or not. The discussion of this body of work will explore the implications of a focus on exploring literacy ‘practices’ and ‘situated’ understandings of literacies, understood as multiple practices which are socio-culturally located and bound by context, asking to what extent they challenge the implicit links between ‘literacy’ and ‘development.

Each of these three perspectives, to a greater or lesser extent, asks questions around the ways in which ‘literacy’ or ‘literacies’ relate to power, to social good, and to values. They engage in different ways with questions of inequality, justice and dis/advantage. Their different conceptualisations of ‘literacy/literacies’ in turn position illiterate populations and individuals differently, and are concerned with identities in different ways. The chapter will ask how they theorise the intersection of ‘illiteracy’ with other forms of marginalisation and educational exclusion, how gender is seen as imbued in these processes, and how they speak to (or are silent about) violence.
A right? A key? A catalyst? Conceptualisations of literacy as a universal good

Since the formation of UNESCO in 1946, when the world was recovering from the Second World War, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations in Paris in 1948, UNESCO has held that literacy is a universal human right (UNESCO, 2006, Wagner, 2011). This commitment remains enshrined in its mission statement and has been reiterated over many years in different declarations and resolutions. For UNESCO, this right is one that is ‘fundamental’; in the language of the 1975 Persepolis Declaration, “literacy is not an end in itself. It is a fundamental human right” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 136). Such definitions of the right to literacy as ‘fundamental’ were operationalised in work such as the Experimental World Literacy Programme, designed to “test and demonstrate the economic and social returns of literacy” through a ‘functional’ literacy project in eleven developing countries (Goldstone, 1979). This language of functionality specifically emphasised links to human capital through returns from ‘literacy’ to employment and economic growth (Levine, 1982).

By the launch of the Education for All (EfA) movement in 1990, UNESCO had (to some extent) moved away from a focus on ‘functionality’, but the conceptualisation of literacy as ‘fundamental’ persisted: the World Declaration on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand described literacy as “a necessary skill in itself and the foundation of other life skills” (UNESCO, 2015, p. 145). At the launch of the EfA movement, literacy was defined as an “essential learning tool” and one of the “basic learning needs” of every person (UNESCO, 1990, Article 1.1). Literacy was explicitly linked to learning, and through the construct of the ‘basic’ and ‘essential’ nature of literacy a threshold was generated, drawing a line between those who possessed the ‘tools’ or ‘needs’ required to learn and those who still lacked them. Learning without literacy was constructed as significantly constrained. This language reframed the threshold to be crossed in terms of learning rather than functionality, but nevertheless continued to position ‘illiterate’ populations as in deficit.

EfA had been launched in 1990 with pledges to universalise primary education and reduce illiteracy by 2000, but it was not until the second EfA conference in 2000 in Dakar, Senegal that these pledges were translated into the six internationally agreed goals that shaped the dynamics of the field for the next fifteen years. Unlike the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were also adopted in 2000, and from which adult literacy was
notably absent, EfA goal 4 spoke directly to adults in general, and women in particular, through the aim to “achieve a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults” (UNESCO, 2000). This literacy threshold for adults was further expanded by the references to ‘life-skills’ in EfA goal 3, which aimed to “ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes” (UNESCO, 2000). Mobilisation around EfA goal 3 was poor, however, and the skills agenda was the “most neglected” and least well-articulated of the EfA movement, in part, according to the official account, “because no targets or indicators were set to monitor its progress” (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 3). The absence of internationally comparable indicators meant that ‘foundational skills’ were measured in many contexts by the proxies of years of schooling or access to secondary education (UNESCO, 2015, p. 112).

Overlaying these conceptual slippages were ways in which different national metrics which were developed over time resulted in both variability and inaccuracy in comparisons between and within countries (UNESCO, 2015, p. 138). The launch of the EfA and MDG frameworks in 2000 renewed focus on ways to assess literacy rates in national comparisons (Maddox and Esposito, 2011), but comparisons were notoriously difficult to standardise, and attempts at unifying these metrics through programmes such as UNESCO’s Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) were slow to design and hard to scale up (Ercikan et al., 2008). While attempts were made to conceptualise ‘literacy’ beyond binaries, UNESCO themselves acknowledged at the end of the EfA term that “more needs to be done” in relation to measuring both literacy and skills (UNESCO, 2015, p. 135), and that in many countries the measurement of ‘literate’ societies continued to map against UNESCO’s 1958 definitions of ‘functionality’, or ‘reading and writing a simple sentence’ (UNESCO, 2015, p. 139, UNESCO, 2017).

Notwithstanding the flaws and contestations around measurements, these movements were not successful on their own terms, and the raw numbers of illiterate adults has remained “stubbornly high” at between 750 and 785 million adults (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 4). While there has been remarkable progress in particular countries in reducing the number of illiterate adults, or for particular populations within countries, the global illiteracy figures have remained static, and global dominant policy and funding discourses have remained remarkably similar over the past thirty years (Robinson-Pant, 2004b, p. 15,
Eldred et al., 2014, p. 662, UNESCO, 2017). In UNESCO’s words, adult education has been “neglected” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 27), and reductions in adult illiteracy “may be the consequence of younger, better educated people replacing older, less educated ones, and not due to the implementation of effective literacy programmes” (UNESCO, 2015, p. 135). The somewhat sinister language of ‘replacement’ highlights ways in which adult literacy has been seen as a temporary fix, designed to fill the gaps left by disadvantage in earlier years, but only until ‘younger’ people are ‘better educated’ through the quality agenda that underpinned constructions of education in these frameworks.

This idea of replacement also underpins some of the conceptualisations of ‘basic’ or ‘compensatory’ models of adult education that have persisted in the work of the UNESCO in the years from 1950-2000 and into the first decade of the millennium, despite shifts in rhetoric (Torres, 2011, Wagner, 2011). These models translate the basic literacy of schooled, quality education to a model of adult education as a “second chance” or “second road”, and draw equivalence through the metaphor of parallel travel between the content of formal schooling cycles and adult education (Wagner, 2011). But in doing so, adult education lost out to the political capital, resources and will mobilised for the education of children and youth; adult education consistently receives less than 1% of national education budgets (UNESCO, 2006, UIL, 2016). The work of UNESCO and the international frameworks cited here thus represent a particular kind of universal approach, grounded in human rights discourses, but critics argue that “rights-based approaches have consistently failed to move beyond rhetoric in the field of adult literacy” (Maddox, 2008, p. 188).

UNESCO also remained committed through the series of International Conferences on the Education of Adults (CONFINTEA) to sharing best practice around adult education, and to monitoring national adult education policies through the work of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and the Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) (UIL, 2009, UIL, 2013, UIL, 2016). The CONFINTEA conferences and the GRALE reports also worked to shift the language of UNESCO, representing deeper engagement with adult literacy itself and a focus on adults specifically that recognised national and regional global variations in programming and contexts (Hanemann, 2015). In the 1997 Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning adopted in Germany at CONFINTEA V, UNESCO’s language continued to pivot on the notion that literacy is a “fundamental human right”, although Article 2 of the Declaration went further to argue that “literacy is
more than a right; it is key to the twenty-first century” (UNESCO, 1997). Article 11 of the
Declaration fleshed out how this right was understood in relation to adult literacy
specifically, as “the basic knowledge and skills needed by all in a rapidly changing world”
(UNESCO, 1997). This changing world was held to be one of ‘knowledge-based societies’
in which literacy is a “catalyst for participation in social, cultural, political and economic
activities, and for learning throughout life” (UNESCO, 1997). “Unreached and excluded”
adults, however, as Article 11 emphasised, continued to be the “most urgent concern”
(UNESCO, 1997).

In these metaphors of literacy as a ‘catalyst’ or ‘key’ that peppered the Hamburg
Declaration, those without literacy were positioned as not only constrained in their
learning throughout their lives but as ‘locked out’ of all forms of social, cultural, political
and economic participation. The economic growth and human capital arguments for
literacy which characterised the ‘functionality’ approach were replaced by a much broader
conceptualisation of the instrumental (and to a lesser extent intrinsic) value of literacy.
For some such as Nelly Stromquist, arguing from a long-held interest in women’s
empowerment and citizenship (Stromquist, 1997, Stromquist, 2006, Stromquist, 2013b),
CONFINTEA V and the resulting Hamburg Declaration represented “a major milestone,
with its detailed attention to gender issues, especially in fostering empowerment through
knowledge” (Stromquist, 2013a, p. 31). Learning was given a wide definition, embedded in
social processes of (gendered) human rights, including key feminist issues such as
domestic and sexual violence, the burden of care and decision making. Narrow notions of
literacy were associated with broader claims for gender, including reference to violence.

The language of “learning throughout life” in the Hamburg Declaration (1997) was further
translated in the Belém Declaration (2009) adopted at CONFINTEA VI in Brazil. Literacy
was re-affirmed in Article 4 of the Belém Declaration to be “the most significant
foundation upon which to build comprehensive, inclusive and integrated lifelong and life-
wide learning for all young people and adults” (UNESCO, 2010). Article 7 of the
Declaration stressed a definition of learning as: “learning to know, learning to do, learning
to be, and learning to live together” (UNESCO, 2010), echoing the language of the ‘Four
placed emphasis throughout on “literacy as a continuum”, but evoked EFA Goal 4 in
Article 11 with the pledge to “redouble efforts to reduce illiteracy by 50 per cent from 2000
levels by 2015” and in the recommendations committed to “focusing literacy actions on women and highly disadvantaged populations” (UNESCO, 2010).

For Stromquist (2013), the Belém Declaration (2009) represented a regression in terms of the approach to gender from the more substantive claims of the 1997 Hamburg Declaration. She argues that the “simplistic addition of gender to other social markers undermines the pervasive and often severe nature of social and economic oppression linked to gender that...affects roughly half of those in each of the other categories” (Stromquist, 2013a, p. 30). While Stromquist does not call for an intersectional approach, her critique of the Belém Declaration’s (2009) statement that the phrase ‘there can be no exclusion arising from age, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, language, religion, disability, rurality, sexual identity or orientation, poverty, displacement or imprisonment’ represents a “[long] list of...disadvantages” (Stromquist, 2013a, p. 30) echoes the ways in which intersectional theorists argue against static and list-based approaches that do not take into account the overlaps and interactions between forms of disadvantage that are often gendered, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis (pp. 20-23). As Stromquist highlights, in the Belém Declaration, the language of female empowerment and its politicised context was erased, and the EfA and MDG frameworks were (re)endorsed.

The framing of ‘lifelong and life-wide learning’ that the 2009 Belém Declaration deployed dominated UNESCO’s subsequent conceptualisations of literacy and adult education (Torres, 2011), and it is ‘lifelong learning’ that was translated into the language of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Agenda, and the aim of SDG 4 “to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN, 2015). As I noted in my introduction, lifelong learning theorises both learning and skills as on a continuum, and explicitly aims to challenge the idea that there is a “definite line between a ‘literate’ and ‘non-literate’ person” (Hanemann, 2015, p. 299). Lifelong learning was defined by UNESCO as ‘continuing’ and ‘incidental’, happening in informal ways and spaces as well as delivered through employment and formal education cycles (UIL, 2009).

Two critiques have been articulated in response to the field of lifelong learning, the first of which echo Stromquist’s analysis of the Belém Declaration. This critique concerns ways in which lifelong learning has operated as a gender-blind concept (Rogers, 2006), in which the divisions between ‘low-skilled’ and ‘high-skilled’ learners, while couched in gender-
blind and neutral language, in fact suggests subjectivities that evoke race, class and gender signifiers without recognising the structures that shape these subjectivities (Brine, 2006). The second concerns ways in which, despite many endorsements of lifelong learning, the concept has had most traction thus far within societies and groups of nations that are constructed as ‘knowledge-based’, such as those within the European Union or the OECD (UIL, 2009, Jarvis, 2014). Lifelong learning is associated with the increased prevalence of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and highly skilled workforces, and the growing and increasingly prevalent focus on ‘digital literacies’ (UIL, 2016). The framing of lifelong learning, however, has been critiqued for the potential to create new divisions, not solely between educated/uneducated individuals and groups, but further to exacerbate global inequalities as ‘basic’ education continues to be the focus for poorer individuals, groups and indeed nations (Torres, 2004, Brine, 2006). This distinction between ‘basic’ and other forms of adult education has particular resonance in the South African context, in which the division in 2009 of the Department of Education into the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) creates the potential for misrecognition of the breadth of lifelong learning (Walters and Watters, 2017), as will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.

Despite some evolution and contestation, the approach of UNESCO and the international frameworks that speak to education and development continue to be grounded in universal approaches of ‘fundamental human rights’ and ‘opportunities for all’. Within this universal approach, and despite shifts in rhetoric, a concern has persisted to reach the ‘furthest behind first’ or the adults ‘unreached’ or let down by formal education systems through the delivery of adult basic education. For some, as I will explore in the third part of this chapter, these universal frameworks assume that literacy is considered as universally valuable and valued by the (often poor, often female) populations whom interventions target, tending to treat ‘target groups’ as homogenous and assuming that policy-makers can speak for needs (Robinson-Pant, 2008, p. 789). As I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, for others they offer space to “critical friends” (Unterhalter, 2012d) to garner attention and action and to mobilise political will. In the following section, I want to explore a related universal approach, and to ask how those concerned with ‘capabilities’ have conceptualised education and literacy within theories of social justice in ways that both echo and take forward the universalist approaches offered by UNESCO.
Focalising feature(s)? Literacy & gender in the Capabilities Approach

As Ingrid Robeyns has highlighted in recent publications, the capability ‘approach’ represents such a broad range of empirical and theoretical work and approaches that it may be more useful to talk instead about work ‘concerned with capabilities’ than to talk about a single ‘approach’ (Robeyns, 2016, Robeyns, 2017). ‘Capabilities’ are substantive opportunities, or freedoms, and are contrasted with ‘functionings’ or the achieved outcomes of actions: capabilities ask what people are able to do and be, and how they might lead lives that they value (Sen, 1999, Alkire, 2005, Robeyns, 2005, Deneulin, 2009, Nussbaum, 2000, Nussbaum, 2011b). A concern with capabilities encourages us to ask both the question ‘in/equality of what?’ (Sen, 1980), and ‘in/equality between whom?’ (Stewart, 2005, Stewart, 2009). Conceptualisations of capabilities articulate with basic needs as well as human rights approaches (Qizilbash, 2002, Vizard et al., 2011, Nussbaum, 2011a, Sen, 2005), but capabilities theorists argue that the “intrinsic aim of educational policy should be to expand people’s capabilities” (Robeyns, 2006, p. 70).


In articulations of social injustice framed by capabilities, the intersection of illiteracy with gender inequalities often occupies a central position. These intersections are regularly
deployed to illustrate individual lives characterised by constraint and injustice. In Martha Nussbaum’s narration of the lives of Vasanti and Jayamma in India, for example, whose stories she tells as illustrative examples of “two women trying to flourish” (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 15), Nussbaum attributes the injustices that she has narrated through the telling of their life histories first to gendered inequalities (“both live in worlds in which women are profoundly dependent upon males”), to educational exclusion (“both women...have been severely limited by their lack of education”), and finally to the intersection of these inequalities – “a lack [of education] that is explained at least in part by their sex” (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 21). Vasanti’s story opens (and occupies the full first chapter) of Nussbaum’s later book on ‘Creating Capabilities’ too, framed here as a “woman seeking justice”, which is again discussed with central concerns around gender inequalities, educational exclusion, and gendered violence (Nussbaum, 2011b, pp. 1-16). So too, Jonathan Wolff and Avner de-Shalit open their book on ‘Disadvantage’ with the story of Leah, whose life history is interwoven with poverty, gendered social norms, the ‘shame’ of infertility and the risk of violence associated with the Intifada in Israel, a woman who “had no proper education...could not be autonomous” (Wolff and De-Shalit, 2007, pp. 1-2). In these accounts, a ‘lack of education’ is illustrative of constraint and disadvantage. It is compounded by gender inequalities that limit access to healthcare and other resources, and which shape the kinds of possibilities for ‘beings and doings’ of value.

The ‘lack’ of education noted in these narrative accounts can be further found in discussions of capability deprivation at aggregate levels, used to illuminate national and international questions of injustice. Illiteracy rates are deployed by both Sen and Nussbaum to identify regional or national contexts that can be characterised by capability deprivation. Sen describes illiteracy as one of three “focal features of deprivation of basic capabilities”, named alongside premature mortality and undernourishment (Sen, 1999, p. 103), in making comparisons of India with selected sub-Saharan African countries in a chapter that explores “poverty as capability deprivation”. For Nussbaum too, illiteracy rates mark ‘frontiers of injustice’, and adult literacy rates are used alongside life expectancy and GDP to represent a “world of inequalities”, such as between the ‘top’ nations and Sierra Leone, a country depicted through a literacy rate of 36 percent, GDP per capita of $470 and life expectancy of 34.5 years, at the time of her writing (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 224). As Nussbaum herself notes, “any theory of justice that proposes political principles defining basic human entitlements ought to be able to confront these inequalities and the
challenges they pose” (Nussbaum, 2006, pp. 224-5). Illiteracy is seen as both an indicative cause and consequence of inequality, framed alongside economic inequalities and health.

Literacy/illiteracy rates in these accounts thus operate as an indication of broad processes of disadvantage, which include but extend beyond educational exclusion itself, and often engage simultaneously with questions of poverty. This inter-relationship between illiteracy and poverty is represented too through indicators in international rankings informed by the capability approach such as the Multi-Dimension Poverty Index (Alkire and Foster, 2011, Alkire and Sumner, 2013). While well-being by both Sen and Nussbaum is understood in multi-dimensional terms that “cannot be reduced to a single component” (Qizilbash, 2002, p. 465), a ‘lack of education’ in individual lives, or illiteracy rates at the aggregate level, serve as ‘focal features’ of capability deprivation. These focalisations operate in the two different evaluative spaces that, for Nussbaum at least, characterise the capability approach: the space of “comparative quality-of-life assessment”, and questions of “basic social justice” (Nussbaum, 2011b, pp. 18-19). As Nussbaum and Sen both note in discussing national illiteracy rates, “these data, being aggregates, [do not] tell us all we need to know about how the most deprived people in the world are doing” (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 225), nor do they “provide a comprehensive picture of capability-poverty” (Sen, 1999, p. 103). They nevertheless suggest sites where deprivation might ‘cluster’ (Wolff and De-Shalit, 2007), and where to start in identifying “striking failures” of national and regional development (Sen, 1999, p. 103).

In both Sen and Nussbaum’s work, the fleshing out of the relationship between illiteracy and deprivation in part is done through reference to literacy as holding a ‘basic’ status, whether as a capability, or as a ‘basic human entitlement’. This ‘basic’ nature of literacy is articulated both intrinsically and instrumentally. For Sen, to “be able to read and write” is a “necessary condition for well-being” (Sen, 1999). “Illiteracy and innumeracy are forms of insecurity in themselves” (Sen, 2003, p. 22), without reference to other capabilities. But as a ‘necessary condition’ for well-being, the value of literacy is also articulated with reference to instrumental concerns, particularly in the relationship between ‘basic education’ and access to “gainful employment”, or the relationship between being ‘illiterate’ and the “ability to understand and invoke legal rights” (Sen, 2003, p. 24). Some of these instrumental relationships are gendered, including the association between female literacy specifically and reduced child mortality, for example, that leads Sen to consider literacy to
have a “powerful effect”, particularly for women, and by extension, their families (Sen, 1999, p. 198). Finally, Sen understands the processes of becoming educated through ‘schooling’ as “deeply influential in the identity of a person and the way we see each other, and this can have serious implications for conflicts and violence” (Sen, 2003, p. 28). For Sen, three different spaces of the importance of ‘literacy’ (and education) are thus pivotal: as a form of security; as instrumentally related to access to and participation in other social goods; and as implicated in positive social interactions and identity formation, which may include literacy learning but also go beyond it to encompass socio-cultural processes associated with education more broadly. These notes about ‘being educated’ are made within a talk entitled, ‘Reflections on Literacy’, given at a UNESCO open forum and subsequently published in a set of papers (Sen, 2003). As Brian Maddox notes, in both this paper and elsewhere, Sen uses the terms literacy, basic education, and schooling interchangeably, “in the broad sense of an achieved educational capability” (Maddox, 2008, p. 191).

For Nussbaum, the ‘basic’ nature of literacy is articulated through her universal list of ‘ten central capabilities’, in which the capability for “senses, imagination and thought” are “informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training” (Nussbaum, 2000, pp. 78-9). As a basic ‘entitlement’, the value of literacy for Nussbaum sits at a minimal threshold of justice that is grounded in its place in one of her ten central capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011b, p. 18). These ten capabilities should be pursued “treating each as an end and none as mere tools of others” (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 70). For Nussbaum, humans themselves are ‘ends’ of development, but so too her central capabilities should be seen as ends as well as means. They have both an “irreducible heterogeneity” (Nussbaum, 2011b, p. 35) and represent an “inter-locking set” (Nussbaum, 2011b, p. 27). Trade-offs between these central, basic capabilities, for Nussbaum, are defined as ‘tragic choices’ (Nussbaum, 2011b, pp. 37-8).

Normative accounts offered by Sen and Nussbaum converge in the ways in which they make the case against illiteracy, but the ways in which ‘literacy’ can be converted to valued beings and doings is left more open. In Wolff and de-Shalit’s words, echoing Sen’s concerns about the ‘insecurity’ associated with illiteracy quoted above, “lacking education is always a very corrosive disadvantage, particularly with respect to vulnerability of functioning, whereas its fertility appears to be much more context-dependent” (Wolff and
De-Shalit, 2007, p. 144). As with the rights-based approaches that have defined UNESCO’s work, therefore, the idea of thresholds is useful to capabilities, although the theory itself encourages contestation in where the thresholds might be said to lie, and questions continue to be asked about the threshold for ‘sufficient’ learning or literacy in measurements and assessment tools (Maddox and Esposito, 2011).

A second approach to literacy from those concerned with capabilities takes a slightly different perspective. This analysis looks at how the value of literacy learning and outcomes associated with becoming ‘literate’ has been articulated, and how the rationale for provision of adult literacy classes might best be justified to governments, drawing on capabilities as a rationale for the value of literacy, and as a conceptual underpinning of how to measure the success of interventions. In her analysis of the rates of return to a literacy programme organised by Oxfam in India, Sabina Alkire highlights through such capability analysis that neither of the stated aims of the class to deliver ‘literacy’ or to further ‘income-generation activities’ were successful, and that furthermore only one of the classes which she reviewed survived to a second iteration (Alkire, 2002, p. 256-7). Alkire shows how shifting the metric from perceived reading and writing outcomes or putative economic empowerment to a focus on the social processes associated with attending classes yields much more nuanced results, that much more adequately capture the perspectives of the women participants themselves, and that is missing from the dominant approaches exemplified by UNESCO and discussed above (Alkire, 2002, pp. 255-270).

These insights are echoed in other studies too, such as the work of Esther Prins in the U.S. and El Salvador, which highlights the opportunities that literacy programmes can offer to build affiliative networks that alleviate the emotional and material burdens of poverty, that can be shaped particularly by structural constraints associated with gender inequality. This work stresses ways in which ‘affiliation’ and social networks are an important but too often neglected dimension of adult learning, particularly for marginalised groups (Prins et al., 2009, Prins, 2006, Prins, 2010).

Participation in a ‘literacy class’, particularly for women, is thus understood by Alkire and Prins as offering a particularly fertile space for ‘affiliation’. Affiliation, for Nussbaum, is an “architectonic” capability, that involves “social interaction” as well as having the “social bases of social respect and non-humiliation”, and the possibilities to be “treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others” (Nussbaum, 2011b, p. 39). Affiliation
is a particularly ‘fertile’ functioning in contexts of corrosive capability deprivation (Wolff and De-Shalit, 2007, pp. 138-142). This thesis will build on both the notion of affiliation and questions of the ‘insecurity’ or ‘corrosion’ of lacking education through deeper engagement with questions of intersecting marginalisation and theories of violence, fleshing out ways in which being ‘uneducated’ might be associated with ‘vulnerability’ or ‘insecurity’ of both functionings and capabilities.

Attendance to the processes of adult education, and the ‘being’ rather than solely ‘doing’ outcomes of literacy learning thus gives a much richer account of the value of ‘literacy’, and a broader justification than that offered by either human capital or rights-based approaches, as articulated by UNESCO above. Questions of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ associated with literacy in use and educational processes highlight ways in which:

“literacy capabilities are future oriented, as they relate to people’s potential uses of literacy, and how that enhances their wider freedoms and agency. The values that people associate with literacy may be associated with the enhancement of these potentials, as well as specific functionings” (Maddox, 2008, p. 191).

These ways in which ‘education’ might be understood as ‘being and becoming’, and the implications for measurement, have been further conceptualised by Elaine Unterhalter in a paper which draws on the concept of ‘negative capability’ (Unterhalter, 2017c). This phrase, from a letter that Keats wrote to his brothers in 1817, highlights the importance of “being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason” for the purposes of scientific and literary creative endeavour (Keats, as cited in Taylor, 2010, p. 403). It is associated with an openness, with questions of representation that include attendance to the emotions and embodied experiences, and that allows for the space of “dream, phantasy and possibility” (Taylor, 2010, p. 403). For Unterhalter, it is this space of doubt and possibility that is creative, and that illuminates elements of education that might be ‘unmeasurable’. As she indicates, “measuring capabilities entails not so much counting outputs...but opportunities, that is capabilities, [and] the conditions that constrain or facilitate these” (Unterhalter, 2017c, p. 5). The ‘negative’ of this kind of capability is conceptualised not as an opposite to ‘positive’, but rather as a space in which the value of the emotional and embodied experiences of education might be theorised (Unterhalter, 2017b), as this thesis aims to do.
A useful space to consider how to take these questions of the ‘unmeasurable’ forward is offered in theorisations within the capability approach around the intersect between internal and combined capabilities. Internal capabilities are defined as traits and abilities that are “developed or trained”, while “combined capabilities” represent a substantive opportunity within a context of the absence of structural constraints (Nussbaum, 2011b, pp. 20-21). Education sits at this intersect between the internal and the combined. The educational space itself can be one way in which structures can constrain, for example, through the segregation of educational systems that characterised the apartheid system in South Africa. Attendance to the inter-relationship between structural inequalities and educational exclusion may yield more useful understandings of the space of capabilities. Processes of education themselves shape what we come to have reason to value (Vaughan and Walker, 2012). For some groups, education may not offer the conversion of capabilities that it does to others, particularly in contexts of discriminatory labour market opportunities (Kosko, 2012).

What these discussions about both education and literacy, as well as the language of negative capability and the psychoanalytic perspective highlight, is that education, with its interest in potentiality and the future, its inherently contextual and social nature, and its relationship with identity formation as well as skills and knowledge, is significantly more than its ‘outcomes’. They also raise questions of the ‘focalising’ potential of ‘illiteracy’ to “direct attention”, “promote adequate analysis” and “make pertinent recommendations for action” in relation to inequality, that Nussbaum argues are the key projects of those concerned with capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011b, p. 3). Such ‘focalising’ processes, however, have tended to be top-down, deploying a perspective that sees the aggregate level, but which might be less sensitive to context and intimate social nuances, and to processes of social change and contestation around the meanings and value attached to education, and learning and using literacy, with which this thesis is concerned.

For Maddox, this attendance to context and to the social and structural is essential and a key gap in conceptualisations of literacy offered by both Sen and Nussbaum. Maddox argues that Sen and Nussbaum’s account both offer a conceptualisation of literacy that assumes a “metaphysical neutrality” to literacy as a social good (Maddox, 2008, p. 194), and that does not take into account the kinds of nuances that are raised by broader conceptualisations of ‘education’ within the capability approach. His critique of the
universalising direction of capabilities is also taken up by Brian Street, who questions whether the capability approach can accommodate plural understandings of literacy itself, within a plural understanding of the good (Street, 2011). In this sense, then, one of the unresolved critiques of the conceptualisations of literacy in the capabilities framings centres around universalism, and the extent to which ‘illiteracy’ or ‘being uneducated’ itself directly maps against marginalisation. Nussbaum has argued that cultural relativism romanticizes the injustice of illiteracy (Nussbaum, 2003), but a powerful set of critiques nevertheless raise questions of the contested relationship between ‘value’, the ‘good’ and the ‘benefits’ of literacy. These will be considered in the following section through the work of those concerned with troubling the notion of ‘literacy’ as a single product, but who instead explore a range of literacy practices, and contextualise these practices within broader social, political and ideological processes and discourses around what it means to be ‘marginalised’ and ‘uneducated’.

Beyond the universal? Gender & literacies in the New Literacy Studies

“Conceptualisations of power as a commodity, through which the ‘disempowered-as-illiterate’ subject moves towards becoming an ‘empowered-as-literate’ subject forces constructs of identity into a powerful/powerless dichotomy which does not always do justice to diverse experiences” (Chopra, 2011: 635).

The New Literacy Studies (NLS) is distinct both as a methodological approach but also in terms of the ways in which ‘literacy’ is conceptualised. This broad set of studies argues from the ethnographic perspective that ‘literacy’ should be understood as multiple, socio-culturally situated practices: ‘literacies’ (Barton et al., 2000, Street, 2003, Street, 2001). Rather than treating literacy as a noun, which people either have or do not have, and which can be seen to lead to benefits, literacy is understood as a verb which is practiced in a range of contexts (Bartlett, 2008). Literacy is neither assumed to be universal, nor unitary and uniform, nor a neutral social good (Robinson-Pant, 2008, Street, 2011). The NLS approach argues that ways in which literacy can function as a social good depends on context and power, attending to diversity as well as questions of inclusion and exclusion to illustrate the relationship between literacy and marginalisation. It is argued that this attention to diversity is particularly a feature of the ‘ethnographic perspective’ (Rogers and
street, 2012); those working in the NLS aim, as in Priti Chopra’s words above, to “do justice to diverse experiences”.

As an understanding of literacies as practices that sees a uniform definition of ‘literacy’ as a hegemonic discourse (street, 1984, street, 2003, tagoe, 2008, papen, 2005), those working with an NLS approach work to explore a range of socio-cultural practices associated with literacy. These include ways in which literacy practices associated with recitation of religious texts might be differentiated in their social meanings from ‘schooled’ literacy practices or the commercial literacy practices found in the market, all of which might happen within the same community, as Brian Street’s early ethnography in Iran highlighted (street, 1984). Differentiating these contextually informed literacy practices helps identify how subjectivities and power are shaped differently in these different spaces, and how literacy is “not practised in a vacuum: it is always embedded within some socio-cultural set of activities” (Rogers and Street, 2012, p. 17). ‘Schooled’ literacy can be associated with a dominant (often external, urban-based) culture which can feed aspirations for an external, urban-based livelihood (Rogers and Street, 2012, p. 9), internalised through the symbolic capital of ‘being educated’ (walter, 2004).

Attendance to literacy practices beyond the ‘schooled’ literacies that dominate development discourses in this way has illuminated literacy practices in a variety of contexts and spaces. They have elicited new framings of literacy that highlight how it can be ‘proximal’ or ‘mediated’, practiced across and within households and communities collectively rather than just by individuals (basu and foster, 1998, subramanian, 2004, Maddox, 2007), and in ways that are shaped by gender and other social norms (Maddox and Esposito, 2013). Some work that sees gender within pluralised literacy practices echoes Alkire’s research in India cited above in explicitly troubling narratives that the provision of ‘literacy’ will lead autonomously to shifts and benefits in women’s socio-economic practices, particularly in contexts of high gendered inequality (Puchner, 2003). Other gendered work focuses specifically on the literacy practices themselves, and asks how they might be gendered. ‘Subaltern’ literacy practices have been closely associated with gendered norms around power and status, in which women associated learning dominant literacies with negotiating poverty and increased agency (Maddox, 2005). Other ethnographies have explored how female literacy can facilitate agency within courtship and private love letters, shifting gendered notions of women’s agency to act and plan their
own lives (Ahearn, 2004). This work emphasises how these hidden practices have continued to remain absent from development discourses which construct literacy as a public and neutral good that is not tied to specific socio-cultural contexts, norms and institutions. It centres agency in nuanced ways, that reflects on how women’s power might be enhanced in some spaces associated with literacy while constrained in others.

Attention to gender through the NLS perspective has also specifically aimed to unpack ways in which illiterate identities, when gendered, are too often associated with constructs of the ‘third world woman’ as the “cause, rather than a symptom, of underdevelopment” (Robinson-Pant, 2004b). Writers taking NLS approaches, including Anna Robinson-Pant herself, have therefore tried to ‘speak back’ to this reductionist positioning of the ‘[illiterate] third world woman’, which is specifically bound in colonial and colonising paradigms (Mohanty, 1988, Spivak, 2010). Rachel Yates, for example, analysed a national mass literacy programme in Ghana and argued that the composite identities of the illiterate woman created a false dichotomy between vulnerable non-literate women and more ‘empowered’ literate women. She argued that the failure to attend to heterogeneity of the non-literate women, particularly in relation to varied class positions, worked to the detriment of the implementation of the programme, especially in its attendance to poverty reduction (Yates, 1997). So too, in her work with women in India engaged in a mass literacy campaign, Priti Chopra explored through the evolution of a participatory research exercise and four ethnographic vignettes how ‘illiterate’ women can ‘reclaim’ illiteracy and challenge signifying chains which associate illiteracy with ‘lacks’: of cleanliness, of entrepreneurial skills and of political participation, drawing on these postcolonial and post-structural perspectives of gender and development (Chopra, 2004). Other work of this kind has engaged with the complexity of gender and its intersections with other forms of marginalisation, such as Kate Greany’s analysis of literacy programmes in Sudan that highlights how literacy programmes have the potential to both entrench and to transform gendered norms and practices (Greany, 2008).

A number of these studies explicitly critique donor and/or government discourses that make particular assumptions around women’s time and the opportunity costs of attending adult literacy classes, that make drop-out and poor attendance characteristic of the field (Yates, 1997). These studies explore the ways in which discourses around learners and learning are constructed, looking not only at participants’ experiences, but also in the ways
in which facilitators of literacy projects are themselves implicated in discursive production (Chopra, 2014). They ask questions of how the gap between participant and donor expectations and desires is (re)produced, and give recommendations for forms of literacy delivery that are more attendant to making political agendas more inclusive than offering ‘technical’ solutions (Robinson-Pant, 2004a).

NLS studies in a variety of contexts have further highlighted the ways in which ‘demotivated’ or ‘dropped-out’ learners may in fact be performing their own forms of resistance and transmission of norms associated with dominant literacies (Rogers and Street, 2012, Robinson-Pant, 2004a). From a class-based perspective, Laura Betts analyses examples of the ‘illiterate’ campesinos in El Salvador, and highlights ways in which learners themselves negotiated their attendance to literacy classes in line with their own needs and desires (Betts, 2003). Work such as this highlights the need for attendance not only to gender, but to other signifiers of intersecting marginalisation, and the ways in which these subjectivities can interplay with the ‘disadvantage’ associated with being ‘illiterate’. In concern with diverse literacy practices, and their relationship with the socio-cultural worlds that contextualise them, therefore, these ethnographically informed studies are equally concerned to (re)present and unpack both literacy itself and the subjectivities of literacy learners as heterogeneous.

This concern with the heterogeneity of both literacy practices and identities associated with adult learners, through close attention to diversity and thick description of literacy practices, finally highlights how learning ‘literacy’ or attending ‘school’ is not a straightforward path to empowerment for some individuals or groups. Indeed, for some the universalist approaches to literacy noted above can become universalising, eroding marginalised identities and alternative forms of status. As Holland and Skinner’s analysis of social movements in Tij festivals in Nepal suggests, for example, there are ways in which the introduction of literacy into hitherto oral spaces can lead to social stratification and prioritisation of certain forms of knowledge over others. They argue that literacy can have a disempowering or divisive impact in this context, disrupting collective practices and micro-resistances to patriarchal institutions, and inadvertently becoming “an agent positioning women according to education, thereby creating for some a painful sense of disempowerment” (Holland and Skinner, 2008, p. 860). In other contexts, reflections on the ways in which ‘literacy’, ‘school’ and development are linked in the community
governance practices of the pastoralist Rabaris of Kutch in Western India highlight how conventions of a wider literate society have been adopted and transformed by new generations of literate community leaders (Dyer, 2008). Different literacy practices are associated both with power hierarchies, and with dominant and subordinate languages (Wedin, 2006). These studies highlight how the symbolic capital of 'being educated' is bound in other forms of economic, social and cultural capital: the value of 'literacy' is argued to be deeply shaped by context.

In the South African setting, a number of studies working with NLS approaches have situated adult literacy in “understanding the emergence of new South Africa” (Street, 1996, p. 1), in themes around citizenship, spatialised literacy practices and the importance of social networks that have continued salience today, as this thesis will make clear. Mastin Prinsloo and Mignon Breier’s edited volume collated New Literacy Studies perspectives on literacy in the democratic transition and first years of democracy in the country (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996), making clear the ways in which ‘literacy’ was embedded in constructions of citizenship, particularly around a perceived necessity for ‘literacy’ to legitimise voting practices (Prinsloo and Robins, 1996). Much of this work draws on understandings of space that echo those outlined in the introduction of this thesis, in which “the social construction of space often provides a determining context for literacy practices” (Malan, 1996a, p. 141): Malan’s analysis of literacy practices in Bellville South reflects on the ways in which pension day and funeral services offered both formal and local understandings of literacy practices that were mediated by religious, bureaucratic and neighbourhood discourses and hierarchies. Within these spatialised understandings of literacy practices, the role of social networks in ‘mediating’ literacy events is emphasised, in relationships with localised experts to provide community-level representation in a range of official, health and service-based contexts (Kell, 2008, Kell, 1996, Robins, 1996). Some of these mediated literacy practices speak to intersections of spatialised inequality, gender and violence: Ammon China and Steven Robins’ research in a Cape Town shantytown revealed that while such mediation was important in bureaucratic contexts, it “had no currency” in the lives of the ‘petty gangsters’ with whom they conducted research, who were alienated from official governance structures and sought power instead within structures of crime (China and Robins, 1996, p. 157). Also drawing on mediated and spatialised literacy practices, Diana Gibson’s study of gender, power and literacy practices on farms in the Western Cape found that while women were
able to read and write, the gender regime rendered their literacy practices hidden, legitimising gendered norms around work as a male preserve. As she writes succinctly, “literacy and power are inter-related in different ways” (Gibson, 1996, p. 61).

What these NLS framings of literacy in both South Africa and other country contexts highlight is that different ways of defining what literacy is shape understandings of what literacy does. Literacy practices are understood to be plural and socio-culturally situated, with the result that the social, the structural and the symbolic shaping of literacies are considered in this approach in much more nuanced ways. Both literacy practices and ‘literate’/‘illiterate’ identities can be understood in gendered ways that attend to intersections with class, race, caste or ethnicity. Ways in which these intersecting identities meet donor discourses, and instances of resistance and dis/empowerment, are given significant attention by a number of studies working under this umbrella. These micro- as well as meso- levels of interactions and practices shift the ‘focalising’ perspective of the capabilities approaches from constitutional arrangements or the work of government, and engage with plural negotiations of ‘development’ and heterogeneously understood subjectivities. As I highlighted in the introduction to this thesis (pp. 12-13), however, with a few exceptions upon which this thesis will build, these NLS studies nevertheless tend to be silent on questions of violence in their consideration of the women’s literacy field and a concern for understanding the heterogeneity of adult learning experiences, a gap that this thesis aims to address.

**Locating adult learners: talking differently?**

This thesis will build on some of the rich understandings outlined here of how ‘literacy’, and the diversity of literacy practices and literacy learning might be valued. It aims to answer the call of Anna Robinson-Pant to ‘talk differently’ about what literacy represents (Robinson-Pant in Eldred et al., 2014, pp. 662-4), and to push forward ideas of gender and literacy that go beyond locating illiterate identities in the construct of a ‘third world woman’ (Mohanty, 1988, Spivak, 2010, Robinson-Pant, 2004b), building on much of the work cited here. It aims to continue to differentiate between engagements with literacy as single product, the range of literacy practices, and the process of learning literacy and being or becoming ‘literate’ or ‘educated’ discussed in this chapter. Through analysis in the following chapter of the ways in which these meanings around literacy and adult
education have been translated in the South African policy context, and the findings of the ethnographic study which I will set out in chapter four, this thesis aims to trouble meanings around adult education, gender and violence, elicited through multiple actors with varied and varying perspectives.

In thinking about literacy differently, one of the underlying threads of the discussion of this chapter that I will pick up and explore in the chapters which follow is the ways in which adult education inter-relates with questions of earlier social and educational exclusion. Through analysis of life-history interview data, this thesis will explore in depth the processes of forming values associated with ‘education’ in both adult and early lives, and the way that these processes have shaped desire for, and participation in, adult education. The rationale for such an approach, which does not obscure the links between formal cycles of schooling and adult education, is drawn from recognising the dominance of the ‘schooled’ literacies, or the right to literacy as expressed in the work of UNESCO and others cited here. In doing so, I want to build on Vicky Duckworth’s notion of “learning trajectories” (Duckworth, 2014), in which educational processes and literacy practices that draw a continuity from childhood experiences to adult participation in classes. The idea of trajectories differentiates this interest in time from that of lifelong learning perspectives: the interest that I have is not in the ways in which learning takes place in different spaces, but in the ways in which processes of subjectivity formation are themselves lifelong, and bound in education. Within this notion of a trajectory, I see the moment of joining the adult education literacy campaign that is the focus of this study as a potentially disruptive one, in which the (un)fixed identity of being ‘uneducated’ or ‘illiterate’ might be mediated by the dynamics of classroom relationships and affiliations, that are embedded in histories and contemporary dynamics of violence, gender and its intersects in the ‘matrix’ of oppression and resistance (Hill Collins, 1990, p. 276, Gouws, 2017, May, 2015). The following chapter will set out an overview of the shape of these forms of resistance and oppression in the specificities of the South African politics, policies and programming towards adult literacy specifically, and adult education more generally.
3 Adult education in South Africa: the intersect of race, gender and violence

As I noted above in my introductory discussion of the decision to locate the study in KwaZulu-Natal South Africa, the specificity of both the provincial and national context raises particular questions for the aim, naming and framing of this study. As I also discussed in the introduction, gender and violence have interplayed differently in these exclusionary processes (pp. 13-15); the intersection of gendered identities with constructions of race and other markers of dis/advantage have shaped notions of citizenship and what it means to ‘be’ and ‘become’ educated in South Africa, while State violence worked to regulate forms of political dominance and entrench inequalities along these logics of difference (Norval, 1996, Gqola, 2001, Gouws, 2017). In this chapter, I will engage more deeply with the shape of intersecting inequalities that I set out in those opening pages (pp. 16-19), asking questions of how the inter-relationship of inequality and adult education has been framed over time in the academic literature, in policy, and in activism. In doing so, I will build on work in South Africa that sees educational policy as both discourse and having material effects, grounded in the ‘unique’ nature of the post-colonial and post-apartheid state and the politicisation of education (Tikly, 2003, Chisholm, 2005).

This chapter reflects on the inter-relationship between the politicisation of formal education cycles in South Africa and the forms of adult education that developed in parallel, situated in broader processes of educational and socio-economic exclusion in the colonial and apartheid eras. The first part of the chapter will give a brief overview of the shape of educational inclusion and exclusion in the years preceding the 1994 elections, highlighting how the development of education was embedded in structural inequalities designed to shape the labour market and social relations along raced and gendered lines. The second part of this chapter will pick up some of the themes raised in this opening overview, to highlight where and how the development of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) has articulated with these political processes. It will particularly explore how policies in the post-apartheid era worked as a transitional response to the intersecting inequalities of the colonial and apartheid systems, informed and influenced by both national and international agendas around rights, redistribution and redress. In the third part of this chapter, I will set out the specific policy terrain of the mass national adult
education campaign of Kha ri Gude, which is the concern of this thesis. The chapter will conclude by reflecting on how these different policies and programmes can be seen to engage with the inter-relationship between adult education, gender and violence.

**Literacy and learning in South Africa: ‘never value free’**

As Pippa Stein argues in her discussion of literacies in and out of school in South Africa, “literacy learning in South Africa has never been value-free” (Stein, 2008, p. 309). This history has been traced back to the colonial era, in which the teaching of basic literacy and other basic skills to the black ‘indigenous’ populations was bound in deeply stratified labour structures and forms of social and linguistic domination, and the delivery of ‘Western’ values through education that echoed the relationship between colonising processes and the teaching of ‘literacy’ in other parts of sub-Saharan African (Prinsloo, 1999, Wedin, 2008). Colonial era missionary schooling in the Cape was often funded by the State (Prinsloo, 1999), and worked to (re)produce not only raced but gendered inequalities of gender normative domesticity and docility in preparing girls and women for marriage, and boys and men for low-skilled, subjugated labour, often in mining (Leach, 2008, Kallaway, 1984a).

These ideologies of difference reinforced raced, gendered and classed positions, but in ways that were inevitably shaped by and (re)shaped local histories and socio-cultural structures. Among some of the Xhosa and Zulu populations in South Africa in particular, opposition to the colonial conquest and political administration was locally framed through simultaneous rejection of the religion, language and schooling associated with the missionaries (Prinsloo, 1999). Even among those who accepted colonial education, ‘schooled’ literacies were elided with and shaped by Biblical literacies, as new social practices and forms of symbolic status emerged in which language, values, and religious identities coalesced (Prinsloo, 1999). In the latter half of the 19th century, the relationship between education and labour shifted with developments in economic structures, as colonial administrators during the gold and diamond rushes began to rely on (male) literate workers to occupy leadership positions and jobs that were relatively better paid, but nevertheless subject to discrimination and the colour bar (Harries, 1994). Schooling of the colonised further disrupted traditional social groupings and hierarchies, through the
education of ‘indigenous’ elites, whose literacy practices were put to use in the service of the colonial state architecture (Kallaway, 1984b).

By the 1950s, the racial inequality and political subjugation which had underpinned some forms of missionary schooling and segregated labour was (re)translated into the explicitly racialised and racist logics of the apartheid system. These translations were signalled in political and policy discourses in statements such as the now notorious claim of the South African Prime Minister H.F. Verwoerd in 1953 that education for black South Africans should focus on their constructed roles as “hewers of wood and drawers of water” (McKay, 2007, p. 288). The logics underpinning such claims were formally and legislatively structured into the national education systems through the ‘Bantu Education Act’ of 1953, which regulated and segregated school attendance, excluded black South Africans from higher levels of formal education, and differentiated curricula along racial lines that drew on highly ideological principles of ‘Christian National Education’ (Christie and Collins, 1982, Kallaway, 1984a, Kallaway, 2002).

While education in the apartheid era represented a site of the (re)production of inequality, it simultaneously held a central place in the articulation of liberation narratives and the struggle for democracy and social inclusion, located in contestations around race, class and gender. At the intersect of raced and classed inequality that the ideologies of both colonialism and the subsequent apartheid state consciously worked to entrench, adult education in South Africa worked in some spaces and times within the formal structures of the capitalist and educational systems, and in others explicitly against it. The Bantu Education Act had brought not only all formal schooling under the control of the government, but further worked to limit a burgeoning night school movement which had been delivering adult education in different ways around collective organisation and skills development, in part driven by the Communist Party in the 1920s, and later through liberal organisations in the run up to World War II (Bird, 1984). By the early 1960s, however, increasing demands were placed on provision for official registration, and limits on the age and employment status of adult learners able to participate, “marked both an end and a beginning for literacy and language teaching movements” (Bird, 1984, p. 210). This period initiated the breaking up of organised, urban-based movements, including in the two cities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal, but more scattered and piecemeal initiatives continued to work against the apartheid state.
Paralleling processes of educational segregation, language and the subjectivities associated with them continued to be highly politicised during apartheid (Kamwangamalu, 1997, Prinsloo, 1999). Resistances framed through language crystallised in response to the language policies in the 1970s which prioritised learning in Afrikaans, which most black South Africans were unable to speak and which was associated with Afrikaner nationalism, that in part led to the Soweto uprisings of 1976 (Kamwangamalu, 1997, Karlsson, 2002). The Soweto uprisings highlighted how the intersections of racialised and ethno-linguistic processes of exclusion in education were intricately bound in status, privilege and the protection of unequal power structures (Hartshorne, 1992), and further positioned education as one of the key pivots of the struggle for democracy (Chisholm and Fuller, 1996). Schools were disrupted by boycotts and violence associated with broader struggles against apartheid, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal which was subject to high levels of political violence that both directly and indirectly affected schooling (Ntshoe, 2002), as chapter five will discuss. These policies and resistances continue to shape the ways in which schooled literacies are bound in the intersect of linguistic and racialised historical and contemporary marginalisation (Banda, 2003, Blommaert et al., 2005).

As the 1970s and 1980s progressed, shifts in the labour market, a deepening recession and the increasing intensity of the struggle against apartheid continued to influence the provision of adult education. Following the developing economic and political crises that marked this period, a dominant discourse of ‘skills shortages’ led to expansion of technical and vocational education, but with only limited reform and constrained mobility for black workers (Chisholm, 1984). Some delivery of adult education continued to be linked to labour and human capital on the mines, and included classes for workers set up by some of the biggest companies (Vinjevold and Fleisch, 1992), drawing on the ‘functional literacy’ that characterised UNESCO’s approach in the 1970s (Prinsloo, 1999), and that has been discussed in chapter two of this thesis (p. 29). The development of worker education by COSATU, the biggest trade union formed in October 1985, paralleled calls by the students’ movement for “People’s Education for People’s Power”, and set up new forms of collective organising around the intersect of labour rights and forms of informal education (Cooper et al., 2002, Motala and Vally, 2002). Other independent classes drew on Freirean readings of literacy, such as ‘Learn and Teach’ in Johannesburg, funded by anti-apartheid donors in Europe and constructing adult education as an agent of change and social transformation (Prinsloo, 1999, Aitchison, 2010, Aitchison and Alidou, 2009). In this
Freirean tradition, adult illiteracy was seen as “not only a deeply-rooted social problem, but as a result of a determinate structure and dynamic of classes, and a consequence of the apartheid capitalist organisation of production” (Baatjes and Mathe, 2004, p. 393). The circulation of banned Freirean texts in the early 1970s through the radical University Christian Movement (UCM) to students of the Black Conscious Movement had led to piecemeal efforts to deliver literacy alongside community health centres and other self-help projects, but these efforts were short-lived after many of these organisations were banned and their most prominent campaigners, including Steve Biko, detained in police custody (Vally, 2007, Bird, 1984, Nekhwevha, 2002). In addition to working at the intersect of classed and raced inequalities, adult education classes were also organised around the intersect of black women’s gendered identities, in both national projects and programmes organised under the aegis of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), and through community-level organisation (Hopfer, 1997). Some gender-sensitive training of adult educators to deepen gender and anti-racist adult education work was conducted, with efforts to build networks of gender-sensitive adult educators and gender-sensitive adult education curricula (Mackenzie, 1993, Walters, 1996).

Post-apartheid ABET politics & policies, 1994-2014: rights, redistribution, renaissance?

With the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) and other political parties, and the initiation of a transition to democracy in the 1990s, a period of intense negotiation to formulate a reconstructed education system and integrate both schooled and adult formal and non-formal education into the remit of the state was instigated. This centred in the work of the National Education Policy Initiatives (NEPI, 1992), which aimed to translate the People’s Education policies into five key tenets: non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, a unitary system and redress (Weber, 2002). Contestations around the balance between these tenets emerged, however, and it was argued that ‘gender was not on the agenda’ as fully as it should (or could) have been, with sexism and gender equities absent from many of the NEPI discussions (Wolpe, 2005).

In the development of policies and the emerging political agenda of both the transition and the governing ANC in the elections of 1994, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) held a prominent position as a central sub-section of the national discussions.
around education. The colonial and apartheid eras had resulted in millions of South Africans unable to read in any of the eleven national languages, and the black workforce was largely uneducated and unskilled (Baatjes, 2003). The NEPI Report on Adult Basic Education (1992), drawing on the 1991 census, identified approximately 15 million people to be without basic schooling (cited in Rule, 2006, p. 116); over 50% of the South African population over the age of 20 were regarded as illiterate (Baatjes, 2008, p. 206). A second NEPI report on Adult Education (1993) made explicit links between those who lacked education and their economic position, stating that: “many, perhaps more than half, are school dropouts, unemployed, or underemployed in informal sector activities” (cited in Rule, 2006, p. 116).

Recognition of this history translated into multiple layers of policy and legislative responses. The right to adult basic education was explicitly enshrined in chapter two of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), which outlined the rights of all South Africans to “basic education, including adult basic education and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible” (cited in Rule, 2006, p. 114). This language of rights was echoed the Department of Education’s White Paper on Education and Training (1995) which held that “basic education is...a legal entitlement to which every person has a claim” (cited in Ramarumo and Jacobs, 2007, p. 113).

In the emerging ANC policies of the early democratic years, ABET also held a central position that modified and expanded the rights-based language of the Constitution. The ANC’s (1994) Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) defined ABET in terms of both social and political transformation (Baatjes, 2008), linked to a vision of poverty alleviation and national development that centred people as human resources. Education was seen in the RDP through terms of not only social and economic development but of justice, equity and ‘cultural expression’, and the specific hardships of women and youth were recognised (Unterhalter, 1998). With the shift in 1998 to the ANC’s Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, however, a focus on neoliberal macroeconomics introduced instrumentalist concerns to the framing of ABET, and the radical potential of education was arguably undermined in favour of human capital concerns (Baatjes and Mathe, 2004).
This skills agenda was firmly embedded in agendas for growth and poverty reduction, represented by the “twin traditions” of the RDP and GEAR, and which continued to be a central pillar of government discourse and policy (McGrath and Akoojee, 2007, Allais, 2012). The Skills Development Act (1998) and the Skills Development Levies Act (1999) provided a legal framework to evaluate the skills of those both within and outside the labour market, renewing a focus on training by the Department of Labour, and the provision of ABET through work, particularly in the mining and manufacturing sectors (Baatjes, 2008). These acts developed the work to recognise prior and lifelong learning through the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which formally integrated education and training for adults through the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (1995), introduced as a mechanism to support a more egalitarian education system. It was designed to serve the ‘needs’ of both ‘learners and the nation’ through an integrated framework of education and training that drew heavily on outcomes-based and competency models of economic productivity, but only rhetorical, narrow notions of ‘lifelong learning’ (Aitchison, 2004). These outcomes-based qualifications were designed to recognise prior learning (Cooper, 1998, Hemson, 1999), entering the policy-reform debates through connections with the labour movement (Allais, 2007), and embedded not only in a transition to democracy but in liberalisation of the economy and processes of globalisation (Allais, 2003, Allais, 2012).

The firm grounding of the NQF in economic rationality, however, offered only attenuated responsiveness to gender or other ways to differentiate discrimination and structural inequalities in the labour market (Unterhalter, 1998, Moorosi, 2009, Walters and Watters, 2001). Deploying a ‘lifelong learning’ analytical lens, Shirley Walters argues that while there were employed people who might have benefited from formalised training, “learning opportunities for those in informal employment or in need of basic education and training in communities have been limited and fragmented” (Walters, 2006, p. 19), with clear classed implications. The competing discourses of the NQF towards both social justice, political and economic redress and empowerment on the one hand, and the technicist demands of the labour market on the other, have been attributed to some of the ways in which the NQF has not succeeded in driving the equitable educational outcomes that it was designed to build (Lugg, 2009).
Despite these policy, legislative and rights-based Constitutional guarantees, adult education programmes were not well-funded, and by the census of 2001 significant progress in reducing the raw numbers of the ‘illiterate’ population had not been made (Baatjes, 2003, Aitchinson, 2003). The gendered dimensions of the adult illiteracy rates had also become slightly more pronounced: census data in 2001 suggested that 60% of those with no schooling were women, compared to 58.5 of those captured in the 1996 census data (Aitchison and Harley, 2006, p. 97). The Department of Education’s 1997 Multi-Year Implementation Plan had aimed to target 2.5 million of those out-of-school, with specific reference to ‘vulnerable’ categories that included women, the disabled or prisoners (McKay, 2007), but it was not translated into delivered outcomes and reached less than a third of those intended, blocked by inadequate funding and bureaucratic red tape (Baatjes and Mathe, 2004).

As the South African democratic process continued with the election of President Thabo Mbeki in 1999, political processes aimed at human resources development characterised by the RDP were overlaid by the notion of an ‘African Renaissance’, that promoted literacy learning through government department slogans such as ‘uVuko ngeABET’ (Re-awaken through ABET) and ‘No ABET, No Renaissance!’ (Kell, 2001). State provision of ABET was delivered both by Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs), centres based in existing schools, and which had replaced the night schools of the 1970s and 1980s as a public system of delivery of ABET at the provincial level (Baatjes, 2008). In addition to these PALCs, a number of shorter-term campaigns and projects were launched that targeted adult literacy specifically, and the low participation rates in ABET (Baatjes, 2008). These included two campaigns which were the precursors to Kha ri Gude: the Masifunde Sonke (‘Let’s All Learn!’) Awareness campaign (2001), and the South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI), which was launched in 2000 in partnership with the University of South Africa (UNISA), and delivered over a two-year period in 2002 to 2004, reaching over 350,000 illiterate adults (McKay, 2007).

These small-scale campaigns which have paralleled the formalised provincial structures represented by the PALCs have nevertheless had a contested impact on the reduction of adult illiteracy in the country. Aitchison and Harley argue that literacy became such a key political issue in post-apartheid South Africa that the government has been keen to promote its own success with “inflated” (Aitchison and Harley, 2006, p. 104) claims of
improvements. Reflections on how best to measure adult illiteracy in the country have highlighted the discrepancies between measures that rely on levels of educational attainment, self-assessed literacy rates that rely on learners placing themselves on a binary, and graded self-assessments (Posel, 2011), that have further muddied how to assess progress in reducing illiteracy.

