Using Photovoice to Explore Barriers to School Continuation and Re-Entry for Pregnant Adolescent Girls and Young Mothers Living in Low-Income Urban Contexts in Kenya

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	Full Meaning
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
APHRC	African Population and Health Research Center
CBD	Central Business District
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CPAR	Community Participatory Action Research
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFA	Education for All
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IRB	Institutional Research Board
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NACOSTI	National Council of Science and Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NUDHSS	Nairobi Urban Demographic and Health Surveillance System
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PNH	Public Health Nigeria
PVM	Participatory Visual Methodologies
PVR	Participatory Visual Research
REB	Research Ethics Board
REC	Research Ethics Committee
SASA	South African School Act
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UIS	United Nations Institute of Statistics
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UN	United Nations
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund
WHO	World Heath Organization

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Abstract

The United Nations has led in the formulation of international policies on girls' education such as the Education for All (EFA) goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which seek to address the persistent gender disparities in education by ensuring that all the world's children get equal access to quality basic education. Despite this, adolescent girls who live in low-resourced, hard to reach, and marginalized contexts remain vulnerable to dropping out of school for various reasons like poverty, unplanned teenage pregnancy, and motherhood.

Adolescent pregnancy and motherhood are major contributors to the persistent gender gap in education, especially in middle- and low-income contexts. Unplanned early pregnancy and motherhood among adolescent girls between the ages of 13 and 19 has several consequences on the life and well-being of teenage girls and on the lives of their children in terms of education and health.

In Kenya, as is the case in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the national government has ratified the international treaties on gender equality and education for all. One of the strategies that the Kenyan government is using to address gender inequality in education is the formulation of girl-centered policies; among them are school continuation and re-entry policies for pregnant girls and young mothers. Despite the existence of such a policy for pregnant girls and young mothers, many adolescent girls who become pregnant drop out of school and fail to return. The challenge with which the Kenyan government and other governments in SSA continue to grapple is how to incorporate or re-integrate pregnant girls and young mothers back into school. The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges to school continuation and

re-entry for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers in the presence of a school continuation and re-entry policy that has existed since 1994.

The study aimed to answer the following research questions.

1. How effective are the current school continuation and re-entry policies for pregnant girls and young mothers in SSA?
2. What are the policy makers' perspectives on the current school continuation and re-entry policy for pregnant girls and young mothers?

I conducted the fieldwork study in Korogocho, one of the largest urban informal settlements in Kenya's capital city, Nairobi. I employed Photovoice—a methodological participatory, arts-based, visual approach—with 15 pregnant girls and young mothers aged between 13 and 19 years who were out of school as a result of unplanned pregnancy. I conducted the study in two phases, the first of which was conducted between July and September 2017; it focused on exploring, through Photovoice, the challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers despite the existence, since 1994, of the school continuation and re-entry policy in Kenya. The participants produced over 100 photographs during the Photovoice workshop which they later curated into a Photovoice exhibition. I conducted Phase two between July and September 2019; this focused on using the Photovoice exhibition created by the 15 pregnant girls and young mothers to engage with education policy makers during a validation workshop for school continuation and re-entry polices at the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. I adopted participatory and feminist epistemological frameworks to analyze the data.

Key findings from this study showed that: (a) multiple social, economic, and cultural factors interact to create barriers to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant adolescent girls

and young mothers and policy makers need, therefore, to adopt an intersectional approach to identify needs when formulating a school continuation and re-entry policy; (b) education policy making is still closed and hierarchical and is not flexible enough to incorporate the marginalized voices of the policy beneficiaries; and (c) the umbrella application of the current ethical principles by Institutional Ethics Review Boards (IERBs) when reviewing all studies including those that apply arts-based participatory and visual methodologies with marginalized groups can perpetuate marginalization against these groups by making researchers avoid doing research with them. Drawing from the findings and the analysis, the study concludes that (1) the policy making landscape needs to include the voices of the target beneficiaries and alternative forms of knowledge like the studies from arts-based participatory and visual studies; and (2) that IERBs need to be progressive and expand the current ethical principles to accommodate participatory and visual methodologies that seek to empower and give voice to participants through the research processes.

Résumé

Les Nations Unies ont conduit à la formulation de politiques internationales sur l'éducation des filles telles que les objectifs de l'Éducation pour tous (EPT), les objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement (OMD) et les objectifs mondiaux de développement durable (ODD) qui visent à lutter contre la persistance du genre. disparités en matière d'éducation en garantissant à tous les enfants du monde un accès égal à une éducation de base de qualité. Malgré cela, les adolescentes qui vivent dans des contextes à faibles ressources, difficiles à atteindre et marginalisés restent vulnérables au décrochage scolaire pour diverses raisons telles que la pauvreté, les grossesses précoces non planifiées et la maternité.

L'accent mis sur le discours sur l'éducation des filles est apparu dans les années 90 après la prise de conscience que le travail des décennies précédentes pour promouvoir l'enseignement primaire universel n'était pas possible pour tous les enfants, en particulier les filles.

La grossesse et la maternité chez les adolescentes contribuent largement à l'écart persistant entre les sexes dans l'éducation, en particulier dans les contextes à revenu moyen et faible. Les grossesses précoces et la maternité non planifiées chez les adolescentes âgées de 13 à 19 ans ont plusieurs conséquences sur la vie et le bien-être des adolescentes et de leurs enfants en termes d'éducation et de santé.

Au Kenya, comme certaines parties de l'ASS, le gouvernement national a ratifié les traités internationaux sur l'égalité des sexes et l'éducation pour tous. L'une des stratégies que le gouvernement kényan utilise pour lutter contre les inégalités entre les sexes dans l'éducation consiste à formuler des politiques centrées sur les filles, parmi lesquelles des politiques de

poursuite de l'école et de réinsertion pour les filles enceintes et les jeunes mères. Malgré l'existence d'une politique de poursuite de l'école et de réinsertion pour les filles enceintes et les jeunes mères, de nombreuses adolescentes qui tombent enceintes continuent d'abandonner l'école et ne rentrent pas. Les défis auxquels le gouvernement kényan et d'autres gouvernements en Afrique subsaharienne continuent de faire face sont de savoir comment intégrer ou réintégrer les filles enceintes et les jeunes mères dans les écoles. Le but de cette étude était d'explorer les défis de la poursuite et de la réinsertion scolaires des adolescentes enceintes et des jeunes mères en présence d'une politique de poursuite et de réinsertion scolaire depuis 1994.

L'étude visait à répondre aux questions de recherche suivantes:

1. Dans quelle mesure les politiques actuelles de maintien à l'école et de réinsertion pour les filles enceintes et les jeunes mères en ASS sont-elles efficaces?

2. Quels sont les points de vue des décideurs sur la politique actuelle de maintien et de réinsertion scolaire des filles enceintes et des jeunes mères?

L’étude rapportée dans cette thèse a été menée à Korogocho, l’un des plus grands établissements urbains informels de Nairobi, la capitale du Kenya. L'étude a utilisé une approche méthodologique participative et visuelle basée sur les arts de la photographie avec 15 filles enceintes et jeunes mères âgées de 13 à 19 ans qui n'étaient pas scolarisées à la suite d'une grossesse non planifiée chez les adolescentes. L'étude a été menée en deux phases. La première phase a été menée entre juillet et septembre 2017 et s'est concentrée sur l'exploration par photovoice, les défis de la poursuite et de la réinscription à l'école pour les adolescentes enceintes et les jeunes mères malgré la présence d'une politique de poursuite et de réinsertion scolaire au Kenya depuis 1994. Le les participants ont produit plus de 100 photographies de l'atelier Photovoice qu'ils ont ensuite organisé pour une exposition Photovoice. La phase deux a

été menée entre juillet et septembre 2019 et s'est concentrée sur l'utilisation de l'exposition Photovoice créée par les 15 filles et jeunes mères enceintes pour dialoguer avec les décideurs politiques de l'éducation lors d'un atelier de validation des politiques de poursuite et de réinsertion scolaires à Nairobi le 20 août 2019. au Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. J'ai adopté des cadres épistémologiques participatifs et féministes pour analyser les données.

Les principales conclusions de cette étude ont montré que: (a) de multiples facteurs sociaux, économiques et culturels interagissent pour créer des obstacles à la poursuite et à la réinsertion des adolescentes enceintes et des jeunes mères et les décideurs politiques doivent donc adopter une approche intersectionnelle pour identifier les besoins lorsque formuler une politique de poursuite et de réinsertion scolaire; (b) l'élaboration de la politique de l'éducation est toujours fermée, hiérarchisée et n'est pas flexible pour coopérer avec les voix marginalisées des bénéficiaires de la politique; et (c) l'application globale des principes éthiques actuels par les comités d'examen d'éthique institutionnelle lors de l'examen de toutes les études, y compris celles qui appliquent des méthodologies participatives et visuelles fondées sur les arts avec des groupes marginalisés, peut perpétuer la marginalisation contre ces groupes en incitant les chercheurs à éviter de faire de la recherche avec eux. S'appuyant sur les résultats et l'analyse, l'étude conclut que: (1) le paysage de l'élaboration des politiques doit inclure les voix des bénéficiaires cibles et des formes alternatives de connaissances comme les études des études participatives et visuelles basées sur les arts et (2) que l'éthique institutionnelle Le comité d'examen doit être progressif et étendre les principes éthiques actuels à s'adapter aux méthodologies participatives et visuelles qui cherchent à responsabiliser et à donner la parole aux participants à travers les processus de recherche.

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Authorship and Remarks on Style

This dissertation follows a manuscript-based thesis format. Because of this, there are overlaps and repetitions in the text. As the sole author of the manuscripts and other sections of the dissertation, I conceptualized the study, developed the research design, and formulated the research questions that guided it. I was responsible for the coordination and management of data collection, transcription of the voice data, development of themes and codes, and data analysis. While I am the sole author of all the manuscripts and other sections that form part of this dissertation, I received support and guidance from my thesis supervisor, Dr. Claudia Mitchell, who reviewed and gave me feedback on every part of this dissertation.

Chapter one introduces the thesis; Chapter two frames the study within the sub-field of Girlhood Studies; Chapter three discusses the methodology; Chapter four is a published journal article; Nyariro, M.P. (2018). Re-Conceptualizing School Continuation & Re-Entry Policy for Young Mothers Living in an Urban Slum Context in Nairobi, Kenya: A Participatory Approach. *Studies in Social Justice*, *12*(2), 310–328. WorldCat.org. https://doi.org/10.26522/ssj.v12i2.1624; Chapter five is a Chapter contribution in an edited collection—Nyariro, M. (2021a). Using Photovoice for Ethical Research with Young Mothers in Kenya. In R. Moletsane, L. Wiebesiek, A. Treffry-Goatley, & A. Mandrona (Eds.), *Ethical Practices in Participatory Visual Research with Girls: Transnational Approaches.* Berghahn Books; Chapter six is a journal article published in *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*—Nyariro, M. (2021b). "We have heard you but we are not changing anything": Policymakers as audience to a photovoice exhibition on challenges to school re-entry for young mothers in Kenya. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity.* https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2020.1855850; and Chapter seven,

the final Chapter of this dissertation, offers a summary of the dissertation research study, reflections, discussion, and a conclusion.

CHAPTER 1

General Introduction

Contextualizing Girls Education

There has been an increased emphasis on girls' education as a discourse since the 1990s given the realization that the efforts of the previous decades to promote Universal Primary Education were not working for all children, particularly girls (King & Winthrop, 2015; Sperling & Winthrop, 2015). In the decades that followed, this discourse on girls' education was framed under the Education for All (EFA) rubric, so girls' education, especially for developing contexts like sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), focused on the economic and social returns of female education (Ainsworth et al., 1996; Mfum-Mensah, 2017; Schultz, 2002). Still, data showed that despite gender parity in enrolment, girls of adolescent age were showing higher school attrition rates than were boys of the same age cohort (Abuya et al., 2013; Harber, 2017).

The Education for All (EFA) goals of the United Nations (UN), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were formulated to address the persistent gender disparities in education by ensuring that all the world's children, including girls, would be given access to quality basic education. These global goals are inscribed in international legal instruments in the form of treaties and are binding to the States Parties that have signed on to these and have ratified them into their local country laws. These international legal instruments outline the right of all children to equal access to education and to gender equality in education systems. Despite the achievements that have so far been made globally, and specifically in some developing countries, in terms of access and retention, many children, especially girls of adolescent age are still missing out on their fundamental right

to education and, therefore, to the benefits of education (Hanushek, 2008; Lockheed, 2008; UNICEF, 2012; UNESCO Institute of Statistics and UNICEF, 2015). In many sub-Saharan African countries, gender equality in education remains elusive since many girls continue to be excluded from education systems in the region (Harber, 2017; UNESCO, 2015; UNESCO Institute for Statistics (IFS) & UNICEF, 2015). Among this group of girls are those who live in low-resourced, hard-to-reach, and marginalized contexts who encounter a multiplicity of factors that intersect to put them at high risk of dropping out of school before completing a full cycle of basic education (Abuya et al., 2012, 2013, 2014). Adolescent girls who live in such contexts are highly likely to drop out of school because of unplanned teenage pregnancies and motherhood (Birungi et al., 2015; Onyango et al., 2015; Undie et al., 2015b). UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and UNICEF (2015) have pointed out that about 63 million adolescents of lower secondary school age were out of school globally in 2012 despite ambitious policies being in place at both global and national level to give basic education to all children of the world. Of these, one third are in SSA and most of them are likely to be girls (UNICEF 2015).

Education leads to social, political, and economic benefits as well as to human development. For girls and young women, the benefits of education go beyond personal advancement and have a ripple effect on the family, community, and the society at large. The support for education by global governing bodies such as the UN, the World Bank, and transnational advocacy groups like Plan International among others, is premised on the belief that completing a full cycle of basic education is a pathway to human development and to social, economic, and political autonomy (Human Development Report, 2016). The implementation of the UNs' MDGs and, more recently, the global SDGs has nudged governments in the global community, particularly those in developing contexts, to formulate and enforce policies to

achieve gender equality in their education systems and in society in general. In spite of the efforts made by governments, particularly those in low- and middle-income countries, uniform access to education for all continues to be a major challenge.

Education as a Pathway to Human Development

Investment in girls' and women's education as a pathway to human capital and development is a major priority for countries that seek to increase both their citizens' social and economic growth and human well-being in general (Ainsworth et al., 1996; Browne & Barrett, 1991; Hanushek, 2008; Lockheed, 2008; Schultz 1999, 2002). The literature shows that regions that have invested poorly in girls' and women's schooling lag behind relatively in development because of this limited contribution to the economic and social progress of women (Schultz, 2002). Schultz (2002) acknowledged that strategies for responding to and designing efficient social policies to redistribute education by gender and other intersecting factors such as economic status and social class, must be developed through research in particular contexts. Other scholars have emphasized the value of the returns of female education in terms of the improvement in human capital and in maternal and child health and well-being, along with the ability to control fertility rates, and achieve high agricultural productivity just to mention a few (Ainsworth et al., 1996; Hanushek, 2008; Schultz, 1999). The perceived rates of social and economic return following the education of women and girls have further motivated local communities, local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), and women and youth groups to take up the role of serving as key actors in promoting girls' education and equipping youth with the skills required to achieve such return (Browne et al., 1991, p. 275); (see, too, UNESCO, 2012a, 2015; World Bank, 2011). These benefits notwithstanding, education

access and attainment for girls and young women, particularly in developing contexts like SSA remains challenging because of several intersecting factors that act as barriers to girls' schooling. Scholars like Mukudi (2002) and Mfum-Mensah (2017) have outlined both in-school and out-of-school policy level factors that pose challenges that further marginalize girls and young women in schooling and education systems.

Education as a Pathway to Social, Economic and Political Development for Girls and Young Women

The acknowledgment by international bodies such as the UN and the World Bank that SDGs on gender equality in education constitute an important area for social, economic, and political development (Ainsworth et al., 1996; World Bank, 2011) is crucial. The recognition of gender equality as an important area of development is evidenced by the adoption of such international conventions and treaties as the MDGs, The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the SDGs (which replaced the MDGs) to which many countries are signatory, and which have informed local legislation and policies. Some countries in developing contexts have made progress in achieving equal rates of enrollment at primary levels in education and this has had a projected positive impact on the economies of these countries (Harber, 2017; World Bank, 2011), but much remains to be done particularly for girls and young women in the more remote and marginalized contexts of these countries. The 2016 Human Development Report identified national policies and key strategies that might enable all people to achieve basic human development. These strategies address the structural challenges of the current global system of gender inequality in education and present options for institutional reforms. The report also highlighted the need for flexibility in policy formulation and emphasized the need for universal

policies, like education for all, to reach those who are left out of the development strategies. Furthermore, the report highlighted the challenges of using a uniform policy to address the needs of all groups and suggested that governments and policy makers use context specific policies to address the needs of marginalized groups and communities in order to promote the human development (and well-being) of these groups and communities.

The literature acknowledges that fewer girls than boys transition to secondary school and those who do so are more likely to drop out at lower secondary school level and then remain out of school (Abuya et al., 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017); Ainsworth et al., 1996; Chaaban & Cunningham, 2011; Hanushek, 2008; Hawke, 2015; Latchem, 2018; Lockheed 2008; Odejimi & Young, 2014; Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016; Schultz, 2001; United Nations Development Programme, 2017). Further, other studies show that in the developing parts of the world, girls are more likely to drop out of school before completing a full cycle of basic education. This impacts their human development negatively, diminishes their human capital, and ultimately inhibits their participation in the social and economic development of their communities and countries (Harber, 2014, 2017; King & Winthrop, 2015; Manteaw, 2012; Ombati, 2013; Verger et al., 2012).

Global Conventions that Promote Gender Equality in Education

Since the mid-20th century, there have been global efforts to promote education for all as part of the humanistic initiatives that began in the 1940s and which led to the formation of UNESCO (Mfum-Mensah, 2017). The adoption of the Universal Convention on Human Rights in 1947 which process was led by the UN, became a watershed moment for the global community. The convention helped draft initiatives that presented education for every child as a universal human right. Similarly, 1990 witnessed a global call for universal education that culminated into the

Jomtien World Education Conference in Thailand and subsequent convention in Dakar in 2000, which were both organized by the UN and other global governing bodies that called for EFA. The EFA goals contained in the Dakar agreement were drafted as part of an already existing structure of treaties like The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which called for an end to discrimination against girls and women and their equal rights to resources and opportunities like education already afforded to boys and men. The EFA goals specifically outline a human rights-based approach to education. Because human rights are innate and universal, every child, regardless of gender, is entitled to education. There exist a number of other international treaties that have been formulated to ensure that all children and particularly girls who have been historically excluded from education are included in schools and education systems in general, and that they receive equal quality education. Some of these global conventions include CEDAW, CRC, and the MDGs, which, in 2015, were replaced by the SDGs, among many others.

CEDAW was instituted in September 1981 and was the first global and comprehensively legally binding international treaty aimed at the elimination of all forms of sex- or gender-based discrimination against women. The treaty provides a broad definition of discrimination against women and protects women and girls against all forms of discrimination throughout their lifecycle. CEDAW outlines (see Article 10) that girls and women have the same right to education as do boys and men and governments must end discrimination against girls and women in education. The CRC entered into force in September 1990 and is closely related to the CEDAW convention. The CRC's emphasis is on the best interest of the child in relation to non-discrimination. The CRC outlines in its Article 28 that "States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal

opportunity, and in particular; a) make primary education compulsory and available and free for all; b) encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, and make them available and accessible to every child; and c), take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need." Furthermore, Article 29 of the CRC states in part that "the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest and the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles."

