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Chapter 1

Introduction

Jenny Parkes

Gender violence evokes in us strong emotions. In the course of working on this book, we have been enraged by a girl shot in the head merely for claiming her right to education in Pakistan. We have been horrified by a young woman gang raped on a Delhi bus, an act so brutal that she died of her injuries. We have been incredulous at a Kenyan judge's decision to pass a sentence of lawn mowing on the men who raped a young woman¹. These events seem inexplicable in their horror. Our instinctive response is to clamour for justice – for punishments that fit the crime, for protection systems that keep girls and women safe from the perpetrators. While these responses are laudable, we need to beware of our instinctive emotional reactions and to reflect on why these extreme events captivate us. Could it be that the focus on extreme acts at the tip of the iceberg allows us to ignore the murkier waters below where our own more banal, everyday fears are located, at the same time deflecting attention away from the roots of violence in which we may ourselves be uncomfortably implicated? Or alternatively, do these events remind us about our own vulnerabilities? Most of us have memories of bullying, harassment or humiliation (inflicted by us or against us, or witnessed by others), which we may prefer to forget. Individually and collectively we are positioned within regimes of power that discriminate, exclude and violate. Violence is a tool for struggles over power, a means of communication that attempts to impose through force or coercion. It can be subtle and hidden, or banal and commonplace, and mostly it is not particularly newsworthy. As researchers, we are tasked with trying to explain the dynamics of power at the heart of violence.

Research on gender violence and schooling has been accumulating fast since the start of the 21st century, propelled by movements for women's and children's rights, and with the HIV/AIDs pandemic and the massive growth in primary schooling drawing attention to multiple forms of violence in and around schools (see chapters 2 and 3). But this new field of research that brings together thinking on gender violence, poverty and education is in its infancy and we are only just beginning to address key concerns around: (a) the nature of violence involving children and young people; (b) the sources of violence, including the relationship with poverty and inequality; (c) the effects of violence on young subjectivities; and, (d) the educational challenge of how to counter violence. This book sets out to establish this new field of research through offering innovative research insights into the parameters of the field, its definitional problems, the types of social theory that can be adapted and employed, and the power of contextual case studies to help explore gender violence and the many ways in which violence is embedded in ordinary everyday lives.

In planning the book, I invited the authors to address three different aims for their chapters. Each responded in their own way and brought their expertise into the frame by describing a range of different types of research projects. The three interrelated aims given to authors were to help:

1. Identify theoretical and methodological framings for understanding the relationship between gender, violence, poverty and education;

2. Demonstrate how young people living in varying contexts of poverty in the Global South learn about, engage in, respond to and resist gender violence;
3. Illustrate how to investigate the ways institutions, including schools, families, communities, governments, international and non-governmental organisations and the media constrain or expand possibilities to challenge gender violence in the Global South.

In identifying potential authors, I searched for innovative researchers whose work engaged with multi-dimensional themes and concepts.

Cross-cutting themes and concepts

The book has three cross-cutting themes. Each chapter in their own way explores not a single dimension of gender violence and its relation to poverty, but the complex intersections between *violence, inequality, marginalisation and poverty*. Gender violence is a global phenomenon, but its contours are shaped by economic, political and socio-cultural contexts. Our definition of violence is multi-dimensional, and refers not just to acts of physical, sexual and emotional force, but to the everyday interactions that surround these acts, and to their roots in *structural violence* of inequitable and unjust socio-economic and political systems and institutions. Poverty too is multi-dimensional. Understanding poverty only in economic terms omits the social and political processes through which intersecting structural boundaries are set (Stewart 2008; Unterhalter 2012). At these boundaries, where social, political and economic hardship and marginalisation collide, violence may take many guises. Economic distress, generated through the structural violence of the uneven distribution of power and resources, for example, may aggravate sharply delineated gender regimes in which girls' bodies are commodified in various ways – as labour in the family, or as collateral to be exchanged in marriage, or in sexual exchange in which girls are coerced into sex with older men in order to pay costs of schooling or to provide food for the family. Boys and men are expected to be providers, and the impossibility of fulfilling this expectation may create pressure, which is displaced into acts of physical violence (Moore 1994; Barker 2005). The structural violence of multi-dimensional poverty may thus impact differently on the lives of young men and young women. For both, violence may sometimes be a survival strategy.