These post-apartheid policies have thus engaged with adult education at different stages through a range of discourses that have included framings of ABET as: a right, framed by the broader bill of rights enshrined in the national Constitution; as a form of redistribution, framed in the resource-based understandings of reconstruction and development; as a set of skills, shaped by a shifting agenda towards growth; and as associated with ‘Renaissance’ and a symbolic form of redress that was framed by a notion of consciousness raising. Each of these policies has spoken differently to elements of the history of ABET and formal education outlined in the earlier part of this chapter, but what they have shared is a concern to target specific groups that are in some way disadvantaged, whether by race, poverty, gender or their dynamic intersections. In the following part of the chapter, I want to explore how elements of these policy framings of ABET were translated into the design and delivery of the Kha ri Gude campaign.

**Kha ri Gude (‘Let Us Learn!’), 2008-2015**

While these national socio-historical landscapes of South African adult education form the broader vista of my research, the specific terrain with which this study engages is a mass national adult education campaign called *Kha ri Gude* (KRG), or ‘Let Us Learn’, that was launched in 2008 and ran over seven annual cycles until 2015. KRG was developed and funded by the South African government in partnership with UNISA, building on both the knowledge base and human infrastructure of previous South African literacy campaigns (McKay, 2007). Central elements to the campaign included the importance of standardised assessment linked to the NQF through nationally recognised SAQA moderation and certification (McKay, 2015), which marked both SANLI and KRG out as distinctive (Oxenham, 2004, UNESCO, 2015, p. 147). As with SANLI, and other national mass adult education campaigns elsewhere, KRG mobilised a cadre of Volunteer-Educators, community advocates and monitors in the delivery of basic literacy across the country (McKay, 2007, Boughton, 2010, Boughton and Durnan, 2014).
The KRG campaign was active in all nine provinces of South Africa and aimed to reach 4.7 million adult illiterate learners over the course of its implementation. The campaign covered three general topics of adult basic education: literacy and numeracy were taught through mother-tongue classes with teaching and learning materials co-versioned in each of the eleven national languages, and some additional basic English lessons were also taught which began in the second or third month of the campaign (KRG, 2012). The title of the campaign – Kha ri Gude – was deliberately chosen to centre the language of tshiVenda, one of the much less widely spoken of South Africa’s eleven national languages, reflecting a commitment to multilingualism enshrined in the Constitution (Reagan, 2001).

The KRG campaign particularly ‘targeted’ women and ‘other marginalised groups’ that included a deliberate focus and provision for blind and deaf learners (KRG, 2012). The gender focus of the campaign was guided by a response by the then South African Minister of Education, Kadar Asmal, to the fourth Efa goal to halve illiteracy, particularly for women, by 2015 (UNESCO, 2000). In the first year of the campaign (2008), women represented 76% of learners and 83% of Volunteer-Educators (DBE, 2017). The campaign claimed not just to speak to representative questions of gender parity, but also to more substantive issues of gender and justice, stating on the official website that, “the extended benefits of literacy will...go a long way toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on poverty reduction, women’s empowerment, HIV and AIDS eradication and environmental conservation” (KRG, 2012). Age was a further important intersect: 20% of the learners were over the age of sixty, a highly unusual proportion for adult education campaigns (Aitchison and Rule, 2016). These claims particularly foregrounded the role of the campaign teaching materials which were “specifically designed” to teach “reading, writing and numeracy,” but to “integrate themes and life-skills such as health, gender [and] the environment” (KRG, 2012). As the development agenda shifted towards the Sustainable Development Goals, the aims of “sustainable democratisation and peace building” were added to the government’s agenda (KRG, 2017), and the campaign was awarded the 2016 UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy (UNESCO, 2016). Some of the tensions between the ‘taught’ technical foci and the ‘integrated’ questions of social justice that pertain to these aged, gendered and raced intersections will be considered in chapter six, which engages with how those working within KRG understood these two different elements to the campaign.
In each province, a pyramid structure of Monitors, Coordinators, Supervisors and Volunteer-Educators ‘delivered’ the program to adult learners within local communities, through a cascading structure in which the dissemination of information and training was designed to flow from the top to the bottom. Figure 1 (below) draws on the 2011 figures from campaign materials to represent this structure, with the total number of actors at each level of the national campaign (SAQA, 2012). This structure was adapted in classes in which learners were visually impaired and so making use of the Braille literacy materials (McKay and Romm, 2015); these classes were outside the scope of this study. Ways in which this pyramid structure functioned are explored in detail in chapter six of this thesis, which explores the structures and discourses of the campaign through interviews and observations with actors at each of these levels. This structure was also central to the design of the field study, as the following chapter will set out.

This cadre of Volunteer-Educators were employed under the criteria that they were Matric certificated,¹ and unemployed at the time of the start of the KRG cycle. KRG was housed by the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE), a sub-section of the Department of Education set up in 2009, but it also operated under the aegis of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), which was adopted in 2004 to reduce unemployment through temporary work for the unemployed in government, provincial and municipal departments (Fakier, 2014). Approximately 300,000 job opportunities were created through the employment of a cadre of Volunteer-Educators from 2008-2015, under this EPWP umbrella. In 2016, the DBE reported that there had been widespread fraud through the registration of deceased learners by some volunteers; the campaign was suspended at the end of the 2015/16 cycle in order for the Auditor General to investigate (DBE, 2016). The R44 million of “fruitless and wasteful expenditure” on fraudulent classes noted in this DBE 2015/16 annual report (DBE, 2016) was later revised to R1, 549, 899 after a departmental probe. In April 2017, the Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga reported in parliamentary questions that ninety Volunteer-Educators had been found

¹The Matric certificate is the South African National Senior Certificate, acquired upon completion of the 12th (final) year of school.
guilty of fraud and that R474,737 of this money had been recovered.² The positioning of Volunteer-Educators within the campaign as both sources of risk, but also as themselves in need of poverty alleviation and representative of the communities in which KRG was delivered is discussed in more detail in chapter six.

In addition to the space of poverty alleviation through the employment of Volunteer-Educators under the EPWP, official KRG materials also expressed the aim to challenge poverty amongst learners, with the government stating that it would “empower (skills development) socially disadvantaged people to become self-reliant and able to participate more effectively in the economy and society” (KRG, 2017). Drawing on this assumed equivalence between empowerment and ‘skills development’, a number of analyses of KRG have evaluated the success of the campaign from an economic efficiency perspective (Wildeman and Hemmer-Vitti, 2010, Gustafsson et al., 2010, Mhlanga, 2011). Research into the delivery of the campaign in the Eastern Cape noted that the relatively brief length of the campaign, and the absence of skills training beyond basic literacy such as micro-finance or informal business development training hampered the perceived success of the campaign (Romm and Dichaba, 2015). Analysis of the campaign with a Freirean lens further argued that the relatively short time-frame of the campaign hampered opportunity for substantive forms of critical pedagogies, exacerbated by learner absenteeism and access to the informal venues in which KRG was delivered (Dichaba and Dhlamini, 2013). In the only paper published thus far which attends to gender in the campaign, a study of learners’ experience in the Mpumalanga Province argued that without ‘holistic’ attendance to gender, the delivery of literacy in and of itself was insufficient to challenge entrenched gender norms (Malale and Sentsho, 2014). Their findings resonate with much earlier policy recommendations for the delivery of ABET and literacy interventions in South Africa, that call for programming to “start from where women are” in providing space for gendered empowerment (Walters and Manicom, 1996, pp. 10-29).

*Kha ri Gude* thus represents a government instantiation of the right to adult education, grounded in both the national bill of rights through the Constitution, but also in the international rights agenda represented by EfA, the MDGs and SDGs, and by the work of UNESCO. Overlaying this policy discourse around rights was a recognition of marginalisation, that included explicit but potentially only narrow recognition of

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gendered disadvantage, and some intersectional concerns around poverty and disability. While the official materials of the campaign were explicitly silent on race, race implicitly underpinned the focus on ‘social disadvantage’, as I will explore in chapters five and six.

In some senses, therefore, KRG might be seen to represent the kind of programme that I discussed in the introduction to this thesis (pp. 8-11), in which ‘not much has changed’. Literacy seemed to be constructed as leading to ‘extended benefits’, women were visible ‘targets’ of ‘delivery’, and ‘life-skills’ were defined through a narrow socio-economic lens and a thin notion of ‘empowerment’. The research into the campaign thus far, however, has not worked with a connected analysis of these issues, in reflecting on the intersecting and dynamic ways in which gendered and raced inequalities might be overlaid by poverty, and entrenched, disrupted or regulated by violence. Such an inter-connected analysis will be the concern of this thesis.

**Adult education & intersecting marginalisation: race, gender and violence?**

This socio-historical review of the policy and politics around the design and delivery of ABET and adult literacy in South Africa has made clear the ways in which adult education is embedded in broader processes of socio-economic inclusion and exclusion, which is shaped by race, gender and violence that underpin but are not always explicitly acknowledged in policy discourse. Disadvantage is implicit in the language of rights, redress and redistribution discussed in this chapter differently, but for Alan Rogers and Brian Street the post-apartheid approach to adult literacy and ABET provision can nevertheless be characterised as a “deficit approach...dressed up in the discourse of disadvantage” (Rogers and Street, 2012, p. 42). For Rogers and Street, the premise that there is a direct correlation between ‘illiteracy’ and ‘disadvantage’ is always problematic, and indeed has the potential to entrench deficit through the naming concerns I discussed in the introduction, and outlined with reference to NLS studies in the previous chapter. In the following chapter I will therefore pick up this concern, and explore how an interest in this tension between a recognition of disadvantage and an entrenchment of deficit shaped my research questions and the field study exploring the delivery of KRG in a single rural community in KwaZulu-Natal.
4 Gendering the field: position, power & violence

As I set out in my introduction, this thesis asks whether and how adult education, gender and violence are inter-connected, through a study located in a single community in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. I have traced these inter-connections thus far in theory, politics and in policy; this chapter will discuss with a methodological lens how meanings around ‘education’, ‘gender’ and ‘violence’ were elicited from the field. It will detail and critically engage with the ethnographic data that I generated and analysed to explore potential inter-connections, and reflect on the ways in which these processes were embedded in concerns around position, power and violence.

As this chapter will explore in detail, underpinning my over-arching research question was an interest to facilitate polyphonic and multivalent interpretations of my three research terms, to ask and not assume how meanings around ‘education’, ‘gender’ and ‘violence’ might be constructed. Three sub-questions helped to structure this aim to trouble each signifier, underpinning my over-arching question in the following way:

- Are adult education, gender and violence inter-connected, and if so, how?
  - How was ‘education’ understood, and translated into texts, narrative and practices?
  - To what extent was gender imbued in these processes?
  - Where and how did violence emerge?

I felt that this open approach and interest in multiple perspectives was best suited to an evolving and iterative research design, and a range of methods that would attend to co-constructed narratives, to texts and to social (inter)actions. I therefore chose to design a study with an ethnographic form of qualitative inquiry, that followed the temporal evolution, structures and spaces of the Kha ri Gude campaign. While what defines ‘ethnography’ has become open to contestation (Hammersley, 2006, Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), particularly around the question of time in the field (Jeffrey and Troman, 2004), ethnographies can be defined by their methods, built on the fundamental methods of fieldnotes and participant-observations (Emerson et al., 2007, DeWalt and DeWalt, 2010), and drawing on forms of both informal ‘hanging out’ and formal interviews (Heyl, 2007). Ethnographies rely on the engagement and reflexivity of the ethnographer herself (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), but simultaneously acknowledge the inter-subjective
and partial production of knowledge that such research (re)presents (Haraway, 1988, Lather, 1997, Van Loon, 2001). Through these methods and attendance to the inter-subjective (re)production of knowledge, ethnographies give prominence to the generation of fine-grained ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) of particular phenomena, in telling of ‘tales of the field’ (Van Maanen, 2011).

This chapter is written in two parts. The first sets out the texts, conversations and (inter)actions through which I could co-construct meanings around ‘education’, ‘gender’ and ‘violence’, delineated both physically and discursively by the borders of the Kha ri Gude campaign. In this part, I will map the contours of my gradual immersion as embodied-researcher-subject into this field. These contours are delineated by two distinct but inter-related phases of research: the first located in the broad discursive terrain of the conceptualisation, design and training of the national campaign, through two preliminary visits to South Africa during August-September 2012 and March 2013; the second grounded in the delivery of the campaign in a rural community in KwaZulu-Natal over July 2013-February 2014.

These two phases were demarcated by time: I returned to the UK after both stages of the first phase to complete my institutional upgrade and to conduct further reading, and again over the Christmas break in December 2013, which afforded a key space for reflection before my final six weeks in the field. They were also demarcated by space, power and language: I travelled from ‘official’ sites of national and campaign governance in Pretoria, where interactions were broadly in English, to ‘local’ engagements with the campaign delivery in communities and with individuals that were defined as marginalised, and in which interactions were broadly in isiZulu. Finally, they were demarcated by different kinds of engagement with my research questions, grounded in variants of the three key ethnographic methods of fieldnotes, participant-observations and interviews, informed and supplemented by documentary analysis, focus groups, and community mapping walks.

In the second part of this chapter I will reflexively engage with these contestations and critiques more fully, drawing on the kinds of feminist and postcolonial concerns that I set out in the introductory pages to this thesis to consider ways in which my own positionality coloured these ethnographic strategies. I will spell out some of the ethical dilemmas
throughout the stages of conducting and writing the study that adhered both to my own position but also to the wider process of conducting research, particularly in contexts of multiple and intersecting marginalities. I will start to make visible the process of how I learned and was redirected along the way by the people and spaces with which I engaged, shaping not only what I chose to do and not do, but also how I have interpreted these acts and conversations from the analytical distance of ‘home’.

**Mapping a discursive terrain**

In discussing the ethnographic process, Stephen Ball maps out the ways in which the ‘social’ and ‘technical’ trajectories of research are parallel, as the researcher builds both rapport and familiarity with the setting in parallel to increased understanding and conceptual engagement. Ball further argues that the returns to and from the field that often characterise ethnographic encounters offer space for a ‘reflexive continuum’, in which both the recording of fieldnotes and longer periods of absence from the field offer space to begin analysis and returns to complementary academic studies (Ball, 1990). This part of the chapter will set out these social and technical trajectories in mapping the discursive terrain of my study.

**Phase 1: travelling down the Kha ri Gude cascade**

In travelling down the *Kha ri Gude* ‘cascade’, I began in August 2012 at the top of the campaign pyramid structure outlined in chapter three (p. 59). This first phase was based in Pretoria, the administrative and governance capital of South Africa, in Gauteng Province. Pretoria was the location of government buildings, including the Department of Basic Education (DBE) which housed the campaign, and where the KRG National Coordinator continued to work in 2012. It was the home of many of those who had conceptualised and designed the campaign materials in 2008, many of whom worked at the University of South Africa (UNISA), and from where they continued their activities in monitoring and delivering the campaign in 2012-14, over the fieldwork period. Finally, it was the location of the external company which ran the daily administration of the campaign, and managed the warehouses which delivered the teaching and learning materials out to each

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1 A copy of the research protocol and formal permission from the DBE to conduct the study gained in the first visit is provided in Appendix 1. Institutional ethical approval was granted by the Institute of Education in August 2012, before these pilot visits for both this phase and the immersive phase of the study.
of the nine provinces at the start of each annual campaign cycle. Pretoria thus represented a multiply determined ‘official’ space as the seat of both centralised national political power and as the centralised site of power in the KRG campaign.

In Pretoria, I was given copies of these six campaign texts, and began my documentary analysis, gradually integrating this analysis as an object of inquiry into my research design, and asking direct questions to those who had been part of the conceptualisation team about the choices and process of designing these texts. I was interested in how learners were visually represented in these texts, how the thematic topics of the literacy books were chosen, and the potential ways in which the construction of adult learner subjectivities within these texts engaged with intersecting marginalisation, gender and violence.

I also aimed to engage with ‘official’ (re)presentations of Kha ri Gude through key informant interviews. These interviews were designed to co-reflect on meanings that actors within KRG themselves made of their work, and of the place of gender and violence within their conceptualisation of the texts, talk and inter(actions) associated with the campaign. The design of these interview questions was exploratory and broadly thematic, using a semi-structured, flexible schedule to offer space for interviewees to expand or digress and raise new points of enquiry (King and Horrocks, 2010, pp. 35-41). These interviews took place in a number of ‘official’ spaces, including at the DBE and at UNISA. My early fieldnotes reflected on my negotiations around ‘studying up’ (Becker and Aiello, 2013), signalling my own authority as researcher through my smart dress, the use of English, and drawing on the networks afforded by my university to gain access. My fieldnotes further indicated future trajectories for returns to the academic literature, which I followed up both during the visit itself and on my return to London.

In total, I conducted twenty key informant interviews during this first visit to South Africa. A second, logistical aim of these early key informant interviews was to hold informal discussions about where best to locate the in-depth community research phase of

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4 These campaign texts were: ‘Learn to read in isiZulu’; ‘English for everyone: learn to speak and read in English’; ‘English numeracy’; ‘Yes I can! – Learner’s Assessment Portfolio for Communication and Numeracy’; ‘Literacy: Facilitators notes’ and the ‘Kha ri Gude Training Manual for Volunteers’. Extracts from these texts are discussed in chapter six, below.

5 Guides for these semi-structured interviews are provided in Appendix II.

6 A full list of the pseudonyms and job titles of the key informant interviews which I conducted over the two phases of the study is provided in Appendices III & IV. For public figures, interviews were not conducted under the assumption of anonymity or confidentiality, but I have chosen to attribute quotations by role rather than name.
the study; these early interviews were both to gather information and begin a snowballing process that traced power through the gate-keepers of the campaign (Noy, 2008). Both some International Literacy Day celebrations on September 7th (2012) in which KRG was celebrated in a seminar at UNISA, and a graduation ceremony for learners from the Eastern Cape on September 8th (2012) happened to coincide with my visit; I chose to take up the invitation to attend the seminar and to travel with DBE officials, members of the DBE communications team, and KRG Monitors who were flying to the Eastern Cape from Pretoria. These events offered invaluable opportunities to meet with additional key informants and to observe some of the ways in which KRG members were reporting and celebrating the perceived successes of the campaign, and what these ‘successes’ might imply for understandings of education, gender and violence.

The visit to the graduation ceremony in the Eastern Cape also afforded an opportunity to visit active 2012 KRG classes over a period of two weeks in both the Eastern Cape itself and the neighbouring province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). In total, I conducted eleven pilot site visits across the two provinces, all organised through the campaign officials whom I had met in Pretoria and two KRG Monitors working at the provincial level. These visits were often accompanied as part of the campaign formal monitoring visits and took place in a range of settings, predominantly in rural areas, but also in townships and informal settlements. The ways in which the history of South Africa has shaped the socio-cultural dimensions of these spaces has been detailed in previous chapters; at this stage of the research I was interested in identifying which kind of socio-cultural space and place would be most interesting for the immersive phase of the study, and to familiarise myself with the kinds of spaces in which KRG was ‘delivered’. The spatial analysis which began to emerge during these pilot visits as central to my understanding of the ‘community’ is reflected in the analysis of chapter five.

My final day in KwaZulu-Natal, shadowing the KwaZulu-Natal Monitor in visits to six different classes chosen at random in rural areas of the province, afforded the opportunity to choose a community for this second, immersive phase. Unlike the Monitor with whom I travelled, my aim was not to evaluate the campaign, or to engage with its successes or

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7 Dates and locations of these site visits (two in the Eastern Cape, nine in KZN) are provided in Appendix IV. I visited three of the eleven sites twice.
8 I interviewed both of these Monitors about their work, represented under the pseudonyms of Monitor 1 (Eastern Cape) and Monitor 2 (KZN). Monitor 1 was female while Monitor 2 was male. Both had long histories of work focused on adult education, community development and social justice.
failures solely as a literacy intervention (although this will form part of my analysis). In the final community which we visited, however, a particularly passionate and committed Supervisor named Philisiwe sat with me for an over an hour after we observed her class, and talked through the problems that she saw in both the technical side of delivering KRG (in terms of resources and the constraints of poverty and rurality on recruitment and attendance) and the ‘social’ dynamics of how gender and violence affected her community. Philisiwe had been a VE in 2011 before being promoted to the role of Supervisor in 2012, and her dedication to her KRG work had been recognised by the campaign in 2012 by the award of a bursary to study at UNISA’s Durban campus. My increased familiarity with the KwaZulu-Natal setting, the passion of this Supervisor, the support of the Coordinator and the Monitor who oversaw her work, and the ways in which education, gender and violence had interplayed in our first discussion meant that I settled on this community in the Valley of a Thousand hills in the Greater Metropolitan area of Durban, which I have given the pseudonym Endaweni, for the second, immersive phase of the study.

In these initial eleven site visits, all the Volunteer-Educators that we observed were women. One class was populated solely with female learners, and only one class (a night class in an informal settlement in KZN) had more male than female learners in attendance. All eleven classes had a range of ages of learners from late teenage to pensioners, and all had at least one baby or child present, accompanying their mothers, or more often their grandmothers, to class. Learner attendance across these nine sites varied: in one rural class in KZN there was the full set of 18 prescribed learners, in another there were no learners at all because it was market and pension day and they had all needed to go into the nearest town. Early thematic analysis of the pilot site visit fieldnotes revealed the ways in which gender intersected with age, as well as the space of jokes to trouble gender and questions of ‘respect’, informing the discussion in chapters five and six.

After these eleven pilot site visits, I returned to London to begin the process of iterative meaning making and honing of research questions that characterises much ethnographic and qualitative research (Ball, 1990, Agee, 2009). I gave some initial presentations on my findings, based both on the interviews (which I transcribed in this period in London), my fieldnotes and participant-observations and my documentary analysis of the campaign texts. In the process of transcribing and analysing these first twenty interviews, questions

9 The community in which this study was conducted was under Monitor 2’s purview both in my preliminary site visits in 2012, and during the immersive phase of the study in 2013-14.
of how notions of gender and violence were ‘translated’ in the structured interactions represented by training emerged as an important theme. I therefore planned a second, additional trip to Pretoria in March 2013 to attend the KRG annual training, which was mandatory for Monitors and Coordinators of the campaign, to explore how education, gender and violence were (re)presented in this mid-level interactional space.

The training workshop lasted for five days, and took place with approximately 200 attendees in a 3-star Conference Hotel in a wealthy area of Pretoria. I joined Monitors and Coordinators from KwaZulu-Natal, working in both English and isiZulu, taking notes as an active participant-observer, participating both in the formal activities of the workshop, and ‘hanging out’ in more informal interactions over breaks and lunch (Delamont, 2012). The workshop was facilitated by the leaders of KRG, but also by three representatives from the national South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), who had been appointed to oversee the moderation of the learners’ assessment portfolios and the process of accreditation (as discussed in chapter three, pp. 56-7). I was able to interview two of these three representatives, as well as to conduct a further six key informant interviews.

Ways in which this workshop represented a technical space in which the campaign structures and monitoring was emphasised, but in which discussions of gender and violence were generally absent, are discussed in chapter six.

These first field visits thus represented multiple entrances and departures from the research field, as I travelled between different sites and provinces. Through the process of generating this range of data, I began to reflect on the ways in which this first phase of the study unfixed my research ‘field’ and relocated it in discourse. These discursive constructions were communicated through the ‘pyramid’ structure introduced on p. 59, but further through a reliance on the (re)production of meaning in campaign texts and training that aimed to bridge the temporal and spatial disjuncture between the phases of design and delivery from the national to the ‘local’ community-based classes. In the second phase of the study, I aimed to explore these contestations and (re)productions of meaning through in-depth engagement with adult learners and their Volunteer-Educators. I aimed to move from spaces which represented a centralised, broad vista of the national campaign to a locally embedded exploration of individual and community level histories and practices around being ‘illiterate’, ‘educated’ or ‘uneducated’, and the ways in which these narratives and practices might be gendered and/or subject to violence. I
wanted to question how KRG might meet these (un)fixed histories and practices, and how the campaign discourses might be (re)produced, negotiated or resisted.

**Phase 2: Endaweni**

In this second phase of the data collection, KRG operated less as the terrain of the study in terms of a direct object of discursive analysis, and more as a boundary to the physical spaces which I observed and the people with whom I could ‘hang out’ and build ‘rapport’ and intimacy (Duncombe and Jessop, 2012). The ethnographic strategies upon which I relied always took the classes as the first point of departure and my field notes were structured around journeys to, from and within learning spaces. The study was designed to map in temporal terms against the six-month cycle of the delivery of the campaign from July to December 2013, although, as I will discuss in more detail below, the campaign started almost six weeks late, and so the fieldwork period extended into February 2014.

In this immersive phase of the field study, my key informants shifted from those at the top and mid-levels of the KRG structures, to those at the ‘local’, lower levels of the campaign pyramid, in particular the Supervisor Philisiwe whom I had met in the pilot site visit, and the ten Volunteer-Educators (VEs) whose work she oversaw. At this community level, access was again iteratively negotiated. I was equipped with my research protocol and permission to conduct the research, signed by the National Coordinator who was housed in the Department of Basic Education (Appendix 1), but more informal levels of consent were necessary throughout the first months of this fieldwork (Malone, 2003). Such levels of access and negotiated informed consent again broadly followed the cascade model, and mirrored the flow of power and knowledge down the campaign’s pyramid structure.

This community-based phase also represented a new linguistic terrain that shifted from the English-medium research of the first phase: my participant-observations in classes, focus groups, community mapping walks, unstructured life-history and follow-up interviews with adult learners engaged in the campaign were all conducted in isiZulu. I had intensified my study of isiZulu with my teacher, Carola Mostert, at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, to facilitate linguistic immersion, but I am not a native speaker and was concerned that the ‘deep’ Zulu spoken by older generations would be out of my reach. I therefore chose to employ Philisiwe, as a
translator throughout the fieldwork from July 2013-February 2014 at an hourly rate, in work that we fitted around her other work and her caring responsibilities. In addition, I paid Philisiwe for the isiZulu transcription of life-history interviews, focus groups and sections of audio recording of participant-observations, all of which are discussed below.

Employing Philisiwe as my interpreter was in some ways a development of the liminal position that she occupied as KRG supervisor. Supervisors within the project tended to live in the communities themselves, overseeing a cluster of ten classes rather than teaching classes directly, but often having been VEs themselves originally. They would travel to the classes and observe VEs teaching to give formative feedback in monthly meetings. Supervisors also accompanied monitoring visits whenever external visitors audited the campaign. Supervisors within KRG thus already straddled a kind of insider-outsider place, in which VEs and their learners occupied more fully ‘insider’ subject positions. As a Supervisor, Philisiwe was also a step removed from direct engagement with learners, which I felt was appropriate for conducting interviews. I did not accompany Philisiwe during her official KRG duties, including monthly meetings with her ten VEs, to help demarcate her role in the study from her paid work as KRG Supervisor. Over time I would say that we also became friends, going to the beach and sharing food together; I will use the shortened version of her name, Phili, to reflect this closeness. Phili(siwe) was the name by which she chose to be identified in this study.

Phili organised all of the interviews which I conducted, and helped me to both literally and figuratively navigate my daily interactions in the community. In my early pilot visits, my safety had been of concern to Monitor 2, and I had been accompanied by an older armed man who was a cousin of the inkosi (‘chief’) and was felt by the Monitor to offer multiple layers of ‘protection’ through both his status and his carried weapon (fieldnotes, 10th September 2012). Phili was able to offer ‘insider’ interpretation to the space; her presence and positionality became a part of the research, and I often recorded audio fieldnotes with her in our journeys to classes and interviews which I would transcribe from home. I also more formally interviewed Phili at several different stages of the research about herself and her work as Supervisor and former VE, using the key informant guide (Appendix II). In the chapters which follow I will at times make visible some of the ways in which her

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10 Chapter five includes a deeper discussion of this sense of ‘risk’.
facilitation of interviews may have impacted the kinds of knowledge being (re)produced, in mediating and interpreting the scripts and norms that might otherwise be unavailable to me as an ‘outsider’ (Sikes, 2006). I have shared a copy of any references that I have made to Phili’s interventions or narratives of personal history in this study with Phili herself, and she has given her consent for it to be (re)presented in this thesis in the words that I have used. Reflections on Phili’s own life-history, and how her identity might have shaped my understanding are further explored in the reflexive discussion below.

As a KRG Supervisor, Phili worked in two communities which I have anonymised with the pseudonyms Endaweni and Phakathi, and herself lived in Endaweni. I chose to anonymise these communities with two isiZulu expressions, quite close in meaning, which can be rendered perhaps most accurately as ‘in the/a Place’ (Endaweni) and ‘Community’ (Phakathi). As two common expressions to locate yourself physically and socially in isiZulu, these pseudonyms are used in italicised isiZulu throughout to serve as reminders that they (re)present real places in a context in which ethno-linguistic and racialised ‘culture’, ‘tradition’ and the complex history around place and space develops communities differently. Anonymisation of research communities can be a complex navigation between the unintended and perhaps stigmatising consequences of revealing the name of a research community and the need for sensitivity to context (Nespor, 2000). Chapter five will work to locate Endaweni within these specific socio-political histories.

In her role as Supervisor, Phili was responsible for ten VEs, eight of whom lived and worked in the community of Endaweni, and two of whom worked in the neighbouring community which I have called Phakathi. In Phili’s cluster, all ten VEs were women. Each VE was individually responsible for one class of eighteen learners, whom they would teach for ten hours a week. The classes were generally split into three sessions of three hours each, with one or two slightly longer sessions, and designed to take place at times that, as far as possible, suited the learners. In a meeting on the 23rd July 2013, I accompanied Phili and her Coordinator to the first meeting of the cycle in which these ten VEs were introduced to the campaign and their work (only one of these VEs had worked for the campaign in the previous year). In this meeting I introduced my research, with Phili translating for me into isiZulu, and arranged visits to the classes of the eight VEs who agreed to participate in the study, all of whom spoke English to a greater or lesser degree of fluency. Over the course of the first weeks of the campaign cycle, one VE dropped out
of the study and so the research progressively focused on five VEs and their classes in Endaweni, and the two VEs who worked in Phakathi. I rotated these visits, both with and without Phili, with the hope that the absence of their Supervisor might make the VEs feel more comfortable, but fully recognising that my close working relationship with Phili might represent an obstacle to complete openness. I also interviewed four of these VEs about their work, following the key informant interview guide (Appendix II).

In the first weeks of this phase of the study, I continued to progressively focus on a smaller number of classes, sitting with adult learners, often but not always accompanied by Phili, with a notebook open next to the KRG text being used. The participant-observations which I conducted were supported by audio-recordings, with notes linked to times so that I could transcribe moments of the classes in detail if necessary. Over the course of the first month of research in September 2013, four classes emerged where the VE and learners seemed most comfortable with my presence, and in which I had found the dynamics and practices of the space particularly spoke to my research questions around gender and violence. I chose further to limit the heart of the study to the classes in Endaweni to develop a fuller understanding of context, using the Phakathi data to supplement the analysis in my thinking without being explicitly discussed in the writing.

The focus on these four Endaweni classes in the early stages was honed through three research methods upon which this stage of the study relied: participant-observations of the classes, my detailed reflexive fieldnotes, and a focus group discussion with learners participating in each class. These focus group discussions were prompted by three direct questions, in which I asked learners to describe: the community; a typical community member; a typical adult learner in Endaweni, and why people from their community might want to participate in literacy classes.

These focus groups were conducted in August 2013, at the end of the first or second participant-observation of each class. They were held with all learners who were present; learners were asked to give informal consent, and it was explained that any learner who

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11 Extended extracts from such a transcript of a participant-observation of an early class forms the basis of analysis in chapter six (pp. 147-150).
12 An extended extract from my fieldnotes in this early part of the immersive phase is discussed in chapter five (pp. 112-113).
13 A full list of the focus groups which I conducted is provided in Appendix VI.
wished to would be very welcome to leave, or to remain for the discussion but without pressure to verbally contribute.

Initial analysis of these focus group transcripts and my reflections upon them conducted at weekends during this first month of the immersive engagement started to reveal ways in which the classes themselves were spatialised differently, and I therefore chose to identify the four core classes by locative markers in English and isiZulu:

A. the class on the Hill, Entabeni;
B. the class by the Road, Endleleni;
C. the class in the Hall, Ehholo;
D. the class in the House, Ekhaya.

In the following chapter, I will explore the ways in which analysis of the socio-cultural bounds of space helped to deepen my understanding of the setting of these four classes, which will further draw on two community mapping walks in August 2013 that I added to the research design, with learners from the Entabeni and the Endleleni classes (Futch and Fine, 2014). I have aimed with these Zulu nomenclatures to signal the ways that these four spaces both were and were not intelligible to me as a researcher, and to create an interpretative distance from how any other hill, road, hall or home might be imagined.

I attended the Entabeni ('on the Hill') class the most regularly, visiting this class on most Tuesdays and Thursdays of the six-month campaign cycle from August 2013 to February 2014. In the Endleleni class, however attendance attenuated, and the class had stopped entirely by two months into the study (field notes, November 2013). I therefore only conducted four participant-observations of the Endleleni class over August to November 2013, but spent more time 'hanging out' with the VE and her extended family. Over August to December 2013, I also conducted four participant-observations of the Ehholo class, and two participant-observations with the Ekhaya class.

After the first month of iterative visits to classes, Phili and I began to arrange life-history interviews with learners who expressed comfort at my request to discuss their reasons for joining KRG and their educational stories in more detail.14 We began by conducting thirty life-history interviews with learners who attended these four core classes, and whom I got

14 A full list of the pseudonyms and dates of these life-history interviews is provided in Appendix VII.
to know the most well over October to December 2013. All of these thirty core interviewees were women. Male attendance in these classes had attenuated: by the end of the campaign cycle (and research period) only one man still participated in the core classes of the study (in the Ekhaya class), and we conducted one additional interview with a man who participated in the Edobo class in Phakathi. These gendered dimensions of recruitment, attendance and participation are explored in chapter six.

The life-history interviews all took place in either the homes of the learners or the room in which the class was held, and were conducted over cups of tea, juice, fruit and cake. While informed consent is an inherently imperfect process (Malone, 2003), each interviewee chose to use either their first name (whether their isiZulu or their English name) or a pseudonym, and gave their verbal consent for their stories to be audio recorded and (re)told in this study, with the exception of one life-history which was withdrawn a week after the interview was conducted. These interviews tended to last approximately an hour, and were unstructured, opening with the question: “Please think of the course of your life, in relation to education, beginning when you were born, and up until now. Please tell me your story.” In the design of these life-history interviews, I was interested to understand how adult learners shaped their reasons to value participation in the Kha ri Gude campaign, and to attend to the contextual and temporal nuances in the construction of life-history narratives and the dynamics of participation. I wanted to open space to co-reflect on past histories of being ‘uneducated’ to understand these motivations in context and over time. Where learners were quiet, Phili and I used prompts to encourage reflection on life-stages, such as marriage, entry into the labour market, or the birth of children and grand-children. In addition to the four core classes, I conducted supplementary life-history interviews and observations in a further class in Endaweni which took place by a Tree (Emthini), and two classes in Phakathi which took place by a Pump (Empompini) and in a Valley (Edobo). By the time that I had finished these sixty life-history interviews in Endaweni and Phakathi, and conducted over a hundred hours of participant-observations, I felt that I had reached “saturation” of the analytic or theoretical categories in which I was interested (Guest et al., 2006), as narrative tropes began to recur and signifying chains related to education, gender and violence began to solidify (Lapping, 2008). The table below gives details of the total numbers of classes observed and the numbers of life-histories conducted with learners.

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15 A full list of these life-history prompts within the unstructured interview frame is given in Appendix VIII.
over September-December 2013, with the numbers of follow-up second interviews conducted in January and February 2014 given in brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English identifier</th>
<th>Zulu identifier</th>
<th>Interview numbers (2nd interviews)</th>
<th>Classes observed (hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>on the Hill</td>
<td>Entabeni</td>
<td>16 (9)</td>
<td>16 (48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by the Road</td>
<td>Endleleni</td>
<td>10 (4)</td>
<td>4 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the Hall</td>
<td>Eholo</td>
<td>8 (5)</td>
<td>4 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the House</td>
<td>Ekhaya</td>
<td>7 (2)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by the Tree</td>
<td>Emthini</td>
<td>5 (-)</td>
<td>2 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by the Pump</td>
<td>Empompini</td>
<td>10 (-)</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the Valley</td>
<td>Edobo</td>
<td>5 (5)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>61 (25)</strong></td>
<td><strong>86</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These follow-up, reflexive interviews were conducted with twenty of the thirty core learners over January-February 2014, and had been integrated into the research design after the late start of the campaign. They were designed to explore potential shifts, fractures and contradictions in co-constructed meanings of education, gender and violence that would supplement the life-history interviews and participant-observations that I had already conducted. I wanted to know whether the moment of joining the campaign had worked as a kind of interruption that might disrupt (un)fixed meanings of norms and constructs around ‘education’, ‘gender’ and ‘violence’, and to explore the ways in which adult learners had navigated these processes. I had been interested to see where and how violence might emerge in the data, and to what extent gender offered a useful analytical lens; these follow-up interviews offered a useful space for co-reflection.

Thus far, I have detailed the kinds of work that constituted the ‘doing’ of this research, at the same time as making visible ways in which I have come to understand ‘education’, ‘gender’ and ‘violence’ in this field as a discursively constructed object of analysis. In the following discussion I want to unpack these ‘doings’ of the research, setting them within some of the contestations in the ethnographic literature, and reflecting on ways in which my own embodied position as researcher-subject met the logistical constraints of the field. I will ask how the analytical distance of writing has shaped the telling of these ‘doings’.

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16 The schedule for these second, follow-up interviews is given in Appendix IX.
A “Reflexive Continuum”

As Martyn Hammersley notes in his discussion of the problems and prospects for ethnographic research, “being an ethnographer today is neither an unproblematic nor a very comfortable role” (Hammersley, 2006, p. 11). For Hammersley, some of this discomfort centres on the (im)possibilities of ‘doing ethnography’ in a climate in which funding often does not provide for extended field visits, and the form that ethnographic methodology takes itself is contested, with the result that what studies can be properly named ‘ethnographies’ is under debate. For Hammersley, however, three dimensions can nevertheless be considered core to the ethnographic approach: methods, and ways in which ethnography is a specific form of qualitative enquiry; contact, and the central position which the researcher herself holds over time; and perspective, through an engagement with participants that is complemented by (but sometimes in tension with) the researcher’s analytical understanding and oversight (Hammersley, 2006, pp. 3-4). In the discussion that follows I will reflect upon how (and to what extent) this study engaged with each of these three ethnographic dimensions: methods, contact and perspective.

While ethnographic methods may vary, they are most commonly held to centre on the two distinctive methods of fieldnotes and participant-observations (Emerson et al., 2007, DeWalt and DeWalt, 2010). These two methods together mapped the contours of my research journey: annotations and sketches taken during participant-observations of the pilot site visits, the training workshop, and the class visits in Endaweni and Phakathi were interspersed in my notebooks with fieldnotes taken both during and after my presence in the field in a range of spaces that included hotel rooms, cars, under trees, or my flat in Durban. When I was unable to take notes (if I was driving, for example), I would audio record reflections which I would later add to as I wrote them up in my notes. At times, such notes were doubly layered by both my own interpretation and by the interpretations which Phili offered of particular events and told stories.

In form, the product of these two methods resonate with and complement each other: “mental” notes and sketches in situ to orient my memory for later, fuller descriptions; “jottings” of words and direct quotations; selective, descriptive and at times affective accounts that together constitute the work of the field (Emerson et al., 2007, pp. 356-358). Fieldnotes thus represent a multidimensional interpretation, often acting as the first stage
of analysis, as well as potentially providing a form of data that themselves can be analysed (Kalthoff, 2013). They can deconstruct the snapshot of observations and interviews which (re)present a fixed moment in time and space, and unpack ways in which the researcher herself was positioned, and positioned others, reflexively engaging from a temporal and spatial distance from the field (Kalthoff, 2013). They can add layers of reflexive attendance to power, tone, sighs and silences, that support the interpretation and analysis of formal and informal conversations, observation and interviews (Nencel, 2014). Together, fieldnotes and participant-observations encompass the foundations of the ethnographic text, and initiate a process in which the “ethnographic text not only acts as a substitution or embodiment of a culture, but produces what it describes by its representation” (Kalthoff, 2013, p. 281). In both forms of representation, the researcher herself is central – the ‘data’ within them is not something that is ‘given’ as the etymology of the word might suggest, but rather (re)produced through acts of memory and interpretation, ‘generated’ in the inter-subjective space between researcher and researched (Van Loon, 2001). The researcher is both audience and actor, her notes are both ‘partial’ and ‘positioned’ (Haraway, 1988), she works across the hyphen of participant and observer (Tedlock, 1991), and it is her embodied experience as researcher-subject that bridges the gap between the field and the desk, the ‘space between’ insider and outsider perspectives (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009).

Fieldnotes, participant-observations and the life-history interviews were all underpinned by a shift from semi-structured active questioning, to unstructured “methodical and active listening” (Bourdieu, 1996), in which I aimed to decentre my own authority, and attend to what people “are heard to say” as “the most important cue” to understanding local social categories (Oyewumi, 1997, pp. 13-15), differentiating ethnographic “engaged listening” from that of the everyday (Forsey, 2010). In each of these spaces meanings were co-constructed, and my own presence was neither neutral nor passive (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994, DeWalt and DeWalt, 2010, Llewelyn, 2007); as I will go on to explore I was ‘read’ differently at different times and in different phases of the study. This active role may usefully be conceptualised through the lens of performance and performativity in the inter-subjective space of participant-observations (Castañeda, 2006), in which the researcher’s gaze and attention actively shapes the possibilities for meanings and (inter)actions emerging in the space between observer and observed, subject and object. I was concerned to reflect on ways in which I might occupy this space.
These questions of position and representation have also been seen to be central to understandings of the generation of life-history data. The interview space too can be seen as performative, an inter-subjective dialogic encounter in which co-constructed narratives emerge through the telling of a life-history that is shaped by context and inherently partial (van Stapele, 2014, Willemse, 2014). Digressions and fractures can be as useful to attend to in analysis as ways in which narratives only imperfectly (re)present coherence; the act of framing life-histories in the research encounter can be understood as an ‘agentic act’ (Buitelaar, 2014). These interviews were designed to co-reflect over time and in different spaces to explore moments otherwise inaccessible to me as an outsider-researcher, seeing the interviewer as an inhabiting a ‘co-traveller’ rather than a ‘miner’ position and attitude with respect to the ‘generation’ rather than ‘collection’ of data (Kvale, 2007, pp. 10-23). Co-constructed life-histories thus complement other methods of ethnographic inquiry noted above (Heyl, 2007), by extending the ‘ethnographic conversation’ to constructed narratological as well as observational practices (Hockey et al., 2012, Forsey, 2010).

These three ethnographic methods together constitute the core of my data set, supplemented by community mapping, focus groups and textual analysis, and together comprising the forms of ‘contact’ that Hammersley characterises as the second central dimension of conducting ethnographic studies. Contact is made up of engagements with the field that are both temporally and spatially bound; in this study, however, both time and space presented potential constraints to be navigated by me as an embodied-researcher-subject. The immersive phase of the study was designed around the delivery of an intervention, and lasted eight months, rather than a period of multiple years that often characterises the longer-term immersive engagements with communities by ethnographers and anthropologists (Smith, 2001). I did not live in the community which my research was focused upon, but in the suburbs of Durban, the nearest metropolitan area: my ‘hangings out’ were limited to daylight hours, in the times before and after the classes, and in the journeys to, from and within research sites. In this kind of “compressed” ethnography (Jeffrey and Troman, 2004, pp. 538-540), the daily encounters of the research field are temporally and spatially limited, but analysis embeds the ‘classroom’ in broader social groups, interactions and structures, aiming to make visible power nexuses and the possible dimensions of subjectivities (Bloome, 2013).
These spatial and temporal constraints potentially limit the depth of immersion and engagement with the field, and bring into question the extent to which a ‘compressed’ study can be properly named an ethnography, rather than an ethnographic inquiry, or a study which uses ethnographic strategies.\textsuperscript{17} Questions of whether my study was or was not long enough to properly be called an ‘ethnography’ were first raised in my institutional upgrade, and continue to be of interest for the issues raised about the validity and depth of interpretation, and the potential familiarity with the field that a truncated engagement might represent (Clifford, 1983). In recognising these constraints, I aim to make them visible, signalling in the data analysis that follows where multiple interpretations of my ‘data’ is possible, and keeping “the unfamiliar, unfamiliar” through reflexive discomfort (Pillow, 2003, p. 177) – a process initiated by the practice of writing fieldnotes, but continued throughout the writing of this thesis. The contextualised nature of this study, as well as the concern to remain open to potential fractures and disjunctures in meaning is a feminist one, but further speaks to the concern of my research questions to explore and trouble meanings (re)produced through interactions.

Within this compressed temporal framework, I therefore employed a range of strategies to support in-depth engagement and work to decentre my own authority. This included intensive work towards linguistic familiarity with the ‘vernacular’ of the field (Clifford, 1983), supported by a relationship with Phili and the other VEs of my four core research classes, in which I iteratively explored my own interpretations in informal conversations, both during the ‘doing’ of the study itself, but also at the transcription phase, in which I transcribed and discussed a number of life-history interviews and audio-recordings of key moments in class at weekends with Phili. These strategies were designed to work across the insider-outsider hyphen (Fine, 1994), and to open space to critically examine my assumptions and (re)presentations of the field (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2010). Ultimately, however, my daily departures from the field marked a distance that I was inevitably never able to entirely close: as Stacey notes in her discussion of feminist research, “fieldwork and its textual products represent an intervention into a system of relationships that the researcher is far freer than the researched to leave” (Stacey, 1988, p. 21). My daily departures as night fell, shaped in concerns of personal safety and risk that will be explored in the chapter which follows, pre-figured the ways in which I would leave the field for a final time in February 2014.

\textsuperscript{17} My thanks to Emily Henderson for thinking through this distinction with me, and for writing so thoughtfully about these discussions subsequently (Henderson, 2016, pp. 103-108).
This literal and figurative distance from the field, which researchers are only ever able to bridge imperfectly, particularly when conducting research from an ‘outsider’ position, relates to the final aspect of ethnographic methods: perspective. For Hammersley, this tension between “what we might call participant and analytic perspectives” (Hammersley, 2006, p. 4) is a central part of the production of ethnographies, providing a creative “dynamic” which should be put to work in writing (Hammersley, 2006, p. 11). There is a productive tension between the ‘voice’ of the researcher-in-writing, and the ‘voices’ of the participants; neither voice is seen as ‘authentic’, and the positionality of the researcher is put under the same lens as ‘data’ from participants (Lather, 1997). In this understanding of the ‘dynamic’ or ‘productive’ tension of the ethnographic perspective, the ‘power’ of interpretation and authority is carefully balanced in the framings of the literature read before, during and after the field, the reflections of the researcher herself, and the details of the (inter)actions and ‘told tales’ of the participants, using layered interpretations to make visible rather than mask the ways in which fieldwork can shift our understandings of the signifiers under analysis. This tension is thus both analytic and ethical in nature. In the subsequent analysis, I therefore deliberately lingered on moments when my research participant(s) resisted or interpreted my questions or the framing of ideas in unexpected and creative ways. I have tried to attend to how each of these research and interpretative acts are themselves imbued with power and nexuses of gendered social norms and hierarchies, in which intersectional concerns around cultural and racialised identities further interplay with the (re)production of knowledge. The following sections explore how ‘I’ was read, placing this against readings of ‘Phili’ and asking what such readings might imply for understanding the process of generating and interpreting data.

Nevertheless, the ways in which ethnographies are defined by not just “methodological” but “representational” criteria, which situate the historical (and etymological) roots of ethnographic inquiry as writing (graphein) people and culture (ethnos) (Smith, 2001, Van Maanen, 2011) have been seen as problematic. For some authors, a sensitivity to resistances and interpretations which take the researcher outside her own frames is not enough. Critiques of representation (Mohanty, 1988, Spivak, 2010), and the power asymmetries inherent in ethnographic research (Stacey, 1988, Lather, 1997, Denzin et al., 2008) continue to trouble these acts, reading them through the lens of neo-Colonial, globalised processes of knowledge production, and raising concerns about those “treating the periphery as a site primarily of data collection” (Epstein and Morrell, 2012, p. 471). The
following sections reflect on how my own positionality, constructions of gender and violence, and the act of translation are all embedded in these questions of power.

‘Charley’: Mrs Inspector // Inkosazana // -mhlope // -mlungu // phesheya // Sisi

“Vigilance from within can…work not to situate reflexivity in a confessional act, a cure for what ails us, or a practice that renders familiarity, but rather to situate practices of reflexivity as critical to exposing the difficult and often uncomfortable task of leaving what is unfamiliar, unfamiliar” (Pillow, 2003, p. 177).

Inevitably, my own positionality coloured the ethnographic strategies that I put to work, and the multiple readings of ‘me’ impacted differently on the (re)productions of discourses and knowledge through the ‘doing’ of this study. In some spaces I interviewed ‘up’ (Becker and Aiello, 2013), in some I stayed quiet and Phili led the discussions, in others I actively intervened. Some questions were not answered. At times, questions were asked of me. I read and was read differently within different spaces, dressing differently, speaking in different languages and modes, and sitting differently for interviews and informal conversations in warehouses, cars, offices, hotel rooms, halls, houses, or under trees. In the pilot studies that I conducted over August 2012, the combination of my smart dress and affiliative relationships with DBE officials and KRG Monitors led to adult learners referring to me as ‘Mrs Inspector’ during the visit to the graduation ceremony and to classes in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal (field notes, September 2012). I was named as carrying the same authority, and evaluating the project in the same way as ‘official’ campaign monitoring visits, that were designed to feed into the training and management of the campaign (McKay, 2015). This title of ‘Mrs Inspector’ continued to be the way that I was formally but indirectly addressed in the first week of the immersive phase of the study in visits to Endaweni and Phakathi (field notes, September 2013).

As I returned for regular visits in the immersive phase of the study, however, differentiating me from other Monitors and officials who tended to visit just once, ‘Mrs Inspector’ was quickly replaced by other forms of address that continued to centre my raced and gendered identity, but with a shift from English to isiZulu as I myself began to speak and introduce myself in attempts to negotiate this socio-linguistic gap. In the second week of the study, I was directly addressed as ‘inkosazana’ (‘little Miss’), a term that carried with it less ‘official’ overtones either of government or campaign structures, but that
instead (re)centred my raced and gendered identity as one of authority and respect (Marks, 1963), through a term of address for a younger woman embedded in the racialised hierarchy of female domestic work (Shefer, 2012, Bosch and McLeod, 2015). As the weeks continued, when I was spoken about but not directly addressed, I was referred to as ‘-mhlope’ (‘white’), ‘-mlungu’ (the ‘European’), or one coming from ‘phesheya’ (‘overseas/far away/elsewhere’). Sometimes I was referred to as ‘the one speaking English’ (fieldnotes, October and November 2013).

Each of these forms of address signalled racialised social distance, whether geographically, socio-linguistically or through direct reference to the colour of my skin. Such references and forms of address ‘troubled’ how ‘I’ was understood, but were also ‘troubling’ to me (Durrheim et al., 2011, Butler, 1990, Butler, 1997): I felt uncomfortable when I heard them, and would try to build rapport through jokes about my poor pronunciation of the isiZulu ‘click’ sounds, as well as by answering personal questions about my family and life in London. At other times, I was able to put this ‘elsewhere-ness’ to use, asking for things to be explained that an ‘insider’ might have been assumed to know (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009), adopting a “qualified naïveté” (Kvale, 2007, p. 12).

Outside of these references, however, race remained both “nowhere and everywhere” (Walker, 2005) in the ways in which power was signalled in the data, as the following chapters will continue to explore. The one exception to the direct naming of race came in an interview with a learner named Smangele, who addressed a story of racial exploitation and abuse to me directly in our interview, shifting her gaze to me from Phili as she talked about this part of her life (fieldnotes, 12.11.2013). Smangele explicitly named that she had “never had a conversation” with a white person before (fieldnotes, 12.11.2013), and described a history of racialised exploitation and violence in both her role as a domestic worker, and in her interactions with white South Africans during the apartheid era. At the end of the interview, I apologised for the way that she was treated, and left with a discomfort both at the ways in which my raced presence was read into her narrative through her direct address to me, but further at the pleasure that I felt when she addressed me after the interview not as ‘inkosazana’ as she had done when we first met, but as ‘sisi’ (‘sister’), a form of address that had hitherto been ‘reserved for Phili’ (fieldnotes, 12.11.2013).
The multiple readings of ‘me’ noted here are thus contextualised by the logics of difference that I introduced at the start of this thesis (pp. 16-19), and the ways in which “in the ultimate analysis no white person can escape being part of the oppressor camp” (Biko, 1978). Steve Biko’s words continue to have salience for critical engagements with race and with whiteness in South Africa today (Hook, 2011, Truscott and Marx, 2011). In apologising to Smangele and in thinking through the impact of my own positionality on this study, I am conscious that my whiteness is not to be rehabilitated (Steyn and Foster, 2008, Steyn, 2004), and have worked to fight the urge to ‘disidentify’ (Ahmed, 2004) from the troubling nature of whiteness in South Africa, as well as elsewhere. In reflecting on these multiply layered positions, I have aimed not to reach a “catharsis of self-awareness” or to see reflexivity as a “cure for the problem of doing representation” (Pillow, 2003, p. 181), but rather to make visible to both myself and the reader how power and positionality shaped what I chose to do and not do, what could and could not be said, and what I am and am not able to say in interpreting the ‘data’ (Henwood, 2008). While these forms of address and reference were gradually overlaid by address and references to me simply by the abbreviated form of my first name: Charley (fieldnotes, October 2013), concerns around the extent to which my embodied-researcher-subject continued to carry these earlier ‘readings’ of ‘myself’, (re)inscribed on my gendered and raced identity, raise questions of the extent to which I was able to decentre my own authority or actively shape what and who being ‘Charley’ represented. As I will continue to discuss, linguistic engagement through learning isiZulu, the importance of ethnographic engagements grounded in time, respect and perspective, and the value of the researcher’s presence and reflexivity are all centrally important to this study, but they are imperfect tools.

Phili – mediation, interpretation, translation

While some of these forms of address were negotiated by me directly, they were also shaped by my relationship with Phili, and her presence and involvement in mediating, interpreting and translating both words spoken and social interactions. Phili became deeply familiar with my research questions and keen to expand the ways in which I might ask and understand prompts and probes during interview and participant-observation spaces. The kind of mediated cultural interpretation that defined my relationship with and employment of Phili has been critiqued in the anthropological field as a kind of ‘hidden Colonialism’, for its failure to make visible and recognise the contributions of
‘local’ or ‘participant-informants’ (Sanjek, 1993). I therefore make Phili’s interventions visible in the data, attributing questions to her or to me in the transcripts, and detailing her laughter or exclamations in affective response to interviewees’ stories. I want to acknowledge her contributions to this study explicitly. My concern to make her visible is both an ethical one, but also analytical, to make the clear the evidence and arguments that enter into an interpretation, so that it can be tested by other readers. As Wong and Poon powerfully highlight in their discussion of three different translations of data, the translator herself must be brought ‘out of the shadows’, so that interpretations might be considered in the light both of knowledge of the research questions and which signifiers have been privileged, but also by the socio-cultural position of the translator herself (Wong and Poon, 2010).

As I have discussed above, Phili bridged the insider-outsider gap through her position within the Kha ri Gude campaign as a Supervisor, whose role entailed a distanced observation of the classes. This employment within an education campaign, and the knowledge that she had attained this job title through both hard work and a Matric certificate further positioned her as a ‘success’ story within the community: in a number of interviews Phili offered her own past experience as a single, teenage mother and as a hard worker who had returned to education herself as an inspirational example. She was described by learners who knew her as a ‘good woman’ (fieldnotes, 17th October 2013), exemplified by her care for her late brother’s children and by her outward appearance and adherence to norms of ‘respect’ (discussed in more detail in the following chapter). She was religious, and knew some of the learners through the Methodist church that she attended. At the same time, she observed Zulu customs, sending a photograph by WhatsApp of a snake that she had killed to the sangoma,18 for example, to confirm that she had not committed a crime against her ancestors (fieldnotes, 29th November 2013). Her lifetime of living in Endaweni placed her firmly as someone who ‘knows what life is like for us here’ (fieldnotes, 20th October 2013). Her family had experienced violence in the community, both within the research period itself and during the transition to democracy.

Phili and I thus both held multi-layered positions that were constructed through the lens of gender, race and socio-cultural location, but that were further refracted through the lens of our relationship with the campaign itself. In the following sections I want to reflexively

18 A sangoma can be translated as ‘traditional healer’ or ‘witch-doctor’; both terms were used in English when describing this position with the community in Endaweni
engage with the concepts under analysis, by looking at ‘gender’ and ‘violence’ in the field, and how they were both conceptually and physically present/absent, performed and practiced. Just as the discursive and spatial boundaries of the KRG campaign delineated my acts and interactions as a researcher, and framed Phili’s own life history, so too the process of researching ‘gender’ and ‘violence’ in the field was inevitably bound by this discursive terrain. Both ‘gender’ and ‘violence’ became empty signifiers, but ever-present, a potential compass that both organised and disorganised the study and the thinking behind it, as multiply layered meanings were (un)fixed through the doing of the research.

**Gender in // Gendering the field**

As I have discussed above in my brief outline of the recruitment of learners to participate in *Kha ri Gude* (pp. 77-8), one construct of ‘gender’ [inequality] was inherent in the ‘targeting’ of [illiterate] women for the campaign, and the significantly higher proportion of female to male learners who participated in the classes. This gendered targeting of women, interacting with other locally situated constructs around gender, resulted in the attenuation of male learners, and constructions of men as ‘absent’, that will be analysed in depth in the following chapters. It was women’s bodies (present with their children and grand-children) who populated the classes. These (re)presentations of embodied gender will be introduced in the following chapter, which uses a spatial analysis that further contextualises these embodied gendered scripts within the socio-cultural norms and intersections that adhered to living and learning in *Endaweni*.