The UNs' MDGs, endorsed in 2000, in goals 2 and 3 respectively, commit to achieving universal primary education by ensuring that boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling, and to closing the gender disparity gap in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. At its 2012 meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, on the Declaration on Sustainable Development and Plan of Implementation, the UN introduced the SDGs with the objective of promoting integrated development globally. SDGs number 4 and 5 address equal access to education and gender equality respectively. Goal number 4 of the SDG outlines that, by 2030,

> all member states must ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes; ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education; ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university; eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable,

> including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations; ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

To fulfill these stated goals, the Nation States are, among other stipulations, required to build and upgrade education facilities that are child-, disability-, and gender-sensitive and to provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all. Additionally, Goal number 5 is committed to

> end all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere, eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, eliminate harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation; recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate; ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences. The United Nations requires nations to use the MDGs and SDGs to develop and strengthen sound policies and enforceable

legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

The majority of SSA countries responded by ratifying these treaties into their national laws and subsequently formulating policies that support the education of girls like the school continuation and re-entry policies for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers implemented by Kenya. Still, some countries in the region have not formulated such policies.

Problematizing Teenage Pregnancy, Motherhood, and Schooling in sub-Saharan Africa

Despite all this policy framework, the situation for girls who become pregnant while still in school remains dire. Studies have linked adolescent pregnancy and motherhood to the persistent gender gap in education. Unplanned teenage pregnancy and motherhood have several consequences for the life and well-being of teenage girls and that of their children in terms of education and health. In SSA, girls who become pregnant and those who are young mothers before completing a full cycle of basic education are highly likely to drop out of school and fail to re-enter despite the presence of school continuation and re-entry policies (Moletsane et al., 2015; Onyango et al., 2015; Undie et al., 2015a). This might be caused partly by the conventional societal perception that teenage pregnancy and motherhood are generally incompatible with schooling (see Birungi et al., 2015; Chilisa, 2002; Moletsane et al., 2015; Nyariro 2018; Onyango et al., 2015; Silver, 2019, 2020; Undie et al., 2015b).

Ibrahim Yakubu and Waliu Salisu (2018) have argued that teenage pregnancy is a result of complex interactions between various social, cultural, household, individual, and political factors. Studies show that the causes of teenage pregnancy range from poverty (Atuyambe et al., 2015; Krugu et al., 2017; Lambani, 2015; Mchunu et al., 2012), unequal gender power relations, and the sexual abuse and exploitation of girls and young women (Jewkes et al., 2001; McCleary-

Sills et al., 2013), lack of access to comprehensive sexuality education (Atuyambe et al., 2015; Krugu et al., 2017; Mushwana et al., 2015; Wood & Jewkes, 2006) lack of access to information about and the use of contraceptives (Marston et al., 2013; Salami et al., 2014; Yidana et al., 2015), parental negligence towards girls and a lack of parental guidance and counselling (Krugu et al., 2017; Mngadi et al., 2003; Okigbo & Speizer, 2015), early sexual debut among teenagers (Kumi-Kyereme et al., 2014; Salami et al., 2014), religion and early marriage customs (Okigbo & Speizer, 2015) and transactional sex with older men (Abuya et al., 2012; UNICEF, 2010). Such relationships and interactions are loaded with gender/power inequalities that curtail girls' and young women's ability to access contraceptives, information on comprehensive sexuality education, and/or negotiate for protected sex, all of which puts them at high risk of unplanned teenage pregnancy, early marriage, and contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV among other potentially harmful exposures (Bhana, 2008; Bhana et al., 2013).

Evidence further shows that teenage pregnancy has negative social consequences (Gyan, 2013; Nyariro, 2018), negative health outcomes (Ganchimeg et al., 2014; Gunawardena et al., 2019), and negative economic and educational consequences (Bhana et al., 2010; Gyan, 2013; Psaki et al., 2019). These factors can individually and/or collectively have a long-term impact on the lives of adolescent girls, on the lives of their children, and on families, communities, and society at large. In order to mitigate the negative impacts of teenage pregnancy and motherhood, the UN and its affiliate arms have formulated a number of legal instruments to protect these girls and young women from discrimination, exclusion, and violence within the education system in general and schools in particular. For example, the UNs' MDGs and the SDGs (discussed earlier in this chapter) are foundational global instruments that outline gender equality and quality education for all. As a result of member states having adopted these treaties and ratified them

into their domestic laws, many countries in SSA, for example, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, and Kenya among others, have formulated policies that include the most vulnerable girls like those who drop out of school as a result of teenage pregnancy and forced marriage (Birungi et al., 2015; Moletsane et al., 2015; Onyango et al., 2015; Silver, 2020; Undie et al., 2015b). Despite this, most of these countries are still grappling with the challenges of how to design and implement efficient and effective policies to support the integration of pregnant learners and young mothers into school (Arango et al., 2014; Bhana 2010; Nyariro 2018; Onyango et al., 2015; Undie et al., 2015).

School Continuation and Re-Entry Policy Landscapes in sub-Saharan Africa

The SSA region has among the highest rates of gender inequality in the world. The global community's push for gender equality and respect for women's rights has led some countries in this region, including Kenya and South Africa, among others, to ratify the global treaties on gender equality, as noted above. In line with these, they have formulated and implemented policies to ensure access and retention for vulnerable children, and school re-entry policies particularly to bring back those leaners who drop out of school because of various issues such as unplanned teenage pregnancy and motherhood. However, some countries like Tanzania, Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, and Sierra Leone have done the reverse in formulating and implementing school discontinuation and expulsion policies for schoolgirls who become pregnant. For instance, between 2015 and 2020, these four countries banned pregnant teens and young mothers from attending school (Balla, 2018; Hodal, 2020; Makoye, 2017). Their doing this has attracted the attention of international bodies and Human Rights activist groups who have condemned such policies and have highlighted the fact that denying these girls education is

not only an infringement of their fundamental human rights, but have noted that this will also trap them further into the hard-to-break cycle of poverty, leaving them perpetually on the margins of society (Peyton, 2018). In 2017, the World Bank responded to this ban in Tanzania by withholding its education funding to the country and did not reverse this decision until July 2019 with the agreement that the funds will be used to improve access to education for all children including pregnant girls and young mothers (Balla, 2020). In Sierra Leone where the rates of teenage pregnancies soared as a result of increased incidences of sexual violence during the Ebola outbreak (Peyton, 2018), the government responded by passing a policy that banned pregnant teenagers and young mothers from attending school rather than inventing ways to support them to enable them to continue with their education in order to mitigate these effects of this pandemic. The implementation of this policy was overruled after Human Rights and women's organizations led by Equality Now sued and won their case against the government in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) court, leading to the lifting of the ban (Hodal, 2020). Other countries such as The Gambia and Angola, which have the highest rates of teenage pregnancy, do not have policies related to this issue (Peyton, 2018).

Of particular relevance to this study is that the government of Kenya passed a school continuation and re-entry policy in an Act of parliament in 1994 (Birungi et al., 2015; Republic of Kenya, 1993; Onyango et al., 2015) yet the number of pregnant girls and young mothers who drop out of school and do not go back continues to grow because there are no clear policy guidelines that would facilitate the implementation of the policy (Onyango et al., 2015; Silver, 2019, 2020; Undie et al., 2015). With the re-entry policy in place as an intervention, it is presumed that girls who fall pregnant and become young mothers will carry on with their schooling or that they will re-enter school and complete a full cycle of basic education. However,

studies show that despite the presence of such policies in some SSA countries, the majority of pregnant teenagers and young mothers continue to drop out of school and do not return (Chilisa, 2002; Moletsane et al., 2015; Nyariro, 2018; Onyango et al., 2015; Undie et al., 2015b). Thus, the evidence so far shows that the current school continuation and re-entry policies in most countries in SSA, including Kenya, have not been effective in addressing the issue of teenage pregnancy, motherhood, and schooling (Birungi et al., 2015; Moletsane et al., 2015; Onyango et al., 2015; ; Silver, 2019, 2020; Undie et al., 2015a). For example, Kenya's Demographic and Health Surveys (2009) cited in Onyango et al., (2015) show that 18% of girls have experienced a pregnancy by the age of 18 years. Evidence also reveals that most of the girls who drop out of school because of pregnancy do not resume school after childbirth despite the policy provision for them to do so (Moletsane et al., 2015; Onyango et al., 2015; Undie et al., 2015). In the Kenyan context, it is estimated that between 10,000 and 13,000 girls drop out of school annually because of pregnancy and only 1,200 return after giving birth (Onyango et al., 2015). This may have been because there are no guidelines on how to stop pregnant girls from dropping out nor on how to re-integrate young mothers back into school. Therefore, through this study, I wanted to understand which factors continue to pose challenges for pregnant girls and young mothers to continue their education or re-enter school despite this policy of continuation and re-entry that allows them to do so.

Locating Myself in the Study

I was born and raised in rural western Kenya. I come from a large family of nine children and was raised solely by my mother after the passing away of my father when I was only two years of age. Growing up, I witnessed my mother advocating for bursary allocation and awards for children from economically disadvantaged households from the constituency bursary fund. I also

saw how she advocated for children in the community who had been expelled from school to be allowed to return to school. In her early career days, my mother had founded the first local early education center where she also taught before moving to work for the government in the then Ministry of Gender, Culture and Social and Youth Services as the District Social Services Officer, a position she held until her retirement. In her role, she supervised and coordinated development projects, participated in the training of women, youth, and people with disabilities on project design and management for health and sustainable economies. In her dedication to her work, my mother turned part of our home into an office where women and youth groups streamed in over weekends to register their organizations. My sisters and I did not like this because we had to be in the kitchen constantly making tea and serving lunch to these large groups. In hindsight, I know now that having been exposed to people from different backgrounds exposed me to diversity, and to the lived-out concepts of inclusion, and social justice since I saw my mother embrace these people and work closely with them to claim their rights and achieve their full potential. My mother's work and life has influenced my current passion and interest in working with marginalized groups and my desire for social justice for the most vulnerable in society.

Despite all the work that my mother did for the government and the local county council, she did not earn enough to pay school fees and provide other learning materials for all her children. Moreover, the corruption in the government and in the local council made workers go without salaries for several months, and on a lucky day, they were given only a percentage of their salary for the month. I remember that I was often frustrated for my mother because of what she and her other colleagues had to endure. On a few occasions, I think, they had to carry out demonstrations at the council headquarters to demand their salaries. My mother, although

outwardly seen as economically empowered because of her work with the government, needed support much like the people she worked with and advocated for, and I saw this as evidence of her passion for positive change and for the well-being of her community.

I, like some of my other siblings, was sponsored to go to school through the Christian Children's Fund. Occasionally, I was photographed in front of our three bedroomed iron sheet home or on a farm posing next to my favourite sheep to provide material to be sent abroad to seek sponsors for my education. I had different sponsors throughout my time in the program, but my fondest memories remain of my last sponsor family from Canada who sent me post-cards of the mysterious four seasons and sent gifts on my birthday and on every holiday. They reaffirmed to me that I mattered and that my education mattered as well.

When I was 10, my mother enrolled me at the Ngi'ya Girls boarding primary school in Kogello area in Siaya County. In Kenya, girls-only boarding schools performed better in national exams, occasionally second to elite private schools in big cities. Going to this school offered me and the other girls the opportunity to focus fully on our studies away from the distractions of performing household chores and care work that is typical for girls who attend day schools. From this primary school, I was admitted to the top ranked girls-only high school in the country. Being in all-girls schools for the entire period of my basic education shielded me from the outside world and its gender dynamics. It was only when I went to university that I would, for the first time, experience gender-based harassment and discrimination. It was also during my university years that I became pregnant and temporarily dropped out of college. Although nobody told me to do so, my own perception was that I should drop out of school. Although I re-enrolled one year later and completed my program within the timeframe, balancing school and childcare was something with which I constantly struggled.

My relationship with Gender, Women's Studies and Education

My interest in women's studies informed my choice of a Master's program. My master's thesis project investigated how gendered social outcomes for people living with HIV following the disclosure of their HIV status to their intimate partners. I conducted the study in Kibera urban slums. The findings showed that HIV-positive women were more likely than men to be abandoned by their partners following a positive diagnosis for HIV and disclosure to their partners. Moreover, these women were marginalized and ostracized within their communities for fear of their transmitting the virus to others. They suffered economically since most of them could not thrive in the local food and vegetable vending business in which most women in urban informal settlements participate. Despite these challenges, these resilient women persisted and created support groups among themselves where they learned coping mechanisms of living with HIV from each other and acquired skills like weaving to make baskets that they sold at tourist markets.

I worked with APHRC as a project manager for a project that offered after-school homework support and life skills lessons to Grade 6 and 7 students between the ages of 13 and 19 years in two urban slums, Korogocho and Viwandani, in Nairobi. This seemed to me to be a great program in which every girl and her parents would be glad to participate. However, I soon realized that some of the girls lacked the interest to attend these weekend sessions so attended only occasionally. My analysis of the reasons for their not attending the sessions as documented by the peer mentors revealed that most of the girls were helping their mothers with chores, selling at the local market, or taking care of younger siblings during the weekends. A follow-up with the schools which these girls attended revealed the same pattern of school absenteeism among the same girls. In some cases, girls dropped out of the program and out of school, but it

was difficult to establish the reasons. Parents reported that the girls were either transferred to another school or had been taken to live with relatives in the village, but these claims were disputed by neighbours and other community members. These social networks revealed that some of these girls had become pregnant and consequently taken to live with relatives away from the community. This happened more often in Korogocho than in Viwandani. Aware that there was a school continuation and re-entry policy for pregnant girls and young mothers, I wondered why these girls were still not taking advantage of this policy that allowed them to continue their education.

APHRC's Nairobi Urban and Demographic Health and Surveillance System (NUDHSS) data reveals that although these two slums are located in Nairobi city and are within close proximity to each other, there are remarkable differences in terms of the demographics and economic and health dynamics between the two slum communities. Korogocho is home to a stable population that has been settled in the slum for many years while Viwandani has a population that is highly mobile and relatively highly educated (Beguy et al., 2014). It is the uniqueness of Korogocho and its population that drew me to explore the challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant adolescents and young mothers in that setting.

Why Urban Informal Settlements?

I had a certain level of consciousness that women in general were not treated equally in the society in which I lived. My positionality and experiences developed in me a keen interest in understanding issues that affect women. While my choice to conduct my Master's fieldwork in Kibera was spurred by the media depiction of the struggles and resilience of its residents, immersing myself in the fieldwork exposed me further to the daunting challenges faced by

marginalized women living there. This motivated me to respond to a job advertisement by APHRC for the position of research officer especially when I realized that much of their work focuses on adolescent girls living in marginalized urban settlements. The same motivation shaped my desire to pursue advanced graduate research so that I could acquire the skill to work with marginalized girls and women in marginalized communities. From my research findings, I became more aware that the female participants in my study grappled with unique challenges in their daily lives as people living with HIV and AIDS compared to the men. More than 10 years later, while working with APHRCs Education Research Program, I coordinated a project that aimed to improve adolescent girls' educational outcomes and their transition to secondary education in Korogocho and Viwandani and I came to realize that urban slums are undeveloped, they lack basic facilities, and that girls who live there face a number of challenges as they transition to adulthood that most often make them vulnerable to dropping out of school before completing a full cycle of basic education.

Although a lot of interventions into women's economic empowerment through the provision of loans for women to start businesses are ongoing in Korogocho, I suggest that sustainable girls' and women's empowerment should begin early through continued and sustained access to education for girls. My previous work on education intervention with adolescent girls in Korogocho gave me a deeper understanding of the social and cultural factors that intersect and pose challenges for girls' education in this informal urban context. Some of the challenges for adolescent girls living in Korogocho is early sexual debut (Beguy et al., 2014), lack of access to information and services on sexual and reproductive health rights and services, and early and unplanned adolescent marriage and pregnancy (Kabiru et al., 2018). From my experience in coordinating the after-school support program, I knew that girls and their parents

often do not report early pregnancy as the reason why a girl drops out of school. Instead, when a girl becomes pregnant in Korogocho, the reason that is often given for her leaving school is a lack of money and, in some cases, the girls' parents make them leave the settlement for the countryside to live with relatives until they can come back to the city after childbirth. Already, there are a lot of in-school interventions for girls who are in school but those who drop out because of pregnancy are highly likely not to re-enter, and are then often left out, sometimes forever. In order to realize tangible women's empowerment, bring about gender equality in education in the Korogocho community, every child must have access to education, and, in particular, adolescent girls who are vulnerable to early pregnancy and early marriage. This was my motivation to conduct the study in Korogocho.

The Study

The purpose of the study in Korogocho was to explore the challenges of school continuation and re-entry for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers living in poorly resourced urban informal settings.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. How effective are the current school continuation and re-entry policies for pregnant girls and young mothers in SSA?
    i. Why is the current continuation and re-entry policy for pregnant girls and young mothers in Kenya ineffective in meeting its objectives?
    ii. What factors stand as barriers to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant girls and young mothers in low-income settings in Kenya?

2. What are the policy makers' perspectives on the current school continuation and re-entry policy for pregnant girls and young mothers?
    i. What are some of the barriers to inclusive education policymaking?
    ii. Which are the most effective ways in which policy beneficiaries can express their perspectives to decision makers and policy makers?
    iii. How might policy beneficiaries' perspectives be included in the policymaking?

The objectives of this study were

i) to explore the challenges to school continuation for pregnant girls and young mothers in low-income urban informal contexts;

ii) to inform the policy revision process on school continuation and re-entry policies through arts-based participatory and visual techniques;

iii) to explore the challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant girls and young mothers; and

iv) to explore ways in which the current school re-entry policy for young mothers can be improved and made more effective in facilitating school re-entry for young mothers.

To address the research questions, I employed the arts-based participatory and visual methodological approach of Photovoice with girls and young women between the ages of 13 and 19 who were out of school as a result of unplanned teenage pregnancy and motherhood (see Chapter four for a detailed discussion). The study was conducted in two phases. Phase one was conducted between July and September 2017 and Phase two between July and September 2019. In phase one of the study, 15 pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers participated in a Photovoice study to explore the barriers to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant girls

and young mothers in their community. They divided themselves into four groups of four to five participants each and they took a total of 110 photographs. From their photographs, they curated four photo narratives. The study findings identified four themes: poverty; lack of clean affordable and efficient day-care centers; an unconducive physical and social environment; and the lack of parent support and guidance as barriers to schooling for pregnant girls and young mothers. This Photovoice study culminated in a Photovoice exhibition that I curated with the aim of displaying it in the community and, later, to policy makers to create awareness of the challenges that keep pregnant girls and young mothers from re-entering schools despite the presence of the 1994 Kenyan school continuation and re-entry policy. Phase two of the study included displaying the Photovoice exhibition to education policymakers and educational stakeholders to show them, from the perspectives of the pregnant girls and the young mothers, the factors that prevent them from re-entering school and completing their full cycle of basic education. The Photovoice exhibition elicited reactions and responses both from the community members and the policy makers on how to address teenage pregnancy and school continuation for the young mothers.