In schools, underpaid, ill-trained teachers working in overcrowded, poorly resourced classrooms may be unable to provide safe spaces for learning and challenging violence. Instead, there is ample evidence that through their curricula, pedagogies and management structures, schools may reinforce rather than disrupt violence (Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997; Davies 2004; Harber 2004). But the dynamics of violence vary from one context to another, with particular cultural manifestations shaped by distinct political, social and economic histories. With chapters offering case studies from Asia, Latin America and Africa, and from rural and urban settings, we trace the diverse manifestations of violence in specific contexts, and explore the social relations that underlie acts of violence.

The second cross-cutting theme can be described as the relationship between *violence, subjectivity and agency*. Chapters focus less on the extreme or exceptional acts that we read about in the headlines than on *everyday violence*: the mundane, corrosive and often hidden practices that imprint their mark on gendered bodies and subjectivities. Through violating bodily integrity, physical violence attempts to wield control, over-determining relations of power seen as under threat. Psychic wounds can be inflicted through humiliation, denigration

and exclusion. These forms of violence are frequently institutionalised, taken for granted and no longer recognised as acts of violation by their protagonists. Practices like corporal punishment, exchange sex, forced marriage or beatings by an intimate partner may be accepted because no other possibilities can be envisaged. Young people living in poverty may have aspirations that are unattainable, yet, in not recognising the structural constraints, they may face disillusion and self-blame (Swartz, Harding and De Lannoy 2012). This non-recognition of forms of domination and injustice constitutes *symbolic violence* (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2004). Because they are not recognised as violent, these forms of violation do not make the crime statistics, and yet it is precisely because they are not recognised that they are (symbolically) violent. While this relationship between violence and subjectivity is examined by many of our contributors, we actively avoid the reinscription of victimhood by focusing on the perspectives of young people as subjects, actively negotiating their social worlds. Through close attention to these negotiations, we set out to shed light on the processes through which young people learn about and resist violence and begin to develop critical consciousness.

The third theme, that of *gender violence*, echoes the multi-dimensionality of poverty and violence. *Gender*, in our framing, is not just about differences between boys and girls, but is a conceptual lens for examining intersecting structural power inequalities, as well as a way of understanding how subjectivities are constituted through repeated practice in classrooms, playgrounds and communities where the rules of masculinities and femininities are learned in everyday interactions, and where transgressions are policed by denigration and exclusion (Thorne 1993; Butler 1999; Humphreys, Undie and Dunne 2008). Gender violence includes overt acts, including sexual harassment or homophobic bullying, and also those hidden, implicit practices which reproduce inequality and injustice. Following Leach and Mitchell (2006: 7), we use the term ‘gender violence’ in preference to ‘gender-based’ or ‘gender-related’ violence, since the latter seem to imply that some forms of violence are not gendered. However, we take the view that violence is always linked in some way to norms, structures and subjectivities associated with gender, as well as other dimensions like ethnicity, religion, physical appearance, sexuality and ability. Various chapters explore gender violence enacted between same sex and other sex peers, and across generations within school classrooms and playgrounds, in families and communities. This multi-dimensional framing of gender departs from over-simplified dichotomous views of men/boys as perpetrators and women/girls as victims, instead attempting to understand how gendered norms, practices and subjectivities may reproduce and amplify violence, and may also offer spaces for negotiation, subversion and resistance.