These embodied questions of ‘gender in’ the research sample (or gender as bodies, numbers or ratios), however, raise concerns of ways in which a concern for ‘gender in’ an educational intervention can erase or obscure the process of understanding ‘gendering’, by focusing on the presence of men/women rather than practices, interactions and constructions of the very categories of ‘gender’ themselves. In the choice to limit the data presented in the analysis chapters (6-9) to the co-constructed meanings elicited from women’s lives and women’s experiences, the interest which underpinned life-history questions thus shifted from *how do learners participating in the Kha ri Gude campaign shape their own [gendered] narratives of being ‘illiterate’ or ‘uneducated’?* to *how do women participating in the Kha ri Gude campaign shape their own [gendered] narratives of being ‘illiterate’ or ‘uneducated’?* In the following chapters, I will therefore also explore how the
subject-position of ‘adult-learner’ was broadly constructed in the first phase and focus groups of the study, which included perspectives from a number of men and an in-depth analysis of performed, gendered identities in class, before looking at the implications of the shift from ‘learner’ to ‘women’.

There is a thus a difference both of ways in which I was able to collect data about ‘gender’ in the different stages, but also of the object(s) of analysis to which these different stages and methods referred, which potentially reduces ‘gender’ to an empty signifier. Stages of data collection also asked different questions. In the early part of the study, in questions about the conceptualisation and design of the study, I asked, ‘how do you understand gender?’ or ‘where do you see gender interplaying with your work?’. In the training, as a participant-observer, I was interested to see if ‘gender’ was the subject of any of the sessions, or parts of the sessions or informal sessions. In the analysis of the texts produced by the campaign, I was interested to analyse the (re)presentations of gender. In the life-history interviews, I was interested to see how and where ‘gender’ interplayed in and with understandings of ‘education’, how violence might be ‘gendered’, and how and whether gender might be read into told stories. The multiple ethnographic methods that characterised the immersive stage of the study were designed to reflect not on constructions and (re)presentations of ‘gender’ in the campaign discourses, but on the ways in which campaign discourses met, shaped and were shaped by practices, (inter)actions, and identities that characterised the field. Rather than emptying the signifier of meaning, therefore, these rich and layered constructions of gender, gathered through different interlocutors in different spaces and different stages of the KRG campaign, offered spaces to analyse signifying chains of both ‘gender in’ and ‘gendering’ the field.

At the outset of the research, however, I had wanted to remain open to the possibility that the participants in my study might themselves construct their life-histories without reference to their own gendered identities. In the writing of the study, I am doubtful whether the openness and agnosticism that I was aiming for in my attention to gender was possible. Ultimately, the design and construction of this study rests on the premise that gender is an important axis of marginalisation, that it is an important facet of lived lives, and that it would emerge in the data. I was interested to see where and how gender and violence might emerge in discourse and practices in the field, but once I had identified
how and where they were seen, I was not agnostic as to their importance. The (retrospectively written) literature review, edited in response to the data collection, has focused on these themes and emphasised the importance of ‘gender’. Inevitably, the authorial control in choosing what and how to present the analysed data in the following chapters, has privileged gender in the (re)telling of the story of this thesis. In the following section, I will discuss how these multiple meanings around ‘gender’ were further shaped by the emergence of violence, both as a construct in the study, and as a force in the field.

**Violence: dis-/inter-/ruptions**

> Often this speech about the “Other” annihilates, erases, “no need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speak subject, and you are now at the centre of my talk.” Stop.

*(hooks, 1990, p. 343)*

> You must never look away from this. You must always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body.

*(Coates, 2015, p. 10)*

The postcolonial and feminist critiques which I have noted above might be read as particularly powerful in contexts of research around violence, in which the intersubjective space of interviews and participant-observations are situated in broader social structures that include the kind of raced and gendered historical inequalities and power asymmetries that readings of me as ‘inkosazana’ might signify. Such critiques might work doubly against my research. First, they apply to the way in which a literacy intervention, designed at the intersect of international and national level policy, but delivered at a ‘local’ community level, itself might Other the learners with whom it engages in ways that may perpetuate structural and symbolic violence, and fail to challenge forms of physical and emotional violence. Second, these critiques apply to me, Charley, as a researcher. I may
talk about Others in ways in which erases their voice(s). I may re-write my research participants, and myself anew.

The very act of researching violence and ‘telling pain’ thus raises specific ethical dilemmas and debates that must go beyond a question of ‘do no harm’ (Parkes, 2010), to consider questions of dignity (Ross, 2005), often expanding the demands of institutional ethical approval such as that granted for this study. In the South African context, the complexity of individual and collective trauma and memory that such a process of (re)telling might represent have been particularly discussed with reference by authors reflecting on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Ross, 2003, Krog, 2000, Mamdani, 2002, Gqola, 2001, van Marle and Swart, 2017), simultaneous with a concern for the perpetuation of silence around violence against women (Goldblatt and Meintjes, 1998, Kashyap, 2009, Motsemme, 2004). The continued force of taboos in speaking around violence, particularly in relation to raced and gendered violence including rape, sexual and domestic violence, is a concern of both research and prevention strategies (Usdin et al., 2005, Jewkes et al., 2005). Questions of speaking and silence, (re)presentation and “the preservation of memory is...selective, and implicated in power” (Gqola, 2001, p. 98).

Concurrent with these kinds of representational concerns is the reality of high levels of violence for many in the country, particularly for those from poor, marginalised backgrounds: in 2013/14 South Africa’s murder rate was about five times higher than the global average (SAPS, 2017), while rates of rape are among the highest in the world (Buiten and Naidoo, 2016). Analyses of violence both in South Africa and more broadly, however, highlight that while such figures are deeply shocking, there is an ethical obligation to work with conceptualisations of violence that go beyond a focus on the physical acts (Parkes et al., 2013, Parkes, 2015). I was therefore concerned to keep definitions of violence open, and to allow the meanings around violence to shift as I travelled through different spaces and engaged with different interlocutors. In my earlier discussions with those who conceptualised and managed the campaign, mirroring the questions around gender, I did directly ask, ‘how do you understand violence?’ and ‘where do you see violence interplaying with your work?’. I was interested to see whether violence was the topic of any sessions or discussions in the training workshop, and how violence was reflected upon as a question of social justice. In my analysis of the texts of the campaign, I was interested to note if there were references to violence, and if so what form of violence would be referred to. The gap
between these constructions of violence in the KRG discourses, and the forms of everyday violence that emerged from community-based life-histories and focus groups will be a key part of the analysis which follows.

In conducting research into violence with an attendance to these complexities and with a concern to keep meanings open, I did not ask direct questions about violence in the immersive, community phase of the study. Narrations of violent moments did, however, ‘emerge’ consistently. All of the core thirty life-history interviews included discussion of forms of structural violence, most commonly through gendered discrimination and inequalities and the intersects with raced and classed economic inequalities and exploitation. Twenty-four of the core thirty life-histories included reference to past histories of either physical, sexual and emotional violence, while there was reference to experience of violence contemporary with the campaign cycle and research period in three of the core thirty life-histories (two of which are discussed in detail in chapter nine). In the Ehholo class in Endaweni and the Edobo class in Phakathi, female learners sought direct help from their Volunteer-Educators to mediate the violence happening in their homes, and in both cases these requests for support were extended to Phili and to me. Violence was an everyday reality for the women whom I interviewed; there was both an ethical and analytical concern in offering space for it to emerge.

At the moment when references to acts of violence emerged in the life-history interviews, often accompanied by embodied symptoms of stress and distress such as shaking or tears, Phili and I would always offer to stop the interview, and at times did so. At the end of all interviews in which violence was told, we would further discuss options for support with the interviewee, referring them both to community-based, local support but also professional services (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005). In the car and over cups of tea after the interviews, Phili and I would also “emotionally debrief”, talking through the transferred emotion of listening to the told stories, (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005, p. 42). There were, finally, two conversations over Skype in which I sought the support and wisdom of my supervisor Jenny Parkes, for which I am extremely grateful. The aim of such discussions was not, however, to erase the space of affect and emotional responses in both telling and listening to narratives of violence. Attendance to affect and emotions can offer analytical insight that serves as a heuristic device in reflexive processes (Diphoorn, 2013).
A further ethical question pertains to the presentation of data and the ethical obligation to shape future interpretation of findings and discussion related to violence (Jewkes et al., 2000). The references in the transcripts to physical, sexual and emotional violence were described by one of my supervisors, in an early read of chapter nine, as ‘searing’. I have had detailed discussions about whether this violence, that was not directly asked about, should be told at all. These decisions have been extremely difficult to make, with affective chains that still give me pause. In the readings of violence and loss, at a time when I myself was learning to live with the loss of my own father, there were times when these ‘extracts’ were too difficult to read. The act of ‘extracting’ them from their context in the coding process itself felt violent, a further (re)inscription through the de-contextualisation of these moments of violence from fuller stories that also included joy, pleasure, social networks, and laughter. Would the (re)telling of them render me bell hooks’ “colonizer, speak-subject”? What is the impact of a process of centring these extracts, and what I want to say about the identity work that they do, in interpretations that are ultimately “my talk”? 

The acts of violence that emerged in the sixty-one life-history narratives included murder, rape, child rape and abuse, physical acts of violence with knives, sticks and hands, racial exploitation and abuse, suicide, suicidal thoughts, violent robberies, car-jacking, arson and violent destruction of property. These acts are hard to list, hard to tell, hard to listen to and hard to read. Ultimately, however, I felt that to not include some reference to these acts would have been (in Ta-Nehisi Coates’ words to his son, above) to “look away”, to present a partial (re)presentation of Endaweni and the lives of many of those who live there from an analytical distance of home, to choose not to (re)present what had already been (re)presented, told in an explicitly research context. What I have tried to do, in the chapters that follow, is to therefore present extracts that are contextualised, to present the moments of violence in the contexts of hope, social networks and aspirations that framed them, (un)fixed and sometimes contradictory as such narratives were. I have tried not to colonize, to be attendant to the meanings that the women themselves made of violence in their own life-histories, and to not separate words from subjectivities. In the section that follows, I will continue to reflect on this process, and the ways in which translation – in this study from isiZulu to English – can be nevertheless be read as a further act of violence to the ‘data’.
As Claudia Lapping notes in her discussion of the ethics of interpretation, the “process of analysis and writing...is where a certain violence is done to the data, as some meanings are privileged in the substitution of linear text for the richness of the data, and the supplanted signifiers... ‘fall’ from the analysis back into the field” (Lapping, 2008, p. 79). In this study, the potential violence of interpretation is overlaid by the violence of the process of translation, in which meanings are ‘extracted’ from isiZulu and rendered into English, a further distancing that is inherent to the research process, in which signifiers are not only ‘supplanted’ but ‘brought home’ to a very different context and linguistic terrain. The act of translation (re)produces a product that can obscure the process of data collection, and doubly overlays the researcher’s own interpretation. In this study, the narratives in their translated form and the written interpretation of them in a thesis published in English are impossible to share with the women who told them in oral isiZulu. What does (re)presentation mean, in the context of this doubly translated elsewhere (phesheya)?

To attempt to retain the visibility of my own translations, and for my interpretations and (re)presentations of the data to remain open to contestation (Wong and Poon, 2010), I have always co-versioned extracts in footnotes, which use the isiZulu transcripts. These isiZulu transcripts were finished by Phili, after some initial training by me in person around how to produce verbatim texts. The subsequent translation of these transcripts was iterative and triangulated: first, I translated the interviews myself, engaging both with the written and the audio files, as well as my research notes on the embodied experience of the interview. Second, my isiZulu teacher checked my translations and interpretations against both the audio and the original text using a random sample approach across the full data set, and then purposively confirming my translation of extracts which I had chosen to use in the analytical chapters. Finally, I shared the texts with Phili, for local dialect and colour around my own interpretations, and to confirm my understandings. In the

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9. Both Phili and I stored the audio files for these interviews, and the subsequent Word document transcripts, in password-protected folders.

10. My heartfelt thanks to Carola Mostert for both her teaching and for her guidance in the process of triangulating these interpretations.
following chapters, particular signifiers that recur and shift will be given in both languages. These signifiers were traced first in isiZulu, before being rendered into English at the first draft stage of each chapter.

From the outset, translation had troubled the signifiers which interested me; in the analytical process, attendance to the ‘troubling’ meanings of words often yielded important insights. A conflation that I have discussed in chapter two, for example, between being ‘educated’ and being ‘literate’ was hard to define in isiZulu: words associated with education are all rendered by the verbal root ‘-funda’, which signifies a chain that encompasses ‘to read’, ‘to study’, and ‘to attend formal schooling’. In the emerging analysis of transcripts, however, different literacy practices added useful layers that unpacked this conflation, as distinctions were made in the dialectical descriptions of to ‘read or write’ (-funda/-bhala) which were contrasted with to read and write a signature or ‘to sign’ (-sayina), which was expressed through the Zulu version of the English loan word. Analysis of these different meanings, and their associations with dominant and vernacular literacy practices formed a useful analytical starting point. So too the framing of ‘gender’ in terms of things ascribed to ‘men’ or ‘women’, and the various socio-cultural intersects of gendered categories with age (unmarried girl, married yet young girl, mother, and so on) helped elucidate meaning through attendance to the impossibility of direct linguistic transference, unpacking the gendered binary in new and different ways.

A final, useful linguistic distinction that has conceptual implications can be made around the words for violence in isiZulu. The word ‘Violence’ (Udlame) itself has come to signify the political violence of the late 1980s and early 1990s in KwaZulu-Natal, that will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. Words associated with ‘violence’ in isiZulu are multiple, the socio-cultural constructions of the ‘Violence’ (Udlame) is just one of these multiplicities through a direct use of the word itself. Other words associated with violence include the specificities of verbs describing physical acts of violence, or the emotional and psycho-social resonances of ‘feeling bad’ or ‘feeling pain’. Signifiers of violence thus shift with different signifying chains associated with the distinctions and links between physical and emotional, structural and symbolic violence. In attendance to these meanings, violence itself emerged as an analytical category, through signifiers such as ‘trouble’ or ‘stress’ and signification of violence in the affect of sighs and silences, tears and shaking hands. These different chains, in the interpretative phase of the data, came to shape the
ways in which I understood emerging themes around the inter-relationship of education, gender and violence as chapters six to nine will make clear.

In this sense, translation was both a logistical necessity but also a form of analysis, and an interpretative act: “the ethnographer does not...translate texts the way the translator does. (S)He must first produce them” (Crapanzano, 1986, p. 51). Translation completed the circle of the ‘reflexive continuum’, as I returned in the process of rendering isiZulu to English to the process of translating my research questions into isiZulu at the very start of the study. Translation was the first stage of fine-grained discourse analysis that I brought to bear on the data, through which I began to try to understand how talk is constitutive, building discursive positionings that are embedded in social relations (Davies and Harré, 1990, Harré et al., 2003). I would re-listen to the audio-recordings for tone and affect, intimacy and vocalisation, noting the pauses and the silences, the quiet questions or responses, the laughter, and annotating the transcripts with cross-references to my fieldnotes. Silences were attended to, both in the ways in which they might indicate taboos, but also “abbreviated” indicators of normative cultural assumptions (Spradley, 1979, pp. 57-8). Some of these affective and embodied layers of the interview experience are retained in italicised notes in brackets on the extracted data in the chapters which follow, others have been rendered into the interpretation which I have given in the text around the extracts. Attendance to this talk across both isiZulu and English pieces of data helped to reveal the kinds of repetitions, fractures and equivalences that together constitute discursive repertoires (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Potter et al., 1990).

The full data-set which this study encompassed was textualised by these processes, in which my fieldnotes, transcripts of participant-observations, transcripts of focus groups, and transcripts of key informant interviews, life-history interviews and the reflexive second interviews were all brought together, alongside the official KRG campaign texts. By moving back and forth across these forms of data, I began to develop two ‘thick descriptions’ of inter-related aspects of my field, which formed the bases for chapters five and six. The first drew on both verbal and visual forms of data to generate a ‘thick description’ of Endaweni, and included photographs, maps, relevant key informant interviews, fieldnotes, community mapping walks and focus group data. In working towards the analysis for chapter six, I focused on data that generated a ‘thick description’ of the Kha ri Gude discourses, drawing on key informant interviews from the national and
local levels, my analysis of the Kha ri Gude texts, life-history interview data discussing the recruitment phase of the study and an early participant-observation which I had described after noting in my fieldnotes “the prevalence of gendered jokes about being an adult learner / learning adult” (fieldnotes, 7th August 2013). Bringing together these multiple forms of data helped reveal contestations within the discourses, particularly around the idea of ‘motivating’ or ‘being motivated’ to learn, as chapter six will explore, or around the tension in (re)presenting communities at ‘risk’, which chapter five reflects upon.

These two chapters both began to theorise the spatiality and discourses of the Kha ri Gude campaign, but also provided ‘thick descriptions’ that together (re)presented the texts, discursive practices and socio-cultural contexts (Fairclough, 1992b) that framed the interviews with adult learners which constitute the heart of the dataset, and underpin the analysis of chapters seven to nine. My analysis of these interviews was also thematic, overlaying these thematic touchstones with an intersectional or a violence analytical lens, in a process of “constant comparison” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, pp. 101-116) across the interview dataset, in which both codes and theoretical notions are developed in parallel, with breaks for writing of memos to capture “initial freshness” of ideas. This coding relied on building categories of analysis through multiple reads of the data, drawing together patterns that spoke to both the research questions, and to the post-structural, intersectional framing of the thesis set out in the introduction (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015, pp. 201-221). In doing so, I attended not only to the content of speech, but the ways in which ideas were expressed, underpinned by reflections on the structures of the isiZulu language itself, that looked for patterns within the language structure as well as the choice of words themselves (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Through this process of thematic coding, close attention to linguistic expression, and constant comparison, I began to ‘privilege’ signifying chains which broadly spoke to constructs of being ‘uneducated’, being and becoming ‘educated’, and questions of violence; these three chains formed the narrative and analysis of chapters seven to nine.

**Gendering the field: power, position and violence**

As Richa Nagar notes, it can be in the moment of writing that feminist concerns to decentre authority and continue to present (un)fixed narratives are most fraught, as the insecurity of ‘outside’ interpretations can reach an ‘impasse’, or drive a compulsion to
'abandon' (Nagar, 2002), and as power inherent in the writing of the research narrative opens new ethical dilemmas (Becker and Aiello, 2013). Throughout this chapter I have tried to explore where and how power was located, and to make visible some of the ways in which power operated within the nexus of the ‘delivery’ of the campaign, and my own research journey. A traveller metaphor, a sense of ‘elsewhere’-ness has been useful throughout this chapter, to understand the ways in which I have (un)fixed the research field, and tried to explore how the meanings around ‘education’, ‘gender’ and ‘violence’ were elicited. In the act of writing, and bringing such meanings home, I see this research as opening a dialogue, and of only one possible set of interpretations that I hope will be challenged and engaged with, democratising knowledge by building new theory that does not solely sit with me (Epstein and Morrell, 2012). I have tried to make myself vulnerable and to write myself into not out of the study (Fine, 1994), to add rather than detract from the methodological rigour and interpretations which I have drawn on in the chapters which follow. Chapter five takes up this notion of the journey, in the work to ‘locate’ the study in Endaweni.
5 ‘Locating’ the study: Endaweni

“Much as I think about gender as em-bodied, I think about social history as en-landed”
(Connell, in discussion with Livholts, 2010, p. 271)

“What the map cuts up, the story cuts across”
(de Certeau, cited in Madison and Hamera, 2006, xx)

As I have noted in previous chapters, my ‘field’ is doubly constituted. It is both cut up and cut across. Concepts of gender, violence, and being and becoming a learner within this campaign were seen to be constructed both ‘on the ground’ and ‘in the texts’ (fieldnotes reflecting on key informant interviews, August/September 2012). My field is represented by both the ‘en-landed’ social history of the community of Endaweni (the focus of this chapter) and the discursive terrain of the Kha ri Gude campaign (the focus of the next).

This chapter will introduce Endaweni through this notion of ‘en-landed’-ness, exploring a notion of the field as “a practiced place” (De Certeau, 1984, pp. 117-130), in which spatiality interplays with socio-cultural practices and histories to shape the ways in which education, gender and violence can work as inter-connected signifiers of ‘localised’ marginalisation. It will build a ‘thick description’ of the socio-cultural and physical terrain of the community of Endaweni, the space in which KRG would be mediated, transmitted and potentially resisted.

Geographically, Endaweni is located close to Inanda Dam in the Valley of a Thousand Hills region of the province of KwaZulu-Natal. This somewhat evocative name captures the shape of the landscape, in which a series of hills fold down towards the Umgeni River at the base of the valleys, as shown in the photograph which I took during my pilot visit in 2012 (figure 2, left) of a Kha ri Gude class delivered on one of these thousand hills. In this chapter, I will present an ‘en-landed’ social history of Endaweni by both cutting up and cutting across with maps and stories from a variety of data gathered in early stages of the
immersive phase of the study. The ‘thick description’ that this chapter represents is evolving and layered, through a ‘personal’ ethnographic narrative (Pratt, 1986), that (imperfectly) re)presents the process of entering the field as an embodied-researcher-subject. In doing so, this chapter aims to enact the ‘reflexive continuum’ in travelling with increasing proximity to the field, making visible the perspectives, subjectivities and methodological variances that together constitute (my understanding of) being an adult o(‘f)in Endaweni, being an adult learner in Endaweni, and of Endaweni itself. The chapter is deliberately polyphonic and at times contradictory to highlight ways in which the ‘field’ was unfixed and contextualised (for me) by those with whom I interacted, and shaped differently by distance or proximity, ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ status, absence and presence.

The chapter will open with analysis of the intersecting forms of marginalisation that can be constructed through statistical and academic (re)presentations to frame living and learning in KwaZulu-Natal generally, and Endaweni specifically. It will then turn to considering the motto of the campaign – *Kha ri Gude wherever you are!* – which simultaneously centred and troubled notions of space and place in conceptualising the learning space of the campaign, and first raised questions of ‘distance’ that are traced throughout the chapter. Through the subsequent four increasingly proximal (re)presentations of Endaweni, I will try to colour and make immediate this distanced history of the academic literature and statistics, read and imagined by me before I entered the field, by reflecting on fieldnotes, community mapping exercises with two learners and focus group data with the four key classes in this study. I will reflect on what my early fieldnotes (uncomfortably) reveal of my own subjective concerns and how they were shaped by raced and gendered signifiers as I moved through the community in daily interactions. The chapter will close with the proximity of the four key research classes, and ‘communal’ constructions of Endaweni elicited in early focus groups with learners in which co-constructed meanings were drawn by those living and learning there around what it meant to be ‘of-Endaweni’.  

Through this analysis, this chapter will make the case for the importance of understanding the adult learning classroom as a space, embedded in wider dynamics of intersecting inequalities.

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21 This clumsy English represents a Zulu locative/possessive prefix which we do not have in English, but is akin to something like being ‘a Londoner’ or ‘a Northerner’ to signify someone who is from/lives in [Place]. The place, in this linguistic use, does adjectival work and becomes a predicate of the person speaking, as in the phrase ‘Londoner’ which suggests a particular kind of socio-cultural identity linked to space but further to a set of socially constructed values, class and positionality.
Distance: Endaweni from the desk

As I set out in the introduction to this thesis (pp. 15-19), the lens of spatialised inequality offers a particularly powerful tool to analyse marginalisation at the intersect of raced and rural dynamics, educational exclusion, poverty, gendered norms and violence. In this part of the chapter, I want to explore the particularities of an 'en-landed' history at the provincial and community-based level, shaped by the national dynamics set out thus far. In doing so, I want to set out how KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is one of the provinces in South Africa in which educational exclusion, gendered inequalities and violence powerfully interrelate in historical and contemporary questions of inequalities of power and resources. I will do so both to set out a clear rationale for situating the study in a community such as Endaweni, but also to engage with these (re)presentations drawn from the desk that later parts of the chapter aim to trouble.

Spatialised dynamics of race and power played out in specific ways over the colonial and apartheid histories of KwaZulu-Natal, a province unified in 1994 to incorporate both the territory of Natal (which includes the port city of Durban) and the fragmented KwaZulu ‘Bantustan’ or ‘homeland’, one of the ten former ethnically defined areas created under the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 and the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 (Beall et al., 2005, p. 757). Intense power struggles in wars between the Zulus, Boer and English colonising forces had shaped a political character to the province that has drawn on both socio-cultural discursive framings and norms around Zulu identity, and the specificities of the geo-politics of the region (De Haas and Zulu, 1994, Wright, 2008, Marks, 1989). The limitations on land ownership represented by the Bantustan structures preserved particular spaces for white citizens, and were further designed to limit black unified resistance to apartheid, by fuelling ethno-linguistic conflict and stoking notions of ‘tribalism’ (Sithole, 2008, Beall et al., 2005). This ethno-linguistic history to KwaZulu-Natal continues to have salience today: data from the 2011 census show that the population of KwaZulu-Natal is 86.8% black African (SSA, 2014a, p. 29), with the majority of the population (78%) speaking isiZulu as their first language (SSA, 2014a, p. 35).

During the ten years leading to the transition to democracy, the spatial and political boundaries of the structures of apartheid were profoundly implicated in the area in an ‘unofficial war’ between supporters of the African National Congress (ANC) and the
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the Zulu nationalist party led by Buthelezi, the chief minister of the KwaZulu Bantustan, that left as many 20,000 killed (Taylor, 2002). Stoked by the direct involvement of the apartheid police and paramilitary forces, ‘faction fighting’ in impoverished rural areas such as Endaweni exacerbated classed tensions between political rivals (Mare, 2000). The ‘Udlame’, as it was colloquially known in Endaweni and communities in this area of KwaZulu-Natal, took on the significance of a proper noun with clear intersects across raced, gendered, ethno-linguistic and spatial dimensions as “the violence branded political identities onto the geography” of the province (Bonnin, 1997, p. 27). Endaweni was one of the communities north of Durban that became a “flashpoint” for the Violence, particularly in the late 1980s when the Violence intensified (Bonnin, 2001, p. 190), disrupting education and transport routes, displacing families and leaving huge numbers missing and dead.

The intersect of class, ethnicity and gender, and the ways in which these were mobilised discursively and through physical violence, shaped ways in which the Violence interplayed differently with every day social (inter)actions and dynamics, across urban, informal, township and rural settlements. As households themselves became the object of attack, women were indirectly drawn into the fighting while continuing to shoulder the burden of poverty (Bonnin, 2001). The discursive constructions of the IFP particularly mobilised the intersect of gender with ethno-linguistic identities, constructing women’s role in the conflict through their position as mothers and home-makers, paralleled by constructs of Zulu masculinity in terms of patriarchal privilege (Hassim, 1993, Waetjen, 1999). At the same time, the erosion of working class masculinity through economic deprivation resulted in disjunctures between the political mobilisation of gender, ethnicity and ‘culture’ and the ways in which these constructs were lived in everyday interactions, as research in the township areas of KwaZulu-Natal highlighted (Campbell, 1992, Campbell et al., 1995). In some contexts, the Violence worked to deconstruct the public-private dichotomy and extend women’s identities by opening space for women to claim back public arenas through protest, inscribing everyday spaces with political identities (Bonnin, 2000).

Despite efforts since the democratic transition of the early 1990s to both de-segregate and build policies that address the racialised and spatial inequalities that were implicated in

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22 ‘Udlame’ is the isiZulu for ‘Violence’; when I refer to this period of political violence I will use a capital ‘V’.
this Violence, the colonial and apartheid era constellations of space continue to have profound legacies today. One such legacy of apartheid era planning and approaches to development in South Africa has been the concentration of wealth and economic activity in metropolitan areas, with increasingly dense suburbs and informal settlements at a distance from these business centres (Todes and Turok, 2017). In KwaZulu-Natal, this is particularly true of the shape of development in the eThekwini municipality,\(^{23}\) which encompasses Durban and the surrounding areas including Endaweni: patterns of density and concentrations of economic activity that cluster close to urban centres, with smaller sub-metropolitan nodes clustering at the arterial roads gradually ceding to a “band of rural traditional residential settlements” (eThekwini, 2013, p. 15), areas characterised by the municipality in a 2013 report as having low levels of services and limited access to finance (eThekwini, 2013, p. 18). Endaweni is found in one such rural band indicated by pale shading on the map (figure 3), to the north of the major road (the N3) which passes from Durban to Pinetown and continues to the city of Pietermaritzburg (along the centre of the map). Given these bands and decreasing patterns of density and economic activity, and the localisation of violence, the classification of rural-urban has been characterised as overly simplistic for understanding the shape and dynamics of inequality in KwaZulu-Natal (Adato et al., 2007, p. 259).

Poverty within KwaZulu-Natal is further contextualised by provincial differences within South Africa. KwaZulu-Natal has consistently been one of the three poorest of South Africa’s nine provinces (SSA, 2017). Data collected through Income and Expenditure Surveys and Living Conditions Surveys in the years 2011 and 2015 highlight that over the research period 47% of households in KwaZulu-Natal lived below the upper-bound poverty line in 2011, rising to 48.4% in 2015, compared to a national average of 40% of households (SSA, 2017, p. 86). This measure of poverty indicates households with command over insufficient resources to purchase both food and basic needs (SSA, 2017, p. 6), and was placed at R779 per month in 2011, rising to R992 per month by 2015 (SSA, 2017, p. 8). Figures at the national level from the same report highlight the importance of understanding this poverty intersectionally: “the most vulnerable to poverty in South

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\(^{23}\) ’eThekwini’ is the isiZulu name for Durban, translating in English to ‘by the bay’ or ‘by the harbour’.
Africa are predominantly represented by females, black Africans, children (17 years and younger), people from rural areas...and those with no education” (SSA, 2017, p. 56).

Studies have fleshed out this uneven and dynamic nature to the reduction of poverty and the shape of inequality in the twenty years since the democratic transition, including within KwaZulu-Natal specifically. The KwaZulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study (KIDS), a panel study with longitudinal comparisons, has offered a particularly generative set of analyses (May et al., 2007). Analysis of this KIDS data has opened space to theorise the intransigence of poverty in the province through the notion of poverty traps (Adato et al., 2006), in which poor households lack the minimum bundle of assets represented by the upper-bound poverty line, exacerbated by ineffectual social capital that horizontal inequality represents. Participatory research that reflects on KIDS data has further highlighted social networks that extend definitions of the ‘household’: households are embedded in webs of broader relationships that include ‘visitors’ (who are themselves subject to health and economic shocks) and educational transitions that interplay in shaping household poverty and resilience (Adato et al., 2007). More recent econometric research has named this as the ‘dark side of social capital’ (di Falco and Bulte, 2011), arguing that the kinds of extensive kinship networks that characterise Zulu ‘culture’ are associated with lower incomes, making clear the ways in which social capital can have both positive and adverse outcomes in contexts of high absolute poverty, including on decisions related to education and other forms of investment (Di Falco and Bulte, 2015).

Beyond these nuanced understandings of the impact and effect of social and kinship networks, education and poverty clearly inter-relate in both South Africa generally and KwaZulu-Natal specifically. Data from the time of the research period highlight that nationally 66% of adults with no formal education live below the upper-bound poverty line, compared to less than 5% of those with higher-education (SSA, 2014b). The high levels of illiteracy associated with interrupted or non-attendance of schooling among black populations have been noted as a highly visible legacy of apartheid, that particularly affected KwaZulu-Natal: in 1996 and 2001 KwaZulu-Natal was the province with the highest number of adults with no education at all, at around 22% in both sets of census data taken in the first seven years of democracy (Aitchison and Harley, 2006, p. 96). These illiteracy rates have reduced significantly as a result both of the kinds of adult education programmes noted in chapter three, as well as a result of the integration and expansion of
the formal schooling systems: by 2015 the adult literacy in KwaZulu-Natal had risen to 92.4%, although still behind the national average of 93.7% (SSA, 2015, p. 3). Age and gender intersect differently in these educational statistics, over the years 2002-2015 the percentage of women over the age of sixty with no formal education or a highest level of education less than Grade 7 (the final year of primary school) was higher than their male counterparts (47.4% compared with 38.5%) but the reverse was true among the population aged 20-39, with 4.8% of women compared with 7.3% of men having no formal education (SSA, 2015, p. 20). Echoing the spatialisation of wealth discussed above, urban/rural differentiation plays a part, and ‘literacy’ is concentrated in metropolitan areas, with literacy rates of 97.7% in eThekwini (SSA, 2015, p. 21).

Both historical exclusion from education and contemporary low-quality education in South Africa have themselves been understood as forms of poverty traps (Burger et al., 2017, Gustafsson et al., 2010, van der Berg et al., 2011). Analysis of national household survey data has revealed what has been named a ‘skills twist’, in which returns to Matric and post-secondary education have risen, while the returns to levels of education below the Matric have remained constant (Branson et al., 2012), shifting from what Burger & Jafta describe as ‘pure discrimination’ on the grounds of race to differential returns to education in which race is imbued (Burger and Jafta, 2006, Van der Berg, 2002). Analysis of the KIDS panel data in KwaZulu-Natal reflect this national picture: earning differences in the province correlate with educational attainment, exacerbated by the relatively high pay for public sector workers, who tend to be educated (Kerr and Teal, 2015).

National analysis has further shown that despite the democratic transition, women have been consistently over-represented in low-income, less secure employment (Casale, 2004, Ntuli, 2007), with a higher gender wage gap for black Africans at the bottom of the wage distribution than at the top (Bhorat and Goga, 2013). Women across South Africa are also more likely to work in the informal or self-employed sector, but their gender disadvantage in terms of access to space and to markets and their lower access to capital than their male counterparts translates into lower levels of income and profit here too (Magidimisha and Gordon, 2015). KwaZulu-Natal has had a long history as one of the provinces with the highest numbers of workers in the informal sector, with specific efforts made by the eThekwini Municipality to consult with poorer people in their role as workers, which has included a focus on female workers (Lund and Skinner, 2004). Research has nevertheless
highlighted continued correlations between being poor and working in the informal economy (Skinner, 2006): in the final quarter of 2013, approximately half of the informal businesses run in the province had turnover levels of between R0 and R1500 (SSA, 2014d, p. 17). National statistics highlight that the informal sector is racialised, with intersects with educational inequality: 88.7% of informal businesses are run by black Africans (SSA, 2014d, p. 5), 71.5% of whom have education levels below Matric (SSA, 2014d, p. 9).

The insecurity and vulnerability associated with lower levels of the labour market, and the ways in which this is shaped by educational level, race and gender are mirrored in the shape and concentration of unemployment (Banerjee et al., 2008). National labour force survey data collected during the research period show that while the official unemployment rate in KwaZulu-Natal from Oct-Dec 2013 was 19.9% (SSA, 2014c, p. 10), the expanded unemployment rate, which includes those who self-define as ‘discouraged’ or ‘not economically active’, was 36.2% for the same period (SSA, 2014c, p. 20). While South Africa does not have specific state support for unemployment (Klasen and Woolard, 2009), a progressive range of poverty alleviation measures does exist in the form of targeted social protection mechanisms which include the Child Support Grant (CSG), the foster care grant, the disability grant, and the means-tested older person’s grant (or pension), which is available to all those aged 60 or older with no other means of financial income. Analysis has suggested that these grants have been well-targeted since the welfare state was expanded by successive post-apartheid states, and have a significant potential to reduce the inter-generational transmission of poverty (Woolard and Leibbrandt, 2013). General Household Survey data collected during 2013 show that more than one third of individuals (37.2%) and more than half of households (52.4%) in KZN were in receipt of at least one of these social grants (SSA, 2013, p. 32). Studies conducted in the province have shown how these grants have worked to alleviate both income and multi-dimensional poverty for individuals and households, including the poorest (Case et al., 2005). Work also suggests, however, that the receipt of grants has the potential to stigmatise: feminist and gendered analyses have particularly revealed contestations around the relationship between provision of the CSG and teenage pregnancies and early sexual debut (Makiwane and Udjo, 2006). Ways in which these grants alleviate poverty but without addressing structural constraints, particularly for women, have also been noted (Patel and Hochfeld, 2011, Patel, 2012).
Studies have further revealed how pension grants in particular, which are the most generous of these grants, are often distributed amongst family members beyond the pensioners themselves, particularly within female headed households (Bertrand et al., 2003, Burns et al., 2005, Duflo, 2003). Census data show that in KwaZulu-Natal 46.6% of households are female-headed, compared with a national average of 41.2% (SSA, 2014a, p. 50), again with a poverty intersect: the same 2011 census data shows that across South Africa 43.9% of female-headed households were living below the poverty line, compared to only 25.7% of male-headed households (SSA, 2014b, p. 40). These intersecting burdens around poverty, gender and age are further compounded by the HIV/AIDS crisis; studies have highlighted the particular importance of these grants for alleviating the specific caring burdens placed on older women (Schatz and Ogunmefun, 2007, Schatz and Gilbert, 2012, Chazan, 2015). Evidence from KwaZulu-Natal specifically has shown a synergistic relationship between timely receipt of the disability grant and improved health outcomes for HIV-infected adults, as well as the potential to reduce the poverty and vulnerability associated with the illness in poor households (Knight et al., 2013). Some commentators note, however, that the receipt of the disability grant while recipients are sick with AIDS may preclude use of anti-retrovirals, potentially setting up an tension between health and welfare policy (Nattrass, 2006, Leclerc-Madlala, 2006).

The HIV/AIDS crisis has had a particularly devastating impact in the province. KwaZulu-Natal has consistently had the highest HIV prevalence in the country, at 16.9% according to survey data collected in 2012 (Shisana et al., 2014, p. 36). HIV prevalence is highest at the intersect of race and gender: black African women aged 20-34 were the most-at-risk group nationwide (Shisana et al., 2014, p. 53). It is also spatialised: within the province particular communities represent ‘hot spots’ of HIV prevalence; one of these ‘hotspots’ includes the area around the clinic closest to Endaweni (Wand and Ramjee, 2010). A combination of HIV rates with other forms of poor health and maternal mortality (Suri et al., 2007) have meant that life expectancy in the province was estimated to be 37.2 years, based on 2008 data from the National Income Dynamics Study (Gumede, 2011). Research in the province has highlighted the inter-relationship between the burden of HIV and other non-communicable diseases with a range of poor physical and mental health outcomes, particularly for women (Heerden et al., 2017, Burgess and Campbell, 2014).
A number of authors note the ways in which the HIV/AIDS crisis in the province has both shaped and been shaped by constructions of gender at the intersect of ethno-cultural notions of masculinity and femininity, and within the context of socio-economic marginalisation (Hunter, 2010, Hunter, 2005, Bhana and Pattman, 2011, Bhana, 2017). The prevalence of patriarchal attitudes and what Deevia Bhana calls the ‘burden of culture’ imbue notions of male domination and the shape and possibilities for female agency (Bhana, 2016), and narratives of blame and pathologisation of women’s bodies (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001, Leclerc-Madlala, 2002, Sathiparsad, 2007). These sexuality and HIV-focused analyses are set in wider contexts of explorations of shifting ethno-cultural constructs of Zulu masculinities and femininities, which include exploration of how the burden of economic provision and shifting norms around marriage amongst Zulu-speaking men have led to ‘absent fathers’ and women shouldering the burden of care (Hunter, 2006, Denis and Ntsimane, 2006, Lewinsohn et al., 2018), contextualised within broader constructs of masculinity across South Africa that discourage men from expressing care and gender equitable attitudes (Morrell and Jewkes, 2011). Discursive analysis in diverse contexts has further explored the ways in which ethno-cultural constructs of Zulu masculinity can be mobilised in men’s talk to justify or countermand accusations of violence, including during the alleged rape trial of the South African president, Jacob Zuma (Hassim, 2009, Reddy and Potgieter, 2006), or in the talk of teachers’ attitudes to sexual violence in the province (Bhana et al., 2009). The rates of sexual violence in the province are high, both in and around schools (Bhana, 2012), and in social interactions more broadly (Meth, 2003, de Lange and Mitchell, 2014).

While the data and studies which I have chosen to present here indicate the kinds of work and debates that have shaped academic and statistical representations of the socio-economic and political context of KwaZulu-Natal, they also represent the kinds of headline issues that emerged across the data set of life-histories which I conducted, as the analysis which follows will show. Of the thirty women whose life-histories form the core of this thesis, all thirty described multi-dimensional forms of poverty, whether in terms of financial insecurity, food insecurity, insecurity of shelter, or the absence of services and utilities that included electricity and water. These multi-dimensional and intersecting forms of insecurity were more acute for those whose histories included long periods of unemployment (or who had never been employed), as chapter eight will reflect on in more detail, but they were present in all thirty life-history interviews.
In the analysis in the chapters which follow, I will pick up on some of the themes signalled here, including discourses of absent men, the historical and contemporary resonances of both political Violence and other forms of physical, sexual and emotional violence, and the ways in which poverty was shaped by the intersect with educational and gendered inequalities. I will reflect on my early experiences of entering this community and the extent to which these intersecting forms of marginalisation were gradually made visible to me as an embodied-researcher-subject. The following part of this chapter will highlight why this socio-spatial lens was not only a useful tool in which to understand the shape and dynamics of inequality in KwaZulu-Natal, but also to understand the ways in which Kha ri Gude itself was conceptualised and delivered.

‘Kha ri Gude wherever you are!’: campaign constructions of space

‘Kha ri Gude wherever you are!’ was the motto of the campaign, and a common refrain in my interactions, interviews and observations with those working at the top and mid-levels of the campaign and during my pilot site visits (fieldnotes, September 2012). KRG learning sites were determined by the communities themselves, often organised by the VEs, and generally accessible by foot. As a KRG Coordinator explained, the campaign differentiated itself from other forms of adult education in South Africa both by the level or content of what the learners would learn, but also by these spaces, the ‘not-schools’ in which the classes took place. KRG was delivered ‘wherever’ learners could ‘find a place’, to ‘gather there and learn’, and defined by its close proximity to the learners:

Even if there are ABET classes, most of the ABET classes, they operate in schools. Unlike KRG, because KRG, wherever they can find a place, people can gather there and learn. With ABET it’s a challenge because it’s located in schools; you will find that maybe the schools are far from adults, so they are discouraged, then they can’t go to the schools.


I have discussed above in chapter two concerns around attrition in adult education and the ‘challenge’ of recruiting adult learners, who are often constructed as particularly susceptible to becoming ‘discouraged’ (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996, pp. 11-12). What I think echoes those earlier discussions here are ways in which this question of ‘distance’ and
learning in ‘not-schools’ was constructed as a socio-cultural as well as logistical concern. ‘Gathering and learning’ vs ‘going to the schools’ differentiated these processes in terms of geographical distances but also in terms of their degrees of formality. This framing of distance in socio-cultural terms was also discussed by a KRG Monitor from KZN:

> It doesn’t make people to be scared, because they learn from where they come from, in the rondavels[^24] or under the trees. And nobody is going to see them. They learn from the safe spaces, so places where they are comfortable. [...]  

> I am hearing people saying we must have chairs and desks (throws up hands) ...you don’t need a learning environment! You need somewhere comfortable. And you don’t need to set up a school! You need to set up an environment where they are going to sit down, talk, read and write, and so on. It also appeals to their culture, you know? Sometimes something that they do relates to their culture. So, for me, it’s a very unique project.

*Monitor 2, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 17.09.2012*

For this Monitor, distance was a question of not making ‘people to be scared’, of ‘feeling comfortable’ in ‘safe spaces’. The signifying chains around safety, comfort and culture suggest the absence of both shame and potential violence from these informal spaces, as learners were constructed as favouring spaces in which ‘nobody is going to see them’. Adult learners would gather in ways that ‘appeals to their culture’, in ‘traditional’ ways such as ‘under the trees’ or ‘in the rondavels’. ‘Sitting down and talking’ was centred as much as ‘reading and writing’, and a ‘learning environment’ was rejected in its formal sense. Socio-cultural proximity and communality overlaid questions of logistical distance.

In the pilot site visits which I conducted in *Endaweni* with this Monitor, he further ‘read’ the ways in which ethno-linguistic Zulu ‘culture’ and age overlaid gendered norms and practices around ‘sitting and talking’ within these spaces. A tall and respected man in his community, he occupied a space that I (by extension) shared in these visits. We sat together, on a bench reserved for the men at the lighter corner of the rondavel, closer to the door and the fresh air, and subject to ‘respect’ and gendered norms that intersected with socio-cultural scripts constructed around being a ‘traditional’ Zulu community:

[^24]: ‘Rondavel’ is the Afrikaans word for a cylindrical shaped building with peaked thatched roof, commonly used when speaking English
Even today, sitting, you could see that in terms of the traditional way of doing things men would sit this side, on the right-hand side of the house, and women sit on the left-hand side of the house. And right is always associated is strong-ness, and left is always associated with weakness.

*Monitor 2, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 17.09.2012*

As we looked from our position on the bench towards the female learners on the ground in front of us, the Monitor further explained that older women were sitting closer to the door and younger women closer to the inside of the hut. All the female learners were barefoot or wearing their church socks and sitting on woven mats, while the two male learners sat in chairs next to us (see photograph 1, below). Like the Monitor, I was read as male, carrying the authority of an official visitor that adhered to my outsider status as both someone from overseas and as a white woman. Through the associations of particular sides of the rondavel with strength and weakness, gender inequality was embedded into the space, practiced and embodied.

*Figure 4: Pilot site visit, Endaweni, 17.09.2012*

Classes such as this thus took place in spaces that were subject to cultural scripts around gender, age and ‘tradition’ that shaped the use of spaces that were defined by learning, but explicitly ‘not-schools’. Gender in these spaces was an intersectional concern. This chapter and the chapters which follow will develop these early indications of fear, comfort, respect and ‘culture’ in the KRG learning spaces, asking how they modify and shape notions of ‘hard-to-reach’ learners, and raising questions about the role of distance and (in)visibility in adult learning. The following discussion will build on this analysis by highlighting the ways in which the questions of access and accessibility raised here can become inter-related with questions of the spatialisation of risk, that needs to be

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25 This photograph was taken by me, with verbal informal consent granted for use in printed material. These learners are from the 2012 cohort, none of whom were my interlocutors for the second phase of the study where I have offered research participants anonymity through pseudonyms. Permission has been granted for the use of all photographs in this thesis.
simultaneously recognised and troubled in the (re)presentation of particular communities, as I noted in the introduction to this thesis (pp. 18-19).

**Distance: Endaweni by Google**

While the pilot visits in 2012 were accompanied, in the immersive phase of the field study I travelled to and from Endaweni to my flat in the suburbs of Durban alone. As the KRG Coordinator who accompanied me on my first drive into the community joked, “there are no maps here! How will you find your way back?” (fieldnotes, 23\textsuperscript{rd} July 2013). I was (and remain) an outsider to Endaweni. It wasn’t clear to me whether ‘back’ was back into Endaweni, or back to my rented flat. While the Google map was extremely detailed in its depiction of the suburbs of Durban where I lived, and the economic areas represented in the kinds of smaller economic hubs seen in figure 2 (above) which I passed on my daily drive, this detail disappeared with the (apparent) disappearance of economic activity as I neared Endaweni, and all that remained were the two roads and the rivers, stylistically rendered onto figure 5 (left).\textsuperscript{26} Google - my Londoner’s frame of ‘locating’ myself in spaces - was only partially applicable. I needed to learn new landmarks. My early journeys into the community were constructed through a lens of ‘elsewhere’.

![Figure 5: Endaweni by Google](image)

What this lack of detail on the Google map further (re)presents to me now, however, is not only an urban-rural distinction or a consideration of my ‘outsider’ status, but ways in which maps are implicated in potentially Othering communities through discourses of ‘researchers at risk’ in spaces defined as ‘un-mappable’ (Andersson, 2016). As Andersson notes in his discussion of what it means to be an anthropologist in ‘risk’ contexts: “knowledge of the insecure Other is...intimately tied up with the insecurity of the anthropological Self” (Andersson, 2016, p. 708). Danger and risk are both real and imagined, socially and politically constructed: any (re)production of ‘insecurity’ needs to

\textsuperscript{26} My thanks to Eilidh Cage for her work drawing up these maps for me, working from my imperfect memories and fieldnotes to (re)present Endaweni through Maps 1, 2 and 3 provided in this chapter.
be done with a “reflexive risk lens” (Andersson, 2016, p. 713). “The ‘danger’ of the danger zone [is revealed] to be a slippery signifier indeed” (Andersson, 2016, p. 716), as ‘dangerous’ spaces are often only “putatively empty” (Andersson, 2016, p. 717). In the following section, I want to consider ways in which I populated the space of *Endaweni* through sketches and annotations in fieldnotes, but in ways that further engaged with these ideas of risk and personal safety, and which engage with the possibilities of Othering those whose lives are insecure.

**Proximity? Entering *Endaweni* as an embodied-researcher-subject**

As I drove into the community each day of the first week, I would sketch my observations of services, economic hubs and social goods onto the blank rendering of the community in figure 5, fashioning a populated version in figure 6 (below). These visible additions were in some senses objective & replicable, but were also social and interpretative: I blocked off spaces where men and women were, and noted times of day in which these spaces looked and were read differently, such as at the start and end of primary school, the time when men returned from work in the city, or when women returned from their work as domestic workers via different taxis. I added the community hall, the forest, the taps where women gathered to collect water, the schools, the clinic, the clustering of homesteads and tended gardens, the livestock, the taxi-stand and the beer shops, *spazas,* and *shebeens* which were visible from the road. These early additions highlighted ways immediately in which *Endaweni* was far from empty, and demarcated the visible hubs, services and early indications of the informal economy. They added a centre to the community of *Endaweni,* with activity clustered around the

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27 *Spazas,* or ‘tuck shops’, are small retail businesses that operate from a residential stand or home. They have been estimated to account for nearly 3% of South Africa’s retail trade (Ligthelm 2005). They are also associated with ‘vernacular’ interactions in isiZulu that do not require high levels of education or English-language skills (Rudwick, 2008a), a distinction that will be explored in more detail in chapter seven.

28 *Shebeens* are unlicensed drinking places; they can be associated with violence and risky behaviour including high levels of alcohol consumption and unprotected sex (Morojele, Kachieng’a et al. 2006). As the focus group discussions below will highlight, proximity to the selling of alcohol was constructed as a form of risk in *Endaweni.*
Community Hall. They also suggested forms of priority: only schools were advertised, ‘focalising’ education as a form of development in ways that the clinic or the water-tank were not demarcated as services with explicit signs. Other aspects of ‘development’ such as the provision of RDP houses, that were ‘there’ in other communities that I drove through (fieldnotes, 1st October 2013), were notable by their absence. Phili and others whom I interviewed emphasised the absence of the ‘government’ from Endaweni, ‘except at election time’ (fieldnotes, 21st November 2013).

At first, I saw these sketches as simply functional, ‘to remember the route’ as I wrote in my early fieldnotes, but when I returned to these notes as I began my analysis in 2014, I immediately noticed ways in which my own interpretation of the journey into Endaweni was laden with gendered, raced and classed signifiers, and peppered with notions of risk:

Each day begins with a checklist: water, notebooks, dictaphone, batteries, crackers, paracetamol, cakes and juice for participants, a podcast loaded for the journey home, two phones, two sets of money - one hidden, one visible - and a full tank of petrol. And then I leave my compound, opening the gate to my electric and barbed wire fence, and reversing round the pool with an eye out for cyclists and runners by the beach outside. To remember the route, I separate the journey into sections. First: past leafy mansions nearest the coast before emerging into the huge space at the edge of the city over the sprawling informal settlement under the motorway. Next: through increasing urbanisation clustered around the bus station and markets, careful not to hit taxis or pedestrians, and then a tight left-turn down a road bordered by RDP houses, careful to avoid children running up in play or grazing cows. And then down into the forest, past the snaking river and the occasional fishermen, up over the hills, never giving lifts. Finally, suddenly, into the community: signs for coke and Castel beer, bright green and yellow boards advertising schools, clusters of people outside the fenced clinic, queues of women at the water tank. I come to a stop at the top of the road near Phili’s house and wait for her to walk up to me. And every time this week I’ve been asked, “How did you get here?” and every time I point to the road in answer, the next question is always, “Aren’t you scared?”

Fieldnotes, 13th August 2013

29 The housing policies of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was part of the post-1994 policies, aiming to provide homes to qualifying households earning from R0 to R3500 a month. More than a million homes were built, but the RDP policy has also been criticised for some corruption in the allocation of these homes, as well as failure to meet the extent of demand (Narsai, Taylor et al. 2013).

30 Ungaesabi?
Travelling from my home to *Endaweni* was a journey from wealth and space, and the securitisation of Whiteness (Kempa and Singh, 2008), to a community that in these early readings I (re)presented as ‘clustered’ and unsafe. My preparations and ‘checklist’ went beyond the tools of research (‘notebooks’, ‘dictaphone’, ‘spare batteries’, ‘cakes and juice for participants’) to questions of crime and safety (‘never giving lifts’, ‘two phones’, ‘two sets of money’). Fear was both implicitly and explicitly represented in this fieldnote: my body was defined by its proximity to mobility (my car and its ‘full tank of petrol’), but also read as at risk by the questioning of my very presence as from elsewhere: ‘How did you get here?’ and, ‘Aren’t you scared?’

Over the course of the fieldwork I did not, in fact, experience or directly witness any forms of crime or violence, and my body remained, to reframe Stacey’s words cited above: “far freer than the research participants to leave” (Stacey, 1988, p. 21). Overlaying these questions of fear were stories told to me of learners’ own narratives of violent car-jacking on the road by the forest through which I reached *Endaweni*, including the murder of a learner’s husband (Nonthombi, *Ekhaya* class, Interview 1, 20.11.2013), and a story told by Phili of a teacher who had been forced out of her job by the violent theft of her car (field notes, 20th November 2013). A group of learners told me that my car was ‘noticed’ and ‘discussed’ in one of the *shebeens* (fieldnotes, 8th November 2013). On a day when it was 40 degrees and my car over-heated and stopped working, Phili was extremely reluctant to leave it to cool down, and to continue within the community on foot. She felt that ‘women walking’ were judged, and that we too ‘would be noticed’ (fieldnotes, 14th November 2013). In the end, men from the community had ‘clustered’ around the car and fixed the fan, enabling us to drive it home in ease, despite our initial apprehension at their intent. The language of ‘noticing’ highlighted our visibility and our insecurity both in terms wealth and gendered bodies, but acts of violence remained invisible to me throughout the fieldwork, except in the stories that I was told.

In the two community mapping walks which I conducted with learners from the *Entabeni* and *Endleleni* classes too, the invisible scars and structures of gendered inequalities and violence were further drawn against the emptiness of the Google map represented by figure 5 above (p. 109) in ways that were not accessible to me without ‘insider’ explanation. In the first of these walks, the river at the bottom of the community was named as a female space, in which women would go to collect water away from the eyes of their parents,
subject to both potential (wanted and unwanted) marriage proposals but further to potential rape (Entabeni mapping walk, 08.10.2013). In the second walk, the road was read as both offering an exit to the community and the world of work outside Endaweni, but also of bringing in dangerous ‘others’ from outside, described as particularly fraught during the period of the Violence, in which taxis deemed the community too unsafe to travel into over “some years” in the 1980s, and schools were shut (Endleleni mapping walk, 14.10.2013). The forest too was read in this second walk as a place of simultaneous safety and risk, in which groups of young male IFP supporters had run to hide, and sometimes “just not come back” (Endleleni mapping walk, 14.10.2013). It remained a place for “bandits to hide”, and emerge to commit crime (Endleleni mapping walk, 14.10.2013). It was the source of firewood, but also fire, as houses during the Violence were set alight (Endleleni mapping walk, 14.10.2013). Throughout these mapping walks, the ways in which spaces were multiply read contradictorily represented both freedom and risk at different times and in different ways that were classed, gendered, and socio-culturally shaped, leaving “emotional residue” and invisible “dividing lines” drawn onto the land (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 3).

Analysis of these mapping walks and fieldnotes thus reveals how community boundaries were both real and imaginary, firm and contested, structured by natural markers (forests, rivers) municipal markers (including the arterial road) and cultural markers, including the remit of the inkosi and izinduna. Gender and violence interplayed with these boundaries, and the (im)mobility represented by the possibilities of travelling within and crossing them. Violence and crime were further read against my gendered and raced body that both paralleled and differentiated my body from those of the inhabitants of the community themselves, ‘making real’ (fieldnotes, 15th October 2013) the histories that I read from the solidity of my London desk and have (re)presented in the opening part of this chapter. The following part of this chapter builds on these contestations by exploring how ‘being in/of’ the community was constructed in the early focus groups, in which I asked questions designed to elicit descriptions of the space of Endaweni and those who lived and learned there (as discussed in chapter four, pp. 73-4).

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31 The roles of inkosi/amakhosi (chief/chiefs) and izinduna (headmen) are positions of ‘traditional’ authority that provide forms of governance of demarcated areas that work in parallel (and sometimes in contestation with) forms of local and provincial government and development (Beall et al., 2005).
Being ‘in/of-the-community’: ‘common’ constructions of Endaweni

Early discussions of what it meant to live and learn in Endaweni elicited different and sometimes contradictory answers, that added layers to the intersect of race, space, gender and generation. Endaweni was always at first described in terms of its ‘good’-ness (-hle), as in Josefina’s words below, a great-grandmother aged 95 who had lived since birth in Endaweni:

Josefina: I can explain about [Endaweni], that here the people who I know are good (-hle), in [Endaweni] we have lived a good life (-hle), we have been here since we are young, now we are old, we are getting old here in a good place (-hle), which doesn’t have any problems.32

Ekhaya FGD, 12.08.2013

This concern to present communities as ‘safe’ and ‘beautiful’ spaces, particularly in conversations with outsiders, has been noted elsewhere in research around violence (Hume, 2007). Questions about ‘education’ in the community, however, built a different picture, through conversations that quickly travelled from discussions of unemployment and poverty to clashes and ‘strife’ between the generations, and concerns about transactional sex, drugs and alcohol, and a perceived lack of respect:

Charley: And how about in relation to education, what is this community like?
Thokozile: They need to study more33 [...] They study, they finish studying at Standard 10, our children study then they stay at home, they don’t continue, they are just like us (-fana) now.34
Phili: Why don’t they continue?
Nomthandazo: They don’t have the power/money (amandla) to continue.35
Thokozile: There are many people who don’t work - ay! There are very many people who don’t work.36 Especially those younger than us.37

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32 Ngingacaza ukuthi [Endaweni] phakathi kwamazwe engiwaziyo muhle [Endaweni] besiphila impilo enhle thina lana sibasha manje siyagaga sigugela khona endaweni enhle engenayo nje inklinga
33 Kusafanele bahunde
34 bayafunda baqede ukufunda o standand 10 bahunde bese behlala emakhayake abamntwana bengasaqhubeki banjike bahfane nathike manje
35 Amandla abanawo okubaqhuba
36 Baningi abantu abangasebenzi ayi baningi kakhulu abantu abangasebenzi
37 Kakhulu kula abancane
Nomthandazo: Opportunities for work should open up.\textsuperscript{38}

Josefina: We want these children who have been studying, who have finished Standard 10 who just stay with us, we want them not to stay but to get work.\textsuperscript{39}

Philemon (male): I’m already working with their grandmother, and she’s not happy, and their mother is not happy to know that this child is wasting money. Just wasting money! They should work but when the available work is finished, at that time they are just behaving badly, and it’s not at all necessary.\textsuperscript{40}

Charley: What do you mean, ‘behaving badly’?