Organization of the Thesis

As mentioned above, I have organized this thesis into seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the study, lays out the background of girls' education discourse, the benefits of girls' education, the global conventions that promote gender equality in education by promoting inclusion of all girls in the education system and encouraging State Parties to adopt these international laws as part of local law. In this chapter, I also discuss unplanned teenage pregnancy and motherhood as a contributing factor to the persistent gender gap in education. Furthermore, I discuss school continuation and re-entry policies as interventions to bridge the gender gap caused by unplanned

adolescent pregnancy and motherhood in education in selected sub-Saharan African countries. In this section, I interrogate why school continuation and re-entry policies are ineffective in bringing back into school girls who drop out because of early unplanned teenage pregnancy and motherhood. In the final section of the chapter, I outline the study objectives and the research questions that guided the study.

In Chapter two, I frame the study in relation to Girlhood Studies. I draw from the literature to construct a contemporary girlhood in Kenya, similar to how it would be in most of SSA, by discussing the factors that determine the transition of an individual from childhood to adulthood and girlhood to womanhood.

In Chapter three, I discuss the methodological approaches that guided the study and give its contextual background. I describe in detail the two phases of data collection for this study, the methodological approach that guided the study, the methods and procedures of data collection, the context of the study, the criteria for participant selection, and offer a description of the study participants. I discuss in detail arts-based participatory methodologies, specifically Photovoice, and show how it has been used in different contexts with disenfranchised groups to involve them in addressing issues that affect them and to reach out to policy makers about these concerns.

Chapter four is the first of my three manuscripts, "Re-Conceptualizing School Continuation & Re-Entry Policy for Young Mothers Living in an Urban Slum Context in Nairobi, Kenya: A Participatory Approach." In this chapter, I discuss the barriers to school continuation for pregnant girls and young mothers living in low-income and marginalized contexts in Nairobi, Kenya. I suggest adopting a girl-centered framework in the policy formulation process (Moletsane et al., 2015). This perspective puts girls' voices at the center of the policy formulation process to help address the persistent gender inequality in education

through problem identification and an exploration of ways to combat the challenges faced by girls.

Chapter five is my second manuscript, “Using Photovoice for Ethical Research with Young Mothers in Kenya.” In this chapter, I discuss the tension that often arises between current ethical guidelines and the key principles of participatory visual methodology (PVM) that complicate researchers’ negotiations for ethical approval from Institutional Review Boards particularly when they are working with participants who are considered vulnerable. Based on the Photovoice study with young teenage pregnant girls and young mothers in an urban slum in Kenya I deliberately raise more questions than answers to further the discussion about the ethical challenges of using PVM especially in relation to vulnerable populations.

Chapter six is my third manuscript, "We have heard you but we are not changing anything”: Policymakers as audience to a photovoice exhibition on challenges to school re-entry for young mothers in Kenya.” In this chapter, I present the findings and my reflections on policy makers’ responses to a Photovoice exhibition that was curated by the 15 pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers in Korogocho urban informal settlement, and the policy makers’ reactions and responses that followed. While the Photovoice exhibition demonstrated how girls can, in theory, lead from the ground-up in policy making through arts-based participatory research approaches, getting the policy makers to take the identified contextual factors into consideration in thinking about effecting policy change proved to be more complex. Policy makers might still show resistance to the views of other policy stakeholders particularly the policy beneficiaries who are often at the outer margin and this can be a result of the power dynamics and search for elitism that exists among the different groups and individuals involved

in policy making. The views of policy beneficiaries are crucial in formulating effective policies but are currently not considered by policy makers.

In Chapter seven, I discuss and summarize the key findings from the study and discuss the study outcomes. I show how the study contributes to new knowledge, and offer the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of the study. I also discuss the study limitations, its implications for future research, and offer recommendations from the study. In the final part of this chapter, I reflect on the study in general and on the study findings and outcomes and give my conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

Framing the Study: Key Concepts and Literature Review

Introduction

The theoretical orientation of this dissertation is guided by the concerns taken up by Girlhood Studies that investigates the childhood and adolescence of girls, and the early adulthood of young women from a feminist point of view. I discuss the many aspects of oppression that adolescent and teenage girls are likely to face given their age and social positioning. I begin this chapter with an overview of the conceptualization of the categories of childhood, adolescence, and young womanhood from an historical perspective and in relation to geographical contexts. Then, I draw from the existing literature on Girlhood Studies in the sub-Saharan context to conceptualize a contemporary African girlhood by discussing indicators that the society uses to determine and define who counts as a girl and that influence the experiences of girlhood in contemporary Kenyan society.

Overview of Girlhood Studies, Childhood Studies, and Youth Studies: Links and Parallels

Although the terms girl, child, adolescent, and young woman represent categories that are associated with the progression of chronological age and might be seen to be distinct categories, the field of Girlhood Studies is concerned with them all in its insistence on girl-centered research methodologies (Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2008). The UN and the World Health Organization (WHO) define adolescence as the phase of life between childhood and adulthood so the terms teenager and adolescent have come to be used interchangeably at times Public Health Nigeria (PHN), (2019). The UN and WHO posit that adolescence encompasses elements of biological growth and major social role transitions, both of which have changed in the past century (PHN,

2019). The UN and WHO add that the onset of earlier puberty has accelerated the onset of adolescence in nearly all populations, while understanding of continued growth has lifted its endpoint age (PHN, 2019).

According to WHO and the UN an adolescent is an individual in the 10–19 years age group and a youth is an individual in the 15–24 years age group, while the term young people covers the age range of 10–24 years. As children up to the age of 18 years, most adolescents are protected under the CRC. Adolescence begins with the onset of physiologically normal puberty and ends when an adult identity and behaviour are accepted. This period of development corresponds roughly to the period between the ages of 10 and 19 years, which is consistent with the WHO's definition of adolescence (PHN, 2019).

The terms teenage-hood and adolescence are often socially constructed by adults (Helgren & Vasconcellos, 2010b; Lesko, 2001). Lesko (2001) argues that teenagers often appear in adult talk as delinquent, deficient, not to be taken too seriously, and trouble. She argues that some of the terms used to describe adolescence like coming of age, transitioning from childhood to adulthood, and being at risk of not becoming the expected adult, might in themselves carry connotations that adolescents are unfinished, nascent, and in peril. Adolescents are seen to have great potential and as also able to go astray (Lesko 2001) all in one body. Literature on childhood and youth show that the historical construction of children as becoming in contrast with adults who are seen as beings undermines children's rights to contribute to their objectification and denies them their status as knowers (Mason et al., 2005).

Lesko has argued, further, that "the ready construction of young people into numerous public problems—violent, Internet addicted suburbanites, teenage mothers, and urban criminals—suggests that teenagers are complex and malleable" 2001, p. 2). She identifies four

characterizations socially assigned to adolescents between the ages of 10 and18 years as coming of age into adulthood, controlled by raging hormones, peer-oriented, and signified by chronological age. The above characterizations, she argues, are related to physiological, emotional, social, and cognitive changes in young people's bodies. For Lesko, these characterizations also construct teenagers as being at a threshold and in transition which suggests that an evolutionary process is attached to the young person. She argued that adolescence is usually understood to end when a person finishes school, gets a full-time job, marries, and has children and this assumes a linear trajectory in youth development where anything that challenges that order is marked as dysfunctional (Lesko, 2001). As scholars of Girlhood Studies have pointed out, girlhood is often defined by other people (often men) and not by girls themselves (Helgren & Vasconcellos, 2010b; Lesko, 2001). Further, some of these scholars draw attention to the fact that despite the fact that the girl has been at the center of international policies on education and other developments, her voice has remained silent. Recent scholarly work shows that although this trend seems to be changing with the increased participation of girls in decision-making in their communities, a lot remains to be done (Bent & Switzer, 2016; Kirk et al., 2010; Lesko, 2001).

Here, we see that the period between childhood and youth is marked as a transitional period to adulthood. Notably, this period, for a girl, is also marked by contradictions between the required performance of gendered roles and her physiological development; she is seen to be ready and not ready to assume the adult gendered role of wife and mother and biologically ready and not ready for sexual activity and childbirth.

The fields of Girlhood Studies, Childhood Studies, and Youth Studies are closely linked and draw from the perspectives of each other in theory, policy, and practice. The three fields deal

with historically marginalized groups—socially constructed to occupy a lower status in society, leading to their marginalization in participation on decision making, the silencing of their voices, and increased vulnerability to violation of their rights. Studies of childhood, girlhood, and youth all take rights-based approaches. With the recognition that children, girls, and youth are autonomous entities who can make their own decisions and choices as active agents who can participate in constructing their own narratives, respond to the issues of self-representation and participation, and are able to voice all this, the three discourses, although different, exhibit some similarities in approach and perspectives. Leena Alanen draws a comparison between Women's Studies and Childhood Studies and posits that

> the field of Childhood Studies bears comparison with the beginning of Women's Studies . . . Feminists had observed the remarkable and parallel absence of women and women's issues in both the theoretical and the empirical subject matter of science, despite its prevailing beliefs and pretensions to scientific truth and objectivity. . . Placing the critique of adultism in science within the tradition of critical interventions means arguing that children now also constitute a social category that has been 'done wrong'—with similar consequences of absenting them and distorting their social place and contributions. The new Childhood Studies . . . suggests . . . conceptual tools to try to develop a sociology that . . . will take children seriously. . . This alliance of women and children already suggests possibilities for using the achievements of feminist scholarship as a resource for developing the new field of Childhood Studies" (2005, pp. 32–33).

Alanen goes on to mark the points of departure between Women's Studies and Childhood Studies in saying that "Childhood Studies differs remarkably from Women's Studies . . . in that it did not emerge as the willed achievement of those for whom it intends to speak: children."

Rather, she has argued, “Childhood Studies is the work of adults. Children are not, and perhaps cannot ever be, equally positioned with adults in relation to knowledge production, despite the best endeavours of researchers to redress the degree of power imbalance between children and adults.” She posits that “Improving the ethics and the methods in doing research with children is one route towards a better balance.” (pp. 44–45). She has argued that for Childhood Studies to speak for children, they need to be seen and taken as actors and partners with their perspectives within their own rights and this requires that the intergenerational relations between children and adults have to change.

Similarly, scholars of Youth Studies argue that young people have been defined by different groups of people such as sociologists, policymakers, and social worker and not by the youth themselves (Cieslik & Simpson, 2013; Côté, 2019). Both Cieslik and Simpson (2013) and Côté (2019) argue that the concept of youth—its definition that dates from the eighteenth century is fairly recent in Western societies—is historically and culturally determined. Youth, they argue, embody that intermediate stage or phase between childhood and adulthood. According to these scholars, this phase emerged gradually and has been extended in past decades as social-cultural definitions of dependent childhood and independent adulthood have become more clearly demarcated through aspects of transition such as career routes, work and employment, and education. They have argued further that mass media promotes a normative concept of youth through their bodies, sexualities, and dis/abilities and that the media has constructed the notion of youth around the idea of risk and a dangerous age. A focus on youth as a time of transition assumed a linear and unidirectional process of childhood, youth, adulthood, but this has been challenged recently. Often, the phase of youth was, and still is, associated with preparation for the job economy in adulthood although this transitioning period has been lengthened because of

a lack of employment opportunities and because most young people opt to stay in education for longer periods in contemporary societies (Cieslik & Simpson, 2013; Côté, 2019).

Often, the legal definitions of child, girl, and youth appear in international instruments under various Universal Human Rights conventions which also describe their rights. For example, children, girls, and youth are all protected under the UN's CRC, ILO, and CEDAW to mention only a few. As noted by some scholars, adulthood is the only phase that is not defined and protected under the UN's international instruments, thus indicating the assumed autonomy of adults (Fattore et al., 2005).

There is no fixed demarcation between a child, a girl, and a youth, so I draw attention to the continuity and overlap between these different phases of development and, by extension, the conventions that define and protect their respective rights. In so doing, I highlight the location of Girlhood Studies within these three junctures and the need for scholars of Girlhood Studies to maneuver through these heuristic boundaries while doing research with, about, and for girls of different ages in order to identify and address their needs.

Despite the acknowledgement that education has the potential to transform the lives of young people, especially those who live in the margins of abject poverty, girls often remain at the margins of society as Fiona Leach (2010) has observed. Scholars have drawn attention to the gendered nature of schools and education (Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Leach & Mitchell, 2006) and have described schools as sites in which gender identities are formed and gender violence is perpetuated against girls (Abuya et al., 2012; Dunne et al., 2006; Dunne & Leach, 2007). This means that girls' presence in schools does not often translate into their participation and this, of course, works to silence their voices.

In the following section, I give an overview of Girlhood Studies as a discourse that strives to increase girls' participation, voice, and self-representation in education.

Situating the Study: Girlhood Studies

Girlhood Studies is an emerging academic field that draws from the perspectives of Women's Studies, Feminist Studies, Sexuality Studies, and Childhood and Youth Studies (Alanen, 2005; Cieslik & Simpson, 2013; Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2008). Girlhood Studies emerged after feminist scholars acknowledged that although girls occupy a unique position in international development, the oppressive problems they face in relation to the intersection of age, gender, and sexuality were not being addressed by Women's Studies or by Childhood Studies (Rivard, 2015). Central to Girlhood Studies is the issue of recovering the historically silenced voices of girls and the histories of girlhood (Vanner, 2019). To interrogate the normative silencing of girls' voices in decisions, particularly those that concern their lives, there are approaches and considerations that feminist scholars doing research with, about, and for girls need to take into account (Caron, 2016; Kirk & Garrow, 2003; Rivard, 2015).

In their book *Methodologies for Mapping a South African Girlhood in the Age of Aids*, Moletsane et al. (2008) argue that embedded in the methodological issues in Girlhood Studies is the idea of working with girls, for girls, and about girls. They, and other scholars of Girlhood Studies draw from the rich body of work on feminist methodologies and studies of childhood to create what I might refer to a hybrid approach that integrates different perspectives borrowed from related fields to conduct relevant and appropriate research with, about, and for girls (Caron, 2016; Gonick & Gannon, 2014; Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2008; Vanner, 2019). In doing this, as Moletsane et al., (2008) have noted, methodologies and methods for working with girls should

assume the political stance of defending and promoting the rights of the girls while ensuring their safety both during the research process and after it. In this work, Moletsane et al., (2008) also provide researchers and other professional working with girls with a framework for a girl-method that is guided by four main themes.

a) *Age and Gender*: These scholars (Moletsane et al., 2008) underscore the significance of age in Girlhood Studies. Likewise, other scholars acknowledge the importance of considering age in conducting research with children (Fattore & Turnbull, 2005; Keily, 2005; Mason & Fattore, 2005) and youth (Delgado, 2015). Disaggregating girls into various age categories, scholars argue, helps us to better understand their position and experiences within the larger social cultural context of the society in which they live (see, too, Kirk et al., 2010; Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2008; Vanner, 2019). In mapping girlhood in South Africa in the Age of HIV and Aids, Moletsane et al. (2008) emphasize the need to make age and gender explicit both in relation to the researcher and to the researched. They, like other scholars of Girlhood Studies, acknowledge the power and age dynamics that exist in research processes between the adult researcher(s) and their participant(s). Caroline Caron (2016) in her article, "Placing the girlhood scholar into the politics of change: A reflexive account" with Francophone girls in Canada, reflected on her accounts of conducting feminist work with girls as an adult/feminist/ researcher and argued that the age differences between the researcher and the researched must be taken into account along with the other existing structures of power and privilege which might further intersect with race, class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. To fail to do so would be to undermine the political stance of right-based social justice when we are working with girls. Like Moletsane et al. (2008) Caron (2016) underscored the problem of adults researching with girls and has argued for the adaption of methodologies to make them girl-friendly and girl-centered.

b) *Intergenerationality*: Along with Moletsane et al., (2008), Feminist, Childhood, Girlhood, and Youth Studies scholars (Alanen, 2005; Caron, 2016; Côté, 2019; Kirk et al., 2010) have all underscored the need for adult researchers working with girls to take up this issue of researcher positionality and its related intergenerationality in working with girls and have argued that

it is not enough for feminist researchers to reflect on their positionality in girlhood studies and they should situate themselves in the research process by working with their own histories as starting points to talking about taboo topics such as sexuality, teenage pregnancy, HIV and AIDS and by using the past to inform contemporary girlhood with their participants.

c) *Participatory Process and Self-representation*: The participation of girls in research processes and decision making on issues that concern their lives is of key concern for scholars of Girlhood Studies since this is key to hearing their voices particularly since they constitute a historically marginalized group. Further, Moletsane et al., (2008) have promoted the ethical stance that hearing the voices of girls to fulfil their own research agenda is not enough; taking action to engage with policy makers and even with community members to address their situation to help bring social change is vital (see, too, Caron, 2016). Moreover, in line with this ethical approach, Moletsane et al. (2008) urged researchers to note the risk and dangers to which they might expose girls by speaking out about taboo topics like sexuality or by dealing with sensitive issues like sexual violence about which girls may not want to talk. They have also highlighted the psychosocial risk that is associated with the devaluing of the girls' voices if no action is taken by, for example, policy makers, to address the issues that have been raised.

d) *Historical and Contemporary Representation of Girls*: Moletsane et al. (2008) have referred to the work of feminist literary critic, bell hooks, to locate the importance of history in the contemporary representation of girls and girlhoods particularly if the history has been a

damaging one. Other feminist scholars (Helgren & Vasconcellos, 2010; Kirk et al., 2010; Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2008) have proposed that feminist researchers should contextualize the study of girlhoods and girls' lives within both a historical and a contemporary framework (Bent, 2020; Bent & Switzer, 2016; Vanner, 2019).

It is evident that age is one of the key intersections between girls and researchers in Girlhood Studies, so we need to reflect on the power imbalance that is at play, given the intergenerational age differences, when we are working with girls. We must interrogate our positionality and the power and privilege that we bring into the research in order to achieve a democratic research process during which girls can voice their concerns freely.

Drawing from the perspectives of Childhood, Youth, and Women's Studies, scholars recommend that key to Girlhood Studies are methodological frameworks that uphold participation, self-representation, and respect for the voices of participants of all ages—children, youth, and young women (Caron, 2016; Kirk et al., 2010; Kirk & Garrow, 2003; Moletsane et al., 2008; Rivard & Mitchell, 2013). Participatory and visual methodologies like Photovoice, therefore, are appropriate tools with which to conduct research with, about, and for girls as I discuss in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

Girlhoods: A Global Perspective

Childhood, Girlhood, and Youth Studies all emphasize the participation of children, girls, and youth in relation to having their voices taken seriously (Delgado, 2015; Lesko, 2001a; Mason & Fattore, 2005). While childhood is generally considered to be an extended period of development that deserves to be protected, there are distinctions made in the definitions of a child and a girl across time and geographies. Nonetheless, Helgren & Vasconcellos (2010a) have argued that with the constant global interconnectedness of societies, these definitions, although they vary

largely by context, exist in tandem with each other, an argument that is supported by Bent and Switzer (2016), Kirk et al. (2010) and Vanner (2019).