Organisation of the book

The book draws together established and new authors to develop the emerging field of gender violence studies in education in poverty contexts. This is a particularly difficult field to research (replete as it is with risks, taboos and sensitivities) but there is a growing range of theoretical and methodological tools, and empirical evidence to learn from, as discussed in Part 1: *Theory and Diagnostics*. Bringing together work on gender, violence, poverty and education entails the challenge of working across disciplines: gender studies, childhood studies, sociology, anthropology, development studies and post-conflict studies. As discussed above, the meanings of ‘violence’, ‘gender’ and ‘poverty’ are contested, within and between disciplines. In chapter 2, Jenny Parkes and Elaine Unterhalter start to map out this terrain, exploring different ways in which poverty, inequality and gender violence have been discussed in theoretical and empirical writings on education in diverse contexts, and developing the multi-dimensional conceptualisation begun above in this chapter. Whilst

critical of over-simplified claims that poverty causes violence (or violence causes poverty), they start to unravel some of the complex connections between gender violence, poverty and inequality. In chapter 3, Fiona Leach considers why this is such a difficult field of research. Drawing on a wide range of studies of gender violence in schools, including her own extensive research with young people in poverty contexts, she discusses how differing understandings of terms, concepts and research approaches, along with methodological difficulties have stymied the potential of research to provide clear, robust evidence. She also offers concrete suggestions for carrying out sensitive, ethical and rigorous research with children.

Through their wide ranging review of theoretical, methodological and empirical work around the globe, and particularly from southern contexts, these opening chapters start to map out the emerging field. The case studies presented in the rest of the book build on this body of work to offer new insights and nuanced elaborations of the multi-dimensional framework in research practice.

Part 2: *Experiencing violence in the home and the school* reveals the commonplace nature of violence in families and schools, and some of the effects on girls, boys and teachers of witnessing and experiencing first hand violence in these settings. Two chapters use data from *Young Lives*, a longitudinal study of childhood poverty in four countries². In the first of these (chapter 4) Kirrily Pells, Emma Wilson and Nguyen Thi Thu Hang analyse *Young Lives* data from Vietnam to explore the under-researched theme of children's responses to violence in the home. Their analysis draws out how children's responses to witnessing violence between parents are shaped by old and new structural forces, including cultural ideals of family harmony and rapid socio-economic change. Their subtle discussion of children's reflections on their own family dynamics illuminates the complex, varied and active ways in which children struggle to cope with violence, and how their responses are influenced by age, gender, economic resources and social networks. In chapter 5, Virginia Morrow and Renu Singh, also working with *Young Lives* data, consider violence in schools in Andhra Pradesh, India. Drawing on quantitative as well as qualitative evidence, they reveal the high prevalence of corporal punishment experienced by girls and even higher prevalence experienced by boys in this context, alongside an analysis of children's and parents' perspectives. They paint a disturbing picture of how poverty as well as norms about childhood, schooling and gender influence disciplinary practices at school, and of how parents and children collude with these practices, often through fear and helplessness. In contrast, Sharon Tao's research (chapter 6) examines corporal punishment from the perspectives of teachers in Tanzania. She draws on Amartya Sen's Capability Approach to shift the blame away from teachers, to view corporal punishment as a product of the ways in which teachers are constrained from achieving the capabilities they value. Environmental factors linked to poverty and social conditions mediated by gender relations, and the conflicting capabilities valued by students result in conflicts that are commonly resolved through beating. Through shifting the focus from children's rights to teachers' capabilities the analysis opens up avenues for direct interventions with teachers.

Part 3: *Negotiating Gender Violence* delves into the relationship between violence and the subjectivity and agency of young people in poverty contexts. Two chapters engage with issues of masculinity, youth and risk. In chapter 7, Ariane De Lannoy and Sharlene Swartz trace how the structural violence of social and economic inequality, an inadequate education system, and personal experiences of violence and loss, create for some young men in an

urban township of South Africa a strong attraction to gang affiliation. However, a central concern of this chapter is to explore the varying hopes, doubts, anxieties and aspirations of the young men as they strive to perform alternative masculinities. Moving continents, Ana Maria Buller (chapter 8) traces some similar themes in her analysis of young men and structural, symbolic and everyday violence in Peru. Her analysis examines how young men attempt to challenge the contexts in which they experience oppression and discrimination, sometimes through using violence, but also through avoiding and sublimating violence. Buller shows how violence can be a means of asserting social hierarchies and belonging, and at the same time associated with complex emotions of anger, revenge, frustration and shame. Both chapters problematise the dichotomy between perpetrator and victim. Chapter 9, by Jo Heslop and colleagues, also critiques this dichotomy, through exploring how young women negotiate the blurred boundaries between coerced and consensual sex. Drawing on data from a longitudinal study in Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique, they examine how normative discourses about adolescent sexuality, masculinity and femininity are in themselves coercive, through constraining girls' choices about sex. They reflect on the challenges for an NGO project attempting to address these issues, signalling how difficult it can be to achieve meaningful change where structural, symbolic and everyday violence combine. These chapters vividly show the workings of symbolic violence. They trace the complex negotiations and strategies used by young people to navigate violence within schools, families and neighbourhoods, beginning to map out possibilities for young people themselves to challenge violence.