Philemon: The child just keeps sitting down smoking, drinking alcohol.\textsuperscript{41}

Thokozile: chasing men.\textsuperscript{42}

Philemon: They chase men, all those girls are chasing men, and standing by the taxis saying that they want money.\textsuperscript{43}

Phili (in English, to Charley): If they go to school and study then they won’t concentrate on the boyfriends too much.

Phili: (in isiZulu): Why do they not listen to their parents?

Philemon: It’s strife, there’s no other reason, it’s just strife.\textsuperscript{44}

Thokozile: Another thing is that they don’t have respect, these children have brought an end to respect.\textsuperscript{45}

Philemon: Yes. Thank you!

Ekha ya FGD, 12.08.2013

‘Education’ thus operated as a ‘focalising feature’ of inequality, that worked both as a signifier of hope and progress (‘they need to study more’) but also as a signifier of the lack of opportunity in Endaweni (‘they study but then they stay at home’). The young generation were seen as in some way ‘just like us’ in terms of their unemployment and lack of money or power,\textsuperscript{46} but at the same time were differentiated from the older generation in terms of hard work, and ‘behaving badly’ in varied and gendered ways, despite

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\textsuperscript{38} Ukuthi kuvuleke amathuba okusebenza

\textsuperscript{39} Sifuna ukuthi izingane lezi ekande zifunda o 10 zabaqenda zahlala nathi sifuna ukuthi zinda hlali zithole imisebenzi

\textsuperscript{40} sengiyasebenza nogogo anjabule nomama wengane anjabule azi ukuthi nemali ajejichitha wayeyichithetha khona ukuthi isebenze ngoba uma ingasebenzi kuqicina sekutholakala isikhathi sokuthi ingane kanti akufanele

\textsuperscript{41} kushobala ingane ehleli phansi igcina ibhebha iphuza utshwala

\textsuperscript{42} Iqoma

\textsuperscript{43} Iqoma eyentombazane yonke iqwuba yamandoda kungacina sekweyawo nasema taxini befuna imali

\textsuperscript{44} Inkani aqikho enye into inkani nje

\textsuperscript{45} Okunye abanayo inhlonipho izingane sezapheleluwa inhlonipho

\textsuperscript{46} The word that Nomthandazo used was ‘amandla’ which signifies power, but was translated to me by Phili as ‘money’ (fieldnotes, 12\textsuperscript{th} August 2013). The different ways in which amandla can be interpreted in this context are explored in detail in chapter eight.
recognitions that ‘opportunities’ for work were rare and often temporary. Questions of mobility were contested, as taxis were associated with transactional sex, but there was a simultaneous desire for the younger generations to move and find work opportunities.

In the *Endleleni* class, where learners all lived very close to the arterial road, the importance of taxis and links to work were again emphasised. In this focus group too, discussion of education introduced inter-generational tensions and depictions of the youth ‘behaving badly’ that shaped constructions of *Endaweni* as both ‘a good place’ and having ‘serious problems’:

Thokozile: I can say that *Endaweni* is a nice place. The transport is really good, much better than where I lived before.

Veronica: I can say that it’s a good place, but there are some serious problems here. The children study, but there are those problems of drugs, others study but now don’t get work, but the place, the place is just well. There are just children who don’t study, they are sent [to school], but they behave badly, in the ways that people behave badly.47

*Phili: Why do these children not study?*

Veronica: Some of them take drugs, their parents send them to school, their parents think they are at school, but they are not, they are taking drugs. Others of them are educated, but now there is no work.48

*Endleleni FGD, 14.08.2013*

In the *Ehholo* class, *Endaweni* was also described as a good place, but a lack of decent employment was linked to criminality and poor services:

Tholi: *Endaweni* is a good place, it doesn’t have any problems, but the thing which troubles us here in *Endaweni* is that work is not available for us, just little piecemeal things, we don’t get it.49

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47 ngizothi indawo enhle noma zikhona izigemegeme zakhona izingane ziyafunda kodwa kunaleza nkinga ezikhona zama drugs ezinye zazo zifundile kodwa manje azatholi umsebenzi kodwa indawo indawo ephilayo nje ikona nje ngoba izingane azifundi sezize ziyanganya ngendlela ezinganganyayo

48 Kusho ukuthi ezinye zazo zidlala ama Drugs abazali bazo bazithathe baziyise ezikoleni abazali bazo bazi ukuthi zisekoleni kanti azikho zisema drugs. Amanye babo bafundile kodwa manje imisebenzi aqikho

49 mhule [Endaweni] awunankinga, kodwa nje into ebishlupha lana kwangcolosi imisebenzi besingayitholile namatohwana njena singawatholi kuphela into ebishaya wona mhule aqikho inkinga asiboni nje bubu, umsebenzi njena ebesingayitholi
Grace: The problem of our place is development, we don’t move forward, we don’t have houses, water troubles us, there are criminals here in Endaweni.50

Badumile: Endaweni is a really bad place, we have been burgled three times, we have been burgled at home. Endaweni just has criminals, they burgle, they steal from people’s homes.51

Hamilton (male): Some people are ‘right’, others are not ‘right’, they steal, they steal cars, they burgle.52

Ehholo FGD, 15.08.2013

The ‘rightness’ or not-rightness of those who burgled and conducted crime, and the youth who took drugs that characterised these descriptions of the community by the Ehholo class were in stark contrast with the descriptions of the community from those in the Entabeni class. For these learners, concerns were framed in terms of distance to services, living as they did more than twenty minutes’ walk from a small road that was a further fifteen minutes by car to the arterial road where taxis were caught. In this focus group, crime and narratives of poor youth behaviour did not emerge:

Prudence: Endaweni doesn’t have a problem, my god. We are not attacked by criminals ever, so it’s nice Endaweni. We have a clinic, we have everything - although the clinic is far, it’s there.

Ndende: The road here is poor, cars do not go well, and it’s far to take a taxi if you want to go into town.

Nombuso: The primary school is far, if the child is sick they must just drop out, they can’t go anymore to school.

Bancane: We haven’t had any water for three weeks; it’s far from the river and from the pump.

Entabeni FGD, 13.08.2013

What these different focus groups thus highlight is ways in which experiences of living and learning vary, even with a single community that can be defined in unified ways as I

50 inkinga ngendawo yethu intuthuko aqhubekhi izindlu asinazo, amanzi ayasihlupha, kunobungebenga lana kwangcolosi siyaqindinga indawo lapho singabika khona eduze e abamntwana sebenyasiqekelwa kwane Ngcolosi sekwabakhona newunga lentayo obeheyayo nje siyasaba sifisa engathi singathola abantu abangasingada kanjalo sicela intutuko engathi ingaqhubeka
51 Ngcolosi mubi kabi senqeqekezelwe kwaye kwakathathu ngqeqekezelwa izindlu, ngcolosi unobugebengu njena bayaqekeza bayatshonisha abantu bakulendawo
52 Abanye ba-right, abanye aba-right, bayatshonisha, bantshontsha izimoto, bayaqekeza
have done in earlier parts of this chapter. They highlight ways in which proximity to services and roads shapes violence and gendered interactions, and give context to educational processes. The classroom spaces in which I conducted the study were all characterised by rurality and poverty, and to a greater or lesser extent violence, in which different forms of socio-cultural and symbolic meanings around ‘respect’ and inter-generational ‘strife’ interplayed with criminality and unemployment. Learners stressed, nevertheless, a pride and desire to (re)present the community (particularly to me as an ‘outsider’) as a ‘nice’ or ‘beautiful place’.

Living & learning: Endaweni

The intersections of spatiality with broader processes of socio-economic marginalisation thus shaped what it meant to live in Endaweni. The following discussion draws on fieldnotes, interviews and informal discussions with the four Volunteer-Educators (VEs) of each class to explore how these intersections also shaped learning in Endaweni in different ways, in the forms of inter-generational dynamics, discourses around the value of education, prevalence of socio-economic hardship, and associations of risk and violence with some areas of Endaweni. In Figure 7 (left), each of these classes have been added, labelled with their locative isiZulu markers in a stylised version of the third hand-drawn map from my fieldnotes (7th August 2013), developed from Figure 6 as I began to observe the KRG classes within Endaweni, and to differentiate between learning on the hill, by the road, in the hall and in the house.

Figure 7: Living and learning in Endaweni

Entabeni (on the Hill)

The Entabeni class was in a rondavel that was the central space of an active homestead of more than five nuclear families, at the top of a long steep hill dotted with small plots of subsistence farming and gardens, and at some distance from the arterial road. Woven mats were tucked into interlocking beams in the ceiling, and in the corner of the rondavel
was a gas hob, two canisters, a small fridge and a kettle; female members of the compound would potter in and out to use the space throughout the day. There was a single bench, and two armchairs with a side table. The hut was encircled by more private, nuclear family unit huts which we only entered on the first day of observations to introduce ourselves to the male and female head of the family, request their permission to conduct research, and express respect and thanks to on the final day of observations. As the centre of the homestead and a space in which cooking and traditional meeting activities regularly took place but no-one slept, the rondavel straddled the public-private dichotomy.

The Entabeni class was structured by age and gender cultural scripts, as well as by notions of ‘respect’ which regulated how those within the space dressed and interacted, as well as the ways in which we spoke to each other (Rudwick, 2008b): older members sat in preferential places in the room and were more likely to speak, younger participants spoke more quietly; a number of women wore ‘traditional’ Zulu clothes, and Phili recommended that I wear a skirt rather than trousers to participant-observations in this area. On a number of occasions Phili and I were brought food or invited to learners’ houses, and in December I in turn cooked a Christmas roast for these learners and their families and we had a big party with singing, oral folktales and attempts to teach me traditional Zulu dancing. Phili and I often sat in the armchairs or on the bench at the start of the lessons, but I would move around and sit with different learners over the course of the fieldwork. In some classes I sat and played with the toddler of a learner named Thandeka, who during one lesson spent the three hours lifting up and attempting to take off each item of my clothes to check whether my skin was white all over, as the first white person he had had the chance to examine. In another class, the VE pinned the A3 paper ‘blackboard’ to her own body, so that younger learners would not transgress into the spaces reserved for older learners when they wrote their answers. This Entabeni class had the strongest bonds and mutually supportive systems, with these learners the most likely to encourage and motivate each other to learn outside of the classroom setting. The learners were also the most likely to regularly attend classes; the class was often fully attended. All the registered learners in this class were women, with the exception of one man who passed away during the first week of September 2012, during the second month of the campaign.

The Entabeni VE was determined to become a teacher, and was keen to use the KRG experience to develop her skills. She described herself as related to most of the
participants in the class through Zulu kinship ties around extended family (both her sister and cousin, for example, were registered learners). She too was subject to the gendered scripts and norms associated with ‘respect’, always addressing the older learners in respectful language with eyes downturned, and dressing very smartly for the classes.

*Endleleni (by the Road)*

The *Endleleni* class was located at the opposite end of the community to the *Entabeni* class, situated at the edge of the arterial community road. Shortly past this class was a small road which marked the end of where the taxis deemed safe, at which point they would turn around to drive back out of the community in the same direction rather than continuing through the forest. The class was close to the main road, the forest and the river, all of which were both historically and contemporaneously associated with high levels of violence, and shaped by notions of precariousness and risk, as the discussion above has shown.

The *Endleleni* class was taught in an intimate small hut in which the learners, Phili & I sat on two long beds which faced each other. All of the learners whom I interviewed from the *Endleleni* class self-identified as literate when they began the class, and a number expressed frustration that English-language classes were delayed until the third month of the cycle (following the campaign structure). On days where I arrived to observe lessons, but no learners arrived, I would sit with the VE and her family in the main room of the house, often sharing food that had been either cooked by them or brought by me. Attendance to this class attenuated within the first month of the fieldwork; various reasons were given for why the learners had become ‘tired’, including that the VE was ‘lazy’, the learners themselves were ‘lazy’, or that the VE was ‘not serious’.

Unlike the *Entabeni* class, the learners in the *Endleleni* class were fragmented into pairs of friends, who often attended classes at the same time and tended to live in adjoining compounds. These neighbour pairings would knock on each other’s doors on the way to classes and encourage each other to attend, with the converse effect that they often would not attend without each other. The learners in the *Endleleni* class were more likely to suffer from, or (perhaps) to disclose poor health than those in the other four classes, including two learners who disclosed HIV positive status. Alcoholism most affected these learners
and their partners and families, and in the first class four learners were visibly drunk. Learners from this area also disclosed experiencing high levels of violence and crime. They tended to be in the mid age-range (around 40-50), unlike the Entabeni learners, a number of whom were pensioners. All of the registered learners in this class were women, with the exception of Kwazekwakhe, who dropped out to care for his HIV positive girlfriend in the first week of the class (and whose early participation is discussed in a vignette from a participant-observation in chapter six).

The Endleleni VE was eighteen years old, and frustrated that she had not done well enough at her Matric to go on to university to study and become an engineer. She had a sister who was only attending school intermittently, and an older sister and brother who were both unemployed. I was initially treated with a degree of suspicion by the Endleleni VE and her family, seen simultaneously as a gatekeeper of Kha ri Gude and the wages the campaign provided the family, but also as an adviser and source of information about work, the value of education, or how to care for the VE’s disabled uncle. The VE was pregnant by the son of one of the learners in the Endleleni class, with whose family her own family were in dispute over child support, and the families both had restraining orders out against each other. The Endleleni VE hid her pregnancy from me until it was impossible for me to pretend to ignore her bump, at which point I gave her some baby clothes and reassured her that I would not report her pregnancy to the campaign or suggest that she was fired. She gave birth in February 2014. Her mother Thabisile, one of the registered learners, died two months later of TB.

_Ehholo (in the Hall)_

The final two core classes echoed aspects of the first two, in different ways. The Ehholo class, like the Entabeni class, had an older average age. It was delivered in the Community Hall, a space which straddled the public-private dichotomy, although the Hall was closer to a public space than the Entabeni rondavel, as the Hall was available to all members of Endaweni who had been granted the express permission of the inkosi (‘chief’). Learning in this class took place at formal square tables, and the VE would stand at the front of the two tables with a blackboard and chalk. Two of the eighteen learners in this class were men.
The learners in this class were the most disparate, and came from the central area of Endaweni where informal economic activity clustered, such as buying and selling chickens and livestock, or operating spazas through windows of homes. One of the three shops of the community was opposite the Hall, and this was seen as both positive (because of the economic opportunities it offered through passing trade) but also negative, because it was dangerous at night when people emerged drunk. As chapter nine discusses, two learners in this class disclosed experiences of physical violence during the campaign cycle.

The Ehholo VE was Phili’s friend from church, and the only VE who had taught in the campaign the previous year. She hosted the end of year party for VEs, and was relatively wealthy since she was married to a man who owned a number of taxis. The Ehholo class was beset by issues associated with the space, and after a number of classes were cancelled because the caretaker refused to give the VE the keys anymore the learners became disheartened and gradually stopped attending. I was also told that they were ‘tired’ of participating in the research, and the VE stopped inviting me to attend the classes when they resumed in one of the learner’s homes.

Ekhaya (in the House)

Like the Endleleni class, the Ekhaya class was delivered in a private setting, in the front room of a four-roomed home. Learners in this class sat on sofas, and were offered tea by the VE and her family who lived there. Children would walk in and out, music from the adjoining rooms sometimes played. This class had an intimate tone, with a lot of laughter. The class was relatively far from the arterial road, and closer to the Entabeni class.

The learners in the Ekhaya class ranged in age from eighteen to ninety-five, and included one male learner. Learners in this class did not travel far to reach the class and all described themselves as ‘neighbours’ to the VE. They described seeing each other going down to class each day, which encouraged them to participate. Two learners said that they first joined the class by ‘following’ other learners to find out what they were doing. The Ekhaya VE was also eighteen. She was described as a ‘good girl’ by the learners of this class, one who treated them with ‘respect’ and attended to their needs as older learners by often repeating sections of the class, and not tiring of repeated questions. She was not, however, willing to be interviewed, and remained quite shy throughout my visits.
These four core classes thus brought me ‘inside’ the community through interactions with those who lived and learned in these spaces, and into homes, rondavels and the Community Hall that were re-framed as ‘classrooms’ or ‘school’, troubling notions of public-private, and opening new ways to engage collectively with education. Intimacy and proximity, socio-cultural scripts of gender, age and respect shaped practices around access, attendance and participation in these learning spaces.

**Locating the study: en-landed intersections**

*Once the romance was about aristocratic connections and lost titles, the fantasy of being part of an elite. Now the romance is about deprivation, dislocation, about the distance covered between there and here*  
*(Hilary Mantel, BBC Reith Lecture 1, 2017)*.

There is a danger of the ‘emptiness’ of the Google map that it is the ethnographer’s role, in a chapter such as this, to populate. There is a danger of romanticising ‘deprivation, dislocation [and] the distance covered between there and here’ - Hilary Mantel’s warning about the writing of historical fiction resonates for me as I write on a different theme. The ethnographer’s journey can sound seductive (Andersson, 2016), particularly when overlaid with the magnetism of risk and violence (Parkes, 2008). In this chapter I have tried not to fall into these romanticising traps in the (re)telling of Endaweni. I have tried to give a composite introduction to the community that acknowledges marginalisation, but also indicates some of the potential for resilience and social networks. In the chapters that follow I will pick up ways in which Endaweni was shaped by culture, poverty, gender and raced inequality, in ways that were regulated by violence, and to continue to explore the ways in which constructions and contestations around the value of education met these intersections. Building on this discussion of the space of adult learning, the next chapter will discuss the ways in which the KRG campaign constructed the adult learner subjectivity, and spoke to questions of gender and violence, by asking how adult learners were (re)presented in the text, talk and (inter)actions that together constituted the campaign discourses.
6 Populating the *Kha ri Gude* discursive terrain: ‘motivating’ learners, constructing ‘learning’

This chapter considers the second constitution of my ‘field’, through an introduction to the discursive field of the KRG campaign. It asks how this nationally designed campaign met the socio-culturally grounded understandings of learning in the community spaces which have been drawn in the previous chapter, and tries to make visible some of the emerging tensions and contradictions between the national and local spaces, through the process of layering one ‘field’ and set of constructs and values against the other. This chapter particularly explores how the subjectivity of ‘adult-learner’ was understood and mobilised in the recruitment and early stages of participation in the campaign, and raises questions around how the campaign discursive space was populated in ways that both did and did not map against how learners described themselves and their communities. It questions how the construct of ‘adult-learner’ was gendered, with attendance to the fluid and dynamic intersections of gender with race, class and ‘culture’, and asks where and how violence emerged in the campaign constructs of (gendered) ‘adult-learners’ and learning.

In exploring tensions and contradictions between the different spaces and levels of the campaign, this chapter draws on a wide range of different data collected in both the first phase of data collection and analysis, and the first month of participant-observations in which I visited each of the opening classes of the four key research sites in *Endaweni*. The chapter opens with three ways of (re)presenting ‘adult-learners’: in the talk of top and mid-level actors in the design, management and delivery of the campaign; through the talk of Supervisors and Volunteer-Educators reflecting on their work in recruiting and working with ‘adult-learners’; and in the campaign texts, images and activities. It will then turn from what it means to ‘motivate’ learners to how ‘being motivated’ to learn was discussed in learners’ own accounts, particularly through the concepts of ‘respect’, and (mis)recognition. The chapter will close with an in-depth discussion of a vignette of data from an early participant-observation that highlights how adoption of the ‘adult-learner’ position was shaped by constructs of gender and ethnicity. Through analysis of the multiple perspectives inherent in these data, which together constitute a discursive (re)production of the ‘adult-learner’ subjectivity through the *Kha ri Gude* campaign, the chapter will argue for a tension across the ‘adult-learner’ hyphen, centred not only in the content of learning, but in contestations embedded in power, agency and dis/advantage.
(Re)Presenting learning and learners in talk

The aim was for learners to know how to read and write, one. And for the materials to be accepted to the clientele, that is the adult learners, not children. For example, the first page would be ‘We welcome you to the literacy class’. With an elderly person welcoming them. So that they feel welcomed to this class, unlike their children’s books. […]

[We] would come up with guidance, communal guidance, and then this is what we were doing when we developed the KRG materials - looking at the needs of adults.

*CEO (2012-2017), Interview 31.08.2012*

‘Adult-learners’ were (re)presented in talk by those who worked at the top and middle levels of the campaign in three broad ways that are neatly summarised in these words of the campaign’s Chief Executive Officer (2012-2017), and that are perhaps in tension. The first ‘aim’ of the campaign was in relation to ‘literacy’, which was constructed as knowing ‘how to read and write’, and which was seen as the key learning outcome. The second (re)presentation drew on this idea of knowledge, but further constructed ‘adult-learners’, the ‘clientele’, as having specific ‘needs’ and in need of ‘guidance’ that extended both to the individual and to the community level. Finally, and in tension with the first two, learners were seen to need ‘welcoming’ and to be ‘not-children’ in ways that paralleled the learning spaces of the KRG campaign as the ‘not-schools’ discussed in chapter five. These three constellations of the ‘aim’ of the campaign – to deliver ‘literacy’, to meet ‘needs’ and to recognise the specificity of learners as adults – underpinned much of the discussion that I had with actors at the top and middle levels of the campaign.

The focus on literacy as a ‘objective number one’ of the campaign was often justified through a view that a lack of literacy and numeracy led to vulnerability to crime and exploitation:

Literacy, of course, is objective number one. Numeracy, more especially when it comes to counting money, because they were often being robbed. Even with change at the shop, they didn't know how to calculate their monies. So it has done them a lot of good.

*Monitor 1, Eastern Cape, Interview 31.08.2012*
The process of learning how to read and write was constructed as a second chance, a form of recognition of disadvantage for those who had been excluded from educational opportunities in the past:

Whoo! I like KRG because KRG gives a chance for those who did not get that chance, neh? That chance to-to-to read and write. It gave a chance for adults who did not have that chance. I like that for KRG. [...] They are changing a lot, because they—... they do write now. But at the beginning, they were not able to write. Especially at the banks, they did not know how to use the ATMs and all that stuff. But now, at least they know how to use the ATMs and other stuff.

* Supervisor 1, Eastern Cape, Interview 03.09.2012

As in this Supervisor's words, one of the common ways in which adult 'needs' were fleshed out was through a concept of necessary 'practical skills' that shaped everyday interactions, encompassing the 'banks', ATMs and 'all that stuff':

We are trying to give them practical skills, that they are able to use in their daily lives. Like being able to go to a bank, complete the form and sign, and get money that they want. To use a cell phone... to um... it could be the auto-banks, or when they go to Home Affairs and they are given a form, at least they are able to make some sense of what is happening there. So it is the practical things that they encounter in their daily lives, and to assist them with that.

* KRG National Coordinator, Interview 28.08.2012

These practical skills can be understood as a sub-set of the kinds of 'life skills' that have shaped both policy and practice around adult education programming (Allais, 2015), aligned with specific literacy practices such as completing and signing forms, as well as numeracy practices such as taking money from an ATM. Some of these everyday interactions were spatialised: learners were particularly constructed as not being able to 'make sense' of spaces such as banks or Home Affairs Department Offices that constitute 'official' domains in 'literate societies', in which 'dominant' literacy practices were situated (Barton and Hamilton, 2000), and that include, in South Africa, localised practices around 'signing' and collecting pensions (Malan, 1996b, Malan, 1996a).
Teaching literacy practices around ‘signing’ were seen to engender particular kinds of socio-economic and democratic inclusion, linking practical skills to broader discourses around the legacy of apartheid and the kinds of socio-economic forms of vulnerability and exclusion discussed in chapter three that are perceived to relate to illiteracy:

We ended up having so many people not educated. So the government is trying to, to-, what to say-, to change that. But because when they told us that the main problem, the main thing that you see [are] those people who can’t write, when they sign they must put their thumb, so there is a lot of fraud with the thumb. So the government is trying to stop that so that everybody must sign now.

*Supervisor 5, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 14.09.2012*

Situating these ‘practical skills’ in particular forms of ‘official’ interactions was also used as a recruitment strategy, as both prospective learners (and their Volunteer-Educators) recognised that ‘things in the country are changing’ in the socio-economic sphere, and that these changes required new ‘learning’. Practical skills were situated in discourses around modernity, and a shifting society:

Others say the things in the country are changing, we have to learn now, we have to go the bank now. We can’t save the money under the mattress. So, when we told them about this Kha ri Gude campaign, they were eager. Yah, they were very eager to learn, because they see that time is changing. Another lady told me that, “yes, it helped me, because I went to the bank, and I asked the assistant to read the application for me, before I signed. Because you told us that we mustn’t sign anything without having, like, knowing what you are signing.” So this lady she told me that, “yeah, you made me confident about myself”.

*Volunteer-Educator 2, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 14.09.2012*

As this discussion of recruitment strategies highlights, the discourse of change was mobilised as a way to motivate learners, who were ‘eager to learn’, no longer to ‘save money under the mattress’, but to access formal socio-economic institutions and structures, and ‘knowing what you are signing’. This concern both drove demand for the literacy classes, but was also reinforced through the recruitment process – the learner in the VE’s story presented herself as ‘told’ that reading forms and signing was something she
should know. Stories of learners’ progress and valuing of the skills and information about these literate institutions such as the bank were repeated to new cycles of learners, and further emphasised during official presentations, such as at UNISA’s World Literacy Day celebrations (fieldnotes, 7th September 2012), or the graduation ceremonies which I observed where learners shared their stories of the ‘benefit’ of learning about the bank and how to sign there (fieldnotes, 31st August 2012).

The message that these ‘practical skills’ were useful (indeed pleasant) to learn was also reinforced in the books themselves, in exercises such as: “It’s nice to learn” (figure 9); “My ID document is important” (figure 8), which contained information both on why IDs mattered, but also how to read and learn an ID number; and “Money Matters” (figure 10), which depicted both using an ATM and filling in forms at a cashier’s desk or loan application.

Literate institutions, through which social protection mechanisms such as pensions and grants are accessed in South Africa, were thus used to structure the design and content of KRG, discursively (re)producing a link between modernity, socio-economic progress and dominant literacy practices. Through these skills, democratic and socio-economic inclusion were constructed as paralleling educational inclusion as leaners were ‘welcomed’ to class and provided with a ‘chance’ that they had not had in the past.
Practical skills such as accessing banks and learning to sign were further explicitly linked to self-confidence and self-esteem. As one VE continued to explain with her anecdote about a lady attending a bank, this confidence adhered to the use of the skills themselves, but also to a sense of self in (inter)actions with ‘educated’ others, a feeling of freedom to speak:

So most of them, “when you are not educated,” they said, “you have a low self-esteem, you can't be free to say whatever you want to say.” Yah. Because if you say that, that person feel like, “oh god! I can’t! (laughs) She knows or he knows everything, I can't say anything about it.” So she told me, “I felt confident,” she said, “no, I'm not going to sign this thing until you tell me what it is, [what] it says.” So Kha ri Gude, she's like, “it's helping a lot”.

*Volunteer-Educator 2, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 14.09.2012*

Access to banks was thus constructed both as a set of literacy practices, but also as a socially located space of subjectivity formation, a set of interactions in which the low self-esteem attached to being ‘not-educated’ constrained agency: ‘you can't be free to say whatever you want to say’. Interactions with someone who ‘knows everything’ were constructed as reducing someone who is ‘not educated’ to silence: ‘I can’t say anything about it’. The process of learning in these accounts adhered not only to content but to interactions.

Ways in which Kha ri Gude was constructed as doing learners 'good' (to use Monitor 1's words, above) also extended to broader notions of 'needs'. These included health messaging in which learners were ‘taught’ how to manage their health and their ‘home affairs’. Health literacies were linked to literacy practices around knowing and telling the time, as well as to reading information and therefore being able to take medications:

Other than teaching them to write and learn, they are learning about their medication. Most of the people are taking medication for different diseases, so they seem to forget, if he is not educated he doesn’t even know the time, if it’s the time that I must take my medication now, so KRG is helping with all those areas.

*Supervisor 5, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 14.09.2012*
What we do, we teach them how to manage their home affairs, how to be healthy, how to take their tablets - it’s very important for their medication, all those things, and how to be aware of the stranger, all those things.

Supervisor 4, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 10.09.2012

These health messages were both ‘taught’ and (re)presented in the texts, through cartoon roleplays such as “Grandfather goes to get an injection” (figure 12) and “Grandfather almost kills himself” (figure 11), in which an older man is encouraged by his granddaughter to follow the instructions on his medication.

![Figure 11](image1.png)

![Figure 12](image2.png)

Figure 11: Exercise 4.2, Learn to read in isiZulu, p. 116

Figure 12: Exercise 4.1, Learn to read in isiZulu, p. 110

While being able to take medicine properly is undeniably important, and recognised widely as a form of ‘health literacy’ (Dowse and Ehlers, 2001, Berkman et al., 2011), the construction of ‘illiteracy’ here perhaps slips into forms of infantilising, reducing adults to one who might take a huge handful of pills simultaneously or not be aware of ‘strangers’ as pre-schoolers might be taught. It is here that the language of disadvantage is perhaps closest to discourses of deficit, to use the words of Rogers and Street (2012, p. 42) that I cited in the conclusion to chapter three.

This pathologisation of the ‘illiterate’ adult was also evident in some moments of equation, or perhaps conflation, of the ‘problem’ of ‘illiteracy’ with the ‘problem’ of ‘poverty’, as in the Coordinator’s words below, who drew lines of equivalence between skills of the socio-economic sphere and skills on ‘how to have a good life’ and ‘how to raise their kids’:
Oooh! You know the only problem in our area is illiteracy, illiteracy. I would improve them to be able to read and write. Illiteracy, and also, making available more training on skills, on specific skills, because the problem in our area is poverty. Also care of them, they don’t have skills on certain things, on how to have a good life, how to raise their kids because of the shortage of money.

Coordinator 2, Eastern Cape, Interview 03.09.2012

‘Literacy’, ‘numeracy’, ‘life skills’ and ‘practical skills’ were thus constructed as neutral, objectively valuable - ‘doing good’ or ‘helping a lot’ - a message that was “ideologically” (Street, 1984) reinforced through ideas of studying as ‘nice’ and something that ‘must’ be learned in a changing, modernising society. In these constructions, literacy, numeracy and skills were situated across the binaries of age (as ‘needs of adults’) and contextualised through social interactions across an educated-uneducated binary. Learning or even being ‘given’ such skills was seen to challenge low self-esteem and build confidence and agentic practices. It was seen as a second chance in a context of disadvantage, and the legacies of socio-economic and political exclusion.

The relationship between poverty and illiteracy will be explored in more detail in the chapters which follow from the perspective of the learners themselves. What I want to pick up in the following section is the ways in which the talk around the campaign in these early key informant interviews engaged with questions of power, and seeing adult learners as bearers of ‘respect’, that drew in notions of recognition as well as redistributive forms of justice (Fraser, 1996, Fraser and Honneth, 2003), and that extended constructs of the ‘adult-learner’ subjectivity beyond the deficit model that underpins a number of these constructions of what it means to be ‘illiterate’.

(Re)Producing ‘adult-learners’ in training: ‘learning’ adults

Teaching the adult people is not the same like teaching the normal children, the normal people.


While ‘adult-learners’ were constructed as having ‘needs’ that that set them apart from children across a generational binary, there was also recognition that their subjectivities as
‘learners’ were different to those of children, who were nevertheless seen as ‘normal’ or default. Questions of ‘adult-learner’ subjectivities particularly emerged in the ways in which key informants talked about the recruitment and teaching processes, as well as the ways in which Volunteer-Educators needed to be trained. In the recruitment process, the age of adult learners was seen to represent a particular challenge, as one Supervisor reflected:

What I can say about this project, is that when I started it wasn’t easy. Because we go there, […] to find job, to be educators. So the time we come there, they told us that we were going to be supervisors, we need to go to and recruit people, old people. And I started to think, god, what am I going to do? Old people where? Who wants to learn now, at this age?

Supervisor 4, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 10.09.2012

Age was also seen, however, as a key marker of historical disadvantage, which the KRG campaign aimed to address, by ‘motivating’ learners with the promise of future opportunities and a recognition of historical realities of exclusion:

When we motivate them, we try to make them aware how important the opportunity is. Because you will find that most of them are elderly people, who missed out because of the situation in how South Africa was before. So, they were deprived of the right to learn. Then we motivate them and say that this is the second chance, they must make good use of it. […]

In South Africa, there are so many opportunities opening up to the people, but those people who did not get a chance to school, they suffer. So now we tell them, no, if you continue learning, there are so many opportunities out there that you can access, so that motivates.


While the age of the adult learners presented a challenge in the recruitment processes that needed to be overcome in order to provide this ‘right to learn’, it also presented a challenge during class interactions. There was a common concern about learner attrition rates, which was mediated through the training of inexperienced VEs, and a concern that their interactions with adult learners should be shaped by notions of ‘respect’:
Sometimes due to the lack of knowledge and experience, you will find that some VEs will treat [learners] in a way, like showing disrespect and all those things. And when [learners] experience such things, they don’t talk, they will just quit. So, you must ensure that most of the time you teach these VEs, that please make sure that you treat these adult people with respect, treat them as your parents, as your mothers, as your fathers, as your grandfathers, as your grandmothers. Make sure that you always keep them happy, so in that way—... But once they sense that they are disrespected, then they will withdraw. [...] It’s not that they know nothing at all. Its only that they lack that kind of formal schooling. But you can learn quite a lot of things from them.


‘Learning’ adults thus needed to be ‘learned’: to be treated with respect and with forms of informal knowledge recognised, despite a ‘lack’ of ‘formal schooling’ (‘it’s not that they know nothing at all’). While ‘illiterate’ or ‘uneducated’ learners were constructed in terms of vulnerability and low self-esteem through the ‘literacy’ and ‘practical skills’ discourses, they were simultaneously constructed with the power to express agency through choices to ‘withdraw’ or ‘just quit’ the campaign. The notion of respect reframed the adult learner and VE relationships less in terms of pedagogical structures or interactions, and more in terms of familial relationships, of treating learners as ‘your parents, as your mothers, as you fathers, as your grandfathers, as your grandmothers’.

Notions of respect were also embedded in the specificity of seeing ‘adult-learners’ as bearers of cultural knowledge, particularly within contexts where VEs tended to be much younger or from a ‘new generation’. These framings of respect constructed the ‘nice-ness’ of learning set out in the texts as mutual:

It’s nice. I can learn from them, they also learn from me. [...] Some like, cultural things, I ask them, because I’m a new generation, I don’t know much about their culture. So, they teach me about that.

Volunteer-Educator 1, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 10.09.2012

In addition to the recognition that ‘adult-learners’ might have informal forms of knowledge, and may be bearers of ‘culture’, there was also recognition that adults who
came to learn through the KRG campaign might have authority, status or power in other spheres. This was nevertheless presented as a contradiction or balance, in one Monitor’s words below, as she constructed a contradictory positionality of learners holding leadership positions, but without literacy skills, ‘Chairpersons who couldn’t read’:

Most of them, even though illiterate, they were Chairpersons of the [School Boards], schools. Chairpersons who couldn’t read, who couldn’t write. But now it’s managed to reach those parts as well. With Church leaders, also it could be said, we need someone to read to us, from the Bible. But they couldn’t.

*Monitor 1, Eastern Cape, Interview 31.08.2012*

In understandings of the dynamics of power in recruitment processes, there was also recognition of the interplay of gender, both in histories of exclusion from school, but also in shaping decisions whether or not to participate in the Kha ri Gude campaign:

Coordinator 1: [Charley] was asking now what is the reason why there are many women, and I say that in the olden days, women didn’t go to school, because they were supposed to marry, so they were not taken to school and there were many illiterate women
Monitor 1: and I think men just don’t want! *(all laugh)*
Charley: *Why do you think that is?*
Monitor 1: Yes! That’s just how they are!
Coordinator 1: Whenever you see women, you won’t see them. They want to see it kicking off, and then they will follow
Monitor 1: and if you want men, go to the beer halls! That’s where you will find them.

*Monitor 1 and Coordinator 1, Eastern Cape, Interview 31.08.2012*

It was thus women who were constructed as those particularly with needs, who had not in the past gone to school, and who were seen as marginalised through gendered histories of educational exclusion that intersected with cultural norms around marriage and family. ‘Illiteracy’ worked as a contemporary marker of these intersecting forms of disadvantage. These contemporary asymmetrical gendered relations, on the other hand, constructed men as dissolute and concerned to maintain their gendered advantage, with the result that
they could not take advantage of the opportunities that the campaign offered, waiting rather to see the campaign ‘kicking off’ before they joined. Men were constructed in this discourse of absence as taking a ‘step backwards’, ‘coming slowly’ and subject to ‘ego’, concerned not to be ‘exposed’:

VE 1: Men, they don’t like to be exposed that they don’t know, they were never educated, they never go to school. The women they want to learn more... Men, they are taking a step backwards. They are coming slowly.

Charley: why do you think the men are coming slowly? What is it?
VE 1: I think it’s their ego! I think it’s their ego, they think they are “Men”! Yah. (laughs)

Volunteer-Educator 1, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 10.09.2012

This construct of masculinity and of male reluctance to join the campaign was further shaped by the gendered and cultural dynamics of older male learners being taught by often younger women:

Most of men say that no, you are such a young girl, you can’t teach me, you can’t tell me what to do. But this year, I had a few men who came and said like, “no, my child, just help me with this one. I have got a cell-phone and I don’t know how to use it.”


Again here, however, the universalisation of the ‘practical skills’ discourse was mobilised against these gendered constructs, as the VE described a set of men who were gradually beginning to join the campaign through their desire to use their cell-phones, addressing her as ‘my child’, but with an accompanying request for ‘help’.

The sense in these interviews that women joined first and men gradually became involved was born out by statistical enrolment data: in 2008 when the campaign was launched 76% of the learners were female; by 2013 when this research was conducted this ratio had balanced to 51% female learners (DBE, 2017). These statistics were understood both as a result of the original impetus for the campaign in ‘targeting’ women as a group (and thus speaking to the target of EFA Goal 4, as discussed in chapter three), but also as a result of
the ways in which gendered norms shaped attendance and participation as discussed in the words of this Monitor, Coordinator and VE. Despite these ‘official’ enrolment statistics, however, the campaign was nevertheless seen as feminised, and the majority of classes which I observed had predominantly female adult learners.\textsuperscript{53} While the Kha ri Gude CEO (2008-2011) described a critique of the campaign that “we are too female-biased... maybe too much women” (Interview 07.09.2012), there was also a sense in which the campaign worked as “essentially a women’s movement, by necessity. It works very well as a system of community-level engagement” (SAQA Official 2, informal conversation, fieldnotes 22.03.2013). Questions of gendered attendance were thus experienced as a backlash but simultaneously mobilised towards gender equality and offering space to women to engage.

This sense of being a woman’s movement was seen as a way to build connections and social networks, to ‘work together...cry together...help together’. In one Supervisor’s description such connections were explicitly linked to power, as she mobilised an apartheid era struggle slogan common in women’s protests against the pass laws that ‘when you strike a woman, you strike the rock’ (MacLean, 2004), re-purposed to describe the value of participation in Kha ri Gude:

> When you strike a woman, you strike the rock. Yes. Women, they are powerful. They know what they want. They work together as a group, yes, because they know they have problems. They share what they have, they cry together, they help together, everything.

*Supervisor 4, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 10.09.2012*

For Monitor 2, this was specifically bound in processes of education, and the idea of learning as a ‘common developmental goal’ which would ‘bind together’ the community:

> You see that a programme like Kha ri Gude could bring stability in the community, you know? And make people talk about one developmental goal which is learning, and other social issues that is going to actually bind them together.

*Monitor 2, KwaZulu-Natal, Interview 17.09.2012*

\textsuperscript{53} The exception to this was the pilot site visit which I observed in an informal settlement, in which there were seven male and two female learners.
While cohesion and collective participation was seen as one value of the *Kha ri Gude* campaign, a second related to the ways in which the literacy campaign as ‘women’s movement’ was seen to work particularly successfully in terms of challenging violence, in contexts when women “don’t know exactly what to do when the husband abuses us, don’t know where to go” (Supervisor 1, Eastern Cape, Interview 03.09.2012). *Kha ri Gude* was seen to offer a space where women could learn ‘where to go’ and ‘what to do’:

A third [benefit of KRG] is the complex. They no longer feel inferior. They know how to express themselves, and they know how to fight for their rights as well. Because they used to keep quiet, even with abusive relationships they would just keep quiet. But now, how dare you touch them! They know what to do. They will go out to report you.

*Monitor 1, Eastern Cape, Interview 31.08.2012*

The ‘feeling inferior’ and ‘keeping quiet’ that was linked above to learning practical skills in this context was thus linked to challenging violence in abusive relationships and reporting mechanisms, through which KRG learners would learn to “call [abusive men and husbands] to order” (Coordinator 2, Eastern Cape, Interview 03.09.2012). The process of the KRG cycle was constructed by Monitor 1 as challenging violent (inter)actions by gaining knowledge of rights and ‘how to express themselves’. Keeping ‘quiet’ became going ‘out to report you’. Confidence thus adhered both to processes associated with illiteracy but also to those associated with gendered inequality, an important intersect of gender with the ‘adult-learner’ subjectivity (re)produced in this talk.

Thinking about the campaign in this way starts to unpack some of the ways in which gendered ‘adult-learner’ subjectivities were constructed both in terms of need, but also in terms of agency, power and resistance that drew in other forms of intersectional identities and marginalisation. By the Monitors in particular, the campaign was constructed as valuable not only in terms of practical and life skills, but further in terms of social (inter)actions, including potentially mediating and challenging violence and developing community cohesion. While these elements to the campaign were seen as potential benefits by the Monitors of the campaign, however, they were not referenced by the VEs and Supervisors of the campaign in the same way. Actors at these lower levels of the campaign were concerned with the (re)production of gendered subjectivities and their
intersections with age and ‘culture’, but their concerns centred on ways in which gender affected the work of recruiting and delivering the campaign, drawing much less on the kinds of transformational narratives that these two Monitors’ words (re)present.

(Re)Presenting ‘adult-learners’ in text

The (re)presentations of gender and violence discussed in this chapter thus far translated differently in conversations about the design of the materials. Within the design of the materials, gender was framed as less ‘visible’, potentially shaping discussions and ‘social things’, but not necessarily ‘in the books’:

Supervisor 5: We tell our educators that in their classes that they must talk with those things - social things that affect the community. Yah, they do. They must discuss it and find out from the learners how they can cure the situation. We do have such an idea

Charley: and what about issues to do with gender? Do you think those are addressed in the campaign?

Supervisor 5: Gender equity or...?

Charley: however you think about it is fine

Supervisor 5: maybe, if they are discussed, just discussed under general. But it’s not in the books.

Supervisor 5, KZN, Interview 14.09.2013

In the Khari Gude texts themselves there was no section on women’s rights or any explicit discussion of gender inequality. In the interview with the CEO (2008-2011) of the campaign, it was emphasised that this ‘embedding’ or ‘integrating’ of gender had been deliberate, a way of shaping discussion that ‘cut across’ a dominant focus on ‘literacy’:

[Gender and justice] more cut across the literacy, so it’s embedded. We don’t have a standalone on ‘what are your rights?’ but if you have a look at the material it’s embedded. And the questions we ask in the teacher’s guide around the issues, ‘why are these learners old, yet come to school?’, or ‘who works in your home?’ That’s-, it’s integrated, they’re not going, if you ask them to outline human rights, or-, they won’t pick it up. [...]

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But it comes up of their own, you know, the kind of issues that they would discuss. […] Can you see, it’s, yah, it’s not explicit, it’s kind of subtle.


There was thus a distinction between what was ‘in the books’ and what was ‘in the discussion’, a tension between material and the way that the materials were used and explored in the classes. For the KRG CEO (2008-2011) who led the design and launch of the campaign, the decision to ‘centrally’ design materials was itself a controversial one. This controversy was mediated in her account by long personal biographies of working in adult education by those who participated in the team, as well as by research in the conceptualisation process, but nevertheless persisted:

Basically, we went against the entire movement, against the trend. There’s almost like a stand-up battle between the learner-generated stuff and the centrally-generated stuff. […] But we had a done a lot of research, and that’s why the themes of health, and learning to learn, and why must I learn, and my family, and so on. Those themes - we didn’t just make them up - they were really based on a lot of research across the provinces. […] What we say in the training manual […] is ‘this is only the core’. If they want to read the Bible, you bring the Bible. If they want to get a driver’s license, you bring a learner’s license. Whatever it is they want to read, a child’s report card, that kind of authentic stuff, you must encourage. And they do encourage it.


There was thus a concern to both have directed materials through the learners’ exercises, and space for open discussion. There was a concern to balance both the centrally-generated themes with the ‘authentic stuff’ that learners might both literally and figuratively bring to the classes, that aimed to meet the critique raised by a number of adult education practitioners that the design of teaching techniques and materials should “recognise the whole adult learner” (Rogers and Horrocks, 2010, p. 113). Despite these intentions, however, early discussions of the campaign reported in the national press argued that the course literature was “more fit for primary school children.”

One of the key justifications for designing materials was through a concern about the untrained and inexperienced VEs who were employed through the Kha ri Gude campaign (whose recruitment under the Expanded Public Works Programme is discussed in chapter three, p. 56). This was overlaid by hierarchies of gender: 87% of the VEs in 2013 were women (DBE, 2017). The VE’s positionalities were problematised by those working at the design and management levels of the campaign, who suggested that the materials would offer these often young, and inexperienced VEs a ‘crutch’ upon which to rely, and a way of ensuring quality and consistency across the 40,000 classes:

That core is what saved us. Because you can’t have 40,000 classes all doing their own thing, and they’re all untrained, and they’re all-, you can’t. And so people know they’ve got to talk about health today, or they’ve got to talk about nutrition, or they’ve got to talk...And the trainer’s manual guides them through what questions to ask, what they’ve got to talk about. And all the other add-ons, they can add on, they can take the learners to-, on site visits if they can afford to, in a bus to a post-office, or...and they do do that. They’re quite innovative, in what they get to their classes. [...] [But] those that can’t move away from the material, the material is perfect for them, it’s a very good crutch.


It is easy for those Grade 12 leavers,55 who have got no experience at all, it is very easy for them to use the materials. Everything’s clear, so the educator does not have to struggle.


The materials were thus presented as central to concerns about VE’s positions as inexperienced, but they resulted in a need to (re)present ‘adult-learners’ in texts that otherwise might not have been necessary. While the texts were seen to offer flexibility in terms of the ways in which they left space for innovative teaching content, they nevertheless closed down the ‘adult-learner’ subjectivity through fixed (re)presentation that constrained the capacities of VEs to fully recognise the ‘whole adult-learner’.

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55 Grade 12 leavers refers to the schooling level which VEs were required to have reached.
One of the ways in which this (re)presentational constraint was mediated was through the prompts of the Facilitator’s Handbook, which was provided to all VEs. This was a guide which supported the VEs in their teaching, and accompanied the texts provided to adult learners. In the interaction of these texts, further constructs of gender and its intersections was discernible. This was particularly evident in the opening pages of the literacy text, ‘Learn to read in isiZulu’, and the work that this book did in ‘motivating’ learners in ways that were ‘accepted’ by the adult ‘clientele’, in the words of the KRG CEO (2012-2014) that began this chapter.

The literacy textbook opened with an exercise designed to ‘welcome learners’ (figure 13). Entitled “I go to class”, the exercise depicted a black female VE standing in front of a board in a classroom populated by diverse learners, the phrase ‘I’m welcoming you’ written onto a chalk board in isiZulu, and in English on a floor mat. These pictures were accompanied in the facilitator’s notes with encouragement to prompt questions such as “why do you think they are in school?”, “what do you think they want to learn?” and “how do you think the people feel in this class?” (KRG Facilitator’s notes, pp. 5-6), initiating a process of raising “awareness” (Kha ri Gude CEO (2008-2011), Interview 07.09.2012) but also offering “an opportunity to encourage them to learn and to complete the programme” (KRG Facilitator’s notes, p. 5). In the representations of learning and learners in the texts, questions of recognition were thus again tied to attendance, learning and completion. In the classes which I observed in the first weeks of the campaign, learners commented, clapping and laughing: “it’s us! That is like me!” (Empompini class observation, 19.08.2013). The markers of dress, race and rurality seen through the open door of the classroom were noticed and identified with, as well as the KRG poster on the wall of the represented classroom which mirrored the rooms in which I participated in these early observations of the KRG classes (fieldnotes, 19th August 2013).

Learners were thus encouraged to identify and see themselves visually represented on the page, through a (re)presentation of a racially diverse but majority black classroom. They

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56 Ngiya ekilasini
57 Ngiyanamukela
were also encouraged to identify with the reasons given in another early exercise that explored reasons why men and women might have been unable to learn in the past (figure 7). Entitled, “We went, [but] we had to leave,” the exercise depicted three adults discussing their memories: a woman carries her child on her back, a man recalls herding cattle as a young boy, and a third remembers the forced removals of the apartheid era (discussed on pp. 15-19). These pictures reflected experiences by race and gender, through the kinds of reasons for school exclusion.

Again, in the facilitator’s notes, this discussion was linked to retention: “learners will talk about what prevented them from attending school in their youth. Talk about how Kha ri Gude offers them a second chance to learn and encourage them to complete the programme” (KRG Facilitator’s notes, p. 11). Learners in a class which I observed again identified the pictorial (re)presentations as “like us!”, telling stories of times that they were moved from their ancestral lands in the early 1930s to the less fertile parts of the valley (now occupied by an exclusive golf course where two of the learners’ relatives worked as cleaners), as well as discussing why young Zulu boys and girls were excluded from school by their families, for culturally shaped, gendered reasons such as the importance of herding, or constraints on girls’ activities outside the home, particularly before marriage (Ekhaya class observation, 06.08.2013).

Identification and representation were thus two key dimensions of ‘motivating’ learners to join the classes, and to continue attending once they had joined. These representations clearly engaged with gendered, raced and cultural histories of educational exclusion, and to a lesser extent with the histories of apartheid and lived experiences such as forced removals, which situated educational exclusion in a context of broader social injustice related to housing and land rights, and the disruptions of black and coloured community identities in both urban and rural contexts (Field, 2001, Walker, 2008).

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58 Siye, safaduka
‘Motivations to learn’ / ‘Being motivated’

In learners’ accounts of the recruitment process, questions of inclusion echoed the ideas of ‘respect’ and ‘recognition’ noted in the chapter thus far. This often centred on a construct of the ‘adult-learner’ as gendered and aged: a ‘grandmother’ (ugogo) who could return to ‘school’:

Ay, she came well! Just like, she said that we have a school for grandmothers, we’re asking for grandmothers, we have a school for grandmothers, just go and you will study, you will study everything! We will study Maths, and Zulu, and English.59

Prudence (aged 63), Entabeni Class, Interview 01.10.2013

The recruitment and ‘motivation’ moment was demarcated by the designation of a campaign that was ‘for us’, ‘for grandmothers’. It was also demarcated by space, and a socio-cultural framing to ‘tell[ing] us the news’ that a new literacy campaign was starting, by travelling door to door:

Virginia: I joined [the KRG class] because [the VE] came to the house, she told us about the studying. I was happy about this that she came to the house so that she could tell us the news about studying, because I like it, I like to study. It is this that makes me happy. I went to join school myself, because I like it.

Charley: Why do you like it?

Virginia: if/when you are educated, you can continue forward (-qhubeka phambili).60

Virginia (aged 57), Eholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013

This news was valued for the inclusivity it offered, but also for the imagined opportunities it provided to learners to ‘continue forward’ in imagined futures that adhered to ‘being educated’. Virginia’s belief in the relationship between progress and education was reinforced through the campaign texts themselves: exercise 1.3 of the “Learn to read in isiZulu” text deployed the same phrase: ‘let’s continue forward’ (-qhubeka phambili), with

59 Ayi wafika kahle! njena wathi nasi isikole gogo ungibiza ngogogo, wathi nasi isikole gogo – hamba, uzoofunda, uzoofunda yonke into! sokufundisa izibalo, nesizula ne-English.

60 Ngawuthola ngokuthi wafika ekhaya, wazositshela ngokufunda, ngajabula nokho ukuthi ufike ekhaya uzosithela ngendaba yemfundo ngoba njiyayithanda, njiyakuthanda ukufunda. Kwangijabulisa lokhu. Ngase ngihamba nami nga-joyina esikoleni, ngoba njiyasithanda. [...] 

61 mawufundile uyakwazi ukuqhubeke phambili
an exercise that opened with an image of a man and woman sitting at a table, and looking through the job advertisements (‘Learn to read in isiZulu’, p. 38). These links between education and ‘moving forward’ will be fleshed out in chapter eight; what is important to note here is the contrast between the concern of the VEs and Supervisors discussed above that ‘old’ learners would be difficult to recruit, and the pleasure and hope with which learners such as Prudence and Virginia framed their recruitment.

‘Motivation’ in these accounts was a process of setting out imagined opportunities through visiting and engaging with learners themselves directly in their own spaces. For learners, as for those working in the campaign, this recruitment also involved contextualisation of the present opportunity that Kha ri Gude offered within histories of past exclusion. Such contiguity was particularly evident in the words of Smangele, who described herself as 82 years old at the time of the interview (2013), but who gave her birth year as 1937:

Charley: Were there any times in the past that you hoped to return to school, after you had left?
Smangele: There were some times actually... but to return? to arrive? I didn’t have anyone who would motivate me (-qhuba) so that I should return, Lord knows how I should have done that. But now here it is that I would get this chance, I am already old, time is already short, I no longer hear in my ears, I no longer see with my eyes, but they were motivating me so well (-qhubeka), and I am so very happy.

Smangele (aged 76/82), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 12.11.2013

This simultaneous ‘return’ / ‘arrival’ was definable by its presence and spatial dimensions: in Smangele’s words, ‘now here it is’, a ‘chance’ that was tangible and embodied in the presence and motivating words of the VE. Such a ‘chance’ was contextualised by Smangele’s own lived and embodied experience, of failing eyes and ears and ‘already’ being old. It was a question of time but also of recognition, of having someone who would ‘motivate me’ now, in contrast to her childhood when she ‘didn’t have anyone’.

‘Motivation’ and ‘moving forward’ were expressed by correlates of the same verb in isiZulu (‘-qhuba/-qhubeka’), suggesting positive signifying chains that drew together education, social networks, and socio-culturally appropriate forms of support and respect.

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62 Kwakuke kufike phela, kodwa kufike qhubeka ngobona ngisingubane naphambi ngezingubane ngezobona ukuthi ozongiqhuba ngibuye ngithi unkulunkulu nasezobona ukuthi ozokwenze njani, manje nakhu sengizothola lelithuba sengigugile isikhathi sesisifishane angisezwa nase mandlebeni angisaboni nase mahlweni bengizoqhubeka kahle kakhulu njinjabule
For Smangele and Virginia, the kinds of motivations and invitations to learn narrated above clearly elicited pleasure, returns that were invested with a process of being ‘happy’, of studying as something that was ‘liked’ or ‘loved’. But the colloquial use of the word for ‘school’ to represent the campaign (isikole) could also (re)produce anxiety, carrying both shame and affect, by symbolically equating a return to ‘school’ as something childish or risible, (re)inscribing ‘adult-learners’ as child-like in ways that undercut a concern by those who designed and delivered the campaign to emphasise the ‘not-child’ status of the ‘adult-learner’. For a number of the learners, including Zandile below, the status of ‘adult-learner’ challenged other forms of respect due as grandmothers, particularly in interactions with children or grand-children, but also with other members of the community. These challenges often came in the form of laughter at the very idea of a grandmother going to school, particularly when learners were identifiable by their KRG backpacks and the signs demarcating spaces as classrooms that were hung on walls at the start of the campaign. The real and imagined laughter of others was thus an important reason that ‘motivations’ were necessary:

They used to laugh at me at the start, they said, “Hhawu! (Wow!) Mum is going to study!” But I just said, “yes, I am going to study” and now they can see that I’m standing on my own two feet (-zimesele) and they are happy for me.\(^{63}\)

\[\text{Zandile (aged 47), Endleleni class, Interview 06.10.2013}\]

Zandile, however, reclaimed the ‘adult-learner’ subjectivity, and resisted the tension inherent in her children’s exclamations by expressing her agency through the act of going to school, an act that she represented as one of autonomy. A ‘return’ to school, and ‘education’ more broadly, carried a particular symbolic value which will be fleshed out in the next chapter. The uneasy subjectivity of being an ‘adult-learner’, or learning adult, and the role of mediating laughter and reclaiming the subjectivity with the phrase “we are at school!”\(^{64}\) in jokes and casual conversations will also be returned to in chapter nine.

What this initial analysis of these learners’ accounts introduces is a tension at the hyphen in the process of being and becoming an ‘adult-learner’, that was bound in both embodied experiences and socio-cultural constructs of age, through questions of relational status, or

\(^{63}\) Bangihleka okuqala, bathi hhawu! mama usayofunda! Ngathi ehhene ngiyofunda, kodwa manje futhi baya bona ukuthi ngizimisele, sebeyanajabula nabo.