Scholars of Girlhood Studies have emphasized that the meaning of girl is not monolithic (Helgren & Vasconcellos, 2010; Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2008; Moletsane et al., 2008; Vanner, 2019). Rather, the term girl is a category that has various meanings in different contexts and in different times (Gonick & Gannon, 2014; Switzer, 2018; Vanner, 2019). Vanner (2016) has argued that aside from the term girl being used to refer to the chronological age of female children or adolescents, the term can be an insult as well as an indicator of community, inclusion, and solidarity. Currently the term girl has been adapted by feminist movements and activists to include grown women as a sign of solidarity and sisterhood for the movement (Vanner, 2019). Vanner has also drawn attention to the expanded use of the term girl to include those who identify as such regardless of the sex assigned to them at birth. Girlhood in most societies is associated with transition from childhood to womanhood (Gonick & Gannon, 2014; Lesko, 2001). The period of girlhood varies and is determined but not is limited to factors like the onset of menarche, the social class of the girls, race, marriage, childbirth, household responsibility, and, in recent decades, educational attainment and entry into the work force (Helgren & Vasconcellos, 2010a; Kirk et al., 2010).

Definitions of girls and girlhoods are not constant but shift according to historical periods. For Helgren and Vasconcellos (2010b, p. 3) "girlhood has been created and changed at different times and in different regions to reflect the political and cultural concerns of societies." Following this argument, I draw from existing literature on studies of girlhood to conceptualize meanings assigned to girlhood in different times in history—precolonial, colonial, post-colonial, and contemporary societies—and in different geographical contexts to demonstrate that the

definition of girlhood is malleable, fluid, and subjective to several factors—socio-cultural and political—which also change with time. Kirk, et al., (2010) in mapping a global girlhood pointed out that the high rates of gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, and the transfer of household chores and care for the young, sick, and elderly family members from adults to girls in developing contexts can end the period of girls' childhood prematurely. These scholars also identified three thematic areas through which girlhoods have been mapped: pathologizing girlhood, consuming girlhood, and recognizing agency in girlhood (Kirk et al., 2010).

Kozma (2010) has noted that, in other contexts, girlhood has been medicalized and legalized in, for example, cases of medical examination to determine virginity or its absence and in the use by courts of a constitutionalized age of consent in youth marriages.

Girlhood in the Pre-Colonial Period

Even in pre-colonial societies, girlhood was gendered, socially constructed, and defined by adults—mostly men (Kozma, 2010; Lesko, 2001). Liat Kozma (2010) recognized that girls voices and experiences are rarely heard from their own perspectives and that their stories are usually mediated through the perspectives of adults. In her study of the construction and experiences of girlhood in pre-colonial Egypt through legal documents, Kozma (2010) revealed that the Islamic law defined girlhood through the perspectives of learned men, while the lay definition of girlhood during the same period was articulated through the legal systems—courts and police—which had their own definitions of girlhood. Since the Islamic legal discourse on childhood in pre-colonial Egypt was highly gendered, it marked boys' maturity mainly by their mental capacities, and girls' maturity by their sexual and reproductive capacities. The legal

system took into account the commencement of the female child's menarche, defloration, marriage, and chronological age to determine who was a girl and who was not (Kozma, 2010). In this legal system, an adult woman was physically capable of assuming adult roles such as entering the labor force, having sexual intercourse with her husband, and bearing children. The use of these indicators systematically denied many female children of adolescent age their childhood since the integration of Egypt into the world economy introduced factory labor and public works away from home where they were considered adults and lacked the protection of their families and communities (Kozma, 2010). Domestic labour in Egyptian households during the pre-colonial period also determined the definition of girlhood, since it relied partly on female black slaves, many of whom were kidnapped from their homes in SSA as children and sold into slavery. For these adolescent girls and youth, childhood was disruptive, rushed, and short since they assumed adult responsibilities in their masters' households (Kozma, 2010). Experiences of rape also defined childhood and girlhood in pre-colonial Egypt. Sexual assault on a girl not only destroyed her honor, but the act of rape also transitioned the girl into an adult woman. But sexual assault on a boy did not take away his honor and did not turn a male child into an adult—he remained a boy—regardless of his age (Kozma, 2010).

Girlhood in the Colonial Period

The negative effect of colonization on the lives and the social fabric of colonized communities cannot be overstated and the girlhood of Indigenous girls was not spared. During colonial times, girls—Indigenous girls—in the colonized territories bore the burden of assimilation into colonial cultures. They were the targets of change because women were seen to be the transmitters of the very culture and ways of life that the colonizers aimed to erase. Christine Cheater's (2010) study

of the history of Aboriginal girls' experiences in colonial Australia revealed that girls as young as five years were more likely than boys of their age to be taken away from their homes and placed in foster homes, dormitories, or residential schools. Aboriginal girls between the ages of 14 and 21 were perceived by the colonialists to be semi-mature adults and capable of serving their gendered roles as wives and were made available for the sexual gratification of white males and as domestic servants in white households. The control and modification of the sexuality of the Indigenous girl was at the center of colonization (Cheater, 2010).

During the same period, Aboriginal girls were separated from their families and communities, which interrupted their childhood and girlhood. Their separation from the communities disrupted their traditional ways of learning and limited their ability to form social connections and emotional attachments, build normal friendships, and learn their culture (Cheater, 2010). The fear of being separated from their families forced girls to mature quickly and take on the responsibility of caretakers not only of themselves, but also of their younger siblings, notably always to look out for and hide them from police and welfare officers (Cheater, 2010). It is worth noting that not all colonial influence impacted negatively on girls' lives. Corrie Decker's (2010) study of the lives of girls in Mombasa—a coastal town in Kenya—during Kenya's colonial period found that the introduction of western/colonial education in Kenya—as in the rest of East Africa—between 1930 and 1940, introduced a new definition of girlhood and of adolescent culture known as the modern girl that redefined and expanded the period of transition from girlhood to womanhood through the introduction of education and career ambitions (Decker, 2010).

Girlhood in Post-Colonial and Slavery

The slave trade undoubtedly infringed on the human rights of many people including, of course, girls. Slavery introduced more categories of girls and girlhoods by class and race. Nancy Lesko (2001) has argued that the concept and image of adolescence itself is gendered, raced, and classed. Childhood experiences during slavery revolved around plantation labor and economic need. Young adolescent girls who were sold into slavery experienced a rushed childhood or girlhood (Kirk et al., 2010) since they were introduced to labor outside the household and this involved working as servants in the white settlers' households, and in their factories and plantations. In these labor arrangements, adolescent girls were systematically forced to serve as companions and concubines for the colonial masters in the absence of white women on the white settler plantations (Vasconcellos, 2010). Contrary to the expectation that the end of slavery would bring improvement to the lives of slave populations, adolescent girls' lives only got worse as more settlers on the plantations in Jamaica, for example, demanded more girls from Africa in order to increase and sustain the slave population after the end of slave trade (Vasconcellos, 2010). Despite the abolitionist laws that aimed to restore human rights, these laws indirectly caused irrevocable damage to adolescent girls' lives by applying increased pressure on them to breed at the age of 14 and 15, thereby shortening their childhood (Vasconcellos, 2010).

Vasconcellos (2010) further revealed that there was little regard for young female lives in the Jamaican plantations, as in the rest of the slave population; the rape of young slaves under the age of 10 was common. The law prohibiting the rape of minors in the plantations further normalized the sexual assault of young adolescent girls by defining children as anyone below the age of 10 years and girls as any females who were 10 or older—legalizing and normalizing sexual contact between a girl of 11 and an adult man (Vasconcellos, 2010).

Transnational Girlhood

Globalization has influenced human rights and social justice movements like feminism and climate change to work towards transnational approaches. In the same vein, scholars of girlhood studies continue to work on transnational girlhood (Gonick et al., 2021; Kirk et al., 2010; Vanner, 2019). Scholarship on girls, as Vanner (2019) argued, should adopt intersectionality to allow for the consideration of race, class, sex, gender, and context specificity, to mention only a few factors.

Girlhood Studies scholars further argue that at the very center of working with girls is girl-method (Kirk et al., 2010) and girl-centred approaches (De Lange et al., 2015). These approaches prioritize girls' participation in research, decision-making and policy processes, allowing them to speak and make their voices heard on issues related to their lives (see, too, Vanner, 2019). Vanner further argued that Girlhood Studies should be context-specific while still maintaining the process "that connects local experiences of girlhood to illuminate global structure" (p. 127). She also aligned transnational girlhood to the concepts of transnational feminism, but cautioned against having transnational girlhood fall into the ways of "the previous iterations of a global sisterhood in which mostly white women and girls in the Global North employ the narrative to rescue their sisters in the Global South by speaking against barriers or harmful practices in the Global South without identifying gender-based discrimination that affects their own lives' (Vanner, 2019, p. 125). Rather, Vanner argues for an intersectional approach to a global transnational girlhood "that welcomes all girls but particularly amplifies the perspectives of girls of color and those from the Global South whose experiences have traditionally been excluded or distorted in dominant constructions of girlhood" (p. 127).

In efforts to promote a transnational girlhood, many international and multi-national organizations have created, however unintentionally, a dichotomy between North and South

girlhoods in their media and public messages and representation. In these public messages, girlhood in North America and other Western contexts is associated with power, autonomy, and agency while girls in developing contexts are constructed as controlled and vulnerable victims who lack freedom (Bent & Switzer, 2016; Vanner, 2019).

Conceptualizing a Contemporary African Girlhood: The Schoolgirl

Although her voice is rarely heard, the African girl has existed in historic times like any other girl in other parts of the world. Despite this, there is a paucity of data on African girlhood, and especially from the girls themselves because of the socio-cultural norms that classify women as subordinate to men and boys, and position young girls at the very base of the pyramid. This claim is supported by Kirk et al. (2010) and Helgren and Vasconcellos (2010b), who acknowledge this paucity of studies of girls—particularly in contexts where female education is not well established and in development contexts, like SSA. Kirk et al. (2010) argued that even in the few existing accounts of girls, their lived experiences involving the socio-cultural issues that they are forced to deal with in their daily lives such as sexual violence, transactional sex, HIV/AIDS, early pregnancy and early and forced marriage, are never captured. Historical accounts of girlhood in SSA therefore are often fragmented and have been constructed through the perspectives of adults and colonial history.

The introduction of Western education re-defined the African girl and her experiences of girlhood. Situated in a Global context, the image of the contemporary African girl is prominently as a schoolgirl (Behrman, 2019; Switzer, 2018). As an emerging social category in contemporary African societies (Behrman, 2019; Switzer, 2018), the African school girl is positioned in a global context as a powerful agent of change although we rarely hear from her. Vanner (2019, p. 122) has suggested that Girlhood Studies scholars should apply the principles

of intersectionality in order to "balance between recognizing girl's agency while illuminating the structural barriers that may limit their freedom."

I turn now to a discussion on the construction of contemporary girlhood in Kenya. From the literature, I identified the indicators that are used to define and determine who qualifies as a girl in contemporary Kenyan society—from the post-colonial period to the present. It is worth noting that the list I discuss here is not exhaustive; other socio-cultural factors can be added depending on the context in the country. I also do not discuss these factors in any order of priority. Rather, I draw attention to the fact that the factors can be used in isolation or collectively to determine who is considered to be a girl or what girlhood entails in the contemporary Kenyan context.

Sexual Debut: Historically, in most Kenyan communities, the youth and particularly girls were expected to delay their first sexual experience (Kabiru et al., 2010; Marston et al., 2013). This expectation has not changed in contemporary Kenyan society, with messages that target the taming of adolescent sexuality and that promote the ABC approach—Abstinence, Be faithful to one partner, and use a Condom—for a responsible and safe young sexuality. The first component of the ABC approach attempts to control adolescent sexuality by delaying the age of sexual debut. Behind delaying the age of sexual debut is the idea that sexual activity would take away the innocence of childhood—an irreversible consequence—and that this naturally transitions a child or an adolescent or youth into adulthood before they are ready. Through abstinence, therefore, the period between childhood and adulthood is extended and the child is expected to be fully focused on education. For this reason, many countries in SSA continue to struggle with the moral dilemma of making birth control accessible to sexually active adolescents and youth of

school going age, the assumption being that this would encourage early sexual activity among children which is perceived to be incompatible with schooling (Beguy et al., 2013; Obare et al., 2011).

Marriage: In Kenya, like many other parts of SSA, marriage is a symbol of adulthood. Adolescent girls who marry early or are forced into early marriage are considered to have matured into adult women and are expected to take up gendered female roles like having sexual intercourse with their husbands, bearing children, and taking up household responsibilities associated with wifely or motherly roles that include material, physical, and financial provision for children and the family (Beguy et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2013; Okonofua, 2013; Psaki, 2015). Girls who marry at the tender age of 19 and below not only have to take up these heavy social responsibilities but also miss out on important childhood and girlhood experiences such as playing with other girls of their age, parental guidance, and the formation of the friendships that emerge from such social connections (Cheater, 2010).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): The global and national campaigns against FGM have reduced the prevalence of this retrogressive cultural practice that violates the human rights of girls, but the practice persists in pockets of Kenyan society (Bent & Switzer, 2016). The practice of FGM (also known as circumcision) was purported to signify transition from childhood to adulthood for adolescent girls; the practice not only bestowed on them the responsibilities of an adult woman but exposed them to the violations of the female body since they were no longer eligible for protection as children. Adolescent girls who go through the FGM ritual take up roles that conflict with schooling and more often drop out of school. In her study Switzer (2018) shows the conflicting identities that the modern Maasai schoolgirl who has undergone FGM

straddles. On the one hand, by virtue of being enrolled in school, she is considered free from retrogressive cultural norms that bind the girl-child in the Maasai community, and, on the other hand, by virtue of her circumcision, she is perceived to be a grown woman who is strongly bound by the patriarchal Maasai culture that subordinates women and silences their voices (Switzer, 2018).

Early Unplanned Pregnancy: The age of early and forced marriage, sexual debut, and childbirth are related in many ways in SSA (Kabiru et al., 2010; Marston et al., 2013). Historically, in most African societies, once a girl gave birth, she was considered an adult woman. Girls who become pregnant in their adolescent or teenage years while still in school embody multiple social identities as girls, learners, and mothers all with conflicting roles and expectations. This makes it challenging for young mothers of school-going age to play all these roles as well as being, in sone cases, heads of households (Austrian et al., 2016; Menon et al., 2018; Odejimi & Bellingham-Young, 2016; Undie et al., 2015b).

Participation in Labour/Work Force: Entry into the labor force is associated with adulthood. Work signifies that an individual is mature and has the responsibility to take care of themselves, children, and family members. Work is therefore among the factors that creates a binary between a child and an adult and the expectations that come with each; while a child is expected to go to school, an adult is expected to perform work. In most contemporary African societies, schooling is a transitional period that prepares an individual for the labour market. Contrary to this linear progression, many children and youth in SSA like other middle- and low-income contexts, are already in the workforce before they complete their basic education. These children work mainly in the informal sectors where there are no regulations and are likely to be exploited financially

and, particularly for girls, also sexually. While the UN's CRC aims to protect all children from harm, discrimination, and exploitation, the document is not legally binding, and its implementation in the majority of the low- and middle-income countries has not been followed to the latter. Most of the children (and most likely girls of adolescent age) who are already in the workforce are likely to come from poor households, single parent headed households, and households with parents or guardians who have low lower levels of education. In Kenya, until recently young adolescent girls as young as 12 were hired as babysitters and housemaids because of their ability to learn new skills quickly. Adolescent girls from poor households, rural areas, and poor urban informal areas are mostly the targets of such job-seeking and they are paid below the minimum wage for long hours of work. Sometimes they are compensated for their services only with food and shelter. Girls who work as babysitters or housemaids are not only exposed to financial exploitation and long hours of work but are also likely to be exploited sexually by older male members of the household thus exposing them to the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases like HIV, and unplanned pregnancy. These girls play double roles (Nyariro, 2021a); while playing the adult roles of childcare provider and housekeepers, they are considered adults although they are only children. At the same time, their female employers see them and refer to them as girls to signify the subordinate role they occupy which prevents them from questioning the commands they are given.

Crises and Disease Pandemic: The prevalence of pandemics like HIV and AIDS (Birdthistle et al., 2018; Leach, 2008; Phillips & Mbizvo, 2016; Ziraba et al., 2018), and Ebola (Kastelic et al., 2015; UNDP, 2015) have affected the lives of girls disproportionately (Partridge-Hicks, 2020; Plan International, 2020; Save the Children, 2020; World Vision, 2020a, 2020b) and now

COVID-19 is doing the same. During crises and pandemics, girls as young as 10 years of age are forced to care for sick family members, younger siblings, and the elderly and, in some cases, become the heads of households (Bellerose et al., 2020; Kastelic et al., 2015). With these roles that consume time and energy, most of these girls are often forced to drop out of school prematurely, miss out on the benefits of education, and on the important childhood experiences like playing with other children. Studies in countries like South Africa (Bhana, 2008; Ngidi et al., 2016; Ngidi & Moletsane, 2019) and Kenya (Duflo et al., 2006), which have been hit hard by HIV and AIDS show some of the socio-economic burdens of disease on youth like vulnerability to abuse and sexual exploitation and missed educational opportunities. In Sierra Leone, one of the West African countries affected by the Ebola pandemic, life trajectories for many adolescent girls were changed after they experienced sexual violence, unplanned early pregnancy, and disease (Kastelic et al., 2015; UNDP, 2015). Not only did girls have to deal with the burden of taking care of their sick relatives, the systemic violence and discrimination enacted by the government punished them for being victims of a crisis by forcing them to discontinue their education if they became pregnant (Peyton, 2018). Left with few if any options, most of these girls entered into early marriage or were forced into it as one of the ways of survival. As I discussed in the previous section, childbirth and marriage are considered adult roles that come with adult responsibilities and they expose girls to exploitation and abuse that is normalized as part of womanhood, thus leaving young married adolescent girls and young mothers without the protection that is accorded other children.

I cannot overstate how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected negatively the lives of girls globally, but it is necessary to highlight that girls who were already vulnerable before the pandemic, like those who live in poverty have been disproportionately affected. As reports that I

discuss in this dissertation make clear (Save the Children, 2020; World Vision, 2020a, 2020b), millions of adolescent girls were pregnant following school closures only a few months into the pandemic and more are projected not to return to school for various other reasons like household poverty, the need to enter the workforce to make a living, and entering early marriage to escape poverty, to mention only three.

Education: In pre-colonial Africa, each society had ways of educating its children and youth. Most traditional societies had organized ways of offering age-appropriate education where adolescence was the period of intense learning during which youth learned their culture and gender roles in preparation for adult life in their communities. For adolescent girls, in addition to puberty being the time for biological and physiological transition to adulthood, girls were taught to master their gender roles as future wives and mothers (Lesko, 2001). The introduction of Western or modern education during colonial and post-colonial periods in SSA added a layer to factors that define a girl and girlhood experiences. Since being educated was argued to protect children from violence, the international community expanded access to education for girls through educational policies that targeted the most marginalized girls. Among these endeavors, were school continuation and re-entry policies for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers.

As discussed in an earlier section in this chapter, the contemporary African schoolgirl is positioned as the site of social change in the international development discourse. It is not uncommon to see the African girl—in school uniform, in a classroom or in the school playing field—displayed on websites or on front pages of reports of international development organizations. In addition to the other benefits of formal education, for a contemporary African girl, it comes with the added benefit of extending the period of her childhood and girlhood which qualifies her for social and legal protection. Since the 1990 Jomtien Convention that championed

education for all children and promoted education for girls, enrollment in schools for children is associated with childhood and, for girls, with a protected period of girlhood. In contemporary Kenyan society, the term schoolgirl and college girl are emerging categories that signify that a female child is not a woman yet, and subtly connotes that a girl is free from the social expectations of a woman such as marriage and childbirth.