Part 4: *Policy and Interventions* considers strategies to counter gender violence, and how these are constrained or expanded by institutions, including schools, governments, international organisations, NGOs and the media. In chapter 10, Polly Wilding laments the invisibility of young women in interventions on youth violence in urban Brazil. Through an analysis of two NGO projects that offer a 'holistic' range of interventions, she argues that the emphasis on addressing the more visible, public forms of violence associated with practices of young men means that women's concerns and the multiple ways in which gang violence affects their lives are neglected. NGOs are also the object of Karen Wells' critique in chapter 11. Through a Foucauldian discourse analysis of NGO campaign material, she shows how NGO campaigns on gender and education in conflict and poverty contexts construct an image of schools as modernity's solution to the 'problem' of communities or societies seen as violent and dangerous. This legitimises the NGO 'right to govern', with childhood, and particularly girlhood, becoming the site for inscribing new attitudes and practices. In chapter 12 Relebohile Moletsane, Claudia Mitchell and Thandi Lewin shift the gaze from NGOs to governments. They consider why it is that, despite the South African Government's commitment to gender equality, this lauded policy framework has not effectively addressed gender inequality and its manifestations in violence against girls and women and teenage pregnancy. Drawing on participatory research using visual methodologies, they discuss how the films made by female teachers and schoolgirls both echo and challenge norms, arguing that these approaches have much potential for 'from the ground up' policy dialogue.

In the concluding chapter, I reflect on the contribution of the rich body of research discussed in the collection to the new field of gender violence, poverty and education. Drawing on the book's theoretical and empirical insights, I construct a multi-dimensional theory of change, which sets out how violence is produced, perpetuated and countered, and discuss the future direction for scholarship and policy-making in this field. I hope that readers will be inspired

to reflect on, adapt and improve this framework, and to create new studies building on the research agenda set out in this chapter, and throughout the book.

The chapters display what scholarly work (not just policy making and initiatives) can offer to countering gender violence. The field needs more scholarship of the sort in this book. It needs anthropological studies of communities and youth cultures; it needs sociological studies of schools, classrooms, teachers and students' experiences and relations; it needs critical policy research on even well meaning initiatives and their assumptions, international declarations and agendas and national prioritisations of anti-violence as a means of poverty alleviation. Poverty and inequality are deeply implicated in violence, and violence associated with poverty can lead to children and women finding themselves outcast, marginalised, silenced and damaged by violence. Established gender relations are not always comfortable or safe. Through building on this scholarship, we may be better able to meet the educational challenge, and find ways to help young people and those around them to understand, resist and rupture the many faces of violence.

¹ See extensive coverage of the case of Malala Yousafzai shot in October 2012 following activism for girls' education in the Swat Valley, Pakistan, where the Taliban had banned girls from attending school (Husain 2013); and of the young para-medical student in Delhi in December of the same year (Majumder 2012); and reactions to the rape of 16 year old 'Liz' in Kenya, BBC News (2013) Kenyans demand gang-rape justice in police petition. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-24755318> (downloaded October 31st 2013)

² Young Lives is an ongoing longitudinal study investigating the changing nature of childhood poverty in four countries: Ethiopia, India (Andhra Pradesh), Peru and Vietnam. The study follows two cohorts of children (born in 1994/5 and 2000/1), their households and communities over 15 years (2001-16). Led by a team in the Department for International Development at the University of Oxford it is funded by DfID, UK (2002-17) (<http://www.younglives.org.uk>).

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