\(^{64}\) sisekoleni!
interactions with other family or community members. These tensions across the hyphen cast the need to ‘welcome’ adult learners not only in terms of recognition of past disadvantage, but also in terms of recognition of current status, suggesting the ways in which the ‘adult-learner’ category in some senses represents a contradictory position of both vulnerability and authority. The following extended vignette builds on this analysis in discussing the first meeting of the Endleleni class, in which learners (re)contextualised learning through jokes and performativity across the ‘adult-learner’ hyphen, that drew together questions of gender and its intersections, and the respect and representation that have been explored throughout this chapter, and that highlights how these interactions can have an affect not only on recruitment but continued participation in adult education.

(Re)Contextualising ‘learning’: performativity at the ‘adult-learner’ hyphen

The following extended vignette draws on an interchange between Kwazekkwakhe, an ‘illiterate’ male learner in his 60s who had “never held a pencil” (Endleleni class observation, 07.08.2013), and Veronica, a ‘literate’ female learner aged 42 who had attended secondary school but dropped out due to early pregnancy (Endleleni class, Interview 1, 14.10.2013). There were seven other learners present at this class, all of whom were women and none of whom spoke as much as Veronica and Kwazekkwakhe. In discussing their talk, I will reflect on the ways in which their intermittent interchanges (which are timestamped in bold) were imbued with contestations around power, drawing on the notion of performativity (Butler, 1990) to explore the inter-relationship of both gender and violence in being and becoming an ‘adult-learner’.

Throughout the classes, learners would often joke about the difficulty of tasks with which they were engaged. A joke that I heard in more than one class centred on the difficulty of writing down ‘a’ or starting with ‘a’, through references to ‘a’ as just a ‘little thing’ – something for ‘little’ children, a task that was ‘little’ and therefore should have been easy, and literally a small letter. In the following extract Phili’s attempts (in her role as a KRG supervisor) to mediate the difficulty of the task by acknowledging that it was hard were resisted by Kwazekkwakhe, who joked instead that the hardness of the task was in the potential for failure, of receiving ‘zero’ marks. Kwazekkwakhe both ‘played’ the naughty boy who does not want a zero, but also played with the idea of being ‘laughed at’, saying that he would instead adopt a naughty boy position, sitting and flirting with his girlfriend.
rather than listening to the teacher. Underlying this play was a risk or insecurity, that he might ‘cry’ if he did not perform the task well, tears again suited to a child. Ultimately, however, this ‘naughty boy’ position was denied to him by Veronica, who herself played with a ‘good girl’ subject position, suggesting that he should ‘sit alone’ instead:

[31.10] Kwazekwakhe: Let’s start with an ‘a’ down here. It’s just a little thing! (class laughter) Hhawu

Phili: It’s hard

Kwazekwakhe: It’s hard to write zero! (class laughter)

Phili (to class): Are we laughing?

Kwazekwakhe: Don’t you laugh, I will cry! ... It’s better if I sit with my girlfriend!

Veronica: It’s better if you sit alone! (class laughter)

*Endleleni class observation, 07.08.2013*

Gendered subjectivities of ‘good girls’ and ‘naughty boys’ were thus both performed and deconstructed in these performances by Kwazekwakhe and Veronica. In talk approximately ten minutes later, these subjectivities were further overlaid with Zulu constructs around age and gender, through the proposed act of taking traditional medicine (‘umuthi’) to mediate ‘confusing’ tasks and ‘old legs’, referring to a Zulu socio-cultural tradition in which ‘muthi’ was taken to guard and maintain physical and political (male) power (Flint and Parle, 2008). This proposed gendered, socio-cultural subject position was in turn again resisted by Veronica in jokes, returning to constructs of the ‘good’ student who does not talk in class:

[42.36] VE: I would like a third [learner] to do the last one (example on the board).

Kwazekwakhe: You have forgotten that we have old legs! (laughter)

VE: Now, a third one?

Kwazekwakhe: I will have to take some muthi so that I might be able to do the things which are confusing! (class laughter)

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65 Siqale ‘u-a’ phansi. Intiyana nje! (laughter) Hhawu
66 Kunzima-
67 [kunzima] ukuzobhala amguqu futhi!
68 Sihlekana futhi?
69 Ningahleki-bo, mina ngizokhala! Kungcono ngihlale [with Name]!
70 Kungcono uhlale wena uyedwa! (laughter)
71 Ngicela olwesithathu owokucina ngci
72 Okhumbula sibuye siphathwe amadolo njalo (laughter)
73 manje olwesithathu?
Veronica: Maybe you should just not talk in class! *(class laughter)*

Endleleni class observation, 07.08.2013

Approximately five minutes later, the VE interrupted the class to praise ‘some’ who can ‘write their names’ already, as ‘clever’. This praise was not available to Kwazekwakhe, who was laboriously working to re-write his name, erasing each mistake as he did so. Phili was sitting with him at the time, encouraging him to continue to try, to make it look ‘nice’, an encouragement interrupted by Veronica, who joked that he would continue to try ‘until it gets dark’. This in turn was mediated with humour by Phili, who played with Kwazekwakhe’s earlier joke that he ‘would cry’. Tears were rejected by Kwazekwakhe, who instead emphasised that he would ‘try’, a view reinforced by an exclaimed ‘my god’ from Thokozile. Such ‘trying’ would be rewarded, in Phili’s words by being ‘well’, but jokingly (re)inscribed with childish rewards by Kwazekwakhe, of ‘juice and cake’:

[48,28] VE: We see now that some are able to write their names, they are clever.⁷⁶

[...]  

Phili (to Kwazekwakhe): It’s nice if you use the rubber. It looks nice, you start with the rubber here, you go down over it, then you can write again...⁷⁷

Veronica: until it gets dark! *(laughs)*⁷⁸

Phili: You will cry! *(class laughter)*⁷⁹

Kwazekwakhe: We will learn indeed, there’s no problem. We will try. We will try. We will really try.⁸⁰

Thokozile *(in English)*: My god!⁸¹

Phili: No...there is a lot, but we will be well. It will be nice.⁸²

Kwazekwakhe: We will have juice and cake! *(class laughter)*⁸³

Endleleni class observation, 07.08.2013

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⁷⁴ Ngizothola muthi ukuthi ngingakwazi lapha kungiphixa
⁷⁵ kodwa ukhululuma ekilasini!
⁷⁶ Kushukuti sibona abantu abakwazi ukubhala amagama abo, bahlakaniphile
⁷⁷ Kumnandi ngiphumise iRubber. Kumnandi, uRubber, uzoqale phansi, phinda uzhale futhi...
⁷⁸ kuze kubemnijama!
⁷⁹ Uzukhale! *(laughter)*
⁸¹ My god
⁸² Kuningi-ke, sazoba kumnandi.
⁸³ Sazobanamakhekhe ne-juice! *(laughter)*
In a later exercise, however, Kwazekwakhe became confused and lost, and the jokes were cast aside in a reclaiming of gendered and cultural power, through an adult male Zulu subjectivity, as he claimed the status of ‘grandfather’ and the ‘respect’ that such an identity affords, particularly in interactions with a younger woman of the community such as the VE, whom he addresses as ‘(i)ngane’ – child. This subjectivity, unlike other adopted positions, was not met with class laughter but rather silence from both the VE and the other learners, I think reflecting the reclaiming of patriarchal authority at the intersect of gender, age and ‘culture’:

[53.10] Kwazekwakhe: Wait, wait for me!84
Phili (addressing the VE): Teacher, show them that they are working here [this page]!85
VE: You should cut in this book, here.87
Kwazekwakhe: Oh! Ok. You’re right. We see. We see how to do it. (in English) I’m a Grandfather! You must give me respect, child!88
[silence]

Endleleni class observation, 07.08.2013

This silence lasted a full three minutes, during which time learners cut and stuck different words into their texts. The silence was finally interrupted by Kwazekwakhe himself, as he dropped his glue, and was frustrated to not know how to ask another learner to pass it back to him. In forgetting the word (a hard word for an isiZulu speaker to pronounce) Kwazekwakhe played with the idea of corporal punishment, opening space to joke that he was ‘afraid of the teacher’. Unlike other jokes, however, this joke was not met with laughter, but with sympathy, and an exclamation by Veronica too that ‘learning is hard’:

[57.06] Kwazekwakhe: I want to properly learn that name.89
Phili (in English): Glue.

84 Mamela, mamela!
85 Thisha yini awumushintshele kulaba abanye
86 Ngisika la? Sika lo? ... Usikaphi? Ngizosikaphi? Sika la? Sika... Sika la phaya?
87 Sisika la kulezi ncwadi
88 Oh! Ok. U-right! Sibone. Sibone kanjalo. I’m a Grandfather. You must give me respect, ngane!
89 Ngifuna ukuvala lona igama
Kwazekwakhe: Oh, I’ve forgotten again. Are there beatings here?90
Phili: No, no! There is no stick here, nobody walked in with one. Nobody will ever be beaten. There is no beating here.91
Kwazekwakhe: I’m afraid of the teacher!92
Phili: Don’t be afraid. It’s like you will run away from school, if you are afraid of the teacher.93
Veronica: Hhawu! Learning is hard!94

Endleleni class observation, 07.08.2013

This early Endleleni class was the only class which Kwazekwakhe attended. When I returned two days later and asked Veronica where he was, she joked, disparagingly, “he ran away!”95 (fieldnotes, 9th August 2013). I have no doubt that Kwazekwakhe was performing being ‘afraid of the teacher’ and afraid of ‘beatings’. But Veronica’s closural exclamation that ‘learning is hard!’ I think served to articulate an equivalence in their subjective experiences of re-entering adult learning, a potential anxiety or ‘fear’ that was not mediated by the VE sufficiently to ‘motivate’ Kwazekwakhe’s return.

Analysis of this vignette has highlighted that in the process of ‘returning to school’, performativity may draw on (gendered) dynamics that are bound in past experience, not just of ‘schooled’ literacies, but ‘schooled’ positionalities: the ‘good girl’, the ‘naughty boy’, the teacher with a stick. Echoing the argument of Gemma Moss reflecting on ‘schooled literacies’ in the UK, this analysis makes clear that “schooled literacy is shaped by the institutional economy of the classroom, and the regulation and organisation of knowledge within it” (Moss, 2001, p. 149). Gender and intersectional subjectivities interplay in both this institutional economy and the forms of knowledge that are (re)produced within it. Mediating these historical meanings which are read contiguously into the present experience requires skill and empathy from Volunteer-Educators, who are themselves simultaneously mediating their own gendered and aged positionings. This extended vignette highlights, as other research has shown, that the adult learning process can be invested with emotion, and responses of shame and anxiety, that are not captured by

90 Ngakhohlwa futhi, kuyashaywa la?
91 Ayikho indoko, abafikanga ngayo. Angeke ashaywe umuntu. Akekho uzashaywe.
92 Ngiyamsaba thisha!
93 Ungamsabi! Kushokuthi uzobaleka eskolweni, uma umsaba utisha.
94 Hhawu! Kwaze kunzima
95 wabaleka!
simple notions of being ‘demotivated’ (Mezirow, 2006, Bartlett, 2007a). In navigating the hyphen of ‘adult-learner’, adults agentically draw on forms of status that both complement and trouble the ways in which the ‘adult-learner’ is itself a contradictory position, embedded in social processes that affect not only learning but ways in which (re)becoming a ‘learner’ can both do and disrupt identity work.

**Populating the discursive terrain: motivating learners, constructing learning**

For critics such as Brian Street, too often “the arrival of a literacy programme together with the associated national publicity about the problems of lack of literacy themselves serve to construct illiteracy among people for whom the term previously had no salience” (Street, 1996, p. 3). This chapter has discussed a number of different ways in which the ‘adult-learner’ subjectivity was constructed through such publicity: through ‘needs’ in ‘changing times’, as socio-economically and democratically excluded through a deficit of ‘literacy’, ‘practical’ and ‘life’ skills; as historically disadvantaged through gendered, cultural and racialised inequalities; and finally in terms of symbolically returning to and attending ‘school’ that was ‘not-school’, of learning subjectivities that were not child-like but that intersected with socio-cultural constructs of age, gender and ethnicity. In exploring these different dimensions to learning within *Kha ri Gude*, the importance of ideas of ‘respect’ and ‘representation’, and the prominence of social interactions for shaping adult learners’ ‘motivations’ to enrol and continue to participate in classes has been made clear. The ‘adult-learner’ subjectivity may be formed by vulnerability and histories of exclusion, but ‘adult-learners’ are simultaneously able to draw on other forms of agency, authority and respect that are shaped by gender, age, and socio-cultural scripts and dynamics. These questions will be picked up in more detail in the following chapter, which will explore in detail how adult learners constructed and identified with the signifier ‘uneducated’.
7 Intersections in the symbol: being & becoming ‘uneducated’

This chapter builds on the concern of chapter six to understand the ways in which the ‘adult-learner’ subjectivity (re)presented one of tension, by looking back in women’s life-histories and exploring the ways in which the signifier ‘uneducated’ was discursively constructed in their accounts as a marker of exclusion, difference and disadvantage. As I discussed in chapter two, theorists and researchers working in the field of literacy have worked hard to challenge the binary of illiteracy/literacy, and to develop the idea that there is “no definite line between a ‘literate’ and ‘non-literate’ person” (Hanemann, 2015, p. 299). In my introduction too, I traced the ways in which I was concerned to both reflect and name marginalisation, but not to essentialise or to cement binaries associated with being un/educated. In the light of this aim, writing this chapter was all the more challenging. Against my concern to unpack and challenge binaries I was met with life-history accounts that prima facie (re)presented the exclusion, difference and disadvantage represented by educational exclusion across binary lines.

Through fine-grained discourse analysis across translated isiZulu life-history data, this chapter will explore how the adult learners in this study identified with the signifier ‘uneducated’ in different ways that at times (re)produced and at others resisted these binary distinctions. In doing so, I will draw on the work of Mastin Prinsloo and Mignonne Breier, who argue that “‘literacy’ and ‘illiteracy’...[are] concepts of signification within social discourse. [They]...come into being only as they are understood, explained and incorporated into social practice” (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996, p. 21). I will extend this analysis to reflect not just on concepts of ‘il/literacy’, but on a broader understanding of being ‘un/educated’.

The chapter will argue, drawing on close analysis of life-history data, that signifying chains around ‘un/educated’ work as a “focalising feature” (Sen, 1999, p. 103) of inequality at not just the macro, policy-based level of comparisons between nations and groups within nations, but in proximal comparisons between individuals and within families and communities. It will show how being ‘un/educated’ operated as a relational construct that shifted over time, contextualised by localised as well as national socio-political shifts that were situated within a localised experience of the intersectional “matrix of oppression” (Hill Collins, 1990, p. 276, Gouws, 2017, May, 2015). Being ‘uneducated’ (re)presented or
‘focalised’ a wider set of ‘difficulties’ (-nzima), ‘troubles’ (-hlupheka), and feelings of ‘pain’ (-buhlungu) and ‘badness’, that dynamically intersected within this matrix with the material impacts and discursive constructs of poverty, rurality, race, ethnicity and gender, across “different organising logics” (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006), and through which “privilege in one respect can mitigate or modify oppression in another” (Garry, 2011, pp. 831-33). The chapter will argue that discursive constructions of being ‘uneducated’ worked “as systems of rules which make it possible for certain statements but not others to occur at particular times, places and institutional locations” (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 40).

The distinction of un/educated dis/advantage

Some neighbours were educated; others were just the same as us. It was really those neighbours who were uneducated who were just the same as us.

Badumile (aged 49), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013

One of the key aims of this chapter is to explore how being un/educated (re)presented sameness and difference, a source of resemblance (-fana) through proximal, direct comparisons with others in the community, in both the past and the present, encapsulated in Badumile’s neat antithesis that ‘some were educated...others were not’. These comparisons were spatially and socially bounded: they did not include comparisons with people outside the community or family networks, and no comparisons were made across racial boundaries. In understanding these bounded comparisons, the discussion will draw on Bourdieu’s theorisation that assets and practices together act as marks of ‘distinction’, in which power and asymmetrical social relations embedded in structural inequalities are further shaped by symbolic and cultural forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1984). This opening part of the chapter will begin that work to understand the distinction of being un/educated by tracing the power of the signifier to (re)present disadvantage through scripts that were written and read onto bodies and into (the absence of) material objects and access to particular spaces.

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96 This isiZulu word signifies a range of painful emotions/states: affliction, harassment, abuse, annoyance, persecution, grief, bother, irritation, suffering, unhappiness, or ‘hard times’.
97 I have translated both the English loan word (-bheda) and the isiZulu adverb (kabi) as ‘bad’/ ‘badly’.
98 Abanye babefundile, abanyeabezifanele nathi nje. Yibona impela omakhelwane babengafundile, bezifanele nathi.
I first started to reflect on the process of identification with both the signifier of ‘education’ itself and of ‘educated’ others as different while listening to and (re)reading the words of Princess, a learner in the *Endleleni* class. Princess had never been to school, and described both her home life growing up and her adult life in *Endaweni* as ‘bad’ and ‘not right’. Such qualities were embodied, and spatialised: Princess constructed her ‘bad’-ness as possible to ‘see’, and intimately associated with being ‘here’ in the space of home, ‘just staying’, both as an unemployed adult, and as an uneducated child:

It was just bad [at home], and even now it is still bad. Life is not at all right, just like you see me, I have already left home. But here at my house it’s [also] bad, I am just staying.\(^99\)

*Princess (aged 43), Endleleni class, Interview 14.11.2013*

One of the key ways in which Princess (re)presented this cycle over her life of ‘badness’ and lack of ‘rightness’ and the process of ‘just staying’ was in relation to education, which she associated with literal as well as metaphorical mobility and progress:

*Charley: And at that time when you were not at school, how did you spend your time?*

Princess: I did nothing at all, I just used to stay.\(^100\) [...]  

*Charley: How did you feel at that time, what did you hope for?*

Princess: I was hoping for everything, I was hoping to work, I was hoping to study, I can see others who have already studied/are already educated. You hear about that thing; I was thinking about it for myself. It’s just that for me, when I used to see people and I didn’t study with them, they are already going about with cars, they are ‘right’, you just see it.\(^101\) [...]  

*Ay! [Education] is important, when you know nothing.*\(^102\)

*Princess (aged 43), Endleleni class, Interview 14.11.2013*

\(^99\) *Kuyabheda nje ngoba namanje kusabheda, impilo yayingekho right njengoba nibona nakumina sengiphumela. Nakumina kusabhedela ngiyahlala*  

\(^100\) *Ngangingenzi lutho, bengihlalele nje.*  

\(^101\) *Ngangifisa konke, ngangifisa ukusebenza, ngangikufisa nokufunda, ngibona abanye sebefundile. Uyayizwa leyonto ngizicabangela ukuthi nami ngabe sengibona abantu engangifunda nabo, sebehamba ngezimoto ba-right, uyabona nje.*  

\(^102\) *Eyi kubaluleke, ukungazi lutho nje!*
In Princess’ words, ‘education’ had become ‘everything’, a sense of being ‘just right’, an ‘it’ or ‘thing’ that was not (could not be?) defined, but which represented an idealised process that other people in the community had access to, and who now were ‘right’, a rightness that was also embodied, ‘seen’ in both the assets and practices of ‘going about with cars’. Their ‘rightness’ was contrasted with the absoluteness of doing and knowing ‘nothing’, with which Princess characterised her own life both in the present and in the past. Being uneducated was knowing/doing nothing, singular and absolute; being educated was pluralised possibilities - something, many things, perhaps ‘everything’. Education seemed to be a focal feature of a range of deprivations, as well as the signifier in which hopes for change were invested. A focus on ‘being un/educated’ provided a frame through which poverty and im/mobility could be viewed and understood.

This sense of ‘rightness’ or of ‘just seeing’ the benefits attributed to education, was commonly expressed, and often attached to specific and visible material advantages which others in the community were held to have. Like Princess, Thabisile gesticulated to the community arterial road which passed the Endleleni class, as she compared herself to a similarly aged woman who had become a teacher and now drove a car, whom she had “just seen” during the course of the interview (Thabisile (aged 41), Endleleni class, Interview 17.11.2013). Thabisile’s single example of her just-seen former classmate, however, became a difference that she imagined as pluralised, illustrated with a demonstrative pronoun – ‘there they are’, ‘those others...with their cars’:

Charley: Do you think that your life would have been different if you were educated, if you had had your Matric?
Thabisile: Hhawu! It would have changed because even me, I would have been going about with cars, just like those other people. There they are, going about with their cars!103

Thabisile (aged 41), Endleleni class, Interview 17.11.2013

While cars were the visible manifestation of the material advantages of an education for Princess and Thabisile, who were both from class by the road, a road which they lived close to, other adult learners such as Prudence from the Entabeni class focused on the power to build houses:

103 Hhawu! ngabe ishintshile, ngoba nami ngabe ngihamba ngemoto njengabanye abantu nabo behanba ngezimoto zabo
Charley: Who are the people that you say that you see now, who already are somebody/have something now?

Prudence: Hoh! They are many! Like our child, our Miss, they also had some difficulties like us, but their mothers sent them to school. Just look! They are somebody/have something(s), just like our Miss. They have studied, they are clever/grown up (-hlakaniphile), they have built houses, they have homes.104

Prudence (aged 63), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 01.10.2013

Prudence’s construction of the differences between those whose mothers sent them to school and women such as herself takes forward Princess’ signifying chain of knowing-doing nothing to being-having nothing. For Prudence, the difference was both verbal and adjectival, educated people were also characterised by who they were as well as what they could do: possessing the qualities of cleverness or grown up-ness,105 being homeowners or somebodies, who had something. They were different both in material terms, owning cars, or houses, but also in terms of the social status that these material goods conferred.

Like Thabisile’s others, these pluralised educated somebodies were constructed by Prudence as ‘many’, but were represented by a single example - ‘our Miss’, ‘our child’ - the VE of her literacy class. Prudence too constructed difference as pluralised and visible, but she complicated the use of a proximal example, as she drew attention to the experience of ‘our child’, ‘our Miss’, the personal pronouns emphasising that she referred to a woman who is both of her community but read as different through her educational opportunities and the resources which they were seen to lead to. As in the words above of Thabisile and Princess, emphatic markers such as ‘Ay!’, ‘Hhawu’ and ‘Hoh!’, and exhortations that these differences were visible – ‘just look!’ ‘you just see it’, ‘there they are!’ – also peppered Prudence’s speech. Such differences (re)produced affect in the remembering, a heightened story-telling mode, and rendered the symbolic value of being ‘uneducated’ a kind of performative, an embodied experience of signification in which “affect supplies much of the textures of these practices and renders them highly involving and highly invested” (Wetherell, 2013, p. 362). For Wetherell, as for Bourdieu, ‘investment’ “must be

104 Hoh, baningi nje! ngane nabo nje miss bethu nabo ukube babehlukupheka njengathi, kodwea umama wabo wabafundisa. Nje buka nje! bavijinto njena uMiss wethu, bafundile, bahlakaniphile, bakhile ekhuqa, banomuzi.
105 -hlakaniphile means both ‘clever’ (in terms of grades at school, for example) and ‘grown up’ in the sense of ‘being conscious’, or reaching the life-stage where you start to form memories. There is a linguistic sense in Zulu, therefore, in which ‘uneducated’ adults are child-like.
understood in the dual sense” of both economic and affective, psycho-social expressions of investment (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 79). Investments in being ‘educated’ carried this dual sense.

In other narratives, this ‘doing-knowing-having-being nothing’ chain was also attached to ‘saying nothing’. For Bancane, whose father forbid her to go to school, ‘being uneducated’ was characterised by silence and ‘staying quiet’:

At those times when they were talking about the things which they did at school we just stayed quiet, we used to just look at them.106 [...] We just stayed quiet, it was painful (-buhlunçu) in our hearts, because we wanted that thing, but we had that problem that we were not allowed.107 [...] We want everything but now we were embarrassed / ashamed (-phoqela), we never went-, we do not go-, we would just go to watch the schoolchildren playing football, but we ourselves were not educated.108

Bancane (aged 66), Entabeni Class, Interview 2, 21.01.2014

Bancane continued by contrasting this play of others at school with her own childhood routine of getting up at half past four, herding cattle and working in the fields until the afternoon, with a small break to drink tea. While Bancane did not construct her childhood as ‘doing nothing’, the play and talk of schoolchildren was nevertheless watched or looked at from a close distance, desired with embarrassment or shame, and with a silence of staying quiet that was ‘painful in our hearts’. While Bancane’s account resonates with Lesley Bartlett’s work in the Brazilian context, and speaks to her concern that the “phenomenon of literacy shame” be recognised (Bartlett, 2007a, p. 552), I think it also indicates ways in which shame is a form of “reverberation” of structural violence (Bourgois, 2002), in which pain and unfulfilled desires frame being ‘uneducated’ as a form of ‘social suffering’ through exclusion (Rylko-Bauer and Farmer, 2016).

Like the links across time which Princess made in her characterisation of a life of ‘just staying’ in both her childhood and her adult home, Bancane’s narrative of the ‘pain’ of uneducation also spanned life-stages. In a sequence of shifting verb tenses that is much

106 manje ngalesikhathi bexoxa ngezinto abazenzi eskoleni sesithuli thina sesibukela bona
107 Sasithula nje kubebuhlunçu ezinhлизweni, ngoba nathi lento sasithanda manje simaleyo nkinga yokuthi thina asivunyelwe
108 Konke siyakuthanda kodwa manje siphoqelekile ngeke siye noma siya, soya nje kobuka izingane zesikole sinodlalo thina asifundile
clearer in the original Zulu (‘ngeke siye, noma siya, soya nje’), the fact that she ‘never went’ to school was rendered into the present, ‘we do not go’ and then re-formulated as a remote future, ‘we would just go to watch...’. Through further shifting tenses of a verb which expresses desire (‘-thanda’), Bancane’s words ‘we want everything’ was true of both her past, childhood self, and the adult who was making meaning around her ‘uneducated’ present self through the telling of her life-history.

Bancane’s narration above of feelings of pain and exclusion as others talked about their education was echoed by Khanyisile, who had grown up on a farm during the apartheid years, where no school was available simply because the farmer who owned the farm ‘did not want’ it. Khanyisile narrated a time when her cousins who lived in the town and secretly came to visit (visits were forbidden by the farmer) would talk about school, ending her story:

We felt so bad because when they used to chat to us about education we ourselves did not know what ‘this [thing]’ was.\textsuperscript{109}

\textit{Khanyisile (aged 51), Ekhaya class, Interview 20.01.2014}

Education and its benefits (perceived or actual, symbolic or material) was thus heard and seen from a close distance, but was also ‘not known’. Khanyisile used a demonstrative pronoun to indicate a ‘something’ – leyo – this [thing], this ‘education’, but simultaneously emphasised that ‘we’ did ‘not know’ it. For her, it was this unknown that demarcated an imaginary not only of other, advantaged lives, but also an affective site of ‘painful’ feelings, of feeling ‘so bad’. This affect was transferred in a process of collective recognition, in which “affect and discourse twine together” (Wetherell, 2013, p. 363) to co-construct meaning around being ‘uneducated’: Phili and I marked our listening with exclamations of ‘ay!’ and ‘so bad!’, which we voiced as audience to Khanyisile’s early life story as she narrated how, instead of being sent to school as her cousins were, she was ‘taken’\textsuperscript{110} without her own or her parents’ consent at aged 15 to work seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the farmer’s household, earning R2 a month.

A number of central meanings thus cohered to the signifier ‘uneducated’ in these women’s accounts. One set of meanings was grounded in time, and the ways in which disadvantage

\textsuperscript{109} kwakusiphatha kabi ngoba babexoxa ngemfundo thina singazi yini leyo
\textsuperscript{110} uma usuno 15 akuthathe ke umlungu athi woza uzosebenza
in childhood was on a continuum with the disadvantage of adult lives. A second set cohered around the embodied and visible nature of [educated] difference, and ways in which ‘educated’ bodies were seen to possess material goods and status as well as movement and activity, while ‘uneducated’ bodies were constructed with ‘badness’ and with stasis through the signifying chains attached to ‘just staying’. As Lauren Classen found in her discursive analysis of the idioms of rural youth in Malawi, this idiom of ‘just staying’ was framed as both literal and metaphorical im/mobility, in which structural barriers were overlooked (Classen, 2013).

In reflecting on the distinction between ‘educated’ and ‘uneducated’ people, only Prudence, in the accounts which I have chosen to present so far, crossed these invisible lines of comparison, recognising that ‘they also had some difficulties like us’, an affiliation between ‘them’ and ‘us’ that, however, she instantly withdrew from through a re-focalisation on differences through/in ‘education’: ‘but their mothers sent them to school’ (my emphasis). In addition to the set of imaginaries that were tied to the visible and material experiences of others in the community, therefore, there were also indications that at times focalisations on ‘uneducation’ as the pre-eminent marker of inequality seemed to work as an over-invested signifier which potentially closed down recognition of other forms of structural and social constraints.

‘I dream at night’: symbolic investments & equivalence in ‘being educated’

The distinction between ‘educated’ and ‘uneducated’ lives within communities and the ways in which the signifier ‘educated’ was invested with a range of positive attributes was also explicit when learners reflected on alternative shapes to their own life-histories. In this part of the chapter, I will particularly consider the counter-factual and contradictory hopes and dreams expressed by two women, Zandile and Bongikile, for whom being ‘educated’ symbolised resolution to ways in which their lives had been ‘difficult’ (-nzima) or ‘troubled’ (-hlupheka). Both Zandile (aged 47) and Bongikile (aged 46) had been to school during the apartheid years, the education of ‘the past’ rather than ‘of now’. The two women’s trajectories to dropping out of school were different, although both were shaped by the gender-poverty intersect: Bongikile had dropped out when her mother became ill and there was no longer money to support her and her siblings; Zandile had dropped out after two successive early pregnancies, when her father refused to allow her to return to
school after her second child was born, a common experience in the community in which one child might be “forgiven” but more than one was considered impossible to facilitate a return to school (Zandile (aged 47), Endleleni class, Interview 06.10.2013). Both women now had more than four children, as well as grand-children whom they were caring for.

For both Zandile and Bongikile, being ‘uneducated’ was not a question of missing out on primary school or literacy skills – they both self-defined as being able to read and write before the class began, and both had attended at least some schooling. Nevertheless, being ‘uneducated’ seemed to work as a kind of available identity positioning, and perhaps a (socially acceptable?) way to explain the difficulties of their context, and to navigate the embodied stigma and emotions that has been shown to adhere to the poverty-shame nexus (Jo, 2013, Walker et al., 2013). Like others, their adoption of ‘uneducated’ as an identity was always relational, with powerful comparisons with either children of ‘now’ or with other adults in their community, that often bridged their past and present experience.

While Bongikile could not recall how many years of primary school she had attended, she vividly narrated the shame and visibility of poverty that coloured her attendance and experience of schooling:

> Because [my mother] didn’t work, she would make clothes for us on the machine; we didn’t wear [official] uniforms, but ones that she sewed at home for us. When we went to school we went by foot, we went by foot, but we didn’t have shoes, and we didn’t even have money for food.111 […]
> [Mum] would say, “go and dig for sweet potatoes, and cook and make the fire for the beans, collect firewood, get water from the river…”. It was in this way I went to ‘be educated’.112
> It was difficult (-nzima), I see that there are children of people who were a little better than me.113

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111 ngoba wayengasebenzi athunge izingubo ngomshini sigqoka izingubo zomshini nje amapheti nama uniform esithungela emshini. Mesiya eskoleni sihamba ngezinyawo, samba ngezinyawo, singafake zicathulo, imali yokudla singabi nayo eskoleni.
112 athi hamba uyomba umbatatata upheke ubasele bhontshisi utheza izinkuni uyokha amanzi emfuleni. kwafika sengiyofunda emingeni.
113 Kwakunzima. Ngibona nanezingane zabantu ezingcogwana kunami. Hlakumeza nje leyondlela leyo yakini ukuthi ekhaya mina kunjena kukonke lokho
The teachers were sympathetic, sometimes they used to give me some bread so that I could eat; at school they would call me over to the side and I would get something to eat.\textsuperscript{114}

\textit{Bongikile (aged 46), Endleleni Class, Interview 1, 10.10.2013}

For Bongikile, an imagined life in which she was ‘educated’ represented the pathway to self-reliance, action or agency, ‘doing-for-self’ rather than ‘doing nothing’, a belief that I was perhaps complicit in (re)producing through a focus on education in response to narrations of the kinds of hardships that Bongikile told:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Charley: How do you think your life would have been if you were educated?}

\textit{Bongikile: It would have been much better; I would not have been troubled (-hlupheka), because I would have everything which I needed, and I would do things for myself.}\textsuperscript{115}
\end{quote}

\textit{Bongikile (aged 46), Endleleni Class, Interview 1, 10.10.2013}

This imagined self-reliance of an educated life was perhaps particularly suggestive for Bongikile because as an adult she lacked social networks upon which she could rely, evoking contrasts with the ‘sympathetic’ teachers who would offer her bread at school. Bongikile was now the head of the household in the home which had belonged to her mother while she was alive; because she lived in the family home she was expected to often host and care for wide networks of family, without reciprocal support, the ‘dark side’ of social capital (di Falco and Bulte, 2011) which I discussed above in chapter five (p. 101). The ten members of her household included the adult sons of her four late brothers, who were unmarried and unemployed, sitting on the step outside the house, and about whom Bongikile at times whispered her criticisms. Throughout her interview, Bongikile returned to the ‘difficulties’ (-\textit{nzima}) of asking family members for help:

\begin{quote}
I ask my child who is working. There is one child of mine who is working but even she says she can’t ever help. Weeee! You just wait until you have your own children and are looking after other children too! It’s her that’s working!\textsuperscript{116}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{114} bona babenozwelo othisha babengipha kwenyile inkathi noma isinkwa ngidla eskoleni bangibizele e’side’ini, ngithole ukuthi ngidle okathile kokudla.

\textsuperscript{115} ngcono kakhalulu ngabe anghlupheki ngoba ngabe yonke into ezidingayo ngabe ngiyazenzela

\textsuperscript{116} Weee ngize njecele kuntwana wami osebenzayo khona umntwana osebenzayo kodwa naye umane athi ngeke wema usunezingane zakho nezinye izingane! Naye uyasebenza!
The children of my brothers are also fed by me, just on that R600 a month I buy groceries, I dish up for all these boys there, I lack sugar, I lack whatever. Their parents are not alive, there is nobody I could ask something from, when I ask my sisters it’s hard to ask them for something because they have their own children.117

The problem is those boys. They don’t work, and I can’t live on that money of the child support grant and of [my job] – I have my own children! The problem is with these very people there (gestures outside).118 [...] I heard that one has never even been to school, he was said just to have run off.119

Charley: If you say they should go to try to get work, what do they say?
Bongikile: Weh! A huge noise erupts. They say I chase them away when I run out of food, do you see? I always carry that blame.120

Bongikile (aged 46), Endleleni Class, Interview 1, 10.10.2013

‘Education’ thus occupied different positions in narratives such as Bongikile’s. It was the source of hope, the reason she was striving each day for her children: “in the morning I wake up so that I can make the porridge so that they can eat and go to school” (Bongikile (aged 46), Endleleni Class, Interview 1, 10.10.2013). At the same time, however, the stasis of the ‘uneducated’ life was gendered, and contrasted with the mobility and irresponsibility of men who were constructed as ‘running off’ or ‘escaping’, as the references Bongikile made to her nephews makes clear. Caring for children was a gendered emotional and financial responsibility, which normatively fell to Bongikile and Bongikile alone: ‘I always carry that blame’. Bongikile’s narrative placed her own educational disadvantage in a wider nexus of intersectional and inter-generational disadvantage shaped by poverty and inequitable gender norms. These multiple and intersecting forms of marginalisation were only partially alleviated by her thin familial social networks, by the social protection mechanisms of the Child Support Grant or by her employment.

For Bongikile, education represented an (the only?) answer to these ‘troubles’, a ‘better life’ of ’doing-for-self’, of ‘everything that I needed’. Her memories of school, however, were

117 Nabantuwa bamfowethu bodliwa imina kwona kulo 600R igrocery, ngiphakele nalabafana laba ngiswele shukela ngiswele kwani kwani. Abazali abekho akekho futhi engizocela kuwenza kodadewethu kunzima ukugcina nabo banezingane zabo
118 Inkinga ilabafana. Abanzebenzi nqyingakwazi mina nezingane zami ukuthi ngiphile ngalemali yeqolo nozibambele manje inkinga nampa abantu
119 lomunye mengizwa akaze aye nhlobo eskoleni kathiwa weqa
120 We kusuka omkhulu umshindo bathi ngiyabaxosha nqicishana nokudla ugbona ngithwele lonke icala
drawn in simultaneous contradictory experiences of both pain and shame or ‘embarrassment’ of going to school without uniform or shoes, and of school as a site of ‘sympathy’, perhaps safety or care, where she was called aside and given food by teachers who recognised that she had not had enough to eat. While Bongikile remained invested in the value and benefits of education as an adult, her own experiences of the shame of attending school without shoes were echoed in regret that her son too would write his Matric exams not in official black shoes, but trainers, because that was all she could afford. Education in her account worked as a complex signifier: a symbolic (re)presentation of both shame and hope, a way of resolving but also (re)presenting poverty and the intersecting structural constraints which had shaped her life-history.

Material troubles and needs, as well as the resonances of shame and stigma that adhere to them, were also the focus of Zandile’s constructions of education, in hopes expressed as a ‘dream’ about a better home, in ‘ifs’ and ‘maybes’ attached the ‘rightness’ of ‘being educated’:

I dream at night, I say that if I would have been educated, I would not live in a hut like this. Maybe I would be ‘right’, with a house not like this, because when my father was already passed away there were some winds which destroyed it. If I would have been educated I would work and I would be able to repair that house which fell down, and this one which I live in would not be like this, I would have changed it. Because I see the kind of work young children who are educated do, just educated now, not like we were educated in the past.  

Zandile (aged 47), Endleleni class, Interview 06.10.2013

In Zandile’s ‘dream’ too, the relationship between a home ‘not like this’ and the position of ‘education’ was uneasy, recognised in parallel with hints of other structural and social or material constraints, such as the quality of education that Zandile herself had received, the insecurity of the physical environment in which she lived in, the death of her father, or the ‘kind of work’ that was available to her. While Zandile acknowledged this wider context

\[\text{121} \text{ngize ngiphuphe nasebusuku, ngithi kube ngifundile ngabe angihlali endlini enjena. Ngabe ngi-right nasekhaya akuye kunjeyaya na, ngoba ukushona kwababa kwafika iziphepho zadiliza ukube ngifundile ngiyasebenza lezindlu eziwile ngabe ngiyazi vusa nelena engihlala kuyona ngabe ayinjena ngabe ngiyashitshi. Ngoba ngike ngibone izigane ezincane ezifundile zasebenza zibanjani, ezifunde manje avuthina safunda kuqala nje.}\]
of poverty and disadvantage, it was the twice repeated sloganic statements that “if I would have been educated, I would...” that framed her narrative.

Zandile’s endorsements of the value of education also seemed to hinge on counter-factual or fractured positions. The repeated conditional ‘if I would have been educated’ confronted Zandile’s description, earlier in the interview, of her attendance of the full cycle of primary and the majority of secondary school – under many criteria Zandile would indeed be considered ‘educated’. Her comparisons across time and generations between how she and her generation ‘were educated in the past’ and ‘young children’ who are ‘educated now’, however, complicated Zandile’s construction of ‘being educated’ with questions of quality, time and context, and worked to open space for her to simultaneously hold a position of both ‘educated’ and not ‘educated’. Her identification with the signifier was a symbolic one, a relational, performative utterance that varied by situation and was shaped by social interactions and contextual dynamics.

These resonances across ages and educational trajectories, particularly around the signifier ‘uneducated’, worked both to reframe how adult learners understood their own educational exclusion, but also framed projected desires for their children. This is highlighted I think most usefully by a comparison of the way that the oldest and the youngest women in the study (re)presented their hope for lives of difference for their children, with resonant equivalences across an age gap of more than seventy years:

I was not educated; I could not even write my name. I suffered (-hlupheka) badly, very badly at the house of the European. It is my children that are educated in those things. My children should be educated, just so they are not like (-fana) me and you. When they are sitting together, they say, ‘Ma, you (all) grew up badly’.122

Josefina (aged 95), Ekhaya Class, Interview 1, 21.11.2013

I hope that-, because when I did something, I was hoping that he would not resemble (-fana) me. I made the example of someone else. [...]
I hope that he can just study, he could finish, perhaps it’s him that could complete that, could build the house, it will be him that will move forward (-qhubeka). I hope that he will get something well-paid.\textsuperscript{123}

\textit{Thandeka (aged 24), Entabeni Class, Interview 1, 21.10.2013}

Thandeka’s hopes here echo those of Princess, who in describing her own education said that she had been ‘hoping for everything’. Like Princess’ hopes, they also suggest the ways in which hope is constrained by material context. For both Thandeka and Josefina in these brief descriptions, the outcomes of education and their hopes for their children were coloured by their own understandings of what they lacked – a completed Matric, a home and a well-paid job for Thandeka, or of being able to write her own name for Josefina. Despite the contextual differences and generational gaps both women were concerned about the idea of their children ‘resembling’, ‘being alike’ or the ‘same’ (-\textit{fana}) to them, a comparison that Josefina expanded by drawing in what she knew (or imagined) of Phili’s history: ‘my children should be educated, just so they are not like me and you’. Both women invested hope in their children’s futures, and contrasted this hope with their own life-histories, in Josefina’s case expanded and qualified by the recognition of her children (and thus a recognition of self in the (re)telling) that her generation ‘grew up badly’, a collective, relational recognition situated in contexts of ‘sitting together’. While Josefina acknowledged the contextual factors of growing up in colonial South Africa and working in the apartheid era, and signalled race through her references to her ‘European’ boss and her life ‘growing up’ as a domestic worker on a farm, it was nevertheless in education and not in the transition to democracy that ‘difference’ between her life and the lives of younger generations in her family was located.

What is notable is thus not the material ways in which ‘education’ was/is the ‘same’ for these women, but the ways in which it might represent ‘sameness’. Representations of selves as ‘uneducated’ resonated with each other powerfully to construct ‘education’ as a pre-eminent marker of a range of inequalities, a lack of access to ‘better’ lives or ways in which others were seen to become a ‘little better’. Against suffering (-\textit{hlupheka}) and difficulty (-\textit{nzima}), education represented moving forward (-\textit{qhubeka}) and hope of being ‘right’. Dreams of being or becoming ‘educated’ offered ways to navigate the embodied

\textsuperscript{123} Ngifisa, ngoba ngike uma ngiyenzile into angifisi ifane nami, ngoba ngibonile noma ngaboneli komunye umuntu nento nami ngifise lokhu engikutholayo ngiyafisa nje ukuthi ifunde iqede mhlawumpe iijona eyogcina yakhile nasekhaya kube iyona eqhubekayo, ngifisa nje ibe into esile
stigma of poverty, and gave a lexicon to articulate the injustice and suffering of structural violence that was otherwise only elliptically eluded to, in times of ‘growing up badly’.

‘Treated like slaves’: recognition, redress and ‘starting again’

A smaller set of accounts made meanings around the signifier ‘uneducated’ through more explicit intersections with raced inequality and the structural and physical violence associated with the apartheid era, that Josefina above only obliquely referred to. For Virginia from the Entabeni class, the value of the Kha ri Gude literacy class was specifically tied to the ways in which it addressed those who had been mistreated or exploited, ‘like slaves’, a racialised exploitation which Virginia associated with a lack of knowledge:

The people who we study with, we treat them like slaves, my Lord, because now they really know nothing at all, shame.124 […] I would never say that we should not move forward (-qhubeke) because also-, because shame-, these others are just still lacking, my Lord, and now I would never say that I should pass ahead of them.125

Virginia (aged 37), Entabeni Class, Interview 2, 21.01.2014

As with the accounts of Princess and Thandeka discussed above, Virginia associated ‘know[ing]’ and ‘studying[ing]’ with momentum or mobility, ‘moving forward’ or even ‘passing ahead’. In her speech here and elsewhere, however, Virginia did not position herself as ‘uneducated’ but rather her classmates to be so, her classmates whom ‘we’ treat ‘like slaves’, a concern that also held affect, as her language was punctuated by ‘shame’ and ‘my Lord’. Virginia narrated unease about the ways in which her educated position offered her the opportunity to ‘pass ahead’, while others were ‘just still lacking’. Her words suggested a kind of solidarity: in rejecting an equivalence of her ‘educated’ self as better she was concerned with a broader picture of justice.

This was echoed in the words of Bongikile, who also acknowledged her own distance from a generation concerned to ‘start again from the beginning’:

124 Abantu esifunda nabo sigabaqilaza nkosi yami. Ngoba manje abazi lutho shame.
125 Ngeke njishe ukuthi asiqhubekele nphambi ngoba futhi ngoba shame abanye babo basasele nkosi yami manje ngeke njize ngidlale ngabo
In the past they were learning but they did not find work, and I used to see that they didn’t find any, do you see? Now even these ones who are educated in the past want to start again from the beginning so that they might study. They hope for that now.126

Bongikile (aged 46), Endleleni Class, Interview 1, 10.10.2013

Virginia and Bongikile thus both recognised themselves to be ‘uneducated’ in some senses, but the proximal comparisons with those ‘educated in the past’ highlighted the relativity of this position, shaped by both spatial and temporal juxtapositions with older and younger generations. Their age in the mid-40s placed them in a middle space, between the lived realities of those who had grown up in the pre-apartheid era, such as Smangele or Josefina, and the generation after them, such as Thandeka, Virginia’s niece.

These spatial and temporal juxtapositions worked both ways, as the words of Smangele below make clear, drawing euphemistic differences between ‘now’ and ‘times before’:

Charley: Do you think, Ma, that education is important?
Smangele: Education is important, my child, because when you are educated you can get work with money, you can get everything which you need, in your life, and for your children. You don’t get this slave treatment, like we were treated like slaves, like we were in the times before. For our children, if I could return back and just start with ‘a’, because education is good now, do you see? For our children that we have who will support us, they will get good work, they should finish school, they should study so that they can get work, they will be able to support us while we are here.127

Phili (in English to Charley): Yah (smiling). I love the words for her. Yah. She’s good. All the time she's thinking positive things.

Smangele (aged 76-82), Ehholo Class, Interview 1, 12.11.2013

127 Imfundo iafulekile mntanami, ngoba uma ufundile uyakwazi ukuthola umsebenzi onemali, ukwazi ukuthola zonke izinto ozidingayo, emphefumuleleni wakho, nase mzimbeni wakho. Ungakwazi lokhu gqilazeka esastikuqilaze-ka thina, esikhathini esiphambili. Izingane nje, ukube ngiyakwazi ukubugela emumva ngiyiqalala nje kwa ‘a’, ngoba imfundo isikahle manje uyabona izingane manje izino esezosiphatha manje zizothola imisebenzi emihle ziqede esikoleni zifunde zithole imisebenzi, zikwazi ukathi zisodle uma sisekhona.
Smangele’s words signalled a hope located in future generations that was endorsed by Phili as ‘thinking positive things’, a kind of hope that echoes the words of Thandeka and Josefin above for the younger generations in their family. For Smangele, like for Josefin, seeing children being and becoming educated impacted her own desires, manifest in the interruption of her hopes for future generations (for our children-), with an expression of reflection on her own life (‘if I could return back...’).

Smangele’s aspirations were thus both retrospective and prospective, she situated her hopes to ‘start with ‘a’, to ‘start again from the beginning’ in both education but also in the redress of racialised structural inequality. When I asked Smangele to explain what she meant by ‘slave treatment’, she expanded with a description of the multi-dimensional structural violence and ‘troubles’ (hlupheka) of apartheid. Unlike the other uses of ‘resemblance’ and ‘similarity’ in this chapter, Smangele’s use of the verb ‘-fana’ was explicitly racialised, a question of racialised inequality and the relationship between race and resources, race and ‘troubles’:

I just can say that those times were apartheid, because it was really discrimination. It was taken that since we were black people we were not the same (-fana), we should not get proper money - oh no! no! – just so that we could eat. And the food that was eaten by them seemed nice. It was [seen as] necessary (-fanele) that we experienced these troubles (hlupheka) very much, we were treated like slaves.128

Smangele (aged 76-82), Ehholo Class, Interview 1, 12.11.2013

Smangele continued by giving many details of the ways in which her employers did not allow her to share the food which they themselves ate, nor to touch or wash their dishes. Food was a fraught site of overt power and the expression of a racist hierarchy in her narrative, as explored in other analysis of racism and domestic work (Archer, 2011). So too was pay; for Smangele, not receiving ‘proper money’ meant at times not being paid at all:

It was hard, my child, it was very hard. But I thank God that now those times have passed. You were beaten whenever you wanted to be paid your money, they poured punches on you, you didn’t get that money.\textsuperscript{129}

\textit{Smangele (aged 76-82), Ehholo Class, Interview 1, 12.11.2013}

What was striking, however, was that Smangele ended her description of her life at work in the apartheid era by returning to the value of education, in her account of her motivation to join the \textit{Kha ri Gude} class, and the way in which being ‘uneducated’, being poor, and being subject to racialised inequality carried a symbolism and a weight associated with emotional pain:

The thing that motivated me was that I was thinking that if you are educated you are able to get a good job, which gives you good money. You are not troubled (-hlupheka), not getting cents, because here it is, this thing that you are not educated. It is that which I hold with difficulty in my heart.\textsuperscript{130}

\textit{Smangele (aged 76-82), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 12.11.2013}

In describing her motivation to join, Smangele’s language drew on signifying chains that associated being educated with a ‘good job…good money’, which will be the focus of the next chapter. But I think that Smangele’s investment in education and her pleasure in being motivated to ‘return’ to ‘school’ at an age when she was ‘already old’ and time ‘already short’ make clear that Smangele’s pleasure in the return operated in the symbolic space more than in the material. The racialised exploitation, physical violence, and 15c a day that Smangele received for her domestic work applied to times that she herself thanked God were passed. I do not think that Smangele joined \textit{Kha ri Gude} in order to get work (as her words at first seemed to imply), but rather to mediate the weight of the emotional burden: ‘that which I hold with difficulty in my heart’. Counter-balancing the presence of a lack, that: ‘here it is, this thing that you are not educated’ was the presence of opportunity, and of hope: ‘here it is, that I would get this chance.’ At an age of over seventy-five, and in receipt of her pension, her investment in the return to education was

\textsuperscript{129} Kwakunzima mntanami, kwakunzima kakhulu. Kodwa ngiyabonga unkulunkulu kwaze kwafika lesikakhathi nokushawa. Wawushawa uma engafuni ukukakhokhela imali yakho amane akuthele isihakakela ungapitholi kwaleyo mali.

\textsuperscript{130} Into eyayingiqhuzelisa ukuthi ngangike ngicabange, uma ufundile uyu kwazi ukuthola umsebenzi okahle ozokunikika imali ekahle, unahlupheki ukuthola amacent ngoba nakhu awufundile ileyonyo eyayingiphethe kabi emogeni wami.
not to address a redistributive question of justice through access to decent, well-paid work, but to the possibility of it, a question of recognition or redress of the pain that she felt.

In their discussion of the case for the provision of adult literacy in the early 1990s in South Africa, Mastin Prinsloo and Mignonne Breier state that “the case for adult literacy provision was made largely in symbolic terms: literacy, or rather its lack, was presented as emblematic of the deprivations produced under apartheid rule...and as symbolic capital whose state-driven redistribution would constitute redress of the wrongs of the past” (1996, p. 11). I think that Smangele’s story speaks to this symbolic construct of educational provision as redress, but with a much broader scope than simply ‘wrongs of the past’ associated with education alone. Smangele’s investment in education was one that mediated the racialised inequality and forms of racialised structural and physical violence, as well as their material effects. Smangele valued education not only for alleviation of the symbolic process of exclusion and the symbolic violence of being uneducated, but for the violence and ‘troubles’ of her lasting memories of apartheid era discrimination.

‘He went out with me’: gendering discursive resistance

While for some women identification with being ‘uneducated’ was able to offer hope and a way to navigate intersecting forms of disadvantage, others negotiated the status of their ‘uneducated’ identities very differently. This was particularly clear in the accounts of Intombi and Nonthombi, who mobilised discursive resistances and alternative forms of status against the power of the discourse which associated ‘being uneducated’ with ‘lacking’ or ‘badness’, and whose talk worked to resist the notion of a presence or visibility adhering to being uneducated.

Intombi: To school? No! I never went! But you would never say if you met me in ‘Town places’ that this person is not educated.132

Intombi (aged 40), Ekhaya class, Interview 21.11.2013

In Intombi’s account, there were thus moments in which her narrative resisted dominant constructions of ‘being uneducated’ as a script that could be ‘read’, that a lack of schooling

131 These two women’s names are similar because they both derive from the isiZulu ‘(i)ntombi’, meaning ‘girl’.
might be visible written onto bodies. These resistances were socially located, to places such as out and about in ‘Town places’, spaces which were not defined by literacy and literate interactions. Intombi drew in Phili and me, ‘you would never say, if you met me’, as educated interlocutors, suggesting that the interview and class spaces were only one set of potential interactions, reclaiming a kind of power and status for herself that rejected a visibility to her ‘uneducated’ identity.

For Intombi, this rejection of the shame associated with being ‘uneducated’ as an adult also applied retrospectively to her childhood self, in which she repeated twice that she ‘never had a problem’ with not being sent to school. To resist the power of the discourse that equated ‘educated’ with good, Intombi mobilised a gendered narrative that schooling was for ‘menfolk’, shored up by references that situated gender within a socio-cultural customary law or norm (inkolelelo) that was expressed without agent, generalised in the passive voice (‘it was said’):

I never had a problem with it, and also there was that law that really because all those menfolk-, it was said that it was necessary for them to go to school. No...I just never had a problem with it.\textsuperscript{133}

\textit{Intombi (aged 40), Ekhaya class, Interview 21.11.2013}

These resistances to ‘being uneducated’ as ‘bad’ or ‘painful’, however, were imperfect and incomplete, suggesting the fragility of the challenges to the hegemonic discourse, or perhaps contradictions in different identity positionings that were available in different times or spaces. When asked about her husband’s education, for example, Intombi narrated a silence that extended into the private space and intimate interactions:

My husband went to school, I don’t know what stage he finished at because he never talked about this studying thing. Perhaps I-, I would imagine that-, perhaps it would be that I would feel badly when he said something about him going to school, because I never went.\textsuperscript{134}

\textit{Intombi (aged 40), Ekhaya class, Interview 21.11.2014}

\textsuperscript{133} Ayi ngangingabinandaba futhi kwakuna lenkolelo yokuthi vele ngoba bona babantu besilisa ibona ekuflanele baye eskoleni ayi ngangingabinandaba nje.

\textsuperscript{134} umkhwenyana wami yena waya eskoleni angimazi ukuthi yena wagcina kabana, naye akakamukamu ukukhuluma ngaleyonto ukufunda. Mhlawumpe ngike ngicababange ukuthi mhlawumpe kuzongiphatha kabi uma ngabe mezisho yena ukuthi waya eskoleni kanti mina angiyanga
Intombi nevertheless seemed to hold this ‘feeling badly’ at a distance from herself, ‘imagining’ and suggesting only partially (‘perhaps’) that an association of ‘being uneducated’ with feelings of pain or shame was only one interpretation of her husband’s silence around his own educational level or experience.

When it came to reflecting on her motivations to join *Kha ri Gude*, however, and whether Intombi had ever thought of returning to education before, the imagined distance between ‘educated people’ and her own position widened:

*Charley: Did you ever think of going to education before, before you joined KRG?*

*Intombi: No! I never used to be able to come, it’s just like, ‘here are educated people,’ I didn’t -, because I hadn’t studied-, Ay! I couldn’t-. Just that.*

*Intombi (aged 40), Ekhaya class, Interview 21.11.2013*

Intombi’s exclamations of ‘no!’ and ‘ay!’, as well as her use of a string of negated verbs which are all disrupted, which I have translated to ‘didn’t-, hadn’t-, couldn’t-’, thus highlight ways in which both ‘educated people’, and the educated spaces which they populated and operated within, could (re)present anxiety and feelings of disempowerment. These ellipses in Intombi’s speech suggest that such feelings were, to an extent, inexpressible and untellable, attached to feelings of voicelessness, echoing the silence around her husband’s education level. Imagined re-entry into education was thus a particularly fraught moment, even when other spaces such as Town offered ways to read ‘being uneducated’ as something other than a visible script. Interactions with ‘educated people’ could be de-problematised in some contexts, but remain forceful in others.

Public interactions in places in the nearby town were thus one set of imagined interactions which potentially did not centre around ‘being uneducated’ as a visible script. In other accounts, such as Nonthombi’s below, the notion that ‘being uneducated’ was a potentially neutral identity position drew both on intimate relationships and the script of being a church-goer to offer alternative interpretations of status and ‘niceness’, and ‘not lacking anything’:

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135 *Hhayi! ngangingakaze ngizwe nokuthi khona abantu abafundayo nganga- ukuthi ngoba angifundanga- Ay!*  
*Ngangazi ukuthi kwaphela*
Phili: It didn’t produce any problems that this one here is a teacher, but he has married someone who never even stepped into school?¹³⁶

Nonthombi: No, there weren’t any. During that time, it was just nice, because I didn’t lack anything because I just looked after myself. You can see me, I am clean, I was taught at home to wash. It didn’t cause me any problems that my husband is educated because when he used to go out, wearing his black jerseys, he used to go with me.¹³⁷

Phili: He didn’t leave you behind?