Heather Switzer's study with Maasai schoolgirls in Kenya showed that the schoolgirl has become a social category (Switzer, 2018). In Kenya, being a schoolgirl or a college girl carries expectations beyond academic learning to participation in after-school extracurricular activities like sports, drama, and theater clubs. Given these expectations of an ideal schoolgirl, school-going young mothers with childcare and work responsibilities find it hard to fully embody the identity of a schoolgirl and do not fit into the category of contemporary girlhood in Kenya. Switzer's study also showed that the category of schoolgirl is not totally value free and comes with its own complexities and contradictions. As Behrman (2019) highlighted in a review of Switzer's book based on her original study, the research showed that although the schoolgirl is portrayed as free from negative cultural norms, as an empowered and active agent for social change juxtaposed within the patriarchal systems in which she lives, the schoolgirl continues to occupy a subordinate position and is a low-level actor in the patriarchal society in which she has no voice.

The presumption of contemporary human rights and social justice discourses is that the schoolgirl is free from cultural constraints, is empowered, and has a voice but this contradicts childhood and girlhood discourses in most societies in SSA that construct the schoolgirl as a voiceless child. In her work, Switzer juxtaposed what she calls the schoolgirl effect logic against the international development and transnational discourses to show that the persistent idea that

schooling is transformative and empowering for girls puts more burden of responsibility on the girl to prove herself since she is expected to perform the expectations of these discourses of agency of change without any consideration given to the intersections of her lived realities (Behrman, 2019; Bent & Switzer, 2016).

A Girlhood in Crisis? Contradicting Identities of Young Mothers

The benefits of formal education for all children and especially for girls in SSA cannot be overstated. Despite the presence of global policies that seek to advance the education of all children including the most marginalized like pregnant girls and young mothers, some countries in SSA, until recently, denied such girls their right to education. Data shows that education not only protects girls from violence and abuse but empowers them with the knowledge to identify and address violence and abuse (Abuya et al., 2017; Harber, 2017; Leach & Mitchell, 2006), delay the age of first birth (Menon et al., 2018; Okonofua, 2013; Wood & Hendricks, 2017), delay the age of marriage (Menon et al., 2018)—all of which are factors associated with transition to adulthood in most communities in the sub-Saharan region. As shown by Corrie Decker's (2010) study on the influence of western education on girlhood in colonial Kenya, being enrolled in school introduced a new category of girlhood in most SSA societies. Adding layers of educational attainment and career ambitions to the expectations of girlhood, formal education has extended the period of girlhood for most African girls (Decker, 2010).

Conclusion

Without undervaluing other factors like sexual debut, marriage, childbirth, FGM, roles during crises and labor, that are used to determine who is a child and who is a girl in most contemporary societies in SSA, formal education serves to protect the most vulnerable children and girls by

prolonging the period of their childhood and girlhood while they are enrolled in school. Education is the only factor that rewards youth and adolescents as long as they participate. For this reason, systemically marginalized girls who are in danger of not enrolling in school or dropping out prematurely risk the shortening of their childhood or girlhood since this exposes them too early to the factors that socially transition them to adulthood despite their young age. For example, the out-of-school pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers from Korogocho in this study experienced shortened periods of childhood and girlhood since they gave birth and became young mothers with this being considered an adult role. Further, not being enrolled in school and the low possibility of having a career excludes these out-of-school pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers from the category of schoolgirl which is an indicator of girlhood in most societies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

While acknowledging the benefits of modern education in defining and prolonging the period of girlhood and acting as a social buffer to protect girls from abuse and violence we cannot overlook its effect of putting the adolescent girl on a pedestal and for making her body the targeted site of interventions for social change, international development, human rights activism, and social justice movements (Bent & Switzer, 2016) without having prioritized her perspectives. To effectively do this, like other scholars of Girlhood Studies, I suggest the use of participatory visual methodologies as ways through which adolescent girls can participate in identifying their needs and suggest ways to address them, and make their voices heard by decision and policy makers through visual narratives which distance them from the taboo and sensitive topics about which they speak with minimum risk and exposure to harm (Moletsane et al., 2008).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Methods

Introduction

Building on my previous experience of working with girls and women in marginalized urban settings in Kenya (described in Chapter one), I devote this chapter to methodology and methods. I discuss the research design and arts-based methodological approaches in general and Photovoice method specifically and explain how other scholars have used them in conducting research with girls and women particularly in sub-Saharan African contexts. In the next section, I discuss in detail the data collection methods and data analysis procedures I applied in the study. I give an overview and organization of the fieldwork in the two phases, describe the study context, and discuss my data collection procedures. I end the chapter by reflecting on the challenges that I encountered during the fieldwork and indicate how I addressed them, and on the limitations of the study.

Research Design and Methodological Approach

The research design for this study is qualitative and framed within phenomenological perspectives that seek a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of participants (Brantlinger et al., 2005; Taylor et al., 2015; Tracy, 2019). As highlighted in Chapter one, to date the lived experiences of girls and young women in Kenya who become pregnant while attending school is an understudied area. Since teenage pregnancy and motherhood is still frowned upon in Kenya in being seen as shameful and incompatible with schooling, adolescent girls who become young mothers before completing their basic schooling are often stigmatized and do not have a

voice in their communities. In addition, teenage pregnancy may result from intersecting social, cultural, and economic factors which include coercive sex and transactional sex that are imbued by shame and never spoken about publicly, and poverty. The majority of scholars who study teenage pregnancy and schooling have used conventional qualitative methods such as interviews and focus group interviews (Birungi et al., 2015; Onyango et al., 2015; Undie et al., 2015b, 2015a). However, these studies do not focus on the lived experiences of these girls and young mothers. Thus, in this study, I aimed to center the voices of the girls affected by unwanted/unplanned pregnancy and early motherhood in relation to their access (or lack thereof) to schooling. The study is organized under the umbrella of an arts-based, participatory, and visual methodological approach. I delineate below the usefulness of arts-based participatory and visual methodologies for a study of this nature.

I conducted the fieldwork for this study in two phases within a timeframe of two years between July 2017 and September 2019. In Phase one, I conducted a Photovoice study with pregnant girls and young mothers, and one-on-one interviews with policy makers and community leaders and held a community photo exhibition to explore the perspectives on the causes of teenage pregnancy, how to address it, and how to support the pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers to continue their education. In Phase two, I arranged a photovoice exhibition for policy makers with the aim of getting them to explore their views on the challenges that keep pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers from continuing and completing school. In this study, my aim was to

i. Explore and understand the challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant girls and young mothers who live in low-income urban contexts from their own perspectives and lived experiences.

ii. Use a photovoice exhibition created by pregnant girls and young mothers to engage with policy makers to expose them to the perspectives of these participants regarding the barriers to school continuation and re-entry for them despite the existence of a continuation and re-entry policy since 1994.

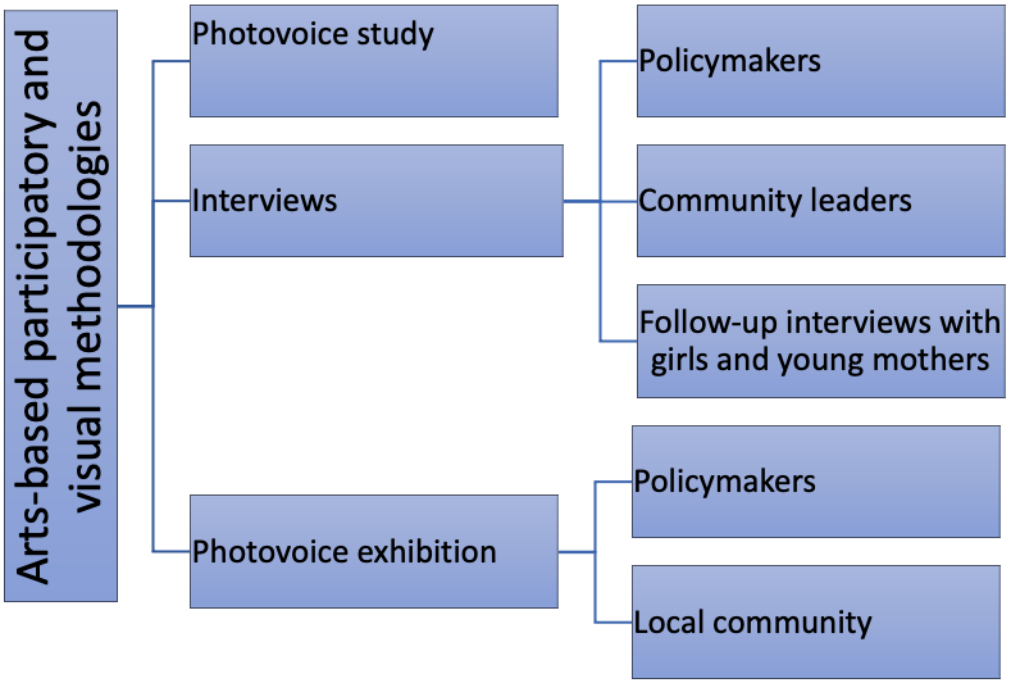

Figure 1: The overall study design

Conceptual Framework: Arts-based Participatory and Visual Methodologies

Arts-based participatory visual methodologies include drawing, making collages, cellphilms, and participatory videos, digital storytelling, and Photovoice. These methodologies are increasingly being used to conduct research with historically marginalized populations and vulnerable groups (De Lange et al., 2015; MacEntee 2015; Rivard 2016; Rivard and Mitchell 2013). Weber (2014) noted that arts-based research approaches are guided by feminist and community-based research principles that interrogate hierarchical, elitist, and positivist ways of conducting research, and

decision and policy making. These scholars have also argued that arts-based visual methodologies can democratize a research process that challenges the unequal power imbalance that is characteristic of positivist research methods. Furthermore, they have noted that the products and by-products of arts-based methodologies such as cellphilms and photo exhibitions are tangible research evidence that can be used to engage with policy makers and present the perspectives of the research participants in policy conversations. Additionally, they have maintained that publicly displaying these visual research products and by-products to a wider audience like the participants' local communities is typically considered a fundamental part of participatory visual work to ensure consciousness raising, sensitization, and advocacy for positive social and policy changes (see, too, Thompson, 2009).

Community-based research approaches and feminist frameworks emphasize the perspectives and voices of women and other disenfranchised groups in research processes, demanding that their voices should not be silenced both in the process of research and the final products of research (Cadman et al., 2002). Scholars who work in the field of arts-based participatory and visual methodologies have observed that these methodologies foster reflexivity among participants, communities, and audiences on the issues under inquiry (MacEntee 2015; Mitchell et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2004). Some of these scholars have used these methodologies to study gender-based discrimination, violence, and sexual violence against girls in and around schools (Mitchell et al. 2017; De Lange et al., 2015; Moletsane et al. 2007).

Scholars have adopted various participatory methodologies with girls and young women and have noted that these methodologies can enable girls to take up activist and advocacy roles in their communities to address pressing social issues such as the stigmatization of people living with HIV and AIDS (Moletsane et al., 2007). The vulnerability of pregnant adolescents and

young mothers in society was another reason for my framing of this study within arts-based participatory and visual methodologies. The ideal of a participatory visual study is to have the participants involved throughout the research cycle from the conceptualization of the research problem to data collection, and from data analysis to data interpretation, through to the dissemination of the findings (Mitchell et al., 2016).

In many communities in Kenya, teenage pregnancy and motherhood is still perceived as being incompatible with schooling because of the social construction of teenage pregnancy as a deviant transition to adulthood. Because of this social identity, teenage mothers as a category have no voice in their communities and cannot speak out about issues that affect their lives, let alone their schooling. I realized that, as a historically marginalized group, pregnant adolescents and young mothers might not have the confidence to speak out through the conventional qualitative research methods like interviews. Using Photovoice allowed them to express their concerns and define their own needs in relation to going back to school.

Photovoice methodology was developed by Caroline Wang, an American researcher working in the field of public health with women farmers in the rural Province of Yuhan in China (Wang & Burris, 1994,1997; Wang, 1996). Photovoice, based on feminist principles, adopts a community-based action research approach (De Lange, et al., 2015; Delgado, 2015; Gant et al., 2009; Mitchell, 2015; Wang et al., 1996).

Since Wang first coined the term, the use of Photovoice has been expanded and is widely used by researchers from various fields to study gender-based violence and sexual violence (Mitchell, 2011b; Ngidi et al., 2018); to investigate learners' absenteeism from school (Mitchell et al., 2006); to study health perspectives (Mitchell & Sommer, 2016); to understand young people's perspectives on HIV and AIDS related stigma (Moletsane et al., 2007); to explore the

vulnerability of orphans to sexual violence (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2019); to study women's economic empowerment (Nyariro et al., 2017) as well as youth in urban spaces (Delgado, 2015); and to investigate teenage pregnancy and schooling (Nyariro, 2018) to mention only a few examples.

As a data collection technique that is used by researchers working with disenfranchised and historically marginalized groups, Photovoice combines participants' photography with storytelling, usually in a group setting (Boog, 2003). Typically, the participants are trained on how to use cameras, how to take ethical photographs for research, and how to engage with the Photovoice prompt. This is followed usually by a photography session in the participants' environment or community setting and a story telling session during which participants engage critically with the photographs they took, talking about each picture and the reason they took it. Each picture is given a meaning in the creation of a short story about it or an explanatory caption.

As a feminist methodology, Photovoice is an important research approach for empowering the historically and systemically marginalized groups (Capous-Desyllas & Forro, 2014; Delgado, 2015; Liebenberg, 2018; Moletsane et al., 2007; Ngidi & Moletsane, 2019) like girls, women, people with disabilities, and children among other vulnerable groups. In addition to supporting participants to speak out about the issues that affect them, photovoice can enable participants to record and reflect on their lives (Wang et al., 1996, 1996) and thus increase their collective knowledge about the issues they face. In addition, the images that participants produce from Photovoice studies are normally used to create awareness in their communities about the social problems that are of urgent concern to them and to inform decision and policy makers about the perspectives of the people whose lives are affected by their decisions (Delgado,

2015; Gant et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2004). Through their participation in a Photovoice activity, participants normally engage in self-reflection about their lives, and this can transform their internalized self-image as passive and powerless policy recipients to active actors who can make decisions and take action to change their lives (Wang et al. 1996).

As a community participatory action research (CPAR) (Delgado, 2015; Gant et al., 2009; Ngidi et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2004), Photovoice has been adapted by researchers to disrupt the elitist, positivist, and top-down approach to research. Scholars have used Photovoice as a tool of representation to engage with decision and policy makers who often assume the role of experts who then ignore the perspectives and the needs of the policy beneficiaries (Nyariro, 2018; Rivard & Mitchell, 2013; Wang et al., 1996, 2004). The use of Photovoice as a research methodology puts value on the co-construction of knowledge and the importance of locally generated or grassroots knowledge (Pithouse & Mitchell, 2007;Wang et al., 2004). Some scholars (Gant et al., 2009; Molloy, 2007) who use Photovoice have shown that the collaborative nature of the methodology increases the likelihood of working with disenfranchised groups who are affected by institutionalized, structural, and systemic forms of violence and discrimination and who often go unheard. Ordinarily, marginalized populations are often at the bottom of the social hierarchy and have little to no chance of having their voices heard in decision and policymaking processes, even those that affect them directly. Through Photovoice the participants are more likely to be able to take control of the research process, which then becomes more democratic.

In the previous paragraphs, I have focused on the ideal of Photovoice. However, it may not always be possible to carry out the steps outlined above. For example, a researcher may have limited access to the proposed participant population, or the age of the participants may make

this impossible. Reaching policy makers may require special efforts on the part of the researcher. Rivard (2016), for example, explained how she had to create a PowerPoint presentation and an art book from the photos taken in her project in Rwanda to show to the policy makers in their offices. Similarly, Thompson (2009) set up a Photovoice exhibition in the lobby of a government building in Sierra Leone where policy officials would see it as they made their way to their offices. She did this in anticipation of the likelihood that they would not attend a community exhibition. In Chapter four, I highlight the challenges I faced in engaging policymakers by using a Photovoice exhibition produced by pregnant girls and young mothers in my dissertation research study.

Despite Photovoice being an effective tool for marginalized groups to use to document their lived realities, there are a number of points related to the methodology that must be taken into account including the power dynamics between researchers and participants, technical challenges, the security and safety of both participants and researchers, tensions between ethical principles (the human rights, privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality) of participants, and issues related to agency. These challenges also vary depending on the participants themselves and the contexts within which the Photovoice studies are conducted (Delgado, 2015). First, although Photovoice does promote a democratic research process, it cannot be completely free of the power dynamics that exist in most research processes (Delgado, 2015). Delgado's argument is that those who initiate using Photovoice for research with marginalized groups are, themselves, professionals who are relatively more highly educated than the participants with whom they work and are experts in their fields. This necessarily introduces a power imbalance—something Photovoice seeks to dismantle.

Another challenge in the use of Photovoice concerns the technical challenges of using cameras (Mitchell et al., 2005). In a Photovoice study with teachers and community health care workers working with youth in rural South Africa to address the stigmatization associated with HIV and AIDS, Mitchell and colleagues noted that most participants lacked a basic knowledge of photography and had no related skills. Training participants in basic photography and training them in matters related to visual ethics can take up a great deal of time (Mitchell et al., 2005; Nyariro, 2018, 2021a; Sadati et al., 2019). In this study, I discuss how a failure in camera technology led to the loss of photos taken by one group of participants and how this led, in turn, to the ethical dilemma of whether to ask them to go back to the field to take more photos, or not and how this would impact their participation in the subsequent analysis process. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Five of this manuscript dissertation.

An additional limitation of Photovoice concerns the security and safety of participants during a Photovoice exercise in the community, particularly when marginalized participants are participating in urban settings that are potentially dangerous. “Safety becomes a consideration in how photovoice projects get conceptualized and implemented, particularly in social-ecological contexts where violence (physical and psychological) is a common occurrence” (Delgado, 2015, p. 160).

Photovoice is labour intensive, expensive to implement, and is time consuming as Delgado (2015) has reminded us. Given that most Photovoice research is framed within Community-Based Participatory Research and Participatory Action Research that seeks to influence social and policy change as one of its key ultimate goals, these limitations need to be taken into account. Researchers need to connect with community members and policy makers in order to influence social and policy change and this requires time and financial resources.

Johnson (2016) and Evans-Agnew & Rosemberg, (2016) have observed that Photovoice has the potential to offer false hope for social and policy change since many Photovoice studies do not result in policy change.

To add to the conversation about the use of Photovoice studies to reach policymakers, it is worth noting that despite what might present as a barrier, many Photovoice studies have been shown to policymakers which is a step in the right direction. Johnson's (2016) scoping review found that only few studies that employed Photovoice have influenced policy change. This may have been the result of policy makers having been involved only at the end of such projects rather than at the outset. Johnston (2016) also commented that although a "complete state of empowerment would illustrate a meaningful shift in the modes of power and the establishment of new relationships to reduce inequalities and power differences in access to resources" (p. 804) participation might lead at least to partial empowerment. However, there is the risk that participants might feel more hopeless and more powerless than before if the Photovoice project in which they participated fails to mobilize community action to change their social realities or influence policy change (Johnston, 2016).

Another concern regarding Photovoice has to do with how the voices of participants are centered in such studies with critics arguing that although Photovoice does privilege the authority of participant voice in research by enabling them to speak out on topics important to them, the responsibilities like designing the study and choosing which findings and where to publish them rely solely on the researcher (Evans-Agnew & Rosemberg, 2016) and this needs to be taken into account, too.

Data Collection and Analysis Processes

In this section, I discuss my positionality working with the girls and young mothers, provide an overview of the data collection procedures and the analytical approaches. I also discuss in detail the pre-fieldwork preparations that I made before the beginning of each phase of the fieldwork, the actual fieldwork process, and the methods of data collection which I applied in Phase one and Phase two of the fieldwork. Since this is a manuscript-based thesis, I describe the data analysis frameworks and procedures in brief since these are discussed in detail in the manuscript chapters.

Locating Myself in the Fieldwork

As noted earlier, in conducting the fieldwork in Korogocho, I was returning to a site where I had already participated in a number of research studies. During the two phases of my fieldwork, I worked with four research assistants who helped me to collect and document data and also with the logistics surrounding facilitating groups of participants. The research assistants, three women and one man, all work in Korogocho on different projects that focus on adolescent girls' education, sexuality, and reproductive health issues. We introduced ourselves to the girls and the young mothers before the beginning of each session of fieldwork. Although all three of these female research assistants and I were not teenage mothers we all had our first birth between the ages of 20 and 21 which is the age when learners are in post-secondary or early university education. This is also the period during which most girls get married and start families in Kenya much like in the rest of SSA (Beguy et al., 2013, 2014; Kabiru et al., 2010). In Kenya, approximately 15% of adolescents aged 15 to 19 have had a child and about 25% of young women between the ages of 20 and 24 have given birth before the age of 18 (Beguy et al., 2013). According to Beguy and colleagues (2013), marriage, being out of school, and having

negative models in peer and family contexts are factors that are associated with early childbearing among females between the ages of 15 and 17.

While I did not become pregnant and drop out of school before completing my basic education like the young mothers in this study, my life closely mirrors theirs since I married at the age of 20 and gave birth to my first child when I was 21 while in my undergraduate program so I faced several challenges as a young mother pursing her education. I told the girls and young mothers about my own experiences in this regard and outlined the challenges I encountered with balancing motherhood and schooling with the hope that it would encourage them. After the participants learned about the life experiences of the female research assistants and myself, they were more prepared to talk about their own experiences of early pregnancy and motherhood within the research group setting. Most of them were still very emotional talking about these at the beginning of the Photovoice workshop but they unanimously acknowledged that they felt more comfortable participating and giving their perspectives and discussing their lived experiences because they did not feel judged. In any case, the participants also acknowledged that this was the first research project they had encountered that focused on the well-being of pregnant girls and young mothers and that gave them the space and freedom to speak freely about anything regarding their lives.

Despite sharing my experiences with the girls and young mothers and telling them how their lives closely mirrored my own, some of them continued to address me as "teacher." In Korogocho as would be the case in other parts of the country, this title is commonly used to refer to or to address facilitators, trainers, researchers, and anyone who gives knowledge to others and is seen to hold a position of power and privilege. As Audrey Kobayashi pointed out, "All academic women are privileged to some degree since they have access to the middle-class

luxuries, such as education and professional status, that are still relatively inaccessible for most women of all backgrounds" (cited in Rose, 1997. p. 307), and this made me even more aware of the power I hold in being educated.

Throughout the fieldwork process I wrote field notes and I engaged in self-reflexivity to interrogate my privilege and also to keep aware of how my lived experiences influenced my analytical lens. Scholars in the field of social sciences (see Thompson & Burkholder, 2020) have emphasized that field notes are an important part of the process of conducting fieldwork; researchers can document aspects of the process and give detailed descriptive accounts of their observations, reflections, and results of their reflexivity during the fieldwork (Akesson & Coupland, 2020). Dmitri Detwler (2020) has noted that although fieldnotes do not directly reflect the objectives of the study for many researchers, writing them to describe people, places, and processes helps construct the interconnectedness that guides the subsequent interpretations of events that might otherwise be forgotten or misremembered. Jayne Malenfant furthered this conversation on fieldnotes and argued that through writing them, researchers establish the beginning of the analytic process. Malenfant argued that fieldnotes provide the researcher with a means of sense-making as pieces of lived experiences are turned into written text (2020). She posited, too, that "field notes become grounded in not only what is happening in a space, but also in a point in the researchers' life on the contexts of the community around them and in relation to shifting policies and the researcher's past experience" 2020, p. 256).

Writing field notes is not only interconnected to researcher reflexivity but to researcher positionality which accounts for researcher subjectivity in the research process, analysis, and how the findings of the study are framed and disseminated. Wanda Pillow (2003) equates self-reflexivity with self-disclosure "that acknowledges researcher's role(s) in the construction of the

research problem, the research setting, and the research findings, and highlights the importance of the researcher becoming consciously aware of these factors and thinking through the implications of these factors for her/his research" (p. 179). At the end of my fieldwork, I realized that the attitude of pregnant girls and the young women with whom I was working had changed regarding how they related to me and the research assistants; they now saw us as being akin to mentors. For example, some of them approached us for advice about issues that they were facing in life. It is worth noting, in passing, that in January 2020, just a few months before the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, I received a report from one of the project research assistants that three of the young mothers had re-enrolled in school and one had joined a technical training institute to train as an electrical installation technician.

Overview of the Fieldwork

As mentioned earlier, I organized and carried out the field work for this study in two phases. In Phase one of the study, I explored the intersection between teenage pregnancy, motherhood, and schooling to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant adolescents and young mothers. This was done through a series of Photovoice workshops and a community exhibition. The Photovoice study in Phase one, conducted between July and September 2017, was guided by the prompt "What challenges do you face in this community?" to enable me to explore the challenges that pregnant teenagers and young mothers face daily in their community. I curated the Photovoice findings into photo narratives and later a Photovoice exhibition both of which were exhibited in the community and shown to educational policy makers. This exhibition formed the foundation of Phase two of the study between July and September 2019.

In Phase two of data collection, my main aim was to start conversations at community and policy levels to explore programmatic and policy interventions that might support the pregnant teenagers and young mothers to continue with their education. My main aim here was to display the Photovoice exhibition to the education policymakers to sensitize them on the perspectives of the pregnant girls and young mothers regarding the challenges that prevented them from continuing with schooling while pregnant or re-entering school after childbirth despite the presence of the school continuation and re-entry policy that allowed them to do so. I collected and documented data through observing and documenting the policy makers' responses to the Photovoice exhibition through researcher participant observation and writing fieldnotes guided by my feminist reflexive positionality.

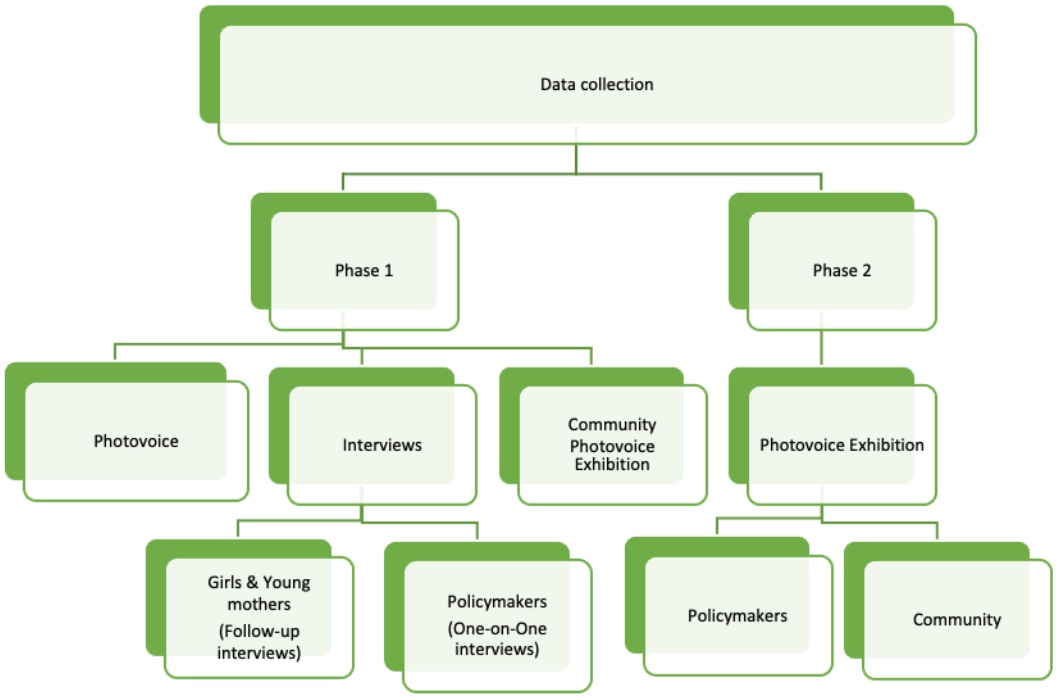

Figure 2: An illustration of the organization of data collection and techniques

Field Study Context: Kenya

Today, 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas. This is projected to reach 68% by 2050 (UN-HABITAT & UN Women, 2020). High urban growth rates, especially in SSA, exert greater pressure on social and physical infrastructure such as schools, healthcare, childcare, and housing than in rural areas. This means that in some pockets of urban centers, commonly referred to as informal urban settlements or slums (Undie et al., 2009), the population becomes marginalized and has little to no access to these social and physical amenities (African Population and Health Research Center, 2002a; Emina et al., 2011; Undie et al., 2009; UN-HABITAT & UN Women, 2020) because most governments' urban plans do not take them into consideration.

Kenya is a country located in the eastern part of SSA; it borders Tanzania to the south, Uganda to the West, and South Sudan to the northwest. Most of the land (80%) is arid and semi-arid. Kenya's economy is mainly agricultural, but it also has a strong industrial dimension. According to the national census of 2019, Kenya's current population is approximately 47.6 million people, up from 38.6 million in the 2009 census and 28.7 million from the 1999 census. It is estimated that the Kenyan population increases by one million people per year (KDHS, 2014). Women make up more than half of Kenya's population (approximately 24 million).[1] Like

[1] According to the KDHS 2014, the average fertility rate in Kenya is 3.6 children per woman. The average household size is 3.9 persons per household. Almost half of Kenya's population, 45% of women and 44% of men reported having experienced violence since they were 15 years old (KDHS 2014). Fourteen percent of women reported having experienced sexual violence since they were 15 years of age compared to 6% of men. My analysis of the datasets and the data collection tools used to collect the indicators on violence and sexual violence during the national census in Kenya revealed that the questions asked prioritized physical violence generally and did not include indicators of, or questions to collect information on, or measure incidents of sexual violence among respondents. This might render it difficult to identify an accurate rate of incidents of sexual violence in the country. In addition, the categorization of adult respondents in the 15 to 49 age range makes it difficult to collect data that describes the circumstances of adolescents and young people. Apart from

many social scientists who choose to conduct their research in familiar settings (see Tracy, 2019), I chose to conduct this study in Kenya because of my social and cultural background as a Kenyan woman that equips me with awareness and a deep understanding of the cultural and social factors that impede girls' education and gender equality in the society in general and in the education system specifically.

***Korogocho*.** I conducted this study in Korogocho because, as I have explained above, it was a familiar context for me since I had worked there on an education research intervention with APHRC. Korogocho is located in Kasarani sub-County in Nairobi County. Kasarani is the second largest sub-county in Nairobi County, with a population of 772,586 people, after Embakasi with 983,232 people. Korogocho is the second largest slum in Kenya after Kibera slums. It is situated 12km from Nairobi's central business district (CBD) Area (African Population and Health Research Center, 2014). Korogocho location is headed by a senior Chief and is divided into seven sub-locations headed by Assistant Chiefs, and seven villages headed by elders' villages. Each village is clustered into 10 households, locally referred to as *Nyumba Kumi*. Each *Nyumba Kumi* has a representative. The *Nyumba Kumi* initiative has its origin in the high migration rates in slums, the sprawling high population and the resulting high levels of insecurity. A typical dwelling in Korogocho is a single room made with mud and timber walls, with waste tin cans used as roofing material. A typical living unit might be a 10 x10 ft single

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serving as Kenya's capital, Nairobi serves as one of 46 administrative counties nationally. Nairobi's population is approximately 4.4 million people, with an average household size of 2.9 people. It is 696 square kilometers in geographical size. Nairobi County has a population density of 6,247 per square kilometer, which is the highest in the country, followed by Mombasa County at 5,495 per square kilometer. The national average population density is 82 per square kilometer. Administratively, Nairobi County is divided into 11 sub-counties: Dagoretti, Embakasi, Kamukunji, Kibra, Lang'ata, Makadara, Mathare, Njiru, Starehe, Westlands and Kasarani.

room (Undie et al., 2009). The Nairobi waste dumping site is situated to the east and southeast of the slum settlement (Emina et al. 2011). Korogocho is characterized by high rates of unemployment, insecurity, poor housing and infrastructure, high rates of physical, sexual, and domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, and the absence of essential services such as schools, health facilities, childcare, and clean water (African Population and Health Research Center, 2002b, 2002a, 2014; Emina et al., 2011; Undie et al., 2009).

Figure 3: Map of Kenya showing Nairobi County

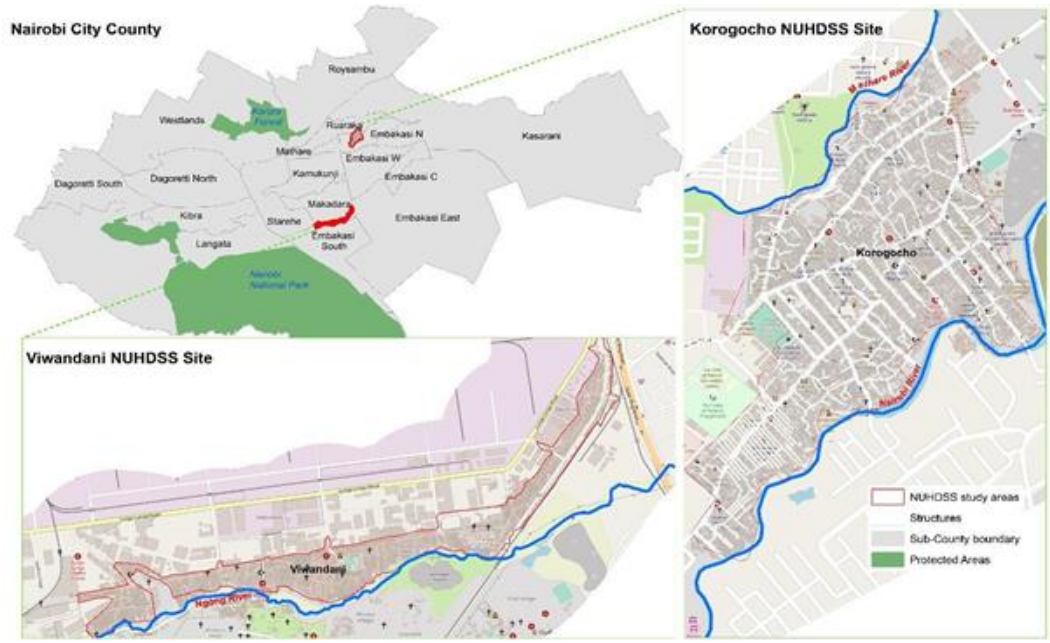

Figure 4: Map of Nairobi showing APHRCs two NUHDSS sites in Korogocho and Viwandani

Doing Fieldwork

Phase One

As noted earlier, my goal in Phase one was to explore the challenges to school continuation and re-entry for the pregnant girls and young mothers in the study through Photovoice. As a methodology, photovoice offered creative ways through which young mothers and pregnant teenage girls who are often silenced in this society could express their views. In addition to a Photovoice study I also conducted follow-up interviews with the pregnant girls and young mothers to explore their feelings about the Photovoice activity and I interviewed key informants, six community leaders, and six education policy makers at national and county levels.

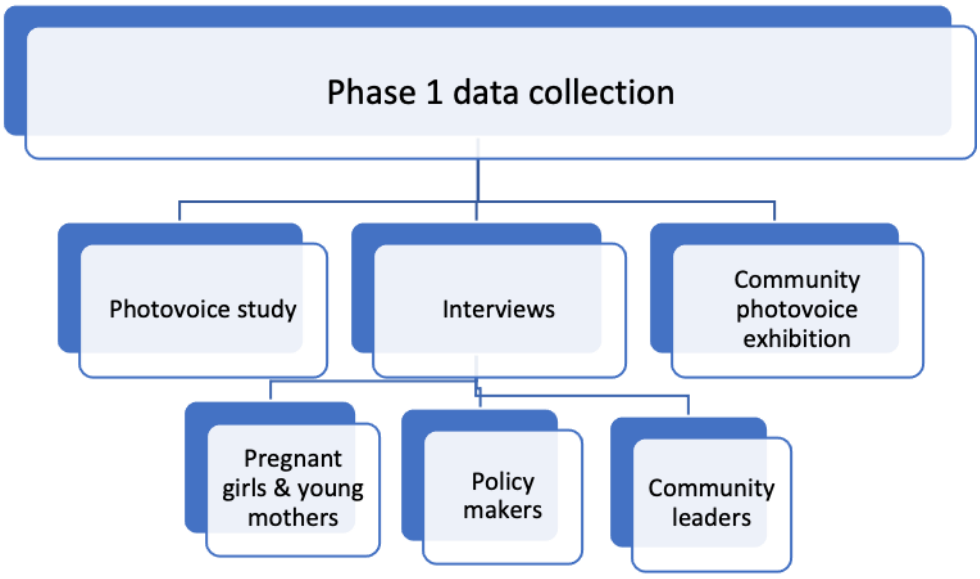

Figure 5: Structure of phase one of data collection

Pre-field activities

The Host Institution. I was required to have a host institution with which I would be affiliated for the purpose of gaining credibility, being accountable, and for logistical reasons. The need to partner with a local institution was required by both the National Council of Science and Technology (NACOSTI) and the institutions which funded my study at various phases. Although I am a Kenyan citizen who was going back home to carry out a study, I still needed to work as an affiliate with a local institution as required by NACOSTI. I applied to APHRC to be hosted as a graduate intern during my data collection. My choice of being hosted by APHRC meant that I could work in a context I understood and with which I was already familiar. Taylor et al. (2015) and Tracy (2019) have noted that most social science researchers choose to conduct their studies in familiar settings. For me, working with a host institution involved using the institutions database to identify and recruit my study participants. I also held regular briefing meetings with my advisor at APHRC about my plans for the fieldwork, my new strategies for selecting the

participants, the strategies that I was using to identify key policymakers to participate in the study, and the logistical issues around planning and facilitating a community Photovoice exhibition.

Ethical Clearance and Research Permit. I applied for and obtained my ethical clearance to conduct the Photovoice study with pregnant girls and young mothers in Korogocho from the McGill Ethics Review Board. As a researcher who was going to do fieldwork in Kenya, I also had to apply for and obtain a research permit from the Kenya National Council of Science and Technology (NACOSTI) which is the body that oversees all research activities in the country.