Nonthombi: He didn’t leave me behind. He went out with me. I’m not educated, but-, but, if you look at me, you would see, you would say, ‘that Mama is educated’.¹³⁸

Nonthombi (aged 57), Ekhaya class, Interview 1, 19.11.2013

In this extract, Phili (re)presents one interpretation of Nonthombi’s intimate relationship, that her marriage to a teacher as a woman who had ‘never even stepped into school’, should ‘produce problems’, that she should be ‘left behind’ at home when her husband might go out. Like Intombi, Nonthombi drew us in as educated interlocutors, ‘if you look at me, you would see, you would say, that Mama is educated’ to resist the implication behind Phili’s words that Nonthombi’s uneducated status should bring shame. In the car after an interview the following day, Phili reflected that Nonthombi was a ‘good woman’ and her husband a ‘good man’: for Nonthombi, her (gendered) position as a ‘Mama’ and wife offered one dimension of an alternative form of status that counterbalanced ‘being uneducated’, and that was reinforced by her relationship with her educated husband (fieldnotes, 20th November 2013). Like other studies in other contexts that highlight how adult learners reject discourses that equate being ‘uneducated’ as somehow ‘unclean’ (Chopra, 2004), and that highlight how other forms of status such as religious identities are mobilised in interactions across asymmetrical hierarchies (Bartlett, 2007b), Nonthombi’s account was shored up by the informal learning of what she was ‘taught at home’, a visible ‘cleanliness’ that rejected a visibility of an inscribed ‘uneducated’ status.

¹³⁶ akubanganankinga ukuthi nangu uthisha kodwa useshada umuntu ongazange alubeke eskoleni?
¹³⁷ Hhayi, kwakungekho ngalesikhathi kwakubamnandi nje ngoba ngangigasweli lutho njengoba ngizithanda nje uyangibona nje ngihlanzkile ngafundiswa ekhaya nokuwasha angibanga nje nenkinga ukuthi umyeni wami ufundi ngoba kwakuthi mekuhanjwa nje kuyogqokwa amajazi amnyama wayehamba nami.
¹³⁸ Wayengangishiyi wayehamba nami ngisingafundi kodwa kodwa wawu uma ungibheka ubone engathi ufundile loMama
In Nonthombi’s account, her gendered identity was also troubling and troubled, however, in the ways in which she positioned marriage in her life-history. For Nonthombi’s father, school was something “for boys”, while “the work of girls is to get married”.\textsuperscript{139} Educating girls was a “waste of money” because they would leave the family at time of marriage.\textsuperscript{140} Nonthombi had grown up on a farm (like other learners in the Ekhaya class such as Khanyisile and Josefina) and begun to work at the age of 9 until the age of 19 when she got married and moved to Endaweni. Her father had collected her wages, and the money for this work had never been passed on to her. Marriage offered a way to a form of independence, a departure from the family home, and a source of alternative pathways to status, particularly through children. Nonthombi contrasted the ease of getting married in the past, to times now when ‘education’ and having work (‘carrying something in your hands’) had become part of lobola (bride-price) negotiations:

In those times, it was just a thing for many people, it was easy to get married, you were quick to have a child and the husbands didn’t look at whether you were educated, or what you carried in your hands, they knew that just because you got married you would have children here in your home and move forward (-qhubeka) with life on that path.\textsuperscript{141}

\textit{Nonthombi (aged 57), Ekhaya class, Interview 1, 19.11.2013}

Nonthombi’s claim to ‘to move forward’ (-qhubeka) through marriage and children thus echoes ways in which education was a source of moving forward in the accounts of recruitment that I discussed in the previous chapter (pp. 143-145), and draws a parallel between the different forms of status and pathways offered by education and/or marriage, and gendered status as a ‘Mama’, with children ‘here in your home’. Nonthombi presented herself as someone negotiating within patriarchal structures (Nnaemeka, 2004), ‘looking after herself’ and claiming agency and self-reliance, ‘not lacking anything’ despite not going to school.

\textsuperscript{139} Bayafunda abafana athi intombazane noma ingaya kofunda ngeke isebenzele mina izosebenzela lapho iyongana khona bazi ukuthi umsebenzi wentombazane ukuthi iyongana
\textsuperscript{140} wena uyogana ngeke bamoshe izimali zabo lana
\textsuperscript{141} ngaleso sikhathi kwakwi yinto eningingi kwalula ukungana ukuthi usheshe ungane abamkhwenyana babengabhekile ukuthi ufundile unani esandleni babazi ukuthi nje ngoba uguana uyoathola izingane lapha emzini wakho kuqhubeka impilo ngaleqondlela
This resistance was (re)troubled, however, in her final narration of her decision to join the literacy classes, when I asked her why she had chosen to participate in the campaign:

I saw that when I was in church, you can see that I’m proud of myself, I’m trustworthy, I put on my church socks. I know that in my bag there is the Bible, but I would not be able to open it and read for myself, I saw that this was just bad.\textsuperscript{142}

_Nonthombi (aged 57), Ekhaya class, Interview 1, 19.11.2013_

The literal and figurative weight of the unopened and unread Bible in the bag thus unsettled Nonthombi’s account of ‘being uneducated’ as a script that did not do work. She was ‘proud’ of herself and ‘trustworthy’, wearing ‘church socks’ that established her as a woman of respect, in ways that mirrored her husband leaving for Town in his ‘black jerseys’. But the ‘badness’ of her awareness of the Bible in her bag, and the lack of capacity to ‘read-for-self’ left an unresolved dynamic to her lack of literacy skills, that co-existed with her construction of herself as ‘not lacking anything’.

Both Intombi and Nonthombi thus (re)presented uneasy readings of an uneducated but not necessarily inferior identity positioning. Interactions in places such as ‘town’ and ‘church’, as well as those within intimate relationships ‘here in your home’, offered alternative ‘pathways’ to ‘continue life’ of value, in which ‘uneducated’ statuses were not always visible or revealed, and women were able to (re)present themselves as trustworthy and sources of pride and love. The symbolic force of the Bible in the bag, however, in the weight of an unread and unreadable object maintained unresolved ways in which such interactions were in fact ‘easy’, and to what extent the shame of the symbolism of being ‘uneducated’ could be resisted.

**Distinction, equivalence, disadvantage? being ‘uneducated’**

The analysis in this chapter has thus revealed a number of dimensions of the ‘uneducated’ status that are useful for understanding why being and becoming an ‘adult-learner’ might be a site and source of tension. The first is around ways in which past experiences have continuity in understanding the present, and shaping hopes in looking forward to the future: constructs of being and becoming ‘educated’ are shaped relationally, over time, and

\textsuperscript{142} Ngabona nje uma sesisesotweni uyabona nje ngiyazithanda nje ngithembekile mese ngifaka iso isokisi esontweni angihi esikhwameni likhona ibhayibheli ngingabe ngisakwazi ukulivula ngizifundele ngibone nje kabakumbi
within broader dynamic processes of intersecting structural inequalities that in turn shape both retrospective and prospective inter-generational aspirations. In navigating these intersections, different discursive positionings were mobilised differently in negotiating meanings made around being ‘uneducated’, however. Being ‘uneducated’ was constructed by some as a form of shame, echoing other forms of material and psychosocially framed poverty, including through a lens that signalled the embodiment and emotions associated with the poverty-shame nexus (Jo, 2013, Walker et al., 2013), and through a structural violence lens that made clear the feelings of ‘pain’ and ‘badness’ that adhered to this nexus (Rylko-Bauer and Farmer, 2016). For others, however, the shame and pain of being ‘uneducated’ offered a lexicon through which to represent hope, as the second and third part of this chapter made clear. Within these different mobilisations, gender conversely offered alternative discourses of status, through being a ‘Mama’ in having children in the home, or through being a ‘good’ Christian woman. The analysis in this chapter has nevertheless highlighted the precarity of these resistances, as the women’s accounts signalled anxiety around their ‘uneducated’ status being revealed, through the weight of the Bible in the bag, or the danger of being ‘left behind’.

In the following chapter I want to build on this analysis by reflecting on the other side of this coin, asking in what ways being ‘educated’ was constructed through a lens of inclusion, that was equally embedded within intersectional matrices of structural inequalities and violence as well as the symbolic violence of shame noted in this chapter. I will explore how Kha ri Gude offered a way to reduce some forms of distinction, but not others, speaking to some forms of ‘education’ as capital (Bourdieu, 1984, Bourdieu, 1986), but in constrained ways that limited the ways in which I think that the programme could be described as transformative.
8 Intersections in the structures: being and becoming ‘educated’

This chapter focuses on adult-learners’ expressed reasons to value ‘education’ through socio-economic frames of inclusion in inter-related concerns around work, speaking English, and the kinds of ‘practical skills’ that were seen to frame daily interactions in the descriptions of Kha ri Gude by those who designed, managed and delivered the campaign (as discussed in chapter six). As I noted in the final pages of chapter four (pp. 92-95), translation and attendance to the meanings of words has offered an important tool in the analytical work of this thesis. In this chapter I want to explore a set of constructions, contestations and conceptual slippages around being and becoming ‘educated’. I will ask how different constructs of ‘literacy’ and ‘education’ underpinned the multiple meanings made around the isiZulu signifier ‘-fundile’ (‘educated’), that together encompassed: the discursive association between being or becoming ‘-fundile’ and being able to do ‘right’ work; an inter-relationship between being seen as ‘-fundile’ and being able to speak English; the distinction between formal and informal learning, and the ways in which some forms of learning were seen as leading to a recognition of self as ‘-fundile’, while others were not; and finally a specific set of dominant literacy and numeracy practices associated with recognition of the ‘-fundile’ subject position.

This chapter will draw on two theoretical concepts that engage with questions of socio-economic inclusion to understand the relationship between being ‘educated’ and work, speaking English, and practical skills. The first is Bourdieu’s notion of forms of capital, and the ways in which economic, linguistic and cultural capital can be differentiated as inter-linked but differently articulated concepts that inter-relate with education (Bourdieu, 1986, Grenfell et al., 2013). The second is the notion of misrecognition, both in terms of the relationship between recognition-based and distribution-based claims to justice (Fraser, 2005, Fraser and Honneth, 2003), but also to questions of structural inequality, and the ways in which structures can be misrecognised. For Bourdieu, this misrecognition is part of a schema of symbolic violence (Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016), in which processes of internalisation and complicity in everyday interactions make asymmetrical hierarchies “appear as natural” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 170), “legitimate in the eyes of the beholder” (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p. xiii). This chapter will argue that the misrecognition of both structural inequalities and the patterns of informal learning that signalled negotiation of these structures could be understood as such a schema.
The impetus for this chapter came through two early observations: first, it was striking that none of the thirty women whose interviews form the core focus of this study expressed satisfaction with their work; and second, that all thirty women associated ‘right’ or ‘good’ work with being ‘educated’ (-fundile) in its wider sense. This was true both of the twelve women who were working and the six women who had worked during their lives but were in receipt of their pension at the time of the study. It was also striking that the kinds of work that the women did was notably similar: of the eight women in receipt of their pension, six had been domestic workers, while one woman named Shongolutha described herself as ‘never’ employed, although she had cared for children. One woman named Prudence had worked both as a domestic worker, but additionally within the community as a sangoma. Seven of the women of working age were also domestic workers, one of whom (Busi) worked for a local, black family while the other six worked for white families who lived a minimum of two taxi rides (more than an hour) away from Endaweni. Four women worked for the municipality, cleaning the roadside, in work that will be explained in detail below. Only one of the women, Thokozile, did not work either as a domestic worker or for the municipality but was employed as a cook in a local school. These types of work are explicitly gendered, and linked with constructs of femininity: the husbands, brothers and sons of these women did different kinds of work, although many who were ‘uneducated’ worked as gardeners and security guards, a male correlative in the outside space to domestic work inside the home that has also been associated with low levels of education and low wages (Hertz, 2005).

These types of work are furthermore not unusual across South Africa. In 2010, 1.1 million domestic workers were working for private households, concentrated in the provinces of Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal; more than three-quarters of these workers were female, representing the third largest sector in the country for employment of women. Race intersects with gender in this sector: 91% of these workers were black African, with the remaining 9% coming from the Coloured population (ILO, 2013, p. 33). As Ally notes, there has been a “vast distance travelled in the politics of recognition for domestic workers” (Ally, 2011, p. 6) during and since the transition to democracy in South Africa. On paper, race, gender and workers’ rights have all been advanced through the Constitution and

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143 Bancane, Ncizile, Ndende, Prudence, Smangele and Josefina
144 A sangoma can be translated as ‘traditional healer’ or ‘witch-doctor’; both terms were used when describing this position in English within the community of Endaweni
145 Busi, Fakazile, Tholakele, Veronica, Zandile, Intombi and Khanyisile
146 Khonzeni, Bongikile, Virginia (Ehholo class) and Badumile
post-transition legislature introduced at the start of this thesis, aiming to address the intersecting “triple oppression” that black women in South Africa experience as black Africans, as women, and as workers (Gaitskell et al., 1983, p. 96). The isolation and asymmetrical power relations inherent in domestic work, however, has made domestic workers’ rights particularly hard to realise (Magwaza, 2008). A number of authors note the continued salience of the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU) motto that ‘women will not be free until domestic workers are free’: despite the advances in the labour rights such as minimum wages and contracted working hours (Magwaza, 2008, Ally, 2008), domestic work has been seen as the ‘last bastion of apartheid’ (Fish, 2006), although it has been acknowledged that domestic work not only in South Africa but across the globe is characterised by its hidden and asymmetrical power relationships, often between women (du Preez et al., 2010). In South Africa as elsewhere, oppression of domestic workers remains coded in dress and forms of address (Bosch and McLeod, 2015), and treatment of some domestic workers continues to be exploitative, even violent (Maboyana and Sekaja, 2015). The analysis which follows will explore ways in which the life-histories of female adult learners in this study speak to these questions of power, constrained agency, and the nature of their working conditions.

The four women in the study who worked cleaning the roadside were employed by the ‘Masipala’ ('Municipality') under the South African Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), of which Kha ri Gude itself was part (see chapter three, pp. 59-60). What the women called the ‘Masipala job’ was part of the ‘Zibambele’ ('Do it for yourself') programme which has run in the province since 2000, with the objective of creating sustainable job opportunities for poor rural families through the maintenance of rural roads (McCord, 2004, p. 14). These women worked part-time for two days a week, paid at the time of research R600 a month which placed the women’s earnings just over the upper-bound poverty line discussed in chapter five (pp. 100-101). As part of the EPWP, the Zibambele programme explicitly targets the poorest members of communities, particularly female household heads. EPWP employment such as Zibambele is designed to be a gateway to better paid and more stable employment, and to speak to the inequalities of apartheid education and labour structures, but research has suggested that workers in these kinds of programmes such as the Zibambele work often relinquish any search for alternatives, and remain trapped by these low wages (McCord, 2004).
A final set of two women in the study supported themselves through self-employment in small businesses. Tholi sold chickens and Badumile ran a spaza, both of which operated out of their homes. While Badumile’s spaza was a supplement to the work that she did under the Zibambele programme, Tholi’s business selling chickens supplemented other informal sector work that she did, such as collecting pots and pans and other metal items around the area which she would then try to sell on. As I will discuss in chapter nine, Tholi’s sole reliance on these informal patterns of work placed her as one of the learners with the least financial security, a vulnerability compounded by poor social networks.

These brief introductions to the kinds of work that the women in this study were engaged in offer a headline indication of the extent of their unemployment and underemployment, and start to signal ways in which the life-histories and contemporary daily experiences of the women with whom this study is concerned were shaped by precarity, vulnerability and low levels of financial resilience that can be seen within the context of the broader national and provincial dynamics of poverty discussed in the chapters thus far. The following part of the chapter will explore these dynamics of work through the lens that the women in the study themselves applied, that associated ‘education’ with ‘right’ as opposed to ‘not-work’.

‘Right work’ vs. ‘not-work’

When you are educated you can get a job... you can work.¹⁴⁷

Badumile (aged 49), Eholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013

You can never work if you are not educated.¹⁴⁸

Thabisile (aged 41), Endleleni class, Interview 17.11.2013

As I discussed in chapter six, education was seen as something that learners both needed to be ‘motivated’ to participate in, but would also help them to ‘continue forward’, two different but related meanings of the isiZulu verb ‘-qhuba/-qhubeka’. In this chapter I want to layer more nuance into that discussion by discussing one key pivot around which such ‘motivation’ and ‘moving forward’ turned: the relationship between being ‘educated’ and being able to do work of value, ‘right’ work.

¹⁴⁷ Uma ufundile uyakwazi ukuthola umsebenzi... Ukwazi ukusebenza
¹⁴⁸ Ngeke uze usebenze ungafundile
The relationship between ‘education’ and ‘right’ work was most often constructed in terms of the related resources of knowledge and money, as in Virginia’s words:

> The life of the educated person is better, because you know how to do things for yourself (‐zi‐) with your education, and the work you do is a well-paid thing. As I am not educated myself, I haven’t got work that pays ‘right’ money.\textsuperscript{149}

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Virginia (aged 57), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013}
\end{flushright}

‘Education’ was thus constructed by learners such as Virginia as a pathway to autonomy, of ‘knowing‐how‐to’ / ‘doing‐for‐self’, which she expressed both through the reflexive prefix (‐zi‐) and emphatic personal pronouns. For Virginia, this autonomy was enhanced through the financial autonomy of the ‘right’ remuneration, the ‘well‐paid’ work that was accessed through being ‘educated’, and which led to a generalised ‘better’ life.

For Ncizile too, ‘education’ and work were also closely linked to resources, but this time filtered through a specific concern around food security:

> Ay! I am really happy [that my children went to school] because they can feed themselves (‐zi‐). Because it’s like for me I didn’t used to have work, I was not able to feed them, but now that they are educated, they can feed themselves (‐zi‐).\textsuperscript{150}

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Ncizile (aged 60+), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 01.10.2013}
\end{flushright}

Ncizile, like Virginia, drew links between ‘education’ and autonomy through a repeated reflexive prefix (‐zi‐). Ncizile contrasted her children’s ability to feed themselves through educated‐work with her own problems in the past supporting her family, when she had earned R10 at the end of the week as a domestic worker for a local black family, and was only able to buy “potatoes and maybe some tomatoes” for the week, which would not last until she was paid again (Ncizile (aged 60+), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 01.10.2013).

The distinction between the work available to those who were ‘educated’ and those who were not was both a question of types of different levels of payment and security, but also

\begin{flushright} \textsuperscript{149} Ibangcono impilo yomuntu ofundile ngoba uyakwazi ukuzenzela izinto ngefumdo yakhe, nomsebenzi usebenza into esile. Mina engingafundile angutholi umsebenzi oholela imali e‐right \end{flushright}

\begin{flushright} \textsuperscript{150} Ayi! Ngiyanjabula bandla ngoba bayakwazi ukuzifunza ngoba bami njengoba ngasasebenzi angabe angikwazi ukubafunza kodwa njengoba befundile laba bekwazi ukuzifunza. \end{flushright}
of access to, and opportunities within, work. For Bancane, this access and opportunities were constrained by interactions affected by skills which she described herself as lacking because she had not been ‘educated’. She narrated, for example, how she had been overlooked for jobs herself because she could neither read application forms nor answer questions asked in English, and so had not passed an interview. She compared this with her brothers’ lives, in which they had been overlooked for promotions because “someone ‘educated’ had come who would jump over and take their place”, and who also, through recognition of an ‘educated’ status, earned more money (Bancane (aged 66), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 08.10.2013). For Bancane, whose father had forbidden all of his children to go to school, the process of being turned away from work “was really painful”:

It had already got to that stage where it was already clear that there was not anything which [my father] could do for me. I went home and told my father that now I am suffering (-hlupheka) because I cannot get a job.\footnote{Bancane (aged 66), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 08.10.2013}

The relationship between ‘education’ and work was often one that was seen to emerge over the evolution of lives, as investments shifted with time and context. Bancane said that she initially had not minded working ‘small jobs’ for ‘small money’, but that later ‘painful’ feelings of ‘suffering’ emerged, at the moment when she was turned down for more highly paid work, at a stage when it was already too late to return to school, and at an age where she had begun to expect more.

The construction of the signifier ‘work’ thus often included a range of resources and skills, but also included treatment, status and the absence of feelings of pain. For Ncizile, reflecting upon her own history of very low wages, being ‘educated’ or ‘being able to study’ was seen in contrast to lead to work that she ‘would have liked’:

The work which I would have liked is that I would have liked to work in a kitchen. I was not ever working well. Because I had not been able to study, I did not work.\footnote{Ncizile (aged 60+), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 01.10.2013}
Ncizile had already described the work that she had done as a domestic worker, and here emphasised that she ‘was not ever working well’. But she went further, in the final sentence of the above extract, to construct an explicitly negative link between her lack of studying and her ‘lack’ of work. Ncizile had worked, but it was not work that she valued. Not working ‘well’, in Ncizile’s words, was not working at all.

This description of particular kinds of jobs as ‘not-work’ was one that only became clear during reflections on the interview transcripts, and took some time to unravel. ‘Not-work’ was attached in signifying chains to diminutives, and other adjectives and phrases that suggested smallness, such as small money, short-term contracts, or part-time work, as in Badumile’s words below. These distinctions often operated within families, as the impact of the ‘not-work’ that women narrated over their life histories was tied into ways in which their families were also ‘not-working’. The impact of such ‘not-work’ is highlighted in Badumile’s unexpressed hopes for her future, which were interrupted and constrained by her material experience:

Charley: What do you hope for in the future, with your family?  
Badumile: I am hoping that-. Because my son was doing (-tohoza) a piecemeal job (itoho) which finished. And in fact, the father of my children is also not working, and I am not working. I just caught that thing at the road; for a few short days, there at the road.  

Charley: Have they also gone to look for work?  
Badumile: The boy keeps going, he keeps going to search for work (umsebenzi).

Within this brief description of Badumile’s family there were three different forms of ‘not-work’, which were demarcated linguistically. Badumile’s son’s work was differentiated in Badumile’s language by its temporary, informal and poorly paid nature, signified in isiZulu with a different noun (itoho) and verb (-tohoza) than to ‘work’ (umsebenzi, -sebenza). Her subsequent use of the iterative form of the verb (‘he kept going’) highlights his ongoing search for work in ways that speak more to the strain of the labour market than a
simple delineation of him as ‘unemployed’. Finally, the balance between the father of her children’s ‘not-work’, and Badumile’s own ‘not-work’ is complicated by the description of the work that she in fact did. This work that Badumile ‘caught’ was defined by its place ‘at the road’ and by its part-time nature, through the diminutive a ‘few short days’. Later in the interview Badumile went on to describe further her economic ‘vulnerability’: she was unable to save; every member of her family including the father of her children, whom she lived with, the son that she mentions above and one school-age daughter depended on her income; and she was running a spaza to supplement her income selling drinks, phone vouchers and biscuits out of a room at the end of her home (Badumile (aged 49), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013).

‘Not-work’ was thus linguistically differentiated in these accounts in ways that highlight social and economic boundaries, as well as giving indications of the ways in which this ‘not-working’ operated at the family and broader community levels, echoing analysis that has found that social networks are an important job-finding strategy of the employed (Posel et al., 2014). While there was a sense of the collective in the ways in which people within these women’s social networks and extended families ‘not-worked’, there was also a powerful discourse, however, which individualised the process of looking for work and of success and failure. Badumile’s twice repeated use of the iterative form of the verb to emphasise her son’s persistence in looking for work is one such example (‘he keeps going’). In other accounts this individualisation was expressed through the value placed on ‘trying’, in actively ‘not-working’, in searching for work, even in ‘trying to try’, as Phili’s probing questions in the following extract highlight:

**Phili:** Were you working in those times [when you were not at school]?
**Princess:** Eh-eh (no)

**Phili:** You have never worked?
**Princess:** Eh-eh (no)

**Phili:** What was the reason why you did not get a job?
**Princess:** I don’t know work because English is necessary, which I don’t know.\(^{157}\)

**Phili:** You never tried to try?\(^{158}\)
**Princess** (aged 43), Endleleni class, Interview 14.11.2013

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\(^{157}\) angazi emsebenzi kufuneka isingisi esingasazi
\(^{158}\) Awukaze uzawuzame?
In Princess’ framing, ‘not-work’ was constructed in terms of knowledge, and was specifically tied to English, which she had not been exposed to since she had not been to school. Princess constructed herself as ‘not-working’, ‘not knowing’ work. Princess, like Badumile, did not recognise the work that she did cleaning the roadside as ‘work’, instead describing it as a means of living or surviving (*phila*). The distance from the kind of work that Princess defined as ‘work’, and what she actually did, was emphasised by her forceful antithesis which balanced her ‘not-knowing’ English with ‘not-knowing’ work, as well as by her inarticulations (eh-eh), her non-verbal acknowledgements that she did not work, had never worked.

Phili, however, resisted Princess’ reasoning or perhaps justification for her ‘not-work’, and re-framed it by questioning her individual effort, her capacity to ‘try to try’. In my fieldnotes written during this interview, I noted a tone of frustration in Phili’s questions, which I followed up with Phili in the car afterwards. To Phili, Princess was ‘not a good woman’ because she was not raising her own children, because she was not working or studying, and because she was drunk in the first KRG class that we had observed (fieldnotes, 14th November 2013). For these reasons, Phili had not wanted me to interview Princess. Phili was both complicit in the (re)production of the value of ‘trying to try’, as well as trapped by it, herself only temporarily employed by *Kha ri Gude* (and by me), and herself a domestic worker, a job that she ‘hated’ (field notes, 21st November 2013). She did not recognise in this conversation with me that there may have been structural constraints on the education and work opportunities available to Princess, nor that she herself might too be subject to these constraints. For Phili, Princess’ ‘never working’ needed to be justified.

The clearest resistance to work which was ‘not-work’ came from Balungile, who was twenty-five years old, and who had joined the *Kha ri Gude* class even though she was educated to Standard 9, and even though she knew that the class would only cover basic literacy, numeracy and English, all of which were skills that she self-defined as being very competent in. Balungile had dropped out of school when she had become pregnant, although her schooling was already suffering at that stage due to poverty within her family and caring responsibilities at home. Balungile was holding out to be a nurse, rather than ‘not-working’ in a job such as domestic work that she, like Phili, ‘hated’ and which she had seen her mother do. Balungile, like Princess, was not currently in education or work:
Phili: Why is it that you want to be a nurse?
Balungile: I can say it’s that kind of work which is easily accessible, it’s that kind of work which is best when you are educated. [...] I am not working. [...] I am looking. We get up in the morning, some other girls and me, and we go to [places] and put some CVs there, and I don’t yet understand why I haven’t got anything. We usually go up here to Town... we go in, we come out, we go in, we come out, [we visit different] shops. [...] Charley: Have you ever thought about doing domestic work?
Balungile: No! I have never thought about that, bu-uu-ut, the situation in terms of work, it’s like it’s not available (get-able). Even though it is said (kuthiwa), ‘here it is’, I haven’t got anything. [...] I saw the way it was when I was still small (laughs). I said that I would not be able to, that I should study so that my future is calm. I intended to stop myself from going for domestic work, since I was small, since I was this big. [...] Phili: What is it about domestic work? (laughs)
Balungile: Ay! I never said that I would take it, since it is said (kuthiwa) that finishing school should get you something, if I continue and study- Ay! I knew that that would be my whole life sacrificed / given up in domestic work. (laughs) [...] No, I never heard anyone speaking badly about it because that money is similar, but it’s not equal, it’s not equal to the work which you do. That is the problem with domestic work, since I was small I said that the day I get up to enter domestic work is the day that I die in domestic work. [...]

Balungile (aged 25), Entabeni class, Supplementary Interview, 26.10.2013

Balungile’s account of why she did not want to be a domestic worker like her mother thus draws together many of the themes of ‘not-working’: questions about why work was ‘get-able’ but not ‘gotten’; about the incomprehensibility of the empty promise that ‘here it is’;

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59 Ngathi iwona msebenzi engathi utholakala kalula iwona msebenzi ongconywa uma ufundile.
60 uthi akukagondani ukuthi ngiwuthole
61 angikaze ngikucabange, kodwa-aa-a ngesimo njengoba umsebenzi unghatholakali kanjena mengase kuthiwa naku ngingawuthatha
62 Ngagibona indlela ngisencane, ngithi nginquakwazi ukuthi ngifunde ngoba ikusasa lami lilele kumina manje, nje ngimane ngisukele ialidi ngimncane ngimungakana
63 Agi ngeke nomi nangalingalithathake uma kuthiwa nakuqeda isikole ngithole ima yokuthi ngiquubeke ngifundeke agi ukuthi ngazi ukuthi impilo yamia yonke senqidele ejalindini
64 Cha nangalingakaze ngizwe abakukhuluma kabi ngalo, ngoba yona imali iyafana kona nje ukuthi ayilingani, ayilingini iwona akuwona umsebenzi onenkinga wasenjalidini ukuthi nje mengabe umncane nje usukeleke uyongena enjalidi ofani nini njenalidi
about the low wage and low status trap of a ‘sacrificed’ life, ‘given up’ in domestic work, that was seen to last over a lifetime; about the iterative and ongoing nature of going ‘in and coming out’ of shops looking for jobs; and about the ways in which ‘education’ and ‘educated’-work such as nursing was valued in contrast. In her decision to remain unemployed rather than to become a domestic worker, Balungile’s words echo questions raised in the literature about commensurability of labour and wages, of equity, and what work of dignity looks like (Mpedi and Smit, 2011).

‘Right’ work was thus associated both with questions of distribution, of resources, food, knowledge and security, and with questions of recognition, of status, dignity, commensurability and the absence of feelings of pain. The possibilities for getting this ‘right’ work both attached to signifiers associated with education, but was also individualised through notions of agency and effort, of iterative searches, and ‘trying to try’. The extended vignette from Balungile’s interview particularly highlights ways in which these discursive (re)productions that work ‘is said’ to be ‘available’, that it is said that ‘here it is’, that it is said that ‘finishing school should get you something’, misrecognise the gendered and raced structural constraints of the labour market and the uneven returns to different levels of education that have characterised the post-apartheid shifts to inclusive education (Burger and Jafta, 2006, Van der Berg, 2002, Branson et al., 2012). Balungile’s constrained agency in her intentions to avoid ‘not-work’ was contextualised by these inequalities, which made sense of what she was not able to “yet understand” about why she remained unemployed, and perhaps underpinned the affiliative laughter between her and Phili about what domestic work represented. Her decision to remain unemployed technically placed her as a ‘discouraged worker’ of the kind discussed in chapter five (pp. 102-3), but this discouragement could also be seen as a form of constrained resistance, of the expression of a constrained form of agency that inter-played with both the gendered shape of the labour market, and her educational trajectory.

While being ‘uneducated’ was thus regularly framed as leading to ‘not-work’, the ways in which this pathway was constructed were not fixed, but fluid and often aspirational, and relative to other employees, family members or members of the community, as well as to women’s own life stages and inter-generational progression through work as their aspirations changed over their life histories. The following section will pick up these
questions of relationality and mis/recognition, in exploring ways in which being ‘educated’ was constructed through a lens of speaking for -self, or speaking English.

**Speaking for -self? Inclusion and/as English**

The neat antithesis that Princess used, quoted above, to suggest that she did ‘not know’ work because she did ‘not know’ English captures a useful, related construction of the relationship between work and education. The skills, capacities, status, or knowledge associated with English was a common way in which the signifier ‘educated’ was invested with meaning, both within work contexts and within home and local community space. Investments in English included framings that drew on notions of both the symbolic and social capital associated with being able to speak the dominant language (Bartlett, 2007a): English language skills in South Africa have been shown to correlate with higher earning potential for black South Africans (Casale and Posel, 2011), as well as access to both “sources of knowledge...and pleasure”, such as television and films (Webb, 2002, p. 12). The following analysis will explore these psycho-social investments, and ask how they were shaped by asymmetrical gendered and racialised power relationships, particularly with white, female bosses.

For Virginia, who above constructed ‘education’ as access to well-paid work, English represented another form of resource, another way to ‘move forward’ or ‘be motivated’ that signified work of value, autonomy and agency through ‘speaking for –self’:

> When you are educated, you know how to speak for yourself (-zi-). You are able to move forward with life (-qhubekela), it’s not the same as being uneducated when you are never able to go to get the work you want, as I was not educated.165

*Virginia (aged 57), Eholo class, Interview 2, 25.01.2014*

For Badumile, who had wanted to be formally employed in a shop, but who instead ran her own *spaza* from her home, ‘education’ was also a question of English, framed in terms of a potential employer, and what ‘they say’ she would or would not be able to ‘understand’:

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165 Uma ufundile usakwazi ukuzikhulumela. Uyakwazi ukuqhubekela phambili nempilo, akufani nokuba ungafundile ngoba njeke kwazi ngithi yoifuna umsebenzi ngafundanga
They say that you can never work in a shop if you are not educated, because you can never understand if they tell you things, if you are not educated.\textsuperscript{166}

\textit{Badumile (aged 49), Ehholo class, Interview 2, 06.02.2014}

While \textit{spazas} have been conceptualised as offering informal employment that is often situated in mono-lingual contexts with low levels of English (Rudwick, 2008a), it is interesting to note here that Badumile does not explicitly mention English, nor whether she herself can speak it, but instead frames the discussion in terms of how she is read as someone ‘uneducated’ by those who might employ her, what ‘they say’ about her ‘understanding’. For Badumile, it was education that led to ‘understanding’, in both the linguistic and the epistemological senses of the word.

A number of women in their stories about work more explicitly contested the notion that ‘understanding’ was solely reducible to English language skills, despite the strength of the discourse that constructed English as essential. These accounts often emphasised the importance of experience, and other forms of knowledge, that contested a notion of education as the only space of ‘learning’. Intombi’s reflections below on a moment in which she both did and did not ‘understand’ what work she should be doing, through racialised interactions represented by language but also the power inherent in interactions with her ‘white/European’ (\textit{umlungu}) [boss], brings out some of these contestations:

[When I started work] it was hard. The white person would talk and talk, and she wants me to do something, she said what I should do. [But] when the white person came home, she said I didn’t do it. I hadn’t understood (-\textit{zwa}) her but I had nodded, I said, ‘yes, yes Miss’ (\textit{Phili: ooooh! Laughs}). But I had not understood what she was saying. I myself did the things for myself, whatever I knew. I know that I must do what I know.\textsuperscript{167}

\textit{Intombi (aged 40), Ekhaya class, Interview 21.11.2013}

Intombi thus began with a recognition that working across language boundaries, and that not understanding when her boss would ‘talk and talk’ was ‘hard’. Intombi’s self-

\textsuperscript{166} Bathi ngeke ukwazi ukusebenza esitolo ungafundile ngoba ngeke ukwazi ukuzwa uma bekutshela izinto ungafundile
\textsuperscript{167} Kunzima. Umlungu akhulumke akhulumu uyafuna ngiyenzhe into athe angiyenzhe. Abuye umlungu angiyenzile into angimuzwanga kodwa ngiyizwane nathi yes yes mesisi kodwa bengamuzwanga ukuthi uthini. Mina bengizenzela lokhu engikwaziyo ngazi ukuthi fanele engabe ngiyakwenza engikwaziyo.
presentation of her not ‘understanding’ signals this language barrier, as she uses an isiZulu
verb (-zuwa) that can be translated to both ‘I didn’t hear’ and/or ‘I didn't understand’. But
Intombi also claimed a form of knowledge for herself, built on her own experience since
she was young of cleaning her own household. There was a very clear tension in her
account between ‘knowing’ through experience what to do and ‘understanding’ what she
had been told to do through verbal instructions. Intombi tentatively reclaimed her
knowledge and autonomy, as she [her]self ‘does...for -self, ‘knowing...what I know’. This
tentative reclaiming was further played with as Intombi (re)performs ‘maid’ in her
nodding and the assent of ‘yes Miss’, consciously interpolated into her narrative in English
rather than isiZulu, eliciting laughter from Phili and engagement with the performativity
of a ‘good’ employee, but that was undermined by a (re)assertion that ‘whatever I knew’,
she in fact ‘had not understood’.

Intombi’s narrative continued with a focus on ‘understanding’, but turned to ways in
which the interactive relationship with her boss involved ‘teaching’, including her boss
‘teaching herself that perhaps she should be honest about whether I really understood
her’, reframing the question of whether it was Intombi herself or conversely her boss that
needed to ‘learn’. Intombi narrated the intimate details of her increased understanding,
including a meticulous list of the appliances and shape of the kitchen and boundaries of
her work, and a range of communicative practices as she was ‘shown’, ‘taught’, ‘saw’,
‘understood’ and ‘did’ the work required, as her boss in turn ‘was teaching herself’, ‘saw’
and ‘talk[ed] with her hands’:

Intombi: When I got there at work, I did it and did it.168 [...] 
Even her, she was teaching herself that perhaps she should be honest about
whether I really understood her. She opens the ‘fridge’, she shows me, do you see
here? You have to wash here. I understood everything about t
he fridge. And then
she finished teaching me.169 [...] 
It seems as if she wants to talk with her hands. And then she sees that I really
understood the things which she was talking about, because I did what I used to do
at home. And I did the laundry. But then the white lady bought a washing

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168 mengifika lapha emsebenzini, ngenze, ngenze.
169 kwaze kwathi naye uyazifundisa ukuthi mhlawumpe abenesiqiniseko sokuthi ngizwile ngempela. Alivule i-fridge
akhombe, uyabona lana? fanele uwashe i-fridge, engathi ngiyezwake waze wacina esengifundisile
machine. I didn’t know where to put things, and how it was possible to start this machine-, Ay!  

**Phili:** But did she show you how to use it?  

**Intombi:** She showed me, and all the words which are there so that the clothes should not shrink like this. But I didn’t know. I was shedding tears, but I didn’t say that I was crying. I thought that I could iron the clothes and the jerseys which were shrunk that much. When that white lady realised that the clothes were shrunk so much, I never felt so much pain as on that day, I didn’t know what I should do, should I start again with the clothes, or what should I have done. She just said, ‘did you understand?’ and I said, ‘no’.  

**Phili:** What made you agree, when you actually didn’t understand?  

**Intombi:** Actually, I don’t know what I should say, if I should say no, I don’t know, or, ‘yes, Miss’, all the time, just, ‘yes Miss’.  

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_**Intombi (aged 40), Ekhaya class, Interview 21.11.2013**_

The climax of Intombi’s story reframed the joking around ‘yes Miss’ and the performativity of the ‘good employee’ that she had engaged with earlier, (re)inscribing the precarious and fragile nature of her autonomy and knowledge above, and turning the laughter which she elicited from Phili turned to ‘tears’ and ‘pain’, silenced by what she ‘didn’t know’ and ‘didn’t say’. Represented in Intombi’s discussion of the washing machine incident are ways in which the asymmetrical power hierarchies inherent in domestic work, as discussed above, are further complicated by linguistic boundaries which are overlaid by questions of address and duty, what ‘should’ be done and said, and the acceptability of assent. English is ultimately (re)centred in this anecdote, rendering insufficient the range of communicative practices, recognised experience and mutual learning that Intombi narrated earlier and accompanied by her ‘pain’ of acknowledging that she ‘didn’t know’, and the tears that she did not voice.

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170 kwangathi ufuna ukukhuluma ngezandla, abone ukuthi ngizwile ngempela lento ayishoyo ngoba mina ngangenza lokhu engikuyazele ekhaya nanokuthi ngiyawasha ke ngafika umlungu ethenge umshini wokawasha angazi ukuthi kumele ngimisephi, mekukuthi kufanele kuwashe, ay!  

171 Wayekukhombisile kodwa?  

172 Wayengikhombisile washo phela ngamagama akhona azikaze zishwabane kanjena izingubo angazi ukuthi ngiciphize kephi angashongo ukuthi ngiciphize khona ngibe ngisathu ngiyazi ayina izingubo nomzile kwashwabane kantaka yena umlungu menzile akushwabani kantaka angikaze ngiphathheke kabuhlungu nyalelo langa angazi nomzile nasele ngiziqale phansi izingubo noma fanele ngezenjeni. Athi nje uthe uzwile njathi hhayi.  

173 Yini eyaayikwezwa uzooma noma ungezwana?  

174 Phela angazi ukuthi fanele ngithi uma kufanele ngithi cha angazi ngazi yes mesisi yonke into yes mesisi nje
Intombi’s concern about the right thing to say – whether ‘no, I don’t know,’ or ‘yes, Miss’ – was echoed in other narratives. In accounts of ‘not-understanding’, women often stressed the difficulty in expressing themselves to their employer, particularly at the start of work:

When I started, I stayed silent. She would go, and perhaps after some time I would go to her and say, ‘sorry’, I didn’t understand what you said, I don’t understand what you said. Then she would start again from the beginning. She was shocked that I said that, but then after that it was accessible (-ngenaka).[75] [...] They treated me well. It was no problem, we just ‘understand’, it was no problem because they know that when I don’t understand I come to them and ask. That when I didn’t understand well, she should explain for me.[76]

*Virginia (aged 57), Ehholo class, Interview 2, 25.01.2013*

In her telling of misunderstandings and moments of anxiety in voicing a lack of comprehension, as well as times of staying silent, Virginia somewhat ironically peppered her account with English words, including ‘sorry’ and ‘understand’, which she somewhat ironically prefixed with the Zulu to express ‘I don’t’: ‘angi-understand’. Virginia’s concern about speaking up is represented in her employer’s ‘shock’ that she would do so, but followed by relief that the work became ‘accessible’, that she was ‘treated well’ and that there was an understanding and a ‘knowledge’ about what to do when she didn’t understand. Virginia expressed this as being ‘treated well’, that now her employer would explain for her benefit, a process that she emphasised through the applicative form of the verb (which stresses that an action is done ‘for’ someone: ‘explain for me’).

The teaching and learning that characterises both Virginia and Intombi’s accounts, in which employers perhaps ‘should be honest’ about whether their employees understood, or questions about whether they ‘should explain’ also characterised Josefina’s narrative below, that opened with an assertion that Josefina (only) went to work because ‘the Missus said she would teach me’. For Josefina, this ‘learning’ at work was explicitly paralleled by age and status, going when she was ‘tiny’, when, ‘really, I knew nothing’, at the age of 9. In Josefina’s account, ‘not-knowing’ was not centred in English, but isiZulu, a linguistic

[75] Bengiqale ngithule, ahambe mhlawumpeni zothatha isikhathi mese ngiyahamba nge ngiyana sorry angizwanga ukuthi utheni angi-understand kuthi utheni. Meseqala phansi ashoke kuthi ngithe kukuthi nokuthi, nokuthi mese kuyangenake

[76] bangiphatha kahle akunankinga ngoba siya-understand nje akunankinga, ngoba bayazi ukuthi uma nginga-understand ngiyeza ngizobuza kuthi angizwanga kahle angichazeleke
problem or lack located in her employer rather than Josefina herself, a not-understanding that was mutual, highlighted by the reciprocal form of the verb (each other):

Josefina: The problem was that she didn’t know Zulu, this White who wanted me. She didn’t know Zulu, not at all.¹⁷⁷ [...]

The Missus said she would teach me the work. So, I went. I went! We didn’t understand each other, because really, I knew nothing myself. I was tiny. (Phili laughs) I went. Hhawu!¹⁷⁸ [...]

She said, ‘you know that you can’t ask me in your words what you should do’. Ay! Ay! Ay! Ay!¹⁷⁹ [...]

Everything in the kitchen, she pointed out every single thing. It was work, my god! Even at the beginning she just used to leave me alone.¹⁸⁰ [...]

She didn’t say anything, I just used to look for myself. I thought about it. How I should work, how I should start. Hhawu!¹⁸¹ [...]

She just showed me, ‘here’s this, here’s that’. The iron sits here.¹⁸²

Phili: But you didn’t understand what she was saying?¹⁸³

Josefina: When she was ironing, I just used to look, as if I were a pair of eyes... (Phili laughs) I did everything, everything, everything.¹⁸⁴ [...]

Phili: She didn’t teach you, she didn’t teach you English so that you could speak?¹⁸⁵

Josefina: No.

Josefina (aged 95), Ekhaya class, Interview 1, 21.11.2013

This interchange between Josefina and Phili adds another layer to the construction of English, as Josefina contrasts being ‘taught the work’, with the fact that she was ‘not taught’ English, and not allowed to use ‘her words’. She depicts forms of learning, although she does not construct them as official/formal ‘learning’, as she ‘looked for –self’ and ‘thought about it’, as well as her joke that when her employer would iron she would turn herself into a ‘pair of eyes’ to study how to do it. At the same time, Josefina

¹⁷⁷ Manje, inkinga akasazi isiZulu, loya mlanga, ongifunayo. Akasazi isiZulu, nhlobo.
¹⁷⁹ yathi uyazi ukuthi angizokubiza ngegama lakho ngizothi uMa, ayayayayay.
¹⁸⁰ Konke okusekhishini, angitshengisile konke lokhu. Ne-ayina lihlala la! Kuyasebenza, nkosi! Kuzongishiya ngalolusuku lokuqala, ngisale ngedwa.
¹⁸² ungishengisile konke lokhu, Ne-ayina lihlala la.
¹⁸³ Awuzwa kodwa ukuthi uthini?
¹⁸⁴ Uma uso-ayina, kodwa nje ngiyabuka njengamehlo. (Phili: laughs) Ngenze konke konke konke. (Josefina: Cha)
¹⁸⁵ Akasakufundisi, uyakufundisa isiNgisi ukuthi ukwazi ukhuluma? (Josefina: Cha)
acknowledges the difficulty of this individualised learning (and by extension of the work of itself), emphasising that ‘it was work, my god!’ In Josefina’s account, there was an uneasy agency, and a dependency on the ‘Missus’, as well as a recognition of the extent of the work that Josefina did through a thrice repeated ‘everything’.

Virginia’s emphasis upon knowledge as a way to mediate or interpret racism was echoed in the words of another learner, Prudence, from the Entabeni class. When her employer emigrated to Australia she left Prudence the TV, microwave and tumble dryer in lieu of pay, a decision that Prudence had not agreed with, and which had denied her agency, a limit on her agency that she understood as a limitation to her own learning:

Prudence: Weh! Why would they pay? Whites in domestic work don’t pay.\(^{186}\)

*Phili: There wasn’t anything there that you could follow up?*

Prudence: There wasn’t anything that I could do.\(^ {187}\)

*Phili: Why didn’t you do anything, Ma?*

Prudence: I don’t know, it’s just that it’s not something I’ve learned.\(^{188}\)

Prudence (aged 63), Entabeni Class, Interview 1, 01.10.2013

Prudence named this as a form of racist exploitation that hinged on her insecure position as a domestic worker, and a racialised hierarchy in which ‘Whites…don’t pay’. Prudence stressed her powerlessness – there ‘wasn’t anything’ that she could do. But as Phili again troubled the way in which such powerlessness operated by asking why, Prudence (re)framed the pluralised structural constraint represented by ‘whites’, and (re)individualised a solution to herself, through an individualised lack of ‘learn[ing]’. This lack, however, was undefined, an ‘it’ that was associated with ‘education’, and one that Prudence was only aware that she did not have.

The various constructions of forms of learning in these accounts of looking for -self, thinking about the words, drawing on experience, or being directly taught and ‘explained’ to also translated into specific desires when the women reflected on their reasons for joining the literacy classes. It was particularly through English language skills, ‘just talking’, that formal primary and secondary education and the informal *Kha ri Gude*

\(^{186}\) *Weh! Bayakhokha yini? Abelungu basemanjalidini abakhokhi. *

\(^{187}\) *Angizange ngize ngiyenze *

\(^{188}\) *Angikhathi kona kungafundi*
literacy classes were seen as having convergent outcomes. A number of the learners were already able to read and write, and had joined the class with the hope of improving their English skills, often with a desire to access new and better labour market opportunities:

Charley: What do you hope will change after you have joined this literacy class?
Bongikile: I was thinking if I want work as a domestic worker, I would then be able to talk with the white person, and I would even just talk, do you see? In the past it would have been difficult, not knowing what I should be doing there, do you see? Not knowing what I should do in her house. But now [after joining the literacy class] I would see what I should do, if she tells me what to do I can do it, and so I can go out and try to find work outside [the community].

Bongikile (aged 46), Endleleni class, Interview 1, 10.10.2013

Educated-work in English was thus often explicitly attached to movement outside the community, a literal as well as figurative shift from the ‘not-working’ cleaning the roadside that Bongikile also currently did to being able to ‘go out’. Communication in English opened new spaces and new interactions across the kinds of social and economic divides drawn by being ‘uneducated’ or ‘unable’ to speak.

The construction of the impossibility of work without English was only one kind of silencing that being ‘uneducated’ could lead to. Communication in English also led to forms of social inclusion within home and community spaces. English opened space for play, for relaxing, and for social interactions, as Bongikile continued:

Charley: Were there any times in your life when you think that it did not matter that you were not educated?
Bongikile: No, it never happened like that. Because I can say that [my children] were educated, but me when I am with them, I hear that they are speaking, when they are looking here at the TV, they’re talking, they’re having conversations about ‘Generations’ which they are watching, and me too, I want to know what they are saying! I can read the words, when they are written [in subtitles], it is possible to

\[\text{Sengathi noma ngifuna umsebenzi wasejalidini sengizokwazi ukukhuluma nomlungu ngikhulume nami nje, uyabona? ekuqaleni kwakuzobanzima, anyazi uthi lana uthi angenzeni, uyabona? uthi anyazi uthi angenzeni emzini wakhe. Manje masengibona uthi angenze ukuthi ngikwe lokho ngizokwazi nokusebenza nami, ngiphume ngijofuna nomsebenzi ngaphandle.}\]
read them written there underneath, but I only understand when [my children] are actually reading them. Ay! Ay!190

Bongikile (aged 46), Endleleni class, Interview 1, 10.10.2013

Bongikile was thus silenced and excluded at home in ways that echoed her desires for better work. She contrasted her ability to read with her understanding of English, and further contrasted her own partial understanding with her ‘educated’ children, whom she needed to ‘explain’ what was said. Social networks were important ways to navigate ‘uneducation’, but reliance – whether on a kind or understanding boss, or on children – was uneasy, and invested with power(lessness) and constrained forms of agency.

Bancane’s story below, in which a silencing through English also interplayed with familial power structures, illustrates well this uneasy reliance on social networks. Bancane spoke of when she first became a Makoti,191 and moved to live with her husband’s extended family. In Bancane’s account, English was a way that she was excluded by her sisters-in-law; ‘entering into English’ was a distance that was both linguistic and social:

Bancane: Those times were hard for me, the girls didn’t look after me, the sisters in the family I married into.192

Phili: You were together in one place?209

Bancane: They were still at home; they were not yet married. They would chat, they would chat and look, they didn’t like it when I understood, they would stop and enter into English, and I would not understand them myself.194 [...] Phili: You were the Makoti there?

Bancane: I was a Makoti, I was their mother’s brother’s wife. But when I was feeling sorry for myself, I would say, ‘it is ok!’ because I actually didn’t understand what they were saying (laughs).195

Bancane (aged 66), Entabeni class, Interview 2, 21.01.2014

190 Hhayi, akukaze kufike lokho. ngoba ngisho befunda nami ngiba lana ngizwe ukuthi bathi babuke lapha babuke lapha bakhulumle baphendulane o generations ababukwayo nami ngifuna ukuzwa ukuthi kuthiwani! ngifunde lamagama mekukuthi kuyafundeka lawa abhalwa ngezansi ngizwe bewafunda bona. Ay! Ay!

191 A makoti is a married woman, a status that is linked in part to lobola payments, as well as to forms of respect and diverse responsibilities that might include cooking for the family or cleaning (Hunter, 2016).

192 khona isikhathi esake sanzima kumina, amantombazane akalindiwe nodadewabo abashandele kaSurname

193 bandawonye?

194 Besekhaya bengakashadile. Bazoxoxa baxoxe baboneke kuthi lana abasathandi mangizwe bamane bangene ngesingisi angisabezwe mene

195 ngumakoti ngumalumekazi wabo mese kayazwela kumina ngithi kulungile ngoba angibezwa bathini (laughs)
Bancane’s account thus touches on a range of different power asymmetries and hierarchies of status, around age, gender and marriage, and education as represented through English language levels. Bancane set her Makoti status against her seniority in the family structure, as the mother’s brother’s wife, and indicated implicitly that she would have expected the girls to ‘look after’ her, rather than excluding her. For Bancane, the resolution of this ‘feeling sorry for –self’ was to re-frame her lack of understanding as a benefit, joking that at least she could not understand how she was being insulted, if the insults were in a language that she was unable to speak or understand.

In each of these accounts, English was valued as a form of communicative practice that was embedded in broader social relations and dynamics, that included both those at work, across the racialised hierarchies of employer-boss relationships, and those at home, across the hierarchies and multiple forms of power represented by education, and the status of age or gender. While many of the accounts represented forms of autonomy that resisted the dominance of English, at times they also reinforced it, internalising the difficulty, shame and pain that adhered to not understanding. In discussing the relationship between English and hopes for education, the workplace and home settings, my analysis here offers a counterpoint to a burgeoning field of studies that reflect on socio-economic inclusion and the linguistic capital of English for children and young adults in a range of post-colonial formal schooling contexts, including South Africa (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004, Desai, 2016, Milligan et al., 2016, Milligan et al., 2018, Nishioka and Durrani, 2018, Adamson, 2017), and resonates with work to frame language through the lenses of wellbeing and social justice (Tikly, 2016), and within post-colonial concerns around power (Wa Thiong’o, 1992, Brock-Utne, 2001, Desai, 1995).

Language and literacy thus represented intersecting forms of vulnerability that were compounded by the specific context of domestic work, as Amy North has noted in discussion of the inter-relationship of power hierarchies represented by language, literacy and working conditions for migrant domestic workers in the UK (North, 2013, North, 2017). The following section explores the ways in which other ‘practical skills’ too were framed in learners’ accounts by forms of agency as both related to skills, but also to the mobilisation of social networks and positive social interactions with educated others in both ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ spaces that were further embedded in socio-economic nexuses of power.
Practical skills & daily lives: ‘learning’ through Kha ri Gude

As I noted above, it was particularly through the chains which attached English to the signifier ‘educated’ that women’s accounts signalled different understandings of ‘learning’, and saw their formal education and the Kha ri Gude classes as producing convergent learning outcomes. These contestations and anxieties around different forms of learning and knowledge were also clear in the way that women talked about their motivations for joining KRG. While ‘education’ was constructed richly as leading to work, improved lives, and a range of communicative practices through English, the question ‘why did you to join KRG?’ most frequently elicited answers that mirrored the narrower framing of ‘literacy’ in KRG in terms of ‘practical skills’ and ‘daily lives’, which I discussed in the chapter six through the framing of the role of Kha ri Gude by those who designed, managed and delivered the campaign. What I will show in this part of the chapter is that adult learners constructed practical skills through a lens of formal learning that was seen to reduce the distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) outlined in chapter seven, framing ‘literacy’ in much less neutral ways than the accounts in chapter six suggested.

There were two literacy practices that were particularly constructed through a lens of practical skills, and around which distinction particularly adhered, both of which were associated with “schooled literacy [as] a form of cultural capital” (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996, p. 19), in which ‘formal’ or ‘dominant’ literacy practices have been linked with both modernity and with urban and official spaces as much earlier work in South Africa exploring literacy practices in the Eastern Cape made clear (McEwan and Malan, 1996). These first of these was around numeracy practices in the use of ATMs, and the second was through literacy-as-signing. As in Badumile’s account below, it was these two literacy practices that were particularly seen as necessary to be ‘taught’, even for learners who self-defined (as Badumile herself did) as able to read and write, and with sufficient numeracy skills to run a spaza from the window of her home:

Badumile: We already feel bad now, because we were still wanting to study, so that we could continue to see whether we might pass or what? Now it is really painful if we don’t study anymore because there are many things that we don’t know.196

Phili: What are the kinds of things that you would like to know, Ma?

196 Sesiphatheka kabi manje, ngoba besisafuna ukufunda, siqhubeke sibone ukuthi siyaphasa yini? Manje kubuhlangu ngempela njengoba singasafundi ngoba okuningi asikakahwezi.
Badumile: We have not yet been taught taking out money, like at the bank, we don’t know how to do that yet, we had not yet been taught about that thing, we had not yet got to that stage to take money out of the bank or to sign. I do know how to do it, but not the way it should be signed like that, but I am already able to write my name and my surname.  

Badumile (aged 49), Ehholo class, Interview 2, 06.02.2014

Badumile was thus invested in a kind of formal learning, a ‘pass’, that she signalled through an interpolated English loan word (-pasa), a formal phrase to describe exams such as Matric. She constructed particular forms of knowledge or skills as official, and differentiated between a ‘way it should be signed’, from being ‘able to write my name or surname’. These two forms of writing were demarcated linguistically, as Badumile stressed that she knew how to ‘write’ (-bhala), but not how to ‘sign’ (-sayina), for which she again used the loan English word. Badumile recognised some of her literacy practices as ‘known’, but dominant, official practices remained unrecognised, yet to be taught.

For Bongekile from the Entabeni class, who had herself also been to school until the age of sixteen, the ATM machine was also a ‘big thing’; being told that she could ‘learn’ how to use ATMs through KRG was what motivated her to join:

Phili: What is it that makes you think that education is important?

Bongekile: Because for a long time I didn’t know how to take out money at the bank, I was helped there so that I could learn all the time. When I used to arrive, it was necessary for me to ask the security to help me there. You already knew that you should click here, you have learned the words that are written, but I would say they can’t be pushed there by me so that I can get the money. I was just afraid completely. I would say I would just shed tears there, there was something noticeable that you saw, that the ATM was a big thing, that I can’t use it, it’s like there’s a computer, how should I push the keys there?

Bongekile (aged 25), Entabeni Class, Interview 1, 29.10.2013

97 Asikafundiswa ngokakhhipha izimali njena emabank, besingakakwazi, besingakafundiswa nje ngaleyonto, besingakafikizi lapho ukhhipha izimali emabank nokusayinja-ke, kodwa nje ngiyakwazi, kodwa hhayi ngalendlela ekusayinwana ngayo manje kodwa sengiyakwazi ukubhala igama lamini nesibongo.