Planning for Fieldwork. Prior to travelling to Kenya to conduct the fieldwork, I had constant communication with my advisor at the host institution regarding my progress in planning for the fieldwork. During these communications I found that I needed to re-strategize how I was going to select my participants. For example, I had planned to use the APHRC database in order to recruit them. However, the data base showed that only one girl had dropped out of school because of an unplanned teenage pregnancy. This might have been a result of the under-reporting of teenage pregnancy as the main reason for girls dropping out of school because of the negative social construction and stigmatization of pregnant adolescents and young mothers of school-going age.

Security and Accessing the Community. Like other informal urban settlements in Kenya and elsewhere in the sub-Saharan Africa region, Korogocho informal settlement is characterized by high rates of violence which can pose a threat to both participants and researchers who are carrying out their studies in the community. Scholars have noted that doing research comes with risks (Miles et al., 2014; Natow, 2020; Tracy, 2019) but doing research in places like Korogocho

can be more challenging and might expose the research group to insecurity and risks that vary from loss of data and data collection equipment to physical harm. In most community studies security is negotiated (Tracy, 2019). In Korogocho, security for the research team is often intertwined with consent to gain access to the community through the community gatekeepers. As in other community research, negotiating access to the Korogocho community involved knowing who the right people were with whom to make the first contact in the community. The gatekeepers in Korogocho are specific local male residents known as "security boys," who often operate in groups with each taking charge of a specific part of the community. Usually, the gatekeepers determine how the researcher is perceived and received by the community and can predict the overall success of the research activities. Given the volatile nature of the slum and the high rates of insecurity in Korogocho (Emina et al., 2011; Undie et al., 2009), the safety and security of both the research participants and the members of the research team was of highest priority during the fieldwork. I secured local security for the research group for the entire duration of the project and each group of participants was assigned two security boys to oversee uninterrupted research activity.

Training of Research Assistants. I recruited and trained three research assistants (two females and one male) who had prior experience working in the community to help me with the data collection. I trained them for two days on Photovoice as a data collection technique, and on efficient and effective workshop facilitation, interviewing skills, and general skills in conducting qualitative studies. Since, in qualitative studies researchers are the instruments of data collection (Taylor et al., 2015; Tracy, 2019), and it was important that my research assistants understood the objective of the study and the techniques of data collection in order to accurately capture and record all the data. On the first day of the training, I introduced the research assistants to my

study topic, the research question that the study sought to answer, and the methods that I was going to employ to collect the data. I also trained them on Photovoice technique, on how to conduct effective one-on-one interviews, and on how to facilitate small group and general coordination of a community exhibition. On day two, we reviewed all the interview and discussion protocols. We also translated the follow-up interview guides for the girls and young mothers into the local Swahili dialect commonly known as "*Sheng*" that varies widely by context.

Childcare. I organized childcare for the young mothers during their participation in the Photovoice workshop, photography activity in the community, and during the community Photovoice exhibition.

Identification, Recruitment and Mobilization of Pregnant Girls and Young Mothers. I used purposive sampling to identify and recruit participants. In purposive sampling (Tracy, 2019), the researcher purposefully or intentionally chooses the participants who will provide data that fit the parameters of the project and answer the research questions (Naderifar et al., 2017). I used the snowballing technique to identify and recruit out of school pregnant girls and young mothers, which involves identifying the first participant who then refers the researcher to subsequent participants through their social networks (Fehr et al., 2018; Naderifar et al., 2017; Woodley and Lockard, 2016). Snowballing is normally used by researchers when the study population is difficult to access. The first participant was identified by a community mobilizer attached to the project. The participant subsequently referred the community mobilizer to two other participants. The community mobilizers repeated this process until I had 15 participants. The criteria that I applied to identify and recruit the study participants were that they had to have been out of

school at the time of the study because of unplanned early pregnancy, they had to be between 13 and 19 years of age, and had to have lived in Korogocho for three years prior to the study.

The community mobilizers went door to door to the households to which they had been referred. First, they introduced themselves and the project they were working for, then confirmed if there was a pregnant adolescent girl or young mother between the age of 13 and 19 who was out of school within that household. If it was confirmed, they asked to speak to the head of the household to seek consent to speak to the girl or the young mother in cases where she lived with parents or guardians. During the identification and recruitment process, two pregnant girls refused to participate because they did not feel comfortable speaking about their pregnancies. The project community mobilizers used their referrals until we achieved the desired number of participants. In total, I recruited twelve young mothers and three pregnant adolescent girls.

Most of the participants lived with parents in rented accommodation while a few lived alone or in shared rooms with friends. Most unplanned teenage pregnancies occur at primary school level (Salami et al., 2014) and this was so for all the participants in this study. Most of them were involved in income generating activities like collecting used tins, bottles, and sacks from the dumpsite and cleaning them in the nearby Nairobi river for sale to recyclers or supporting their parents in family businesses. A few said that they engaged in transactional sex in the nearby Nairobi CBD.

After successfully identifying the participants, the next phase was to mobilize them and ensure that they showed up for the Photovoice activity and that they knew where the workshop would take place. I recruited three community mobilizers and debriefed them on my topic of study, the objectives, and the expected outcomes of the study. I also briefed them on the characteristics of the participants whom I wanted to recruit for the study and the criteria for

selecting them. As a researcher working with a community, I found it useful to tap into the local community human resources to make the process of accessing the participants easier, faster, and safer. For this reason, it was important that the community mobilizers had a deeper understanding of the study before they began their work of mobilizing the participants in the community. I made sure that the participants fulfilled the demand of my criteria by verifying their information over the phone before finally inviting them to the Photovoice workshop.

Recruiting Policy Makers. I used a purposive sampling technique to select six education policy makers who worked in divisions or departments that managed girls' education and school readmission and re-entry for vulnerable children in Nairobi County and at the national level. As mentioned above, in purposive sampling the researcher intentionally chooses the participants who will provide data that fit the parameters of the research questions. I therefore identified policymakers who worked at the Ministry of Education under thematic areas of youth and girls' education and gender and those who were directly involved in the formulation of school re-entry policies. Following these criteria, I identified and recruited six policy makers, who were all male, and conducted a one-one one interview with each of them. Through the interviews, I explored the policymakers' perspectives on the effectiveness of the current school re-entry policy for young mothers and discussed their views on how the current policy might be improved to make it more effective in ensuring that adolescent girls who become pregnant along with young mothers continue with their schooling and complete a full cycle of basic education.

Recruiting Community Leaders. I also employed the purposive sampling strategy to recruit six community leaders to participate in one-on-one interviews to explore with their community their perspectives on the causes of teenage pregnancy, their knowledge about the consequences of teenage pregnancy on the lives of girls and on that of the community at large, and their opinions

on how to prevent teenage pregnancy. I sought their informed consent to participate in the study and to record the interviews on a digital voice recorder before proceeding with each interview. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes.

Data Collection Procedures

Conducting the Photovoice Workshops

The entire Photovoice workshop with the girls and young mothers was conducted in nine sessions. In organizing for this Photovoice workshop, I was guided by nine steps offered by Mitchell et al., (2016) in their work with girls with disabilities in Vietnam. The steps are contextualizing the work; participants learning about photography and engaging with the research prompt; learning how to operate the cameras; visual ethics; taking pictures; looking at the pictures; working with the photographs in small groups and reflecting on the photographs and writing captions to give meaning to the photographs; small groups presenting their analysis to the larger groups; and planning and preparing for disseminating the work to a wider audience through exhibitions to policy makers and community members (p. 245).

Session 1: Contextualizing the work: At the workshop, the participants introduced themselves to one another. After the introductions, I introduced the participants to the research topic and explained to them how they had been identified and recruited to participate in the study. I also informed them that their participation was purely voluntary, and they would not be penalized or lose anything by choosing not to participate in the study. I explained to the participants the risk that might be associated with doing so and told them that they were free to choose not to participate in parts of the study with which they were uncomfortable without any penalty. For example, I explained to them that choosing to appear in the photos was purely voluntary but

pointed out that they could then be identified by other people in the community if they chose these pictures to be exhibited publicly. I also informed the participants that they should keep private and confidential any information about other participants to which they had access during the workshop. I reminded them that I could not guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of their information and therefore they should share in the group only parts of their private information with which they were comfortable. After discussing the issues that concerned informed consent, I facilitated a session to identify the issues they were interested in discussing during the workshop.

Session 2: Learning about photography and how to operate the camera: I trained the participants on the technical uses of a camera like how to hold it in the correct position, how to zoom in and out with a digital camera to correctly capture images, how to focus and capture clear images, how to press the start and off buttons, how to view images by pressing the forward and back buttons, and how to delete unwanted images (see Mitchell et al., 2016; Moletsane & Mitchell, 2007).

Session 3: Visual ethics: In the final part of the Photovoice workshop, I trained the participants on how to take ethically sound photographs for research and explained the process of acquiring consent before taking pictures of people who are not directly involved in the research. I used samples of photographs from old magazine and newspapers to show participants what would count as an ethical photograph and what would not. I also introduced the participants to the "no faces" approach (Mitchell, 2011a, p. 21; Mitchell et al., 2016, p. 245) and the idea of not including identifiable images of people who were not directly involved in the research.

Session 4: Engaging with the prompt: After brainstorming and conceptualizing the issues, in collaboration with the pregnant girls and young mothers, we developed a prompt that guided the

Photovoice activity in the community. First, the participants identified issues that were of interest and importance to them. They mentioned a range of issues that they wanted to discuss. Among these issues were the lack of employment, lack of money to begin start-up businesses, and the high level of insecurity. Seeing that the issues were diverse we decided to come up with a very general prompt that would capture the realities of the girls and we could then analyse them in relation to the research question: "What are the barriers to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant girls and young mothers in the presence, since 1994, of a school continuation and re-entry policy in Kenya?" Finally, all the participants validated the prompt "What are your challenges in this community?" to be effective in guiding them to express themselves through photography.

Session 5: Taking photographs in the community: For this session, I let the participants divide themselves into smaller groups of four to five. In their smaller groups, they decided where in the community they wanted to take their photographs. Each of the smaller groups was accompanied by two security boys.[2] The participants took pictures of objects and staged other scenario in some cases to represent the challenges they faced in their community. The photography session lasted for 60 minutes.

Session 6: Working with the photographs: In this session, the participants worked in their small groups and each member selected her three best photos to be included in the poster narrative to be shown at the community Photovoice exhibition. Each of the small groups of participants reflected on all the selected photos to see if they still thought these images were appropriate and

[2] Security boys are young men who have organized themselves into groups and are responsible for providing security to foreigners visiting or doing research and other work in Korogocho slums. Different parts of the settlement have their own group of security boys and anyone who seeks to conduct research in the area needs to have this informal consent to access the community.

ethically suitable for display at a public community Photovoice exhibition. The main criterion for including photos were that there did not contain identifiable images of people who were not directly involved in the research.

Session 7: Reflecting on the photographs and captioning: Each participant then showed her photos to the rest of the group members and explained what the photos meant to her before pasting them onto cardboard using a glue stick and then writing a short caption under each image to explain its meaning. I drew from the SHOWeD guide[3] adopted by other researchers who have used Photovoice (see Johnston 2016; Liebenberg 2018; Liebenberg et al., 2020; Wang & Burris 1994; Wang et al. 1996) to formulate the questions that I posed to the participants to reflect upon when they were deciding on their three best images and creating the accompanying captions. These were (1) What did you want to illustrate when you took the picture? (2) What is occurring in this photo?

Participants who were not able to write their own captions were assisted by the project research assistants. In order to verify that the caption correctly captured the meaning the participants attached to the image, I let the research assistants write and then read out the captions to the participant for verification. Each of the small groups produced posters narratives which they presented to the larger group. This session lasted 45 minutes.

Session 8: Presenting to the larger group and creating policy messages: After the smaller groups had created their photo narratives, each small group presented their findings to the larger group. Then each participant in the smaller group presented her three photos and explained their

[3] SHOWeD guide is a set of prompt questions [What do you **S**ee here?, What is really **H**appening here?, How does this relate to **O**ur lives?, **W**hy does this condition **E**xist?, What can we **D**o about it?] that guide the participatory analysis process and were first developed by Roy Shaffer in 1983 in *Beyond the dispensary*. Nairobi: AMREF (The African Medical and Research Foundation).

meaning to the larger group. During the discussions that followed the smaller groups presenting their findings to the larger research groups, I posed the following questions to help the participants reflect on key policy messages and on the people whom they wanted their images and messages to reach:

(1) What can be done about the situations that you present in these images? (2) Who has the power to do something to change the situation? (3) Who do you want to see these images and the messages?

Session 9: Preparing for the community photovoice exhibition: During this session, the pregnant girls and the young mothers also identified key people in the community who we thought should view the images that they had created. Collaboratively, we generated a list of key stakeholders in the community and targeted their representatives to be recruited to participate in the community photo exhibition. The recruitment of the audience was done through two community mobilizers who used the list that was generated by the research team and their community social networks to contact and recruit the key community stakeholders for the community photo exhibition. This was done through face-to-face conversations or telephone calls. Among the key people in the community who were invited to attend and participate in the community photo exhibition were the area senior chief, the village elders, religious leaders, daycare owners, youth leaders, parents, *Boda Boda* [4] operators, businessmen, teachers and school principals, and, of course, the pregnant girls and young mothers who created the photo images. This session lasted 60 minutes.

[4] *Boda Boda* is the name used to refer to motorcycles or motorcyclists who provide transportation in areas which are inaccessible by motor vehicles because of poor infrastructure in remote urban or rural areas.

Community Photovoice Exhibition

The photo narratives that were created by the pregnant girls and the young mothers were later displayed for public viewing at a community exhibition. I made the decision to hold the exhibition on a Thursday at the Korogocho chief's camp after consulting with the participants and the community leaders. I mobilized different community stakeholders to attend the community Photovoice exhibition that was organized into three phases.

Phase 1: On the day of the community exhibition, the girls and the young mothers arrived an hour before the scheduled time of the exhibition. They worked in their small groups to have a second review of their images and decided if they still wanted them displayed. In this second review, I wanted the participants to have another look at the images and remove from the exhibition any images that they no longer wanted to be displayed. After the participants confirmed their choices and consented that the photo narratives could be displayed, each group selected a wall in the hall at the Chief's camp and hung their photo narratives on the walls using duct tape.

Phase 2: The community mobilizer and approximately 70 people attended the community photo exhibition. It was launched by the area senior Chief who addressed the community on the high rates of teenage pregnancy and its impact on girls' education and well-being. In the first session of the exhibition, I facilitated a discussion on the causes of teenage pregnancy in the community from the perspectives of the community members. Afterwards, I introduced the audience participants to my research topic, explained why it was important for me to carry out the study in Korogocho, spoke about who produced the photo narratives and the process they followed to produce the images. I also explained to the participants in detail that participating in the exhibition was voluntary and sought their verbal informed consent to participate in it by

allowing their conversations to be captured on a digital voice recorder, and their images taken to be used solely for purposes of the research for use in academic and non-academic publications, at conferences and workshops, and in my written dissertation. I also informed the participants that they could change their minds about the consent at any time without any consequences.

Phase 3: In the third part of the community exhibition, I invited the audience participants to walk freely around the hall and view the photo narratives that were hanging on the walls. The audience participants did so, viewed the images, and engaged the girls and young mothers in conversations about how they produced the images and the meaning of them. After the exhibition walk-about, I facilitated a follow-up discussion with the participants to collect and record their views about the photo narratives that were produced by the pregnant girls and the young mothers. I used some broad questions as guides in facilitating the follow-up discussions with the audience. Some of the questions that I used to guide me to facilitate the photovoice exhibition follow-up discussion included: Which images were most captivating to you? Why? In your opinion what might be the solutions to the challenges presented in the Photovoice exhibition? The community Photovoice exhibition lasted 120 minutes.

Interviews with Policy Makers

Interviews are qualitative methods of data collection that are commonly used in social science research to obtain a deeper understanding of people's daily experiences on a particular topic. Qualitative interviews rely on building rapport with participants and discussing, honestly and in detail, aspects of the particular phenomenon being studied (DeMarrais, 2004; Taylor et al., 2015; Tracy, 2019). Interviews can be conducted with an individual or group of participants using a set of questions to guide the discussions and facilitated by a research assistant. According to Tracy (2019), a good interview is so much more than just asking good questions and it depends on the

interviewer's ability to create an environment in which the participant feels safe to have a free conversation. In this study, all the interviews were conducted by individual participants face-to-face, all were conducted one-on-one, and captured on a digital voice recorder. All participants used pseudonyms during the interviews to protect their anonymity. See Appendices i, ii, ii, & iv for details.

***Pregnant girls and young mothers*:** I conducted follow-up interviews with the fifteen pregnant girls and young mothers who participated in the Photovoice study to explore their general perspectives about the Photovoice activity in which they had participated and, in particular, which part of the workshop they liked most and which they found challenging. The follow-up interviews were conducted one-on-one with the participants and were facilitated by the research assistants and captured on digital audio recorders. Informed consent to participate in the interview and to record the interview was sought from each participant before beginning the interviews. All the girls and young mothers gave their informed consent to participate and gave consent for their interviews to be recorded. The interviews were conducted at the APHRC's site office in Korogocho. Each interview was conducted in a partitioned cubicle and were spaced out to ensure the privacy of the participants. All interviews with girls and young mothers were conducted in Swahili or *Sheng*. Through the follow-up interviews, I sought to have a deeper understanding of the support system that the girls and the young mothers had to help them cope with the demanding role of parenting. Some of the questions asked of the girls and the young mothers included, "What was your experience when you became pregnant or a mother for the first time? What would say were the main reasons you dropped out of school? What is your personal view about teenage pregnancy, motherhood, and schooling? What barriers have you faced in trying to return to school? Are you aware of your right to return to school as a pregnant

adolescent or a young mother? What would you tell teachers, school principals and other education officials about the support that they can give to pregnant adolescents and young mothers who wish to return to school and complete their basic education?" On average each interview lasted 45 minutes. Details about parental consent and girls' informed consent and informed assent are provided in appendices i and ii.

Policy makers: After identifying and recruiting six policy makers I conducted one-on-one interviews with each one of them to obtain a deeper understanding of their views on the effectiveness of the current school continuation and re-entry policy for pregnant girls and young mothers, and to explore their perspectives on how the current policy might be improved to become more effective in bringing back to school adolescent girls who drop out of school because of unplanned early pregnancy. I asked, "What is your general opinion about teenage pregnancy, motherhood and schooling? What other policies are in place to promote gender equality in education? Thinking about education policies that aim to promote the education of vulnerable group of learners in Kenya, how effective are these policies in meeting their objectives? In your opinion, what more should be done to add to the school continuation and re-entry policy to support pregnant and teenage mothers to continue and complete a full cycle of basic education? Are there additional structures that support the current policy on school re-entry and continuation for pregnant and parent-leaners? If yes, what are they? If no, what would you suggest being added to the current policy to support pregnant girls and young mothers to return to school?" Interviews with policymakers were conducted in their offices at the Ministry of Education headquarters. The interviews were conducted in English or Swahili or both. Each interview lasted 60 minutes. Details about the interview questions are provided in appendix iv.

Community leaders: Community leadership in Korogocho operates on a spectrum and includes the formal government administrators who include the area Senior Chief, Assistant Chief and the informal village elders, religious leaders, and leaders of youth groups and community-based organizations. Here, a community leader is a person who holds a position of power and responsibility and whose opinion is highly regarded by most of the residents in the settlement. In addition to interviews with the girls and young mothers and policymakers, I also conducted seven in-depth interviews with community leaders to explore their perspectives on the causes of the high rates of teenage pregnancy in the community and to get their views on how teenage pregnancy can be addressed in their community. Details about the interview questions are provided in appendix iii.