98 Ngoba kade ngisingakwazi nokuthi ngikhiphe imali bank ngasizwa ikona ukuthi njifunde njalo uma njifika bekumele ngibize security lizongisiza lana, manje sengiyakwazi uzithinte lapha ufunye ngiyakwazi akwengishaye lana ukaze niyathole lemlali besaba phela kube sengathi uzociphizakakhe khona okonakalalagho ubone sengathi into enkulu umshini wemali uthi angikaze sebenzise kusho computer lena ngizoyithhita kanjani lena.
Bongekile thus described an ongoing process of ‘help’, ‘learning’ and ‘knowledge’ which she both had and did not have. Her feeling that the buttons on the ATM could not be pushed ‘by me’, and her ‘complete fear’ reduced her to tears, a distance from knowledge that she had lived ‘for a long time’, despite being helped ‘so that I could learn all the time’. Bongekile moved between descriptions of constrained forms of agency and autonomy, what she ‘already knew’, to affective framings of things that she ‘could not’ do, drawn in tears and embodied, emotional responses. For Bongekile, the ATM represented a socio-political site of exclusion (Introna and Whittaker, 2006).

Part of the status that Bongekile felt that she lacked, with her emphasis upon ‘the big thing’ that the ATM represented, may have been to do with the way that the bank and the ATM was read as an official, ‘literate space’, in which particular dominant literacy practices were situated. This was signalled by dress, by knowledge, and by efficiency, of the younger, educated generation who worked in the bank:

Charley: Why do you think that your children should work in a bank?
Intombi: Hhayi bo! They are dressed so well these children [who work at the bank]. I see that mine really must work there, and there are these things which I don’t know, when they use-, you know, like that thing - I don’t know what. You see them clicking, you see that they can tell me everything - ay! I would really like that, I can see that is what I am hoping for.999

*Intombi (aged 40), Ekhaya class, Interview 1, 21.11.2013*

Intombi’s desire for her children was thus bound in the knowledge, status, and access that the bank machines and computers represented, and the use of ‘things’ that she could not voice or name. At the same time as expressing that she hoped that her daughter would be a bank teller like those she had seen, Intombi narrated how she would take her daughter with her when she wanted to take out money:

Intombi: I can say that [my daughter] is a girl who is very in order. [...] When we go to the bank it’s necessary for me to be there at the bank, I go there with her. She is the one who helps me, but the bank doesn’t agree that it should be her who does

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999 *Hhayi bo! ziqgoka kahle lezingangane njibone neyami ukuthi iyofaneleka uma isisebenza lapha khona lezinto angazi noma zisuke zifane zilento yini ubone zithi [‘click click’] ubone zithi zingitshele yonke into ayi ngithanda kabi ngithi nje ngiyafisa*
everything, I should be the one who does it, because it is me who is using the money and also that money is mine.  

**Phili: Do you see when she takes the money out which is there?**

**Intombi:** Money, ay! I know money, yes, I can do the money. I know money, my husband happened to give me money, when for a long time it was him that was working, I would not do bad things because I know that I want to be someone who has money.

Intombi thus narrated different degrees of knowledge and presence in this interaction, as she ‘knows money’, but can’t take it out of the bank. She was ‘there’ in person at the bank, but troubled by the faceless institution which argued that she herself should be the one to take the money out, which ‘doesn’t agree’ that constrained agency of ‘help’ is sufficient. Her daughter’s goodness, or ‘order’, was highlighted by her support of her mother and her honesty when she takes her own money out, but Intombi stressed her own goodness too in saving rather than spending the money given to her by her husband – ‘I would not do bad things’. Intombi’s words here again speak to a perceived equivalence noted in other studies in other contexts in being ‘illiterate’ or ‘uneducated’ with not being ‘good’ (Chopra, 2004), and that I discussed above, in chapter seven (pp. 169-174).

The idea that the bank might close down the reliance on social networks such as Intombi above relates was a common one. While Bongekile recounted asking the security guard to help her, Khonzeni stressed that this was not always possible, that for her too sometimes there were ‘problems’ which left her ‘really upset’, as a security guard told her that she must do it for herself, a process that he himself was able to do with ease, ‘just looking’:

The thing which made me [join Kha ri Gude], I liked it, because really, I am not educated, there were problems when I am there at the bank, I am really upset (-hlupheka) by this, I want the bank security guards to help me, but this one just looked for himself (-zi-) there, he said that a person must push the buttons for

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200 Kwingane elunjile ke aye uyabona uma siya bank ngoba sekubakho nalezi mali nami ngihola khona ebank umlungu wami ungifakela khona imali bank umakhona ukuthi kufanele njilokhu nje khona bank ngihamba naye ugena ongiyasizayo kodwa bank bake bangavumi kube ugena owenzayo akwenze mina ngoba imina engisebenzayo futhi imali eyami

201 Imali ayi imali ngiyayazi nangiyayazi imali. imali ngiyayazi mkhwenyana wami imali ubevele engipha noma kade kusasebenza yena ngingenzi izinto ezimbi ngoba ngithi ngifuna ukuthi ngibe nemali
themselves (-zi-). I really don’t know how to take money out at the bank for myself. [...] I ask them to show me how it is taken out, but it does not go in very well.\footnote{Into ezenza ngithande, ingoba vele angifundile, kunezinkinga noma ngiyalapha bank, ngiyahlupheka ngilokhu ngifunana namaphoyisa ukuthi akangisize, elinye limane lizibhekele lena lithi umuntu uyazishayela vele mina angikwazi ukuzikhiphela imali bank. [...] ngiyacela bangikhombise ukuthi kushawa kanjani kodwa akungangeni kahle.}{Khonzeni (aged 59), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 17.10.2013}

There was a sense in which there was a shame attached to ‘really not knowing’ and being ‘really not uneducated’, as in Khonzeni’s words that led to being ‘really upset’, or in standing in front of the machine and seeing it as a ‘big thing’ and just ‘shedding tears’ in Bongekile’s. For Khonzeni, this shame was mediated by the process of learning through the KRG classes, in which she had practiced ‘the machine’ through using her calculator, and had been able to learn her pin number, which she called her ‘secret’ (Khonzeni, aged 59), Entabeni class, Interview 2, 16.01.2014). This mediated both a sense of autonomy, as she was able to ‘do for –self’, but also privacy and the absence of public humiliation, as she ‘resembled’ (-fana) any other bank user through her skills and knowledge. In Khonzeni’s words, knowing an object (money) was differentiated from knowing a skill (how to...):

The thing which I am really happy about is that I already know the money, I already know how to take my cents from the machine out for myself, I already resemble (-fana) the other people.\footnote{Into enginjabulise kakulu imali sengiyagazi sengiyakwazi ukuthi njizikhiphela amacent ami emshini sengiyafana nomuntu wonke.}{Khonzeni (aged 59), Entabeni Class, Interview 2, 16.01.2014}

While some ‘practical skills’ as in Khonzeni’s account served to make ‘alike’ (-fana), others offered different forms of recognition. This was particularly true of writing names, by those learners who described themselves in terms of functional illiteracy, never having been to school, and not able to write or read their names. For Intombi, who emphasized four times during the interview that her children were doing well at school, school meetings at which she had to ‘sign’ were a site of anxiety, expressed with cries of ‘ay!’:

Ay! Ay! Let me tell you the problem there! When it is said you sign, and then on another day I didn’t know that it was necessary for there to be some sort of evidence, so that you should do it there. I said, ‘yes it’s me, I’m here, yes’ but the
paper was sent around that didn’t look the same (-fana). I didn’t know I had to make something that looked the same (-fana), I didn’t know, I didn’t know that it was necessary for me to write my title and my name, perhaps my surname? My title, my name and now my surname weren’t written in the same way (-fana) and my hands were not accustomed to it.  

*Intombi (aged 40), Ekhaya class, Interview 21.11.2013*

In Intombi’s account, the ‘evidence’ of presence represented by a signature was ontologically troubling, and her claim that ‘yes, it’s me, I’m here, yes’ was unheard in the lack of ‘sameness’ on the register. The verbal pronouncements of her presence went unnoticed, the work of her hands ‘not accustomed’ to the process of writing her signature did not look the same. Like Intombi’s experience at the bank, there was a contradictory presence and inactivity that caused anxiety, as she peppered her account with demonstrative pronouns – ‘this, that’ – for things she did not yet know how to recognise. Official knowledge and official literacy practices were constructed in the passive, of what ‘is said’, is ‘necessary’, that ‘should’ happen, that denied Intombi herself agency.

For Intombi too, this anxiety was mediated by joining the KRG classes, and learning how to recognise her name and ‘write for –self’, that became a recognition of ‘self’ in the progression from ‘illiterate’ to ‘literate’ represented by her returning to and from class:

> Our teacher [VE] gave us paper, she said ‘this is my name’, now I went away with it, I went home with the paper and I wrote, and I wrote, and I returned and I asked her ‘is this my name?’, and she said, ‘that’s it’. And I returned, and I went again, and I returned, and I asked, ‘is that my surname?’ I was so happy that I could then write it for myself (-zi-).  

*Intombi (aged 40), Ekhaya class, Interview 21.11.2013*

For many of the women, the sense of agency in being able to do ‘for –self’, which at points seemed forced upon them by outside institutions such as the bank, was contrasted with the

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204 *Ay! Ay! avuyazi inkinda elaphoke mekuthi wa sayina ngelinge ilanga angazi ukuthi kwakufuneka kube nobufakazi bani ukuthi uwenza uwenza lana ngathu mina yebo lana yebo, kodwa memiswa amaphepha awafani. Angikwazi ukwenza into efanayo angithi ngazi ukuthi kufanele ngibhale isiqalo segama lami mhlawumpe nesibongo-ke isqalo segama lami nesibongo manje akubhaleki ngendlela efanayo shuthi isandla asiwyel.  

205 uthisha wethu lo wasinikeza iphepha wathi igama lami leli manje ngahamba nalo ngayi ekhaya iphepha ngabhala ngabhala ngabuya ngamuthela ukuthi ilona igama lami wathi ilona ngabuya ngahamba fathi ngabuye ngabuza ukuthi isibongo sami lesi. Nganginjabula kabi senjityakwazi ukuzibhalela.
social networks represented by the children or neighbours whom they relied upon to help them to navigate the literate spaces they entered. Intombi herself relied on an educated neighbour for help in the school meetings, but was aware that her neighbour “felt too busy when always she must sit there, go there with me” (Intombi (aged 40), Ekhaya class, Interview 21.11.2013). For other learners, such as Prudence, needing to take her daughter with her to the bank each time doubled her costs in ways that left her furious, banging her hand on the table as she described her budget and the impact of needing to buy two bus tickets when she went into town (Prudence (aged 63), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 01.10.2013).

Prudence also expressed delight that after the classes she no longer needed to rely on security guards, as even they had robbed her (Prudence (aged 63), Entabeni class, Interview 2, 16.01.2014). A reliance on social networks for reading and writing was thus embedded in dynamics and interactions based on trust, as Sabikile also emphasised:

I wanted to know how to write my name down here, to be able to see if this person or that person is insulting that name of mine if they wrote it down on the paper, whether it’s different or something else or that is my name which is written down.206

Sabikile (aged 47), Ehholo class, Interview 2, 23.01.2014

Social networks were thus both a way to navigate literate institutions and practices, but were also precarious, as Josefina’s account highlights in her pleasure at being able to read and count the amount of her pension, receiving it in full, with none of it siphoned off:

Phili: When you go to get your pension, are you able to read your slip for yourself now?
Josefina: Yes!
Phili: They are no longer reading it for you?
Josefina: Nooo!
Phili: Wow! (laughs) They are no longer stealing parts of it now?
Josefina: No!
Phili: You count it for yourself now?

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206 Ngangifuna ukuthi ngazi ukubhala igama lami laphansi, kwazi ukubona ukuthi lomuntu ungithukile igama lami leli, melibhalwe laphansi ngiyakwazi ukulibona noma zohluleka ukulibhala phansi kodwa igama lami leli.
Josefina: Oh, my lord, I am no longer helped by the people! Instead the people ask me, “who were you taught by to count the money?” And I say, “I went, I went to school (esikoleni) to learn it (-funda).”

Phili: These are the people who were coming from [collecting their pensions] inside the hall? Josefinna: Mmm! [I say], “I went so that I could learn it from this young girl and this white person (laughs)! I’m educated!”

For Josefina, pension day was thus a specific kind of literacy practice, bound in the workings of ‘official-dom’, as Liezl Malan found in her study of local literacy practice in Bellville South, a working-class Coloured area in the Cape Peninsula of South Africa (Malan, 1996a). In navigating these spaces and practices, the status attached to ‘being educated’ was threefold: first, through the content of her new knowledge, the process of now being able to count money and read pension slips; second, through the process of learning, being recognised and able to perform ‘learner’ to other pensioners in the hall; and third, through the space that her education had opened space for interactions across power asymmetries, with both her Volunteer-Educator (‘this young girl’), and with me (‘this white person’). Her laughter and her performative claim that ‘I’m educated’ and that ‘I went to ‘school’ to learn it’ signal recognition of this new status and cultural capital by ‘the people’, reinforced by Phili’s iterative questions about reading and counting ‘for yourself’. Being ‘literate’ was performed and performative, a positioning that is explicitly relational, shaped by dominant constructs of what literacy is and does (Bartlett, 2007b).

Josefina’s account thus draws together the ways in which the ‘practical skills’ associated with ‘learning’ in the Kha ri Gude class are tied to both dominant literacy practices in official spaces, but also to questions of recognition of learning and the identity positioning that such status might afford. The autonomy of ‘doing-for-self’ adhered to presence in both the spaces themselves, but was also explicitly demanded by those who regulated the actions within them – security guards, bank tellers, or teachers in parent-teacher meetings. Social networks were a way to alleviate the pain of being revealed to be ‘uneducated’ in these spaces and to navigate the unknown, but were precarious, at times undermined by officials, at other times by contextual factors – neighbours becoming tired, or cost of travel.

207 Nkosi angisasizwa abantu, bayangibuza abantu ukuthi usufundiswe ubani ukubala imali ngathi ngihambile ngaya esikoleni ngayofunda
208 ngihambile ngayofunda kulentombazane nomlungu (laughs). Ngifundile!
Reasons to value education? Structural intersections with ‘being educated’

While associations in the early part of this chapter between education and ‘right’ work were particularly framed in distributive terms, as questions of equality in resources and knowledge, the discussion of English and differentiated literacy practices in the latter two parts of the chapter have affirmed Nancy Fraser’s contention that questions of justice need to be equally concerned with recognition (Fraser, 2005, Fraser and Honneth, 2003). The analysis of this chapter has made clear that through the absence of recognition of informal learning, and the misrecognition of the kinds of structural constraints that frame the ‘trying to try’ discourse in the stories of Princess, Badumile’s family, and Balungile’s efforts to get work that she valued, a potential for symbolic violence emerged that was shaped by the kind of investments in an ‘educated’ (‘-fundile’) position that both this chapter and the previous chapter have explored. Social networks interplayed with these discourses: the proximal networks upon which the women were able to draw were themselves constrained by structural inequality, limiting the potential for the kinds of mediated practices that have been noted in other studies (Malan, 1996a, Maddox and Esposito, 2013). The twin resources of time and economic capital constrained these networks and the space for such mediation, as much as they constrained learners’ own lives.

Within this nexus of structural and symbolic violence, Kha ri Gude offered a way to access and negotiate dominant literacy practices, and a way to access the cultural capital that adhered one set of meanings around being ‘educated’. For learners such as Josefina, transformation within this space and structure was a success of the project. For others, however, the short-term timeframe of the campaign limited the possibilities for substantive change, both in relation to the ways in which the campaign was able to ‘deliver’ or facilitate access to dominant literacy and numeracy practices, but further in the ways in which the campaign failed to speak to the broader economic and linguistic framings of the ‘-fundile’ position and the possibilities for decent work. This limited transformation is itself a signal that in working to enhance access to individualised cultural capital and self-reliance through becoming ‘educated’ (‘-fundile’), Kha ri Gude was working within these inter-related systems and structures, and potentially (re)producing the individualising discourses noted here. The following chapter will pick up and extend this discussion, by looking at how the discourse of ‘trying to try’ became embodied, in forms of stress that (re)produced within families and were turned in on the self.
9 Mediating practices and (inter)actions: embodied violence

As I noted in my discussion in chapter four of the methodological choices and research design which shaped this study, the question of how violence emerged in this thesis was one that I wanted to leave open, to allow for violence to emerge in women’s accounts of their life-histories, and to attend to the emergence of physical violence if it were disclosed or disrupted learners’ participation in the *Kha ri Gude* classes. As I also noted in that earlier discussion, the violence which emerged in the accounts of the women in the study was extensive and ranged across the typology of political, physical and emotional, structural and symbolic forms (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2004, Bourgois, 2002, Žižek, 2008, Rylko-Bauer and Farmer, 2016). None of the life-histories of the thirty women whose interviews form the focus of this study were free from violence. Violence was both an empirical phenomenon that shaped the ‘everyday’ (Stanko, 1990, Schepker-Hughes, 1993), and an analytical lens through which to understand the ways in which educational exclusion and gender inequality are inter-connected.

In exploring the inter-relationship of violence, gender and education, this chapter will first explore two accounts of physical and emotional violence that occurred contemporaneously with the campaign cycle, disclosed by two women learning in the *Ehholo* class, and which had a disruptive effect on the participation in the KRG classes of the women who described them. These two accounts were of physical violence, but of violence that was witnessed or threatened: Badumile described physical violence perpetrated by her husband against her daughter; Sabikile described a threat of physical violence against herself and her property. In analysis of these two accounts of violence, I will ask how these experiences of violence were constructed as both interrupting and interplaying with investments in education and intersections with gender, and will explore through consideration of the data how the experience of physical violence was borne in the embodiment of poor physical and mental health, and not feeling ‘well’ (*kahle*) or ‘right’.

The second part of this chapter continues to reflect on embodiment and of not being ‘right’, by exploring the overlay of structural and symbolic violence on experiences of physical violence and loss. This part of the chapter will particularly consider the manifestation or embodiment of forms of structural and symbolic violence in ‘stress’, in being ‘tired’ or ‘exhausted’ (*-khathele*), in poor mental and physical health, and in suicide.
It will reveal how the embodied enactment of the violence of structures and symbols was (re)produced within familial relationships, particularly through those between mothers and daughters, in which women’s hopes for their daughters as a source of support and success were constrained by misrecognised structural violence.

In the final part of the chapter, I will explore how the KRG classes spoke to the forms of violence discussed in these first two parts. I will discuss how the women in the study conceptualised the value of the KRG classes as a space associated with movement, talk and laughter. This part of the chapter will consider how the space and moment of the classroom was constructed as one of inclusion and mediation, that might engage with embodied violence and alleviate ‘stress’, but with some caveats about the length and focus of the campaign. It will conclude with some reflections on the ways in which attendance to violence adds layers of signification to narratives around the value of ‘education’ and the material and psycho-social resources associated with being ‘right’ discussed in the chapters thus far.

The disruptions of everyday, physical violence

As the discussion in chapter six highlighted, the space of KRG was constructed by those who designed, managed and delivered the campaign as one in which intimate partner violence (IPV) in particular could be challenged, in contexts where women “don’t know exactly what to do when the husband abuses us, don’t know where to go” (Supervisor 1, Eastern Cape, Interview 03.09.2012). KRG was seen to foster learners’ empowerment through knowledge and agency, engendering the knowledge of “how to express themselves”, of “how to fight for their rights”, of “knowing what to do”, and the confidence to act on that knowledge; “they no longer feel inferior” (Monitor 1, Eastern Cape, Interview 31.08.2012). In the training workshop which I observed during the first phase of the study, one of the Monitors from KwaZulu-Natal had given an example of a woman who had experienced IPV, disclosed to their VE and was supported to seek legal support and justice in the 2011 campaign cycle (fieldnotes, 24th March 2013). Khari Gude was seen to be a space that challenged violent (inter)actions and the taboos around speaking up against violence. Such framings of violence and the empowering processes associated with adult learning pivoted on a construction of the ‘adult-learner’ as female, disempowered, and potentially subject to violence in her daily life.
In the fifty-eight life-histories conducted with women for this study, however, explicit disclosure of IPV emerged in only one of these accounts. It did not emerge explicitly in any of the life-histories from the thirty women learning in the core four classes, although there were at times veiled references, as the data below will suggest. In this opening part of the chapter, I want to speak back to these elements of the depiction of the potential of the campaign to challenge violence, and to consider these depictions against the accounts of two women participating in the campaign: Badumile and Sabikile, both from the Ehholo class. I want to ask how far these two accounts of violence speak to the framings of the KRG adult education space as one which enabled adult learners to cross from a position of disempowerment and subject to violence to an agentic position in which violence could be challenged and reported, and to highlight the complexity and nuance that Badumile’s and Sabikile’s accounts bring to bear on narratives of dis/empowerment and the relationship between adult education and seeking justice.

Badumile was one of the most regular attendees of the Ehholo class, which she would attend with her close friend Virginia, who lived in the house opposite to her. Badumile rarely missed classes, but on one day was visibly upset and left in the middle of a class after receiving a phone call. When I spoke to the VE of the Ehholo class afterwards to ask what had happened, the VE explained that Badumile had left to try to intervene in a family argument, after a neighbour had called her to tell her that Badumile’s “husband was killing her daughter” (fieldnotes, 22nd October 2013). Badumile had called the VE outside of the class and asked the VE to help, but the VE was worried for her own safety and did not feel in a position to visit the home. She in turn asked me for advice (fieldnotes, 22nd October 2013).

By the time that the VE and I had this conversation it was already starting to get dark, and we both felt that it would not be safe for us to go in person to visit Badumile’s home that night. We therefore agreed that we would arrange to talk to Badumile together the following day, through the frame of a life-history interview, and would use the space to offer support to Badumile if the subject of violence came up. I drove the VE home; both of us were shaken and concerned that we were inadequately supporting Badumile and that visiting the following day was “not enough”, but were both unsure “what else we could do” (fieldnotes, 22nd October 2013). The VE called Badumile an hour later, and then called me in turn to tell me that the situation had “calmed down”, and that she had arranged an
interview for the following day (fieldnotes, 22nd October 2013). I was relieved to get the call, but nevertheless felt unsettled and concerned about the ethics of inaction, even as self-protection (Diphoorn, 2013).

The Ehholo VE and I arrived at Badumile’s house early the following morning, sitting in the front room with tea and biscuits that Badumile brought from her spaza, and cake that I had brought myself, to conduct the interview. After discussing her early childhood, Badumile moved from reflections on her adolescence and period of lobola in her early twenties, to life ‘now’ when she was married and in her late forties. The following extract marks the start of that socio-culturally framed temporal shift in her life-history.

Charley: How is life now, now that you are married?
Badumile: It’s nice because I live in a homestead of my husband, but it’s hard because there are some problems of the house.210
VE: Between you and your husband?211
Badumile: Between me and him.212
VE: Do you want to say or you are ‘right’ if you don’t say? Let’s pass this, because I can see that no.213
Charley: It’s ok if you don’t want to talk about it.

Badumile’s answer to my direct question about her married life thus paralleled the descriptions of Endaweni discussed in chapter five, in which ‘it’s nice’ (kumnandi) was set antithetically against ‘it’s hard’ (kunzima). At first it seemed that violence would remain unspoken, generalised or only euphemistically referred to as ‘problems of the house’; these reluctances seem to represent a taboo around disclosing violence, compounded by the sense in which violence and negative depictions of a community is often hidden from outsiders (Hume, 2007). The antithesis thus prefigured a closure, that things were ‘between’ her and her husband. Badumile spoke quietly, and there was a silence after each statement. The VE too seemed reluctant to talk about the violence, foreclosing this part of

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209 Lobola is period of engagement that can last years, in which bride-price is paid over a series of visits to the bride’s family before a wedding is arranged, which sometimes, in these times, includes two weddings, one ‘traditional Zulu’ and one ‘Western’ or ‘White’ wedding (Rudwick & Posel, 2015).

210 Kumnandi ngoba ngihleli emzini omuntu kodwa kunzima khona indaba yalayindlini.

211 ephakhathi wakho nomumyeni wakho?

212 iphakhathi kwami naye

213 uzothanda ukusho noma u-right ungashilo? Asidludle lapho, ngoba ngiyabona ukuthi hhayi.
the conversation with the exhortation ‘let’s pass this’ (asidlule), and by answering her own question – ‘do you want to say...I can see that no’. She attached a ‘right’-ness to Badumile’s silence: ‘you are ‘right’ if you don’t say’. There was a suggestion, perhaps, that Badumile was subject to IPV, but it was not explicitly disclosed.

At this stage of the interview I felt ethically torn between a desire to offer Badumile support (as we had hoped by arranging the interview so soon after Badumile’s departure from class), a concern that the VE herself was closing a space to talk that Badumile herself may have wanted to open, and an ethical concern to respect Badumile’s silence. I found Badumile’s face and body language “hard to read” and was worried about “who was enacting the taboo in silencing the talk about violence?” (field notes, 23rd October 2014). Approximately ten minutes later, however, in response to my standard final question, a space re-opened. This began not through a direct discussion of violence, but a generalised euphemistic concern that Badumile expressed that her life was not ‘right’:

Charley: *Is there anything else that you would like to tell us, or to ask us, about education or your life?*

Badumile: My life is not ‘right’. When I arrived here I was wearing size ‘40’ now I am wearing a size ‘30’ skirt. Now I see that I have lost weight from my body.214

*VE: What was the problem, what caused all these things?215*

Badumile: I don’t know.216 [...] I have collected [pills from hospital] for a long time now, I return with them, I get home and take them. But still they don’t make me feel well.217 [...] I’ve got sugar (diabetes), BP. I go and fetch them, but I’m still disturbed/troubled (-hlukumezeka). I’m not ‘right’.218

*Badumile (aged 49), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013*

Badumile thus located the toll of being ‘not-right’ in/on her body, medicalised and embodied as (high) blood pressure (BP) and diabetes, for which she took pills, but still did not feel good, still was ‘not-right’. This embodied, physical feeling was contextualised with a word that bridges the physical and the emotional in isiZulu, the feeling of being

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214 impilo yami aqikho right. *Ngifike la, bengigqoka u30-, bengigqoka u40 isikhethi. Manje ngiyabona ukuthi ngehlile emzimbeni.*

215 Yindaba kwenziwa yini zonke lezi zinto?

216 Angazi.

217 Bengikade ngiyowalanda, ngibuye nawo, ngifike ngiwadle. *Still awangiphathe kahle.*

218 Ngiyabona ukuwalanda kwami, still ngiyahlukumezeka. *Angikho right*
‘troubled/disturbed’ (-hlukumezeka), a word that suggests both poor physical and mental wellbeing.

While Badumile herself said she ‘didn’t know’ the problem, in her question that followed the VE attributed this being ‘not-right’ to the problems between Badumile and her husband, although framing this problem in terms of unemployment and drinking rather than violence, both of which Badumile had mentioned in the interview thus far and which were implied to be the reasons behind her husband’s absence from the home:

VE: Do you want to explain a little bit? Is it because he’s drinking, or because he’s not working?
Badumile: He gets angry (-thetha), he’s got a temper (-laka).
VE: Does he drink?
Badumile: Eheh (yes), he drinks.
Charley: Is he here (now)?
Badumile: No, he’s not here, he’s gone out.
VE: What happened?
Badumile: He started a fight with the child, it ended up that she was beaten without knowing why she was being beaten. He took the lock of his belt round her neck.

Badumile acknowledged her husband’s unemployment and drinking, but focused on her husband’s ‘anger’, which she emphasised with two synonyms. Her description of ‘what happened’ was evoked in vivid and direct language that emphasised the control of her husband in ‘starting the fight’ (belwisa), with their ‘child’ (ingane), a word not normally used of someone beyond puberty, a daughter whom Badumile further explicitly constructed in terms of the absence of agency in both action (‘she was beaten’) and understanding (‘without knowing why’). Badumile’s description escalated quickly to where the fight ‘ended up’: an attempted act of strangulation and the moment at which she herself was telephoned.

219 Ungathanda ukucaza kancane? Yingoba uyaphuza noma akasebenzi?
220 Uyathetha, unolaka.
221 Uyaphuza?
222 Eheh, uyaphuza.
223 Ukhona?
224 besekwenzenjani?
225 Belwisa ingane waqcina eseyishayile engazi ukuthi ubeyishayelani. Wase eyikhiya ngobhushu emuqaleni.
Once Badumile had described the act of violence, however, it became possible to talk about strategies and ways to challenge her husband’s violence, and to protect both herself and her daughter. Here the VE again emphasised that the violence might ‘pass’ (-dlule), but with an entirely different meaning than in the silencing exhortation ‘let’s pass this’ that had concerned me in the earlier part of the interview:

*VE: Is there someone that you can talk to about this thing, so that it might pass, to warn him to stop?*

Badumile: There is a person who I could talk to from the family, the senior members. […] Whenever I say he should go to the Clinic, he doesn’t want to go to the Clinic. [*VE: Perhaps it will pass? Perhaps you should report to the other members of the family?*]

Badumile: I’ve reported it, they all know. [*VE: All the family know? Are they afraid of him?*]

Badumile: They are afraid of him. [*VE: Is there no-one in the family who is not afraid of him, who might speak to him, that he should not beat the child, that he should stop this thing which he is doing?*]

Badumile: There’s no-one. They are afraid of him, all of them. They are afraid of him. The thing which I bear with pain is how he has a problem with that child. [*VE: Which child is it?*]

Badumile: That girl who just left [the house]. Yesterday his behaviour—, already the things he was doing to her, he said that he was finished with the belt. My heart is really tired (-khathele). Yes, it’s him that is not at all ‘right’, with these things

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226 Ukhona umuntu ongakhuluma naye ngale nto, ukuze idlule amukhuze ajiyeye?
227 Ukhona umuntu ongakhulumisa wasemzini omkhulu wakandlalose
228 Mengithi akahambe aye eClinic, akafuni ukuye eClinic
229 Mhlawumpe kuzodlula? Fanele ubikele nabanye bombeni?
230 Ngiyababikela, bayazi nabo
231 Bonke ama-family bayazi? Bayamusaba?
232 Bayamusaba
233 Akekho amsabayo ku-family, angathi mekhuluma naye, akashaye ingane, ajiyeye yonke le nto ayenzayo?
234 Akekho bonke bayamusaba. Bayamusaba. Into engiphatha kabuhlungu le ingane awazi ukathi inklinga ilaphi.
235 iyiphile leyo?
236 We had asked for this interview to be conducted in private. Badumile’s daughter had been present in the house, but attending to customers of the spaza that was run from a spare room of their house. At this point of the interview, she left the house.
which he is doing. He said that he told her off for where she was going, I don’t know. I don’t like it because yesterday he kept beating her.237 […] 
Charley: Have you thought about telling the police?
Badumile: I don’t know how I would be heard by the police, my god.238
VE: Have you told the Ward Counsellor?
Badumile: I told the deputy-chief (induna) [Name].239
VE: What did he say?240
Badumile: He was silent.241

Badumile (aged 49), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013

What this part of discussion between the VE of the Ehholo class and Badumile highlights clearly is that Badumile had a strong network upon which she could draw, but that the other members of her family already knew about the violence of her husband, and shared her fear of him, which she emphasised by repeating three times and with the emphatic pronoun (‘they are all afraid of him’). Reporting his violence to the Ward Councillor had been met with silence, and she could not imagine reporting this violence to the police. Her husband did not want to go to the clinic for counselling. For Badumile, it was not a question of ‘knowing her rights’, but rather that ‘what to do’ was bound in complex questions of fear and a lack of agency at the collective level that drew in both her daughter and her older relatives, and that was compounded by the silence of community leaders.

While there was not a sense in this extract of an absence of effective action through reporting, there was, however, a sense in which the responsibility for the violence was shifted discursively through the process of reporting and discussing the reporting. While earlier Badumile had located violence on her body, that she herself was ‘not-right’, in this part of the discussion she relocated being ‘not-right’ in her husband’s acts: ‘yes, it’s him that is not at all right, with these things which he is doing’ (my emphasis). This ‘yes’ was forthright where Badumile had previously been quiet, a discursive relocation through a space that was perhaps opened by our questions around ‘warning him to stop’, a kind of consciousness raising that ‘he should not beat the child’, he should/must (-fanele) stop,

238 Angazi ngizwe ngamaphoyisa, inkosi yami. 
239 Ngatshela induna [name]. 
240 Wathini? 
241 Wathula
paralleled by a corresponding emphasis that Badumile herself ‘should/must (-fanele) go out and report’.

While this analysis highlights ways in which meanings around violence might be (re)produced, challenged or shifted, it is important to acknowledge that this discussion occurred within a space delineated for a life-history, and not within the adult education space itself. While the Monitor whose words I discussed in chapter six (pp. 136-7) stressed the role of Kha ri Gude in empowering women to make use of reporting mechanisms, the research encounter with Badumile highlights the complexity both of the mechanisms themselves, and of the ways in which adult education might be seen to foster empowerment. I do think that Volunteer-Educators trained well in questions of gender justice could be well placed to engage with the kinds of “problems at home” that Badumile refers to here, complementing the networks offered by family, or by governance structures that included both unused state services (the clinic or the police) and the community izinduna structures, which were ‘silent’ on the issue. As I discussed earlier in chapter six of this thesis, however, the campaign training focused on the technicist aims of ‘delivering’ literacy, numeracy and practical skills. The sense in which Kha ri Gude operated only as a women’s movement in practice – “de facto”, to use the words of one of the SAQA Officials – meant that opportunities to progress gender justice may have been lost.

Badumile’s account thus both does and does not map against the Monitor’s construction of the relationship between adult education and violence reduction and prevention, of ‘knowing your rights’ and ‘what to do’ as being sufficient to challenge domestic violence. In (re)presenting an account of violence that is ‘domestic’, located in the home, but not perpetrated by a husband against a wife, it explores a different constellation of the ‘how dare you touch them!’ frame that the Monitor introduced. In discussing this account, I have suggested that this frame fails to capture the complexity of the taboos around reporting violence, and the ways in which social networks themselves can be regulated by fear. I have suggested tentatively, however, that the power of discursive constructions around violence – through taboos that it should be ‘passed’ – might be challenged through talking, talking that in turn might shift the ‘the problem’ from women’s bodies (in the affect of experiences of violence as both victims and witnesses) to the acts and perpetrators themselves. It highlights the importance of interpreting and contextualising acts of
violence through both talk and emotional engagement, and acknowledging the complexity of the inter-relationships in which acts of violence are embedded.

Our discussion about how to ‘protect’ Badumile herself and her daughter, however, was complicated by constructs of gender and age, and the ‘advantage’ that education was seen to offer, particularly for unmarried girls who had reached sexual maturity:

Charley: Is there somewhere that she could go, to send her to stay in another place with your relatives?242

Badumile: There is. I was thinking about that, but he (my husband) would say that I am sending her off to the men. I was still wanting her to finish school (aqede esikoleni); she should finish school (aqede esikoleni). I know that I should start down there, I should speak with the family. I was thinking about taking her out, sending her to some other place.243

Badumile (aged 49), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013

Badumile thus articulated her dilemma around whether to send her daughter away through two embodied, gendered constructions of ‘protection’ – one of her daughter’s bodily integrity, the second of her sexualised identity. Her husband was concerned that if her daughter would leave the family home she would be subject to men’s interest, ‘sending her off to the men’. But there was also a sense of the protective value of education. This reference to the relationship between discursive value of education and violence construct double notions of ‘risk’: the ‘risk’ of out-of-school girls as promiscuous and the ‘risk’ of not attending or completing Matric, that Badumile repeated twice for emphasis (‘[she should] finish school’).

For Badumile, therefore, investments in education added a layer of complexity to the available responses to gendered violence. In what Martha Nussbaum calls a tragic choice (Nussbaum, 2011b, pp. 37-8), Badumile was forced between a choice whether to protect her daughter from physical violence, and to protect her from the potential structural violence of the disadvantage of not completing her Matric. Present (in both senses of the word) risk

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242 Kungezeka ukuthi ahambe umhlalise kwenye indawo ezihlobeni zakho?
was traded against the future risk of deprivation. ‘Being educated’ continued to signify advantage – the value of ‘finishing school’ – and was overlaid by constructs of a ‘good’ girl who was not sexually active. Knowing ‘what to do’ in this context involved complex decision making and competing normative accounts that Badumile had not yet resolved: “I was thinking about... I was wanting... I know that I should... I was thinking about...”.

These questions of time and risk were also evident in the second account of violence to which I now want to turn. The data presented in this account is drawn from our second interview with Sabikile, conducted after the campaign cycle had ended. Like Badumile’s account, violence emerged in Sabikile’s narrative in response to a broad and open question, after I asked how things were now that the Kha ri Gude classes had finished:

We feel very bad because we used to like school, because we liked to study things when it was possible to, things like that. No, it was just ‘right’, I can just say that, that we were ‘right.’ Because (but) I ended up not being able to learn well and I ended up being already afraid. One day it was said that I was supposed to be going to school tomorrow, but I was ambushed by people at night. Now it all changed, whenever I would go down the hill here [to class], I ended up afraid because they said they would drag me there into the forest, they kept me awake when I was at home.

It ended up that I stopped learning, it’s better if I stopped going down there at the Hall [to class], because they would be waiting on the road for me, inside other people’s houses, and then when I would be going home—Ay! Now I’ve stopped [attending class] like this, I am already just staying.

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244 My thanks to Laela Adamson for her insights into the role of time in trade-offs and tragic choices between present and future capabilities, in both her paper at the Human Capabilities Development Association Conference in Cape Town (2017), as well as in the discussions which preceded it and in planning our panel.

245 Siphatheka kabi ngoba nathi besisithanda isikole, ukuthi-ke besisathanda ukufunda uma kufindeka, izinto ezinjalo. Hlayi, besi-right nje, singasho njalo besi-right. Ngoba phela ngâjine, ngasakwazi ukuthi njifunde kahle ngâjcina sengihleli senqisâba, nqelinaye ilanga kwâthi ngizojâ ekoseleni ngakusasa ngahlaselwa abantu ebudzaku. Manje kuthe sekushitsha sekuphiwâ ngalana, ngâjcina senqisâba zothi ngiyadonsa lana ehlahini, bangivukele endleni

246 Angeke ngiyo kanjalo, ukuthi aakuphi kodwa ngiyakuthola ukuthi bafuna izinkoma kodwa ukuthi amaphi angazi angeke ngqcine amanga, ngâjcina senqisâba ukufunda ukuthi ngizokwehla lana kuqcono ehholo bengizehlela emugwaqeni phakathi kwemizî yabantu ngihuye ngiye ngizye ekhaya ayi! Ngâjcina sengihleli njena
Hhawu! Yes, it’s just in the evenings that I’m very scared. I’m afraid that when I left school -, I heard that when I was let out of school -, I’m scared because I don’t know who is going to kill me.247 [...] 

As you know it’s something from when its dark, you will not be able to tell who you saw coming out or who you didn’t see. I never even went to the police because there wasn’t any evidence.248

Sabikile (aged 47), Ehholo class, Interview 2, 23.01.2014

Like Badumile, the description of violence was both focused on a factual description of physical violence (‘drag me into the forest...kill me’) but shaped by multiple ellipses (‘I would be going home - Ay!’... ‘when I left school -’) and emotional expressions (‘I’m afraid’, ‘I’m very scared’). Like Badumile, violence disrupted Sabikile’s attendance and the ‘possibility’ of her learning. Sabikile represented this disruption in terms of ‘feeling bad’, a distinct and marked difference in her everyday life that she mirrored in her speech by an abrupt linguistic shift from a collective enjoyment of class (expressed in plural verbs) to an individual experience (expressed by the singular, ‘I’):

Unlike Badumile, however, who had returned to class after the violent incident discussed above, the disruption to Sabikile’s attendance was complete and final, expressed by the assertion that ‘now it all changed’, and the parallel repetitions throughout her account that ‘I ended up not being able to learn’ and ‘I ended up afraid’. Her account adds layers of nuance to the signifying chains around ‘just staying’ discussed in chapter seven, making clear the role that violence plays in regulating space and mobility, and the impact that such regulation can have on learning for both adult and school-aged learners. Sabikile had overheard a group of people whom she did not know planning a robbery of her cows, an important source of material and symbolic wealth in Zulu culture (Hammond-Tooke, 2008), who had been waiting to ‘ambush’ her, hiding in the bushes outside her compound. The failed ‘ambush’ that she experienced, her fear that it would recur when she went ‘down the hill’, her concern that ‘they would drag me there into the forest’, and her emphasis upon the darkness of evenings and night framed the socio-spatial dimensions of

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248 Phelikhona ukuthi yinto yasebusuku ngeke uso ukuthi ubani ngoba usuke umgubonanga umuntu, nase maphoyiseni ngeke uze ngoba uhufakazi bebungekho
her living environment as one of risk and potential violence. While flexibility of the timing and location of the adult education classes was built into the design of *Khari Gude*, the adults in Sabikile’s class had chosen to learn later in the day to make time for informal and formal work. Learners were encouraged to travel together, but the location of Sabikile’s homestead at the very top of the hill, furthest from the *Ehholo* class, limited this support.

This account of violence contemporary with the campaign cycle which Sabikile gave was thus contextualised by the socio-spatial environment of her home in *Endaweni* and by the socio-spatial dimensions of attending an adult education class. But Sabikile’s account of contemporary violence was further situated within a history of bearing witness to acts of inter-personal and community-level Violence (*Udlame*) in KwaZulu-Natal of the 1990s (as discussed in chapter five, pp. 98-100) that shaped her understanding of risk and vulnerability where she lived, and which impacted decisions around the value of education and attendance. In 1990 and 1991 respectively, Sabikile’s husband and her mother-in-law had been found murdered on the road, and their cows had been stolen. Sabikile attributed the failure of her eldest son in his Matric as well as her daughter’s decision to drop out from school to the disturbance (*-hlukumezeka*) of this period after the two murders and in a time when no perpetrators had been arrested (Sabikile (aged 47), *Ehholo* class, Interview 2, 23.01.2014).

Sabikile’s account of violence differs from Badumile’s in many respects: it was not an account of violence within but rather outside and around her home; the violence was physical but threatened, not actualised; Sabikile was not sure of who she had heard or where exactly they now were. In her emphasis on her inability to ‘see’ the threat, Sabikile’s account makes clear that the lack of evidence made this threat of violence impossible to report. For different reasons, Sabikile and Badumile both felt unable to report the violence to the police. But both women gave accounts of violence that drew in the broader socio-cultural context, and highlighted the influence of impoverished institutions and communities on potential and actualised direct violence which constrained their capability to act, both to challenge the violence and to fulfil other aspirations which they expressed.

Sabikile’s account, like Badumile’s, also contained indications of the inter-relationship between forms of violence, and the ways in which forms of violence interplayed with
gender. In a later part of the interview, when Sabikile was discussing her eldest daughter whom she had described as ‘troubled’ or ‘disturbed’ (-hlukumezekile) by the murder of her father and grandmother, she further explained that her daughter had dropped out of school because of an early pregnancy:

It’s painful when you are not educated, but at school you mix the boys with the girls, you can never avoid that a girl might not choose one, giving birth, you know, giving birth perhaps when she is 13 or 14, giving birth.249 [...] She stayed at home here, I said that she should stay at home for three years to raise the baby. When the baby was still small I was just really fed up. [But] eventually I saw that it doesn’t help to be fed up, that she should go back to school, and so I sent her back.250

Sabikile (aged 47), Ehholo class, Interview 2, 23.01.2014

The expression of being ‘fed up’ or ‘angry’ (-cikeka) which Sabikile expressed in this account of her daughter’s early pregnancy here was complex. Sabikile was ‘fed up’ or ‘angry’ with the father of the child, whom she refused to let in the house, and described as unemployed, an “older boy that you don’t realise is older because he was smaller in height” and as someone who was “around, but it was as if he was not around because he is drunk” (Sabikile (aged 47), Ehholo class, Interview 2, 23.01.2014). But Sabikile was also ‘fed up’ with her daughter, whom she refused to allow to go back to school and kept at home for the first three years of raising her child, and whom she had warned that if she ever gave birth again before marriage she would chase her out of the house, clapping her hands as she spoke to emphasise the firmness of her intent (Sabikile (aged 47), Ehholo class, Interview 2, 23.01.2014). Sabikile simultaneously recognised that for her daughter to remain uneducated would be painful, and blamed her daughter for the pregnancy.

As with Badumile’s account, gendered norms that stigmatise the sexuality of adolescent daughters were thus in tension with the discursive value placed on education, and the potential that education could offer as a salve to counter despair, as the only source of hope for access to a range of social and economic capital:

249 kubuhluku ukungafundi kodwa eskoleni uqhathanisa umfana nentombazane. Ngeke uze ukugweme ukuthi ingane ingaqomi, uzele yazi uzale mhlawumpe beno 13 to 14 wazala.
250 Wahlala lana ekhaya ngithi uhlale iminyaka emi thathu, wakhulisa ingane, ingane yayincane futhi ngasisacikekele njena. Ngabuye ngabona ukuthi akusizi ukucikeka kwami akaye eskoleni, ngamphindisela eskoleni.
It’s important that [my children] should study because they have not yet finished [school]. It is important that they should study, because when I am at a loss (-hluleka), what should I do? The food is finished in the hut; we just look at each other. I don’t know where I should get it from, because it’s finished.251 (silence)

Sabikile (aged 47), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 07.11.2013

The accounts of Sabikile and Badumile thus highlight the complexity of the value of ‘being educated’, coloured with both hope and aspirations, but also complex choices that draw in notions of safety and risk, of potential and actualised violence, and the power of normative gender discourses.

In both Sabikile and Badumile’s accounts, a central pivot of the emotional and embodied effect of violence was concerned with their relationships with their children, particularly with their daughters. The following discussion considers a different dimension of the embodiment of inter-generational violence through consideration of accounts of relationships with daughters and grand-daughters that were shaped both by physical violence and loss but also by the structural violence of poverty, underemployment and unemployment, and the paucity or insufficiency of social capital, nets and networks to alleviate this poverty. I will draw out another facet of the embodiment of the effects of violence, by looking at the ways in which structural violence was experienced, and (re)produced in inter-generational and gendered (inter)actions of blame and dis/stress.

‘A long way from earning’: (re)producing violence at the gender-generation-poverty-education intersect

These days we live second by little second! (laughs)252

Virginia (aged 37), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 15.10.2013

As I have discussed in earlier chapters, constructions of being ‘un/educated’ were imbricated in forms of structural and symbolic violence that shaped both retrospective and prospective aspirations. In those earlier chapters, I have highlighted how women’s senses of themselves were relational, shaped by the social networks of family and close

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251 Yah. ibalulekile ukuthi bafunde nqoba nabo abakaqedi kubalulekile ukuthi bafunde kodwa nami mengihluleka ngizokwenzani ukuhla kuqaphela edlini sibukane tho le ukuthi angazikuthi ngizokuthathaphi mese kuphelile
252 okwamanje siyaphila okomuzuzwanyanal! (laughs)
neighbours. In this part of the chapter, I want to consider a different constellation of the
tension between the hope that education might offer and the lived experience of women’s
accounts of violence by exploring the structural and symbolic violence of poverty as it
related to accounts of relationships with daughters. I will reflect on how the immediate
stresses of poverty, of ‘living second by little second’, shaped these relationships, and
manifested in forms of ‘stress’ and ‘tiredness’ as well as negative relational emotions of
feeling ‘fed up’, such as Sabikile described above.

The four women in this part of the chapter all experienced forms of physical violence and
loss that prefigured and shaped the structural violence that I will discuss in their accounts
below. Khonzeni opened her life-history by describing herself as “without parents,
without a mother, without a father, and without a brother”253 (Khonzeni (aged 59), Entabeni
class, Interview 1, 17.10.2013). She had been abused by the Aunt who cared for her when
she was young, forced into a marriage and abused by the family of her absent husband,
and violently challenged when she tried to seek work without a valid passbook. Khonzeni
was one of three of the thirty women learning in the core classes who disclosed that they
had considered suicide. Her relationship with her daughter offered both a source of
resilience and a source of stress, of hope and aspiration, shaped by an inter-generational
interdependence that was located in a broader history of abuse and financial insecurity.

For Khonzeni, who had “never, never”254 been to school, who was ‘still a year away from
her pension’, and who worked for days a week in the EPWP Zibambele role cleaning the
road for the municipality, the act of sending her single daughter (now aged 30) to school
had been a conscious one, because:

She is the one (my daughter) who should help me, because I am not educated. But
she hasn’t got work. She reached Matric, and then she worked as a domestic
worker, but that bad little piecemeal job quickly came to an end.255

Khonzeni (aged 59), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 17.10.2013

254 nhlobo, nhlobo
255 Iyona ezongisiza ezintweni eziningi, ngoba mina angifundile. Kuthi umsebenzi akakuwutholi. Wafikile u-10, wake
wasebenza emajalidini, kodwa kwashesha kwaphela lelo tohvana elibhedayo.
These inter-generational interactions could thus form elements of social networks – my daughter helping me – and discursively shaped attitudes around what constituted education and its outcomes. Khonzeni’s hope that her daughter would get work (umsebenzi) after reaching her Matric, however, ended with the disappointment expressed by the diminutive ‘little piecemeal job’ (itohwana) and the description of even this short-term work as ‘bad’, in ways that echoed the distinctions between ‘right’ work and decent work that both Khonzeni and others made about their own employment, and which I discussed in chapter eight. Khonzeni’s daughter had been unemployed for two years, and did not have the money to pay to photocopy her CV for applying for jobs (Khonzeni (aged 59), Entabeni Class, Interview 2, 16.01.2014). Her daughter’s unemployment led to food insecurity, compounded by a lack of social networks, associated both with the death of Khonzeni’s husband, but also the shame of asking neighbours for help:

We just stay without, staying without at home until the sun goes down, it is better if we just go to sleep just like that. It was better when her father was alive.256 [...] We just stay, with a difficult life. You might see homes of other people staying just like that, but it’s hard to tell someone your secret, so we only stay, my daughter and me, just us.257

Khonzeni (aged 59), Entabeni class, Interview 2, 16.01.2014

I have already discussed the prevalence of unemployment and underemployment, and of the uneven returns to education that Khonzeni’s account signal in relation to Balungile’s experience, who was of a similar age to Khonzeni’s daughter. What interests me here, and I think is indicative of the damage that such a powerful aspirational discourse in the context of structural inequalities can do, is the way that these uneven returns translated into a notion of individualised failure, in which shame can quickly slip to blame. These slippages intersect with norms and constructs of gender, as the discussion below of Virginia’s family highlights.

Virginia described the way in which her hope around education had shifted over the generations, as she first ‘motivated’ (-qhuba) her daughter and then her grand-daughter.

256 sike sihlale siswele, ukuswela hlale lize lishone ilanga ekhaya kungcono silala ele njenak. Bekungcono kakhona ubaba wakhe
257 impilo enzima ungabona imizi yabantu ihleli kanti kuba nalokho bunzima ongeke utshele umuntu kwimfihlo yakho kaphela sihlale nengane yami kaphela
This motivation was shaped by experiences of violence; Virginia’s two sons had died in the Violence of 1984 and her daughter was the “only one left”.

If you are educated, you can get a well-paid job, just like I sent my daughter now to be educated. Because I am not educated it is better for me to drive on (-qhuba) my daughter, my granddaughter. 

I won’t help [my daughter] with anything! It is her that should help me because I was trying to educate her! Now I won’t help with anything. It is me that lives with her child. She lives with my sister in [nearby place]. She phones her child, maybe she phones her when she wants make-up, something like that, small things because she doesn’t have any money. She isn’t working.

For me, I was hoping that she would get well-paid work, because she is the one that is better, she went a little bit to school. She has a little bit of knowledge, she’s not like me. Perhaps she would have been the one to get better work, I was encouraging her that she should reach standard 10, so that she could have got better work.

Virginia (aged 57), Eholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013

Virginia, who had a piecemeal job (itoho) as a domestic worker at the time of the research, drew together in her account several different themes of the faith in education and the way in which unfulfilled investments can lead to becoming ‘tired’ (-khathele), in Virginia’s case with her daughter, about whom she expressed frustration that she ‘isn’t working’ and a sense of blame (‘she phones her when she wants make-up’). Virginia was hoping that her daughter would get well-paid, better work, because she was ‘better’, with a ‘little bit’ of school attendance, a ‘little bit of knowledge’. For Virginia, her daughter was ‘not like me’, a distinction (as discussed in chapter seven, pp. 153-159) through the hegemonic discourses of education that masked any structural constraints (see just below).

258 Nezingane esasinazo, zashona ngodlame, kwasala eye ntombazane
259 mawufundile, uyakwazi ukuthola umsebenzi osile, njengoba efundisa ingane yakhe manje. Ngoba angifundanga kuncono ngiqhube ingane yami, umaahlalo wami.
Virginia thus both presented a lived experience of education not leading to work for her daughter, and a retained investment in the discourse that being educated would lead to well-paid work, which she had now transferred to hope and motivation of her grand-daughter:

Actually, I can say that I am tired of my daughter (-khathele). I can say that now I would drive on (-qhuba) the child (grand-daughter), because she (my daughter) is already old, and she has never tried to get piecemeal work, she has not tried to try things for herself. I can say that I would tell her, ‘never do nothing’. Because I hope that my grand-daughter will just study. I think that she will do the Matric, she can finish hers.  

Virginia (aged 57), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013

Virginia’s disappointment in her daughter, expressed by her becoming ‘tired’ adhered both to her age (‘she is already old’), to her not ‘trying to get piecemeal work’, to not even ‘trying to try’. Virginia did not locate her daughter’s unemployment in her early pregnancy which had meant that she had dropped out of school before she got her Matric, nor in raising her child without any support (“the father of the child never paid anything, never did anything at all”263), nor did she acknowledge that her daughter may not want a piecemeal job, but rather blamed her for ‘doing nothing’. Such material and psychological investments in the value of education when countered with lived realities were even more painful, but not recognised as gendered, raced or structural constraints, instead located as individual failure and the absence of individualised effort. The visibility of education as a resource, that was mobilised in the kinds of discourses of distinction that I have discussed in the two preceding chapters translated to the blame which adhered to judgments that those with education but without work were doing nothing, not even ‘trying to try’.

For Virginia, this ‘doing nothing’ was powerfully contrasted with her own attempts to work, and to support and motivate her grand-daughter, despite her own illness, and the unemployment and illness of her husband:

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263 ubaba wengane akazange ayikhokhele akazange enze lutho nje.
I don’t know how I will drive her on (-qhuba), how I will send her to College, because I only work just for the three days. It would be better if her grandfather was still earning money. But now he doesn’t earn anything. I am a long way myself from earning… now I don’t know. My life is not good. Weh! I can say that I am ill with different things, bone problems, sugar (diabetes), BP, bone problems. [...]

[My granddaughter wants to do] nursing, she said that she does not want to be a doctor. But now where would I get that power/money (amandla)? Where would I get that power/money (amandla), when it’s just all on me? [...]

I think that there is nothing else [to tell you], because I have given out everything which I held inside. Particularly about the child of my child, I was hoping that she would be someone, but the power/money (amandla) is not here (awekho).266

Virginia (aged 57), Eholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013

Virginia’s description of herself as a ‘a long way from earning’ thus signified a range of different ways in which her life, and her children and grand-children’s lives, were subject to structural and resource constraints. Virginia’s piecemeal work (itoho) did not lead to ‘amandla’, emphasised by her repeated, spatial question – “where would I get that amandla?” and her specific, spatialised assertion that this power/money/capital was absent: it’s not here (awekho). This distance (understood through the figurative distance of distance from political, social and economic capital) was nevertheless internalised as a burden of poverty in Virginia’s account: ‘it’s just all on me’. This ‘all on me’ is captured again in isiZulu by a locative, and could be translated (in other contexts) as ‘it’s at me / my house’ – the pressure to work and to motivate her daughter and grand-daughter was described in the most proximal of terms. The distance from amandla was felt in an embodied pain, which Virginia ‘held inside’ herself, and which manifested itself in multiple illnesses – bone problems, sugar, diabetes – which were further exacerbated by the absence of social networks (‘it would be better if her grandfather was still earning money’). The structural violence of poverty was enacted on Virginia’s own body and
misrecognised as individualised failure, experienced as individualised ‘stress’. Virginia passed away just after my return to the UK in 2014, aged 58.

The partial recognition of the structural violence that the distance framing of *amandla* suggests was echoed in other learner accounts too. Like Virginia, Busi deployed a spatial metaphor to frame her distance from *amandla*. Perhaps unlike others, Busi recognised that it was proximity to *amandla* that enabled ‘trying’, and that would make possible the actualisation of potential, and of hope:

*Charley: Why would you like your daughter to continue with studying?*

*Busi: […] For her, I am hoping that it might happen. All the children in these times of ours, I can say the children can learn, a child in these times of ours, when they get the opportunity, they should study. I like that now, when I might get close to that money/power (*amandla*) I would try, do you see?*267* […]*

*Busi (aged 35), Endleleni class, Interview 14.11.2013*

Busi’s belief in education was discursively reinforced through reflecting on friends, family and fellow churchgoers’ experiences, who she felt were ‘studying far’ and whose lives she set against the ‘not-nice’-ness of ‘just staying’ at home that she characterised as her own and her daughter’s experience, an experience that she considered to be exceptional:

*And those other children, they are studying do you see? It’s like staying at home is just not nice. And at church, those children are studying, studying far, their children study so to me it’s just usual.*268

*Busi (aged 35), Endleleni class, Interview 14.11.2013*

Busi’s account thus fleshes out some of the spatial metaphors of a distance from ‘*amandla*’, and highlights the ways in which the stasis of ‘staying’ at home could be contrasted with the movement of ‘studying, studying far’. I think that ‘studying far’ was of course literal – the ‘other children’ she refers to would be at universities located geographically far from

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267 kodwa naye ngiyaphakathi kungabili sonke nje ngane esikhathini samanjane ngathi izingane zingafunda ingane esikhathini samanjane uma ilithola ithuba ifunde. Ngiyathanda manje mengase ngithole amandla ngaisingazama uyabona

268 nezinye izingane ezinganganye ziyafunda uyabona njengoba ehelezi ekhaya akumnandi nje nasesontweni nje ezinganeni ekande efunda nazo ziyafunda, so kumina kuyazwela
Endaweni – but perhaps also figurative, a social distance that adhered to imaginaries of what higher and further education might provide.

Like Virginia and Khonzeni, however, the hope that Busi expressed for her daughter was unfulfilled, and it was at this point in the interview that Busi’s distress was most manifest. Busi had lost her husband to suicide when her daughter was still young, and tears had been close to the surface as she related trying to survive without him, and without his father who had recently passed away. My question that pivoted on ‘change’ prompted a breakdown in Busi’s composure, as she (re)produced the kinds of sloganic investments in education noted earlier in this thesis, but through her tears: an affective response that was caught in both distance from amandla, and the hope that ‘these times of ours’ might offer, in what she had felt should be ‘usual’ for children born of her daughter’s generation:

Charley: What do you think will change if your daughter continues with her education?
Busi: --- (cries)
Charley: Would you like to stop?
Phili: Shall we stop, Sisi?
Busi: (crying) If she can continue, she will find a good life.

Busi (aged 35), Endleleni class, Interview 14.11.2013

Veronica too expressed this language of power, of overlapping and intersecting forms of social, cultural and economic capital, and of investments in ‘trying’ for her children as well as for herself. Veronica had had trouble with an unregistered college from which she had been unable to recover R7000 (the equivalent of six month’s wages for her), and which she had paid in fees for her daughter:

I am trying all the time, so that my children can study, so that they might continue. But I can say, I can just say that I’m a single parent, these ones do not have fathers. I don’t know where to get support from, but me, I’m just trying. I want them to continue forward (-qhubeka).269 [...] (in English) But now I’m feeling tired, and there’s nothing that I can do. R7000 it’s not a small money, it’s a lot of money for me. [...]  

269 Yah, ngiyazama zonke izikhathi nje, abantwana bami bafunde bangaqhubeka. Noma ngizothi, ngizothi nje ngi single parent, noma abanye baye abasena baba. Manje lona omunye angikwazi ukumlekelela noma support njike ngizame kuthi. Ngiyathanda baqhubeka phambili
Veronica’s laughter here was humourless, the ‘stress’ of ‘trying’ as a ‘single parent’ without support, and subject to exploitation by unregistered colleges that took advantage of hope and literal and figurative investments in education that had left her ‘tired’ and conscious that ‘there’s nothing that I can do’. For Veronica too these burdens were gendered, laid at Veronica’s feet; she described three of the four fathers of her children as having each in turn “run away” from their financial and emotional caring responsibilities, which had “left” her both with four children to care for and with HIV positive status (Veronica, (aged 42) Endleleni class, Interview 1, 14.10.2013).

Structural violence thus expressed itself in affective ways in all of their accounts: in tears (Busi), in empty laughter (Veronica), and in repeated rhetorical questions and exclamations (Virginia). So too it was embodied in each of their accounts, in being ‘tired’, in feeling ‘stress’ and ‘pain’. For each of these women, the physical violence, loss and absence indicated here was overlaid by (gendered) burdens of care and the weight of poverty that enacted the intersect of structural and symbolic forms of violence on their bodies, and shaped inter-generational dynamics in (re)producing symbolic violence through relational dynamics of blame and shame.

Understanding the (re)productions of violence within familial relationships, and through notions of both self-blame and shame in this way both engages with and extends theorisations of symbolic violence. This understanding fleshes out two particular “reverberations” of self-blame and shame (Bourgois, 2002), by setting out first how such reverberations are relational, (re)produced within mother-daughter and intimate interactions, and second how structures are turned inward and experienced on the body, contributing to an increasing field of research that highlights that poverty and disadvantage are associated with poor mental and physical health (Allen et al., 2014). These findings powerfully resonate with and counterbalance a range of themes brought out in other studies in South Africa which reflect on the ways in which hope and opportunity without resources or power can perpetuate structural and symbolic violence (Swartz et al., 2012, De Lannoy and Swartz, 2015), but which focus on the experiences of

\[\text{wabaleka!}\]
young men in navigating these structures and pathways into and out of criminality and violence. As a counterpoint to these studies, a focus on the mothers of young women, navigating simultaneously their own educational pathways and those of their daughters, highlights a different constellation to the community-level analysis that this work offers.

In bringing together the physical and the structural forms of violence in this chapter I am not suggesting an equivalence, but rather highlighting the affect and embodiment that located stress proximally and immediately ‘on me’, while the economic, social and political capital associated with ‘amandla’, with earning and economic equality, or even minimal thresholds for lives of value, were located as ‘far off’. Both the structural and the physical violence regulated and interplayed with opportunity and with the possibilities for both literal and figurative mobility. In the following section, I will consider the space of the KRG class as a way to mediate this distance and this pain, through meeting, talking and laughing together. I will take forward this spatial analysis to explore imaginaries of the literacy class as a new space in which memories of exclusion interacted contiguously with expressed hopes for future inclusion, drawing on work that sees literacy classes as an ‘event’ that is constituted by participants, texts and social (inter)actions (Moss, 2007).

‘Sisekoleni!’ (‘We are at school!’): talking & laughter as mediating acts

I liked it really just to meet with people.\textsuperscript{271}

\textit{Busi (aged 35), Endleleni class, Interview 14.11.2013}

I wanted to accustom myself to using my hands, because I used to stay for myself at home and I used to do nothing.\textsuperscript{272}

\textit{Thandeka (aged 24), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 22.10.2013}

As I discussed in chapter two, a number of authors who have understood adult education in affiliative terms (Alkire, 2002, pp. 255-270, Prins, 2006, Prins, 2010, Prins et al., 2009), reflecting on the ways in which metrics of measuring the success of adult education could usefully shift to including social rather than solely economic benefits. In this part of the chapter, I want to build on this body of work by reflecting on the relationship between an

\textsuperscript{270} Ngiyathanda vele ukuhlwangana nabantu vele

\textsuperscript{272} Yingoba isikhati esiningi ngifuna uzipwa ukuthi ngisebenzise isandla ngoba bengizihlalela ekhaya ngingenzi lutho
affiliative account of adult education, and gender and violence, asking how these three together might help to progress our understanding of the women’s literacy field.

In a number of learners’ accounts of their experiences in class, a contrast with the ‘just staying’ at home was set up through an account of the *Kha ri Gude* classes as somewhere where learners could meet people and ‘stay nicely’, doing something rather than ‘nothing’, a place to be ‘right’:

We were staying there very nicely, our teacher treated us very well, there was no problem while she was teaching us. Even where we didn’t understand very well she would go back and show us how it well how it is. Even if you have a ‘hard brain’, if your brain was hard, she would still try to make everything ok, so that we could stay very nicely.

*Sabikile (aged 47), Ehholo class, Interview 2, 23.01.2014*

Being ‘treated well’ and having ‘no problem’ while being taught could thus be interpreted at two levels. *Prima facie*, Sabikile’s account is one of positive relationships with the teacher, being treated with respect and patience despite her idiomatically described ‘hard brain’. The teacher would ‘try to make everything ok’ with learning. But there is also a sense of the affiliative power of being ‘treated…very well’, of ‘having no problem while she was teaching us’. Such absence of problems contiguous with the teaching was also constructed in other learners’ accounts, such as Tholi’s below, through a form of ‘understanding’ that was both about the process of being in a classroom and the supportive social interactions that the space afforded:

Tholi: Hhawu! For a long time, we treated each other very well. Hhawu! We treated each other very well. If you didn’t know a thing we would each be laughed at by each other. We felt at ease - you should think about that thing which was said, and when you return (home), you return with understanding, it used to put an end to everything carried in your heart.

*Charley: What made you laugh at school?*

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273 This isisZulu expression translates to finding it difficult to learn; for contrast, consider the English expression ‘to absorb information like a sponge’.

274 *Hhawu! bekade sipathene kahle kabi. Hhawu! Besiphathene kahle kabi mungabe ungayazi into bekuhlekwana bukhululeka ucbange lento oyikhulumayo mesekubuya kubuya umqondo bekuphela konke ukucabanga enhlizinyo.*
Tholi: I suppose something like when someone asked something, if something was beating them, the others would laugh. [...] And our Miss would just say we should be quiet, we shouldn’t laugh, and we shouldn’t just point it out when someone asked a question. Eheh. She said we shouldn’t copy each other’s work! But we treated each other very well, and we just used to call out for each other, we said, ‘hey! School Child! Let’s go to school!’ (Phili laughs). We used to call out for each other like children from school – ‘class mates!’ (Phili and Tholi laugh)

Tholi (aged 55), Ehholo class, Interview 2, 23.01.2014

In her account of the classroom space, Tholi draws an account of an affiliative space through a repetition of reciprocal verbs, which I have translated into English with ‘each other’ or ‘together’: treating each other well (repeated thrice for emphasis), laughing together, calling out for each other on the way to school, and a performative play with the idea of ‘copying each other’. This affiliative reciprocity was valued and valuable for the ways in which it helped learners to relax (-kululeka), and to put an end to things ‘carried in your heart’, in ways that echoed Smangele’s description in chapter seven of a symbolic return to education as alleviating the difficulty in her heart (pp. 166-169).

Relaxation and the alleviation of emotional pain was signified as a contrast with two specific constructs that have been discussed in this thesis in relation to their symbolically violent effects. The first centres around mediation of the anxiety associated with the return to school (as discussed in chapter six, pp. 143-146), suggested by the play of ‘copying’: Tholi presents ways in which the potential shame that might adhere to ‘becoming’ an ‘adult-learner’ was resisted through directly claiming this positionality (‘hey! school child! Let’s go to school!), and doing so in public, by ‘calling out for each other’ as ‘classmates’ (a word for which she used the English loan word). Such public, collective laughter around the subjectivity of ‘adult-learner’ neutralises the potentially violent laughter at making mistakes, copying each other, having a ‘hard brain’ or being unable to complete tasks that Tholi here rejects, but that was shown for its force in the earlier extended vignette between Kwazekwakhe & Veronica that was discussed in chapter six, as well as in Sabikile’s account of the pleasure being treated well.

275 Angithi phela umuntu ubekubuzwa bekuhlula okanye abanye bekuhleka, angithi ubesacabanga athule ahleke naye asikhombiseke umisi wethu, memu wethu mese simbuza imibuzo. Eheh. athi singakomapelani
276 Besiphathene kahle kabi besesibizana, sithi wengane yesikole asiyeni esikoleni
277 sibizana ngezingane zesikole ‘class-mate’
The second force of relaxation centres around the potential of the classroom space to mediate ‘everything carried in your heart’. Like Badumile who discussed ‘problems of home’ in the public space of the class and through her interactions with the VE (and by extension with me), Tholi valued the classroom space for bringing the private burden of poverty into a shared space. This was a topic that she brought up in both the first and second interview, through constructs of affiliation and care:

I like [going to the classes], when I saw I just liked it, to go there. And the Mam also knows, our teacher who is teaching us would ask about our problems, and then would come and ask how we are keeping, what the matter is, our problems at home. It was just nice, do you see? When we were all there together with understanding, I would just relax, and it would give me something to think about, do you see? When I was there at school, everything, even the pain, I would tell her, my Mam, I would be talking to our teacher, and I told her that I have got a problem and I said I should tell her about my problems, and she knew them. She knew about the lack of support at home, and that I hadn’t built my house very well, and I said that I have got chickens, I try for my children, do you see? [...]278

Because all these things which I was asking myself, all these things which I was bearing badly inside, so that in the times when I was just sitting here, perhaps I would think to myself something/sometimes that I should take a rope, so that I should end now. In this way, I see that I should learn - ay! It is important.279

Tholi (aged 55), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 07.11.2013

Being ‘together with understanding’, the space to ‘just relax’, and the opportunity for ‘something to think about’ were significant, offering a space to mediate the stress of only being able to ‘ask myself’, and holding things ‘inside’ that at times had led Tholi to consider suicide, of ‘taking a rope’ to hang herself, when she was ‘just sitting’ at home. For Tholi, the burden of poverty (expressed here in terms of the insecurity of her mud-built

278 Ngathanda nami sengibona nje sengithanda nje ukuya khona. Naye uyakwazi nje umemu wethu losifundisa yo ukusbuzo izinkinga abuye afike isibuze ukuthi sihlelika njani sinani nhlupheka kanjani nemizi nje. Sekumndi, uyabona? mesesisonke khona nomqondo ngiyakhuhuleka kukunika nokuthi ucabange uyabona ke. mase ngikhona lapha eskoleni uyabona konke nokubuhlungu nje ngike ngithi nakuyena umemu wethu ngaye ngathi nakayena nginenkinga ngathi kufanele ngizodedele kuyena izinkinga zami uzazi ngathi yeyi njiyodla ekhaya futhi ngakhile kahle nathi mina njifuye izinkukhu ngizame la izingane zami uyabona?

279 Ngoba zonke lezingi eningibuza zona bezingiphethe kabi ngaphakathi ukuba bengilokhu ngu thefti lan mahlwumpe bengizocabanga okanye ngithathe intambo nigizihilele manje njengoba ngibona ukuthi kuyafundeka ayi kubalulekile.
house, and a small-scale chicken business) and the absence of social capital (‘a lack of support at home’) were a ‘problem’ or ‘pain’ that was alleviated both by ‘learning’, and by recognition: ‘she knew them’, ‘she knew about...’. Such recognition, through class, was a form of ‘understanding’ that Tholi constructed herself as not hitherto experiencing. The way in which Tholi introduced her pleasure in ‘going’ to the classes was not solely descriptive; movement and the movement to class, and the opportunities to claim public space and public subjectivities such as that of the ‘learner’ position held a particular value.

For Nombuso too, the movement of coming down the hill to class disrupted and alleviated the ‘boredom/loneliness’ and ‘stress’ she associated with long days of ‘just staying’ at home:

Now staying at home for the whole day with boredom/loneliness (isizungu), you have a ‘stress’. It helps that you just meet with people. I suppose throughout the day we stay just the two of us, until the sun sets in the afternoon. Because (But) [now] I have left the big house, and I have come down the hill [to class].

Nombuso (aged 42), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 15.10.2013

Spatio-temporal language was thus used to describe a process of escaping ‘stress’ through movement. In other learners’ accounts, these spatio-temporal metaphors were used to describe the ways in which the trauma of past violence returned in memories and nightmares, which were also mediated by the classroom space. In Khonzeni’s account of reliving in dreams the memory of abuse that she received as a young woman at the hands of her family-in-law, the spatio-temporal language was particularly vivid, speaking as she did of her memories as “something that has passed, but it stays (-hlala), it comes back, it wakes up” (Khonzeni (aged 59), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 17.10.2014).

For Khonzeni, the memory of violence was specifically located at home and the lack of opportunity to ‘stay well’ (-hlala kahle), that was contrasted with the movement to class, a different space where she could ‘stay well’, where she, like Tholi, could relax, and where for her too there was reciprocity, and the opportunity to be heard, and recognised in a space of ‘no problems’, of laughter ‘if there was something bad’:

\[\text{Manje ukuhlala ekhaya ilanga lonke nesizungu une-stress kuyasiza ukuthi uhlangane nabantu nje angithi emini sihlala sobabili nje kuze kufike nokwanda ntambama. ngoba ngaphuma ekhaya elikhulu ngehlale ngezansi} \]

\[\text{Mmm kona sekudlulile noma kuhlale kubuye kavuke} \]
I was treated well, I just relaxed. There was no problem there, nothing bad that I can say. No, there wasn’t anything bad, we just relaxed completely, just as you saw.\textsuperscript{282} […]

We really just used to listen to each other. We really used to just listen to each other, both the VE and the students, because we just laughed. It was good, it was nice, if there was something bad, we just laughed.\textsuperscript{283}

Khonzeni (aged 59), \textit{Entabeni} class, Interview 2, 16.01.2014

For Thola too, ‘staying just thinking’ was associated with stress and poor mental health. Thola had been orphaned and gone to live with her paternal grandmother but then she too had passed away and Thola had lost her sole source of support. Thola had dropped out of school twice in Standard 6 after truancy and two successive pregnancies, with the result that she was forced to repeat grades. While she eventually did attain Matric, Thola described these disruptions to her schooling in terms of her own ‘behaving badly’, or ‘being crazy’, that she held simultaneous with a sense of self, that she was ‘clever’ and ‘behaved well to the teachers’, even enjoying football:

\begin{quote}
I was clever, I passed, I liked sports – running, football – I behaved well to the teachers, but I was damaged, I was just being crazy to myself, do you see?\textsuperscript{284} […]

I was just crazy in the things which I was doing. I became pregnant.\textsuperscript{285} […]

If I had continued school, maybe I would have been ‘right’. I was just crazy, like I wasn’t in control, I wasn’t taking care of myself.\textsuperscript{286}
\end{quote}

\textit{Thola (aged 28), Endleleni class, Interview 10.10.2013}

Thola too described the \textit{Kha ri Gude} classes in terms of the compounding effects of action, movement, knowledge and affiliation, but for her it was also a way to mediate the ‘craziness’ of her time at school, ‘the things which I used to do before, in other times’. Her understanding of her experience as an ‘adult-learner’ was shaped and invested with the meanings which she made around her past history in formal school:

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{282} Ngiphatheke kahle, ngikhululekile. Akukho nkinga, akukho ngisho. Hhaye akukho lutho sikhululekile njengoba ungibona
\item\textsuperscript{283} Ukuzwa impela besingevesizwana, besingevesizwana noVE [Name] nabafundi ngoba besihlekela nje kukuhele, kumnadi, noma kukhona ozibendezela nje sizihlekela nje
\item\textsuperscript{284} ngangingahlakamiphile ngaleyondlela ngangikahlenje ngaphasa ngangithanda support ibhola nokagijima ngi behavior kahle kothisha nakabanza ukuthi ngangizihlanyela nje uyabona
\item\textsuperscript{285} ngingazinakekeli ngenze lezinto engijenzayo ukuthi ngingakhalubhwa
\item\textsuperscript{286} eskoleni ngiqhubekhe nesikole mhlawumpe ngabe njaba right. Njaba crazy ngokuthi ngiyajola ngangazinakekela uyabona
\end{itemize}
Many times, I love it when I can stay and talk with people, so that I might get knowledge, or so that there is something that I might do, do you see? There are many things which you can learn for yourself, they can show you it, so that you can know, you can do it. When there is someone you sit with in class it ends that you are friends, you can tell them that you have a problem just like, so they can tell you what you should do about this thing. Just like that, it’s better you should behave like that, so you can be ‘right’.

Charley: And has that happened? That you have been able to ask advice?
Thola: It’s like I was staying just thinking, when I was thinking about the things which I used to before, in other times, I just tell myself that here is what I should do, to fix it.

Thola (aged 28), Endleleni class, Interview 10.10.2013

Like for Tholi, the classroom was a space in which Thola was able to get advice, to have interactions that shaped and helped to make sense of ‘other times’. ‘Fixing’ the past took on particular resonance in the context of Thola’s life-history in which a period of her not being ‘in control’ was characterised by a violent relationship: her boyfriend had thrown her two-year-old son against a wall during an argument, resulting in the baby’s death and Thola spending a year in jail. I wondered if a symbolic return to ‘school’ was a way not only to mediate the memories of those ‘other times’ directly, but to feel that she was finding a resolution or a way to forgive herself, as she later said that she wished she was able to do.

The space of the Kha ri Gude class was thus valued for offering movement and talk, in contrast to the ‘just staying’ in women’s accounts, which were constructed in terms of inactivity, stasis and silence. This ‘talk’ is differentiated from the reasons to value education discussed in the previous two chapters in terms of ‘speaking-for-self’. So too the laughter of this chapter, defined by its affiliative and reciprocal nature, represents a very different constellation of the kinds of humiliating laughter and the shame of being an ‘uneducated’ adult noted in chapter six. The companionship and laughter that

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287 Isikhathi esiningi ngiyathanda ukuthi ngihlale ngixoxe nabantu nokuthi ngithole lwazi noma kakhona into engingayazi uyabona ziningi izinto oyaye uzifunde nezinto abakubonisa ngazo mungazazi uyakwavu uma umuntu uhleli naye class kuyagcina sekumngani wakho mutshela kuthi nginenkinga kanjena zokutshela ukuthi ungayenzi leyonto kanjena ngcono wenze kanjena khona uzoba right
288 kuthi ngihlala ngicabanga nje, mengicabanga izinto ebezenzeka before kwestinye isikhathi ngike ngizitshele ukuthi khona engingakwensa ku fix ke
characterised the space offered levity, helping to carry or lift the weight of the burdens of isolation, poverty and the bearing of the pain that the women gave account of, and that I have discussed in the chapters thus far. Such talk and mobility opened social networks, but also space to mediate violent memories which were focused upon during times of staying alone. The space served as counterweight to the constraints of economic inactivity, physical and structural forms of violence and poverty, and the double burdens of care and economic provision noted in the section above.

Affiliative mediations: ‘something...I was only starting to understand?’

I want to conclude by raising three caveats that modify the potential value of the *Kha ri Gude* class as a mediating and affiliative space. The first caveat centres on ways in which the length of the campaign as only a six-month cycle, and the removal of opportunities and networks only recently provided, was itself ‘painful’ and did not go far enough to offer the kinds of opportunities that the levels of hope invested in education might require. These unfulfilled hopes were particularly (re)presented in the second, follow-up interviews which I conducted with learners such as Tholi who had valued the social networks that the classes had provided, but were very commonly expressed when I asked how things were now that the classes were finished:

> It’s painful. Eyi! It’s painful. It’s painful, just that. To meet with you, you were already like my children.\(^{289}\)

*Ndende (aged 67), Entabeni Class, Interview 2, 03.02.2014*

> We feel bad! Ay! It was good because our hearts felt pain, because we saw that there is a way forward with knowledge, and many things, mmm, just to study. We feel truly badly now.\(^{290}\) [...] I was just with some understanding about that thing to study, eheh. But there is something else that I was only starting to see... (silence).\(^{291}\) [...] We are all just crying, all of us.\(^{292}\)

*Tholi (aged 55), Ehholo class, Interview 2, 23.01.2014*

\(^{289}\) Kubuhlungu. Eyi! Kubuhlungu, kubuhlungeni! Ukuhlukana nani, besenifana nezingane zami nje\n
\(^{290}\) Siphathethe kabi, ayi! Kahle ngoba izinhliziyo zethu zibuhlungu, ngoba besibona ukuthi siya phambili nolwazi nezinto eziningi, mmm, nokufunda nje, siphathethe kabi njempela\n
\(^{291}\) Bengina nje umqondo kuthi lento njena ukufunda, eheh. Ngoba khona okanye ebesengikubona\n
\(^{292}\) Sonke njena siyakhala sonke.
The second centres on ways in which violence continued to regulate women’s access to space, including the class space itself, limiting socio-spatial connections for those such as Sabikile who were subject to the threat of such violence. For others such as Kwazekwakhe, the shame that adhered to the visibility of ‘becoming’ an ‘adult-learner’ was not mediated by the class, and they dropped out. Other people in the community whom VEs had tried to recruit never participated or joined the campaign. These questions of access reflect the complexity of ‘delivering’ of an adult education campaign not in terms of the kinds of logistical structures or design of the campaign that were discussed in chapter six but rather in terms of how the campaign could or should engage with these broader community contexts. Adult education may only be able to mediate such violence for some learners, but in order to hope to address violence the complexity of inter-linkages between the symbolic and the structural, the physical and the emotional need to be acknowledged. The short-termism of the intervention, combined with Volunteer-Educators whose training did not include work to challenge inequalities, and who themselves may be subject to the same structures and symbols discussed, may not offer chances to do so, and here I think an opportunity may have been lost.

The third and final caveat concerns the ways in which the campaign operated as a de facto ‘women’s movement’ (as discussed in chapter six, pp. 133-137), and the difference in attending to gender by default rather than intention. The adult education space as a particular set of socio-cultural dynamics, in which affiliative relationships can be fostered, and differentiated ways to challenge physical, emotional, structural and symbolic violence might be offered. But in operating within the social and economic structures rather than transforming them, and in mediating the effects of forms of violence rather than working towards prevention or indeed transformation, the value of the Kha ri Gude class in its work on violence can only go so far. What this chapter has highlighted is that the opportunity to ‘disrupt’ through adult education did not meet its full potential, in part, perhaps through the emphasis upon ‘literacy’ or ‘skills’ rather than the process and affiliative potential of the adult education space. My argument here thus adds weight to the importance of affiliation and social network perspectives, as suggested by the arguments of both capability approach and New Literacy Studies theorists (Alkire, 2002, pp. 255-270, Prins, 2006, Prins, 2010, Prins et al., 2009, Wolff and De-Shalit, 2007), who all in different ways suggest that the metric for evaluating the value of adult education needs to be reconsidered, particularly in relation to violence and to gender.
Mediating Practices and (Inter)Actions: Embodied Violence

This chapter has explored how high blood pressure, ‘stress’, weight loss or gain, feeling ‘tired’ and feeling ‘pain’ all signalled the gendered embodiment of multi-dimensional forms of violence. The chapter has highlighted how these embodied depictions described responses to both witnessing and intervening in inter-generational physical violence, but also to the manifestation of structural and symbolic violence, in which failure can be individualised, and where tensions between hopes and aspirations and the material realities can be experienced in the body in cycles that extend symbolic violence to interactions within families, particularly across mother-daughter relationships.

In understanding the inter-relationship between adult education, gender and violence in this way, the chapter argues that attention to these embodied experiences of the violence of structures and symbols is indicative of deprivation, and the ‘corrosive’ (Wolff and De-Shalit, 2007) power of insecurity in contexts of intersecting marginalisation and dis/advantage. Violence is more than a disruptive or interrupting force; it is constitutive of social relations, shaping the ways in which constructions of both selves and others are (re)produced, particularly at the intersect of gender. Ways in which adult education might speak to violence are far more complex than the empowerment narratives set out by those who designed and delivered the campaign, but are nevertheless deeply important for their potential to challenge the effects of inequitable social relations and their potential internalisation and (re)production.
Conclusion

In the introduction to this thesis, I set out how each of the key dimensions of the thesis title have been theorised, and how they have been seen to inter-relate. Through the layering approach that that introductory chapter took, I highlighted that gender worked as a pivot in the literature, shaping both understandings of adult education and of violence. I noted, however, the paucity of literature bringing the three together. This gap set up the rationale for this thesis, which aimed to explore whether and how adult education, gender and violence are inter-connected.

The overarching conclusion of this thesis is that the inter-connections are profound: in this thesis none of the three signifiers are fully understandable or their impacts explicable without reference to at least one of the other two. This thesis answers concerns raised in the introduction that for too long we have talked about ‘women’s literacy’ in the same way (Eldred et al., 2014, p. 662). The original contribution of this thesis is to reveal that multi-dimensional forms of violence, situated within intersecting inequalities, are empirical phenomena that shape everyday lives, but further offer theories of disadvantage that help understand the social processes of being and becoming an ‘adult-learner’.

The case for bringing violence into the field of adult education has been easily made in the context of rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, where discussions of gender violence in the literature are rich, and where instances of multi-dimensional violence are widely acknowledged. This thesis cannot make the case that different but inter-connected forms of violence will always emerge as important in all contexts in which adult education takes place. Nor can it claim that gender will always operate as a pivotal intersect that helps to frame how adult education is shaped by social dynamics, and regulated by violence. What this thesis calls for is attendance first to whether violence and intersectional gender are important, and second to how. It calls for an inter-connected approach to be part of development planning, as a heuristic device that precedes delivery, and that acknowledges and recognises the complexity of the lives and histories of adult learners. It has argued that such an approach is one that is inherently bound in progressing the field of adult education broadly, and women’s literacy specifically, in socially just ways.
This conclusion will draw out from the arguments of the chapters thus far to conclude to an amended version of the thesis title, asking what the reconsidered thesis title contributes to a contextualised theorisation of adult education that aims to explore inter-connections. It will set out the limitations of the study, and ask to what extent in what kinds of other contexts the findings of the study might resonate. The conclusion will close with some reflections on how the findings of this thesis might be extended, both by co-productive dissemination, and by future avenues of research.

**Adult education**

In the early chapters of this thesis, I introduced some of the most salient contemporary concerns of the adult education field. One of these concerns is the ways in which different theorisations of what adult education is and does can be seen to talk to past each other: a focus on the ‘basic’ or ‘functional’ forms of literacy can become disconnected from an interest in the affiliative potential of adult education and the forms of social networks which adult education might be seen to foster, and disconnected again from an understanding of the multiplicity of literacies that are socially practiced and differentiated, bound in hegemonic discourses around shame and socio-economic participation.

The thesis has shown that these theorisations are not only reflective of different understandings of adult education in the academic literature, but of the ways in which adult learners make sense of their own motivations to participate in adult learning. The following diagram (figure 15, below) sets out these four inter-related framings for understanding the ‘-fundile’ signifier, drawn from analysis that itself considered distinct but inter-related constructs of this subjectivity. Rather than seeing different theorisations of adult education as in opposition to each other, this thesis argues that connections can be drawn from practical-functional framings, to symbolic-moral-aspirational framings, to resource-agentic framings, to affiliative framings, as this thesis has aimed to do through a layered approach to the analysis of data in each chapter. Affiliations are built around the learning of practical-functional skills, connections and laughter engendered through the processes of learning to hold a pen, or recognising ‘-self’ in the writing and signing of names. They are built in the process of mediating and understanding ways in which these skills are bound in symbolic and moral constructs, that are in turn (re)produced in affect and aspirations. They are shaped by intersectional resources and agency, across different
forms of capital, and bound in the shape and strength of social networks. This thesis has argued that such connections can become visible when adult education is embedded not just in the social processes associated with learning but of value formation over time. This thesis has highlighted the importance of understanding in full the ‘adult-learner’ subjectivity, situating this subjectivity in histories of educational inclusion and exclusion and in navigation of intersecting forms of marginalisation.

![Inter-related framings of adult education across the ‘fundile’ signifier](image)

**Figure 15: Inter-related framings of adult education across the ‘fundile’ signifier**

It is the concluding argument of this thesis that adult education theorists and policy makers could take account of each of the four framings for adult education programming to progress in both efficiency and social justice terms. In focusing solely on the practical-functional side of the ‘fundile’ signifier, adult education risks working only within the structures of both material and discursive (re)productions of inequality that the second and third framings of adult education signal, rather than transforming them. Indeed, by only (re)producing dominant constructs of what literacy is and does, and by failing to recognise the value of interactions, policy makers might miss some of the most powerful motivating factors for joining a campaign such as *Kha ri Gude* outlined in this thesis. In understanding these four different framings of adult education, therefore, it is further important to understand the contextual specificities of programmes that address or ‘target’ particular groups, and to ask how these might be shaped at the intersect of gender and
violence, embedded within the kinds of matrices of oppression that this thesis has identified.

**at the intersect of gender & violence**

In the design of this study, this thesis began with a determination to not only explore *how* gender and violence might shape adult learners’ reasons to value participation in adult education, but *whether* gender and violence might emerge as important at all. Embedded throughout the research questions and analysis of data has been a concern to explore empirically the extent to which everyday experiences of living and learning were shaped by gender and violence. The analysis of the thesis has revealed that constructs of ‘adult-learner’ subjectivities and processes of adult learning are profoundly imbued with gender, that intersects with age, ethnicity, race, poverty and rurality. It has shown how the continuum of physical, structural, symbolic and embodied violence can constrain and regulate the possibilities for challenging these intersecting forms of disadvantage, but does not entirely close down space for agency and resistance, contestation and change. An intersectional lens thus offers a much deeper engagement with gender than an understanding of the field in terms of ‘women’s literacy’; a violence lens both reflects the empirical reality of women’s lives, but further provides a way to theorise more deeply the ways in which forms of marginalisation are inter-connected.

In understanding gender intersectionally, intersections around age have been shown to be particularly important and signal a perhaps under-researched and under-appreciated dimension to intersectional analyses. Age was simultaneously seen as a marker of historical disadvantage, but also of increased responsibility, in which adult-learners were constructed as having specific needs, rights and agency that set them apart from children across a generational binary. The ‘adult’ of the ‘adult-learner’ hyphen was problematised, as a construct of ‘learner’ was underpinned by a notion of children or youth as default or ‘normal’. In related ways, the ‘learning’ of ‘adult-learners’ was valued when formalised, but often misrecognised in informal settings, such as that of the workplace.

A part of this contribution around intersectional understandings of age was to consider age relationally, through reflections on inter-generationality. The value of an inter-generational perspective extended to consideration of the way in which the subjectivity
across the ‘adult-learner’ hyphen was shaped over time. Shifts were seen in both gendered norms and educational and labour market expectations, in ways that reframed how older women understood themselves, and aspired for their children, grand-children and great-grand-children. These expectations led to new forms of inter-generational tensions, however, as youth were constructed as ‘behaving badly’ in gendered ways that included pathologisation of girls’ sexuality and perceived promiscuity, as well as blame of both male and female younger generations’ failure to find work. In chapter nine, the ways in which these inter-generational shifts translated to the reproduction of symbolic violence within families extended the theories of symbolic violence beyond the individual, and into questions of relational symbolic violence, as mothers and grand-mothers worked to navigate the structures which both they and their daughters encountered. Symbolic violence was not just a question of individualisation, but relational processes of blame, and internalised, embodied experiences of structural and symbolic (re)productions of disadvantage. This was particularly evident at the intersect of race and gender.

In drawing on intersectional understandings of gender, this thesis has thus argued that not only is “violence is always linked in some way to norms, structures and subjectivities associated with gender” (Parkes, 2015, p. 9), but that the reverse is also true: gender inequalities are themselves always linked to multi-dimensional forms of violence. Physical violence seeped into women’s narratives and disrupted their everyday participation in the *Kha ri Gude* campaign, but they did not work to not “obliterate...from view other forms of violence” (Žižek, 2008, p. 9). This thesis has located violence in the theorisations of inter-connections between physical and emotional, political, structural, symbolic and embodied forms of violence, in which self-blame and shame ‘reverberate’ along the continuum of these forms (Bourgois, 2002), and in which these reverberations can easily translate into embodiment and (re)productions not just of self-blame, but of blame within families and networked relationships.

Layering these intersectionally informed understandings of gender and multi-dimensional forms violence as figure 16 does (below) makes clear ways in which adult education, gender and violence are inter-related. Gender can be seen ‘in’ practical-functional units of adult education, through equal presence of male: female participations and parity of outcomes for male: female learners. The norms, symbols and aspirations which shape both reasons to value these practical-functional outcomes, and broader understandings of what it means to be and become ‘educated’ are themselves gendered, and bound in
intersectional norms and power hierarchies, as chapters seven and eight made clear. These are set within gendered structures, and the ways in which these structures are violent, experienced as forms of social suffering. Finally, gender and the potential (physical and emotional) violence of gendered interactions shapes the possibilities for affiliation, as chapter nine made clear.

As chapter five set out, ‘locating’ the study in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, was not just descriptive but theoretical: the study took an ‘en-landed’ approach (Connell, in discussion with Livholts, 2010, p. 271) to adult education, gender and violence. A fundamental premise of the argument of this thesis is that inter-connections are deeply contextualised: socially, politically and temporally situated. The findings of this thesis are bound at their margins by the national politics and policies of South Africa, and more specifically delimited by the borders of a single rural community in KwaZulu-Natal. Through this socio-spatial analysis, this thesis contributes an understanding of the adult education class as a porous space that is embedded in social processes, shaped by gender, violence and power hierarchies that are themselves spatialised. The context of this study does not only empirical but theoretical work.

**Figure 16: Adult Education at the Intersect of Gender & Violence in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

As chapter five set out, ‘locating’ the study in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, was not just descriptive but theoretical: the study took an ‘en-landed’ approach (Connell, in discussion with Livholts, 2010, p. 271) to adult education, gender and violence. A fundamental premise of the argument of this thesis is that inter-connections are deeply contextualised: socially, politically and temporally situated. The findings of this thesis are bound at their margins by the national politics and policies of South Africa, and more specifically delimited by the borders of a single rural community in KwaZulu-Natal. Through this socio-spatial analysis, this thesis contributes an understanding of the adult education class as a porous space that is embedded in social processes, shaped by gender, violence and power hierarchies that are themselves spatialised. The context of this study does not only empirical but theoretical work.
Within this nexus of the spatialisation of different forms of violence, the adult education classroom offered by *Kha ri Gude* and analysed in this thesis held a liminal position and offered an alternative space. It offered levity, a space to laugh and to build or reshape social networks around what Monitor 1 from KwaZulu-Natal called ‘the common developmental goal of learning’. The classroom was cast as a space of action rather than stasis, valued for its potential to reshape and reframe histories of social exclusion through inclusion. This ‘common goal’ represented a way to reframe ‘the pain held inside’, to ‘forget’ and to ‘share’ that adhered to the multiply layered forms of violence associated with other spaces.

The discussion throughout this thesis of the adult education class as a ‘not-school’ is a useful way to understand the bridge between the public and private that these classes represented. These spaces were intimate, bound in proximal connections between adults, but with state intervention through the delivery of books and targeted forms of learning that were driven by socio-democratic concerns of the ‘new’ South Africa. Focusing on the ‘not-school’ as a space extends the notion of ‘schooled literacies’ discussed by other studies, shifting the focus from the practices themselves to a combination of practice and socio-spatial dynamics not just of learning but of subjectivity formation. These dynamics were associated not just with learning but with histories that shaped how adult learners cross the threshold in their ‘return’ to ‘not-school’ and how they navigated the tension that adheres to the hyphen of being an ‘adult-learner’.

As the chapters of this thesis set out, poverty, a paucity of services, high levels of crime and inter-personal violence, poor health and high levels of HIV all interplayed in constructions of the ‘marginalised community’ of *Endaweni* in which the *Kha ri Gude* adult literacy campaign was delivered. But the ‘community’ was also a source of pride, strength and hope, as well as of valuable proximal networks that both included and extended beyond the family. A focus on the ‘community’ in which the adult education classroom is embedded, as this thesis has offered, signals the importance of understanding how adult education initiatives might exacerbate or mediate these different material and social dynamics associated with being and becoming ‘educated’.

The analysis of data in this thesis has highlighted that for the most marginalised, no single solution is possible and joined up thinking is necessary. Education, gender and violence
each ‘focalise’ different aspects of inter-locking dimensions of the problem of marginalisation, but focusing on one dimension at the detriment of others risks working within structures of oppression rather than transforming them. A single ‘focalising feature’ - whether as literacy rates, gender parity or the prevalence of violence, all of which are possible to represent numerically and all of which signal dis/advantage – can become conflated with solutions.

While the rural community of KwaZulu-Natal in which this research was conducted represents one set of boundaries and limitations to the study, as this part of the conclusion has set out, a second set of limitations were mediated by those whose positions, voices and perspectives were absent from the data generated and written about in this study, particularly: the absence of men; and the absence of learners who dropped out from the Kha ri Gude campaign, or who chose never to participate at all. A focus on deeply contextualised ‘tales of the field’, as this thesis has offered, requires attendance not only to presence and voice but to absence and silence.

While each of these absences and silences may represent a limitation to the study, they are also analytically valuable. It had been part of my initial research design to include men and to interview community members who self-identified as illiterate, but in the course of doing this study it became clear that neither constituency wished to participate. The absence of men in this research reflects the ways in which men in Endaweni were less likely to enrol, and less like to continue to participate once enrolled, as I discussed in chapter six. It also reflects ways in which men were seen as absent more broadly from households, in ways that were constructed (in the women’s narratives, at least) as ‘escaping’ (wabaleka!) or reneging on responsibilities, as chapter seven indicated. These absences were gendered, certainly, but they were further bound in the socio-economic context of Endaweni, as set out in chapter five. They were also related to my own positionality, and the reduced likelihood that men might have been willing to speak openly to a female researcher, paralleling ways in which men were constructed as less likely to participate in a campaign that was seen as ‘feminised’.

While I want to explicitly recognise the predominance of female voices in this thesis, I also want to make clear that I do not consider this to be a weakness of the work. In an early presentation on gender ‘in’ Kha ri Gude, I was challenged as to the validity of my research
because I had not engaged with male members of the community. I believe that this is vital work, but not the work of this thesis. Again, paralleling the structures of the campaign itself, which were read as feminised, and which were seen as a ‘de facto’ women’s movement, I in fact think that the opposite: that this study reveals the necessity of spaces for women, in which female relationships and forms of affiliation to discuss the specificities of the gendered burdens of care and labour, and which are free from physical and emotional violence, are deeply important.

The absence of community members who self-identified as illiterate, but chose not to participate in the campaign, may also be bound in both my own positionality, and my decision to work with Phili in her role both as my translator and as a Kha ri Gude Supervisor. Dominant constructions of literacy that pervade this thesis have revealed the shame and stigma which can attach to being ‘uneducated’, including at the point of recruitment and entry into the adult learning classroom, as chapter six set out, and in reflection on past histories, as chapter seven made clear. The parallels between the space of research and the delivery of Kha ri Gude itself, overlaid by the ways in which my whiteness, my socio-economic and both mine and Phili’s ‘educated’ status may have been read, may mean that I was unable to access those whom Kha ri Gude too was unable to reach. This inaccessibility may also have been fostered by the Volunteer-Educators, who at times resisted my probing questions, and who may have seen access to this constituency as a threat to their work and their payment by recruitment and retention of learners.

A related set of absences in this study comes not through lack of access to particular groups of people, but rather to particular spaces, and demarcates this thesis from those more firmly footed in the New Literacy Studies cannon. As I set out in chapters four and five, this thesis took the Kha ri Gude classes as the point of departure for each of the ethnographic methods deployed, and many other spaces and times within the community were deemed unsafe. This study has thus not offered an ethnography of everyday literacy practices, but instead, through life-history interviews, has reflected on how practices were framed in talk. As with other limitations to this study, however, I think that this poses not a limitation but a strength of the study, and complements the practice-focused ethnographic studies upon which it builds. The close attendance to language in this talk, shored up by reflection on signifiers in both the original isiZulu and the English translation, has revealed the importance of discursive analysis that works across
languages, offering more nuanced understanding of contestations and signification than would have been possible with solely translated data.

Linked to the practice-based approaches of other ethnographic studies and the challenges which they pose to ‘hegemonic’ or ‘dominant’ literacy approaches is the final limitation to the study. This is related to the type of adult education and of adult learners with whom this thesis has been concerned. *Kha ri Gude* focused on adult basic education, a sub-set of adult education that sits within the women’s literacy field. While this thesis has aimed to draw out to fields beyond women’s literacy, the focus of both the campaign itself and the research on which this thesis is based has been inherently concerned with ‘basic’ forms of adult education. Throughout the thesis, the links between the delivery of ‘basic’ education and the (re)production of shame has been a concern, speaking to the questions that Rogers and Street have raised around discourses of “deficit...dressed up in the discourse of disadvantage” (Rogers and Street, 2012, p. 42). What this thesis has argued, grounded in the concerns around naming and pathologising that introduced this thesis, is that recognition of disadvantage is important, but that there is a fine balance between recognition and (re)production through shame. In recognising this complexity, this thesis has argued that community workers such as Volunter-Educators are uniquely placed to challenge and work against marginalisation at the intersect of education, gender and violence, but that they themselves would benefit from training that draws in this bigger context, beyond the technicist focus of delivering ‘literacy’.

**Reverting to a title**

I began this thesis with adult education, and it is to the adult education literature that I have ultimately contributed. But the process of researching adult education, gender and violence in rural KwaZulu-Natal raised questions of where and how the boundaries lie between the key words or signifiers that are the central concern of this thesis. These boundaries are troubling, troubling that has its roots in questions that Judith Butler raised of intersectionality, a critique which I introduced at the start of this thesis (pp. 19-20). In her critique, Butler argues that in attempts to work with a “horizontal trajectory of adjectives, these positions strive to encompass a situated subject, but invariably fail to be complete” (Butler, 1990, p. 196). As this thesis has shown, adult education as a subject or a boundary of this thesis is multiply determined, shaped and defined by gender and
violence, and contextualised by the socio-spatial and historical dynamics of rural KwaZulu-Natal: attempts to situate adult education as the subject of this thesis in the horizontal trajectory of multiple and intersecting adjectives represented by a title are invariably partial and incomplete. Adult education, gender, violence and rurality together constitute the four central signifiers of this thesis: this thesis argues that looking across the four signifiers together offers an understanding of adult education that is more than the sum of its parts, and, in doing so, makes the case for an inter-connected approach.

Closing thoughts // Looking forward

A conclusion represents an end to a thesis, but a start to a conversation. The conversation to which this thesis has contributed needs to be continued in three different spaces. First, there is a clear and pressing need for dissemination in South Africa. In reaching the end, I want to return to the beginning and re-trace my research journey, continuing to co-construct and mutually shape the findings presented here. The first part of that journey would begin where I ended, in the community of Endaweni itself. I have noted throughout chapter four the thorny questions that doing a thesis such as this from a perspective and position such as mine raises for the (re)production of knowledge; returning to Endaweni to engage with the women and men whose words and life-histories have generated the argument to this thesis is an essential counterpoint to the concerns raised in that chapter. The representational concerns that I discussed in chapter four are on-going: a continued process of translation of findings, and of ensuring that the ultimate decision of what and how to take this work forward does not rest with me alone is required. I intend to offer space for collective engagement with the ‘findings’ of this thesis from the participants themselves, before I begin to mine this thesis for future publications. The opportunity to consider these findings from the distance of four to five years might also help to understand what elements of short-term interventions such as Kha ri Gude are most durable; and to explore whether the original contribution of the thesis around the potential for the adult education space to foster social networks and mediate violence were long-lasting, or limited to the period of the campaign with which the thesis was concerned. Reflections on contestations in the ways in which research is read and interpreted highlight the importance of such engagements (Nagar, 2002).
The second space of dissemination is related to the first, in working to offer a bridge and a point of advocacy that returns to the spaces which I named in chapter four as ‘official’, including UNISA and the sites of national adult education planning which I visited in 2012.

In the Human Development and Capabilities Association (HDCA) conference in South Africa in September 2017 I began this process of disseminating findings within South Africa (Nussey, 2017), and was asked to return to present the findings to policy makers, an opportunity that I would be delighted to take up. As I discussed in chapter three the Kha ri Gude campaign has now come to an end. There is nevertheless a clear need to work with adult education policy makers at the regional and national levels, to communicate my argument that:

I. for the ‘most marginalised’ more joined-up thinking is necessary, bringing together different sectors of development that might otherwise work in silos;

II. more training for adult educators on gender and violence in contexts like Endaweni would be advantageous, beyond a technicist focus on ‘delivering’ literacy;

III. reflection on how violence as a contextual factor which impacts both on women’s participation and their reasons to value the adult education space might enrich the metrics by which adult education initiatives are measured, and more fully meet the social justice goals through which the design of the Kha ri Gude campaign was framed.

A final space to consider is in relation to adult education in similar contexts, but outside of South Africa entirely. The limitations of the study in terms of generalisability raises important questions of what the perspectives missing from this study might add, and whether the findings of this thesis are applicable to other contexts. I have given some indications in this conclusion of the types of contexts in which they might apply - in contexts where adult education is bound in intersecting forms of marginalisation, in countries with high levels of inequality, in contexts of high levels of physical violence that inter-relates with other forms, and in post-colonial contexts which have histories of educational exclusion that inter-relates with social and political dominant structures.

Future avenues of research would help to build, to refine or indeed to contest the thesis of this work, by ‘asking the other question(s)’ (Matsuda, 1991, p. 1189) that were outside the scope of this work, as intersectional approaches encourage us to do. I look forward to continuing this conversation.
II Appendices

I. Research protocol & permission to conduct research

This research aims to understand the gendered motivations and aspirations for women participating in an adult literacy initiative in South Africa. *Kha ri Gude* was chosen because of its social justice aims, as well as the national scope and focus of the project. As research has continued, the importance of community development and poverty reduction has also been a source of interest.

In my research thus far, I have observed 14 classes in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, interviewed 28 people who work or have worked in the past for KRG, and observed the three-day training workshop in Pretoria.

To continue with this research, I aim to explore learners' motivations and aspirations in participating in KRG, as well as their reasons for being unable to access or attend schooling in the past. For this work, I will work closely with a Coordinator from KZN, who will act both as an isiZulu translator, but also helping to interpret cultural issues and ensure that this research is conducted sensitively. We will reflect on the ethics and dynamics of this work regularly.

My specific research questions for this period of research, which will run from August to December 2013, are:

i. How have women's motivations and aspirations in relation to education shifted across time?

ii. What have been the significant constraints for women in relation to their education?

iii. What has opened up possibilities and opportunities in relation to women's education?

iv. How do gender and illiteracy play into women's mapping of their aspirations for change in their neighbourhoods?

v. How are these motivations and aspirations reflected or constrained in or by classroom interactions?

vi. How are these motivations and aspirations reflected or constrained in or by teaching and learning materials?
To answer these questions, I hope to conduct interviews with approximately 30 women who are participating in KRG in 2013. I also aim to observe the classes which these women attend over the 2013 teaching period, to explore classroom interactions and engagements with teaching materials. I will concentrate on rural women in this province, because my experience as a researcher has been in rural contexts, and because many of the actors in KRG have identified deep rural learners as a historically marginalised group.

Ethics

The research will be explained to potential participants in detail, in isiZulu. They will be given the opportunity to leave the research whenever they wish, and I will ask for their informed consent before any interviews are conducted. I hope to interview each woman for approximately one hour.

I wish to keep the learners’ identities anonymous, so will ask those who are familiar with their stories to respect their confidentiality, and we will discuss how to best do this as the project continues. Learners’ names will be changed when this research is published.

Participants in the research from the KRG structures have also been anonymised in the write-up of this research, as was explained to them when interviews were conducted. Each interviewee is given their title, such as National Office, Monitor, Coordinator, Supervisor or VE, and then a number, in order to protect their identities.

If, during the interviews or research period more generally, personal issues are raised which require further action, such as issues of domestic violence or health issues, the learners themselves will be consulted about which action they would like to take. I will then consult relevant experts in the KRG team about how to support the learners, whether referring them to counselling services, reporting to police or attending clinics, according to what is relevant and appropriate in the context.

I will make clear to learners and VEs at the start of this research period that I am not here as an official KRG representative and am not an independent evaluator of the campaign or classes. As such, I will remind them that issues to do with the workings of KRG itself need to be reported to the appropriate KRG actor, and that it is not within my role to take action.
if there are problems. As such, I am not observing classes in order to assess VEs teaching ability and aim to be a passive observer in these spaces.

I hope that the research will offer opportunities for actors within KRG to reflect upon and learn from their own practice, and thus be of some benefit to participants. I hope that allowing learners to explore their own motivations and aspirations might help inform literacy and community development initiatives in the future, as well as supporting learners to clarify their own visions for change.

Once I have finished conducting and analysing this research, I aim to be able to report back to KRG, either in written form or in person, or both. I have passed on some of the more logistical or practical concerns which have been reported to me, such as the need for more writing boards for VEs, when they have arisen.

If you are happy for me to continue with this research, and begin interviewing and working with learners & VEs, please sign below, and return this document to me.

Many thanks,

Charlotte Nussey

Signed: KRG National Coordinator
II. Key informant interview guide (semi-structured)

1. Personal experience
   a. Can you tell me a little about yourself?
   b. How did you become involved in KRG?
   c. How long have you been working with KRG?
   d. What has been/is your role in KRG?

2. Views on Kha ri Gude
   a. What do you think is the biggest success of KRG? What do you think that the challenges are?
   b. What do you like most about working for the KRG campaign?
   c. If you could improve one thing, what might that be?
   d. What do you think about the KRG training for Volunteer-Educators and Supervisors?
   e. What is your view of the teaching and learning materials?
   f. How do you think learners' lives might change as they go through the lifecycle of this campaign?
   g. How would you describe the communities where KRG works / where you do your work?
   h. How would you describe a typical KRG learner?

3. Concepts
   a. How do you understand literacy from working in this project?
   b. Where do you see gender in this project?
   c. Does violence come into the project?
III. Phase I Key informant interviews (pseudonyms & dates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Coordinator</td>
<td>28.08.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Administrator</td>
<td>28.08.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting CEO (2012-2014)</td>
<td>31.08.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociologist, UNISA Design &amp; Management Team</td>
<td>07.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Advocate, UNISA Design &amp; Management Team</td>
<td>07.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguist, UNISA Design &amp; Management Team</td>
<td>07.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor, UNISA Design &amp; Management Team</td>
<td>07.09.2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitor 1, Eastern Cape</td>
<td>31.08.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator 1, Eastern Cape</td>
<td>31.08.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator 2, Eastern Cape</td>
<td>03.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor 1, Eastern Cape</td>
<td>03.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor 2, Eastern Cape</td>
<td>04.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor 3, KZN</td>
<td>10.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor 4, KZN</td>
<td>10.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VE 1, KZN</td>
<td>10.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor 2, KZN</td>
<td>17.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAQA Official 1</td>
<td>23.03.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAQA Official 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator 4, Gauteng</td>
<td>23.03.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinator 5, KZN</td>
<td>24.03.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinator 6, Western Cape</td>
<td>24.03.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor 3, KZN</td>
<td>24.03.2013</td>
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<td>Coordinator 8, KZN</td>
<td>22.03.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator 9, KZN</td>
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### IV. Phase II Key informant interviews (pseudonyms & dates)

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<td>Monitor 4, KZN</td>
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<td>VE 3, KZN</td>
<td>22.07.2013</td>
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<td>VE 4, KZN</td>
<td>22.07.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>VE 5, KZN</td>
<td>22.07.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>VE 6, KZN</td>
<td>22.07.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinator 10, KZN</td>
<td>18.07.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VE 7, KZN</td>
<td>22.07.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VE Ehholo class, Endaweni, KZN</td>
<td>02.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VE Entabeni class, Endaweni, KZN</td>
<td>16.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phili (Supervisor, Endaweni &amp; Phakathi, KZN)</td>
<td>21.11.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Leader, Endaweni</td>
<td>21.11.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VE Empompini class, Phakathi, KZN</td>
<td>18.01.2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VE Edobo class, Phakathi, KZN</td>
<td>18.01.2014</td>
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V. Pilot site visits (locations & dates)

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<tr>
<th>Site location</th>
<th>Visit date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church, peri-urban Eastern Cape</td>
<td>03.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall, rural Eastern Cape</td>
<td>04.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home, rural KZN</td>
<td>10.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home, informal settlement, KZN</td>
<td>10.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall, township, KZN</td>
<td>10.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home, informal settlement, KZN (visit 2)</td>
<td>12.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home, rural KZN (visit 2)</td>
<td>14.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall, township, KZN (visit 2)</td>
<td>14.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School, rural KZN</td>
<td>17.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional court, rural KZN</td>
<td>17.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rondavel, rural KZN</td>
<td>17.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home, rural KZN</td>
<td>17.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rondavel, rural KZN</td>
<td>17.09.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rondavel, rural KZN</td>
<td>17.09.2012</td>
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</table>

VI. Focus groups (locative class identifiers & dates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English identifier</th>
<th>Zulu identifier</th>
<th>Date of Focus Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>on the Hill</td>
<td>Entabeni</td>
<td>13.08.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by the Road</td>
<td>Endleleni</td>
<td>14.08.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the Hall</td>
<td>Ehholo</td>
<td>15.08.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the House</td>
<td>Ekhaya</td>
<td>12.08.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by the Tree</td>
<td>Emthini</td>
<td>16.08.2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## VII. Core learner interviews (pseudonyms, dates & locative class identifiers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name / Pseudonym (Age)</th>
<th>Date of Interview (2\textsuperscript{nd} Interview)</th>
<th>Class identifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Bancane (66)</td>
<td>08.10.2013 (21.01.2014)</td>
<td>Entabeni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ncizile (60+)</td>
<td>01.10.2013 (16.01.2014)</td>
<td>Entabeni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ndende (67)</td>
<td>29.10.2013 (03.02.2014)</td>
<td>Entabeni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Prudence (63)</td>
<td>01.10.2013 (16.01.2014)</td>
<td>Entabeni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Shongolutho (65)</td>
<td>08.10.2013 (16.01.2014)</td>
<td>Entabeni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Fakazile (37)</td>
<td>08.10.2013 (-)</td>
<td>Endleleni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Lindiwe (48)</td>
<td>17.10.2013 (08.02.2014)</td>
<td>Endleleni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Princess (43)</td>
<td>14.11.2013 (-)</td>
<td>Endleleni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Thabisile (41)</td>
<td>17.10.2013 (-)</td>
<td>Endleleni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Thokozile (48)</td>
<td>03.10.2013 (25.01.2014)</td>
<td>Endleleni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Tholakele (28)</td>
<td>10.10.2013 (-)</td>
<td>Endleleni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Zandile (47)</td>
<td>03.10.2013 (-)</td>
<td>Endleleni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Badumile (49)</td>
<td>23.10.2013 (06.02.2014)</td>
<td>Ehholo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Sabikile (47)</td>
<td>07.11.2013 (23.01.2014)</td>
<td>Ehholo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Smangele (76/82)</td>
<td>12.11.2013 (23.01.2014)</td>
<td>Ehholo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Tholi (55)</td>
<td>07.11.2013 (23.01.2014)</td>
<td>Ehholo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Intombi (40)</td>
<td>21.11.2013 (-)</td>
<td>Ekhaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Josefina (95)</td>
<td>21.11.2013 (06.02.2014)</td>
<td>Ekhaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Khanyisile (51)</td>
<td>20.11.2013 (-)</td>
<td>Ekhaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Nonthombi (57)</td>
<td>20.11.2013 (06.02.2014)</td>
<td>Ekhaya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VIII. Life-history interview prompts (unstructured)

1. Early years
   a. What was your life like when you were very small/as you grew up?
   b. Were your parents educated? Who in your family went to school?  
      (Why/why not?)
   c. Did you go to school? (Why/why not?) What is your earliest memory of 
      education?
   d. What were other families in the community like?

2. Later life
   a. At what age did you get married? (How old are you now?) If yes: what is 
      your husband like?
   b. Do you work / have you worked?
   c. Do you have children? What was their education like? What are your 
      hopes for them? How are things if you compare their lives and yours?
   d. Why did you join KRG? Have you tried to return to education before?

3. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your life? Or about 
   education?

IX. Post-KRG interview guide (semi-structured)

1. How do you feel now that KRG has finished?
2. Why did you join KRG? (compare with Interview 1)
3. How was the KRG class, when you were going? (Why did you stop going?)
4. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?

[+ Any follow up questions/points of clarification from first life-history interview]
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