Working with Phase One Data

I backed up all my data every day on an external hard disc that I devoted specifically to storing my fieldwork data. I also stored all the other private information and data relating to the participants such as copies of consent forms in a private plastic folder and stored them in a locked cabinet. I assigned pseudonyms to all the participants to ensure their privacy and anonymity. Nobody could trace any information to an individual participant.

Photovoice: My analysis of the Photovoice data was through multi-stage participatory analysis which is typical of participatory data analysis. As Mitchell (2011) and others have highlighted, there is a fine line between the data collection and data analysis of a participatory visual study since the process overall is highly reflexive and analytic. The process of girls selecting which photos best fit with the prompt is in itself a type of analysis, as is their production of captions to give meaning to the photos along with their reflections to identify who should see the photo

exhibition. Among the people who the girls and the young mothers mentioned were the President, the Minister for Education, the Governor of Nairobi County, the area Member of Parliament, the County women's representative, area chiefs, village elders, religious leaders, youth leaders, parents, and everyone in the community.

Increasing attention is now being paid to how participants might engage in the process of participatory data analysis in a more systematic way. The work of Linda Liebenberg and colleagues (2020) is a good example of how researchers might adapt conventional thematic analysis to engage participants in developing themes. Liebenberg et al. (2020) have reiterated that methodological frameworks for participatory analysis view participants as research collaborators at all stages of the research process. They further asserted that "engaging in a process of rigorous participatory data analysis better ensures that findings more accurately reflect the realities of participants' lives and that resulting actions are more likely to bring benefits to young people and their communities" (p. 2). For my analysis, I, of course, drew on the reflections of the participants and worked directly with the Photovoice data myself. To do this, I went back to the photo poster narratives that were created by participants and looked at them closely and critically compared the themes represented in them with what is in the literature in relation to teenage pregnancy, motherhood, and schooling. From this, I developed the three main themes of poverty, lack of access to clean, efficient and affordable daycare where the young mothers could leave their children, and, generally, a non-supportive social and physical environment for girls from a tender age. I discuss the themes in Chapter three of this manuscript thesis.

Interviews: The first step in analyzing the interview data involved listening to the audio recording of each set of interviews from the policy makers, community leaders, and the girls and

young mothers and jotting down initial themes under each category in relation to the research questions. The second step involved transcribing all the audio recorded interviews verbatim and then translating the interviews that were conducted in Swahili into English. One average, each transcript was 24 to 36 double spaced pages. In this analytical process of the interview data, I adapted a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a type of qualitative analysis which is used to analyze classifications and present themes or emerging patterns in the data that relate to the research question (Alhojailan, 2012). Alhojailan (2012) and Thomas (2003) outline three key principles of thematic analysis. First, compact the extensive and diverse raw data into a succinct structure by entering the data into charts or tables to give the researcher a visual representation of the interconnectedness of the data. Second, make a clear connection between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from data. Finally, develop a conceptual model or theory that shows the structure of experiences and/or processes which are in the answers to the research questions. In conducting the thematic analysis, I applied the inductive approach (see Glaser, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Thomas, 2003). The inductive approach allows the research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data (Thomas, 2003). In doing this, I was guided by the steps outlined by Thomas. First, I prepared all the raw data files (transcripts) by downloading them into a folder, formatting them and highlighting the interview questions. Second, I read all the transcripts closely in detail to understand the content and the general themes. Third, I created categories; I derived the first level of categories from the research aims and the second level of categories from reading the transcripts many times. The fourth step involved coding the text. I looked for texts that contained certain codes and organized them under categories or themes. It was common to find overlaps in codes and that the same segment of text was categorized under many

themes. In the final step, I refined the categories and merged categories that were closely related. I developed three main themes: poverty, unsupportive social and physical environment for girls from a young age; and a lack of clean and efficient daycares.

Phase Two

In preparation to go back to Kenya for Phase two of the study, I applied for the renewal of my research ethics approval from the university and my research permit from NACOSTI. I also applied for a position as a graduate intern with APHRC which had been my host institution since the beginning of my fieldwork study.

While using research products that come out of arts-based participatory and visual methodologies is seen not as an end in itself but, rather, as the beginning of crucial conversation towards positive social change as I have noted in an earlier section of this chapter. Following a successful grant application and having secured funding from the IDRC, I went back to Kenya and used the Photovoice exhibition to begin conversations with policy makers on newer perspectives on barriers to school continuation and re-entry obtained from the girls and young mothers themselves that could have informed their decisions when they were revising the current policy by showing them the Photovoice exhibition and the messages created by the girls and young mothers.

I conducted Phase two of the study two years after Phase one between July and December 2019. The main goal of conducting Phase two of the study was to show the Photovoice exhibition that was created by the pregnant girls and young mothers during the Photovoice study in Phase one to give their perspectives on the barriers to their school continuation and re-entry given the school continuation and re-entry policy for pregnant girls and

young mothers in Kenya. The main objectives of displaying the Photovoice exhibition to the policymakers were:

1) to expose the hidden challenges that pregnant girls and young mothers face within the community that might prevent them from re-entering school and completing their education after childbirth; and
2) to inform policy makers about the grassroots level (individual and community) challenges that prevent pregnant girls and young mothers from continuing with schooling despite the presence of the 1994 school continuation and re-entry policy.

Phase Two Data Collection Procedures

In the following section, I discuss the data sources for Phase two of the fieldwork.

Photovoice Exhibition to Educational Policymakers

The main data collection method that I employed in Phase two of the study was the exhibiting and audiencing (Rose, 2001) of the Photovoice exhibition to the educational policy makers. I displayed the Photovoice exhibition to approximately 12 educational policy makers during a school re-entry policy validation workshop at the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) in Nairobi. The school re-entry validation workshop was organized by the Ministry of Education and took place at KICD. The validation workshop was attended by representatives from international and local partnering organizations and stakeholders in education. I was a participant observer at the workshop and documented the data through exhibiting the Photovoice exhibition, having informal conversations with the policy makers, observing the reactions of the policy makers to the Photovoice exhibition, listening to the discussions, and writing fieldnotes during the one-day school re-entry validation workshop. I did not formally interview the policy

makers nor did I audio or video record the conversations because this was a serendipitous opportunity and I had not acquired prior consent to do so from the organizers and the participants. Moreover, I was not part of the initial agenda for the workshop and there was no window of opportunity for me to conduct formal interviews with the policy makers, so conducting the study through participant observation was the most appropriate under the circumstances. I therefore took the opportunity to engage the policy makers in informal conversations about the Photovoice exhibition and jotted down short fieldnotes during the workshop and later expanded on them more reflexively. Studies show that engaging policy makers with research evidence is not systematically straightforward and can take a long time (Ajakaiye, 2007; Liasidou, 2012). Aware of the challenges in mobilizing a group of policy makers to attend a photo exhibition, I seized the opportunity afforded by my invitation to the validation workshop for school re-entry policies to share the findings from the Photovoice study and show the exhibition to the policy makers who were present. Chapter four of this dissertation offers a detailed discussion of the findings from the Photovoice exhibition with education policy makers.

I analyzed and interpreted the data that I documented by exhibiting the Photovoice exhibition to education policy makers by adopting Harding's (1992) feminist standpoint epistemology and MacEntie's (2015) feminist reflexive writing practice. Harding's (1992) feminist standpoint epistemology holds three main ideas: knowledge is situated; marginalized groups have an advantage of being able to identify biases that the dominant group cannot see; and knowledge should be built upon the perspectives of the marginalized groups. MacEntie's (2015) feminist reflexive writing practice involves writing and reading through the fieldnotes, followed by a reading of the academic literature related to the topic of the study, and then writing

and re-reading while looking for intersections between the fieldnotes and the academic literature. I discuss this in detail in Chapter six of this dissertation.

Participant Observation

I was a participant observer at the school re-entry policies validation workshop where I also exhibited the Photovoice exhibition to educational policymakers. Participant observation is a qualitative research method that involves spending time being, living, or working with people or communities to understand their perspectives about the social phenomena under investigation (Emerson & Fretz, 2001; Laurier, 2010). Usually, this involves taking field notes, photographs or video recordings as methods of data collection (Laurier, 2010). Making field notes in a participant observation study involves mindful recording and making sense of the data by deciding what data to gather in the research setting (Tracy, 2019). Tracy (2019) further argued that field notes serve to consciously and coherently narrate and interpret observations and actions in the field. Added to this, is that qualitative scholars using participant observation for data collection acknowledge that field notes go beyond mere facts to building a narrative argument that included analysis and interpretations of the evidence with the aim of building a claim.

I created shorthand field notes during the workshop which I later expanded while engaging in self-reflexivity and an interrogation of how my positionality shaped my perspectives of the research process, analysis, and the research outcome. I applied Katie MacEntie's principles of feminist reflexive writing (MacEntee, 2015) to document my fieldnotes during the one-day validation workshop for school continuation and re-entry policies. I used Sandra Harding's feminist epistemological standpoint (Harding, 1992) to interpret the education policymakers' reaction to the Photovoice exhibition created by the 15 pregnant girls and young

mothers in Korogocho. I discuss the analytical approach in Chapter six of this dissertation, which is a manuscript article.

Validity and Trustworthiness of the Study

I ensured that the findings of this study were valid and trustworthy by employing different data collection methods in Phases one and two of this study. The use of different data collection methods is normally used to triangulate the study findings (Denzin, 2015; Natow, 2020; Tracy, 2019) as was the case in this study. I used Photovoice with the pregnant girls and young mothers, follow-up interviews with pregnant girls and young mothers, one-on-one interviews with policy makers, and a Photovoice community exhibition in Phase one of the study and a Photovoice exhibition presented to policy makers in Phase two. I also conducted the study systematically by using the appropriate data collection methods and processes (see Brantlinger et al. 2005; Taylor et al. 2015; Tracy 2019) in order to understand the barriers to school continuation for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers and to explore and interpret how policy makers responded to the perspectives of the pregnant girls and young mothers on barriers to their schooling.

Challenges and mitigations

Despite careful design of the study and planning of fieldwork, social science studies are not without challenges and ethical dilemmas during fieldwork. In this sub-section, I discuss the challenges that I encountered during my fieldwork and how I addressed them.

Fieldwork Recruitment Challenges

Despite systematically designing and planning the study, I still encountered some challenges during fieldwork. First, during Phase one of the study, my plan to use the APHRC database to recruit out of school pregnant adolescents and young mothers was not successful since, as

mentioned earlier, the database identified only one girl as having dropped out of school because of unplanned teenage pregnancy. I mitigated this challenge by changing my recruitment strategy to a snowballing technique to identify, through community connections, girls and young mothers who had dropped of school because of teenage pregnancy.

Methodological Challenges

While using Photovoice to explore barriers to school continuation and re-entry with pregnant girls and young mothers in Korogocho, I encountered some methodological challenges. The first was a technical one; one small group of young mothers lost all the photographs they had taken during the photography activity in the community because of either a camera malfunction or deletion by error. I faced the ethical dilemma of whether to request them to re-do the activity or not. I resolved this issue by giving them the option of choosing to retake the photographs or choosing not to. Surprisingly, the group of participants agreed to go back to the community and retake the photographs. The second challenge that emerged during the Photovoice workshop was that one group of participants reported back that the two security boys who were in charge of safeguarding them were patronizing in suggesting to them where in the community they should take the photographs. Although I did not resolve this challenge because of time constraint and given the ethical implication of asking the participants to return to the field to take new pictures, it was a lesson learned for future research.

In Phase one of the study, one of the research assistants working on the project was a young man in his early 20s. When I was listening to the recorded interviews and reading the transcribed data, I realized that all the follow-up interviews that he conducted were rushed and that he had failed to adequately encourage and prompt the pregnant girls and the young mothers

to speak out. Another reason could also be that the interviewer himself, being a young man, was uncomfortable engaging in conversations about early unintended pregnancy and young motherhood. I excluded the interviews that were conducted by this particular research assistant from the analysis.

Ethical challenges

I was not able to ensure the complete privacy and confidentiality of the participants in some cases during the Photovoice study. It was difficult to conceal the identity of the participants when they participated in taking photographs in the community, during the community exhibition as they presented their finding, and in images in which they appeared in the photo exhibition. I briefed the participants about the risks of being associated with the study and asked for their informed consent to participate, to appear on images that will be used publicly, and to attend the community exhibition. Chapter five of this dissertation discusses in detail the ethical challenges that I encountered during fieldwork and ways in which I addressed them.

Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the motivation behind my interest in the field of gender and education, the professional experiences that led to my interest in conducting research with girls and women in informal urban settings, the research design for the study, and the methodological approach that I applied to conduct it. I chose arts-based and participatory visual approaches for this study because of the vulnerability and marginalization of pregnant girls and young mothers in the Kenyan context. Arts-based participatory methodologies offer ways through which vulnerable and marginalized populations can express their view on issues and decisions that affect them in their day-to-day life. In this study, I used photovoice to explore the barriers to

school continuation and re-entry for pregnant girls and young mothers who live in a marginalized urban setting. Through Photovoice, the pregnant girls and the young mothers visually represented social, cultural, and economic factors that intersect in complex ways and pose challenges to their school continuation, re-entry, and completion of a full cycle of basic education. These include the lack of efficient and affordable daycares, poverty, and unsupportive social and physical environments. Despite encountering some methodological challenges using Photovoice during my fieldwork, Photovoice methodology presented deeper learnings to me as an emerging scholar in the field of arts-based participatory visual methodologies given its ability to spur agency and give voice to the often-silenced groups to speak out about the social injustices that that they face and to articulate ways in which they can be supported to improve their lives.

CHAPTER 4

Re-Conceptualizing School Continuation & Re-Entry Policy for Young Mothers Living in an Urban Slum Context in Nairobi, Kenya: A Participatory Approach[5]

Abstract

This article discusses the barriers to school continuation for pregnant girls and young mothers living in low-income and marginalized contexts in Nairobi, Kenya. In the article, I suggest adopting a girl-centered framework in the policy formulation process (Moletsane, Mitchell, & Lewin, 2015). This perspective puts girls' voices at the center of the policy formulation process to help address the persistent gender inequality in education through problem identification and an exploration of ways to combat the challenges faced by girls. The article, which analyzes studies of government's education policies, is supported by data from my recent fieldwork investigating young mothers' challenges to school continuation and re-entry in Kenya, within the context of Kenya's re-entry and continuation policy effected in 1994. I discuss the school re-entry and continuation policies in low-income contexts using the framework of critical feminism. I argue that there is need to integrate multi-pronged, participatory and feminist frameworks to promote systematic government educational policy reforms to shore up gender equality (King & Winthrop, 2015). To support this argument, I develop three main claims: (a) broad conceptualization of the causes of teenage pregnancy will promote the use of multi- pronged approaches to the

[5] Nyariro, M. P. (2018). Re-Conceptualizing School Continuation & Re-Entry Policy for Young Mothers Living in an Urban Slum Context in Nairobi, Kenya: A Participatory Approach. *Studies in Social Justice*, *12*(2), 310-328.

design of school re-entry and continuation policies; (b) formulation and implementation of any robust policies on re-entry and continuation require strong integration of the voices, perspectives and the lived experiences of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers; and (c) the use of participatory visual methodologies will give voice to pregnant girls and young mothers, and promote policy dialogue while at the same time empowering them and spurring their agency to become part of policy formulation and implementation.
KEYWORDS gender; education; social policy; marginalization; participatory; feminism; intersectionality; sub-Saharan Africa

Introduction

This article is part of a special issue of Studies in Social Justice that commemorates and advances the work and legacy of Jacqueline Kirk who was killed in an attack by the Taliban in Afghanistan on August 13, 2008, alongside two other colleagues and a driver. The commitment Kirk displayed to social justice, youth and girlhood studies, gender equality and inclusion in education, remains urgent. The objectives of this article align with her advocacy for the rights of children, particularly girls, to participate in decision-making processes, as well as her contributions to policy development. Kirk's contributions to gender equality in education include advocating for the use of visual and other participatory methodologies as a way to support the agency of adolescent girls in marginalized contexts, and amplifying marginalized children's voices through images to talk about issues of education and well-being and as a safe strategy to break barriers of autocracy in policy formulation. Her realization and that of other scholars in the field of gender equality and social justice that the conventional top-down approach of policy-making process may risk perpetuating existing power dynamics between policy makers and policy beneficiaries has led to the use of creative, multi-pronged and feminist approaches such as

Participatory Visual Methodologies which prioritize women's voices in policy and decision making. Despite the continued efforts to democratize decision and policy-making processes, girls' and women's voices continue to be marginalized, sometimes with only a few of them enlisted to contribute. This article outlines the challenges to school continuation faced by young mothers living in urban low-income conditions within the context of Kenya's 1994 school re-entry and continuation policy. The article offers (a) some data that could be useful in the policy formulation process, and (b) a technique that could be used in the policy formulation process to integrate the voices and interests of girls.

I have divided the article into four sections. In the first section, I highlight the broader conversation about girls' and women's education in sub-Saharan Africa to provide a theoretical framework for the article. The second section provides an overview of teenage pregnancy and schooling in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). In section three, I review studies on continuation and re-entry policies for young mothers in selected countries in SSA and the challenges of the existing policies. The section also reports the findings from a participatory study with pregnant girls and young mothers in an urban slum in Nairobi, Kenya. The objective of the study was to explore challenges to school continuation for pregnant girls and young mothers. The final section draws from the literature and findings of my study to propose ways policy makers could draw from photovoice – a participatory approach – to re- conceptualize school continuation and re-entry policies for young mothers. I offer recommendations for girl-centered and participatory approaches as inclusive ways of policy-making.

To ensure clarity, I will begin by defining some of the terms used in this article. I use UNESCO's (2003) conceptualization of "gender equality" as placing equal value on the similarities and differences between men and women, and the roles they play in society. Gender

equality, conceived this way, means that women and men are given equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development. I adopt the definition of policy design by Bobrow and Dryzek (1987, cited in Rixecker, 1994, p. 119) as "the process of creating, developing and attuning an actionable framework, incorporating heightened context sensitivity and value clarification with the intent of ameliorating some social issues." I use teenage and adolescent interchangeably in this article to represent young people between the ages of 13 and 19 years. Similarly, I use pregnant girls and young mothers interchangeably to represent girls between the ages of 13 and 19 years who become pregnant while attending school. I argue that there is a need to integrate feminist frameworks to promote systematic government educational policy reforms and evaluation to shore up gender equality (King & Winthrop, 2015) and make three supporting claims. First, a broad conceptualization about the causes of teenage pregnancy will promote the use of multi-pronged approaches to the design of school continuation and re-entry policies. Second, formulation and implementation of any robust policies on re-entry and continuation require strong integration of voices, perspectives, and lived experiences of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers. Third, the use of participatory visual methodologies will give voice to the pregnant girls and young mothers and promote policy dialogue. This will empower them and spur their agency to become part of policy formulation and implementation conversations.

Girls' Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

Girls' education is perceived as an investment in human capital that promotes economic growth and increases a country's human development and well-being (King & Winthrop, 2015; Lockheed, 2008; Schultz, 2002). The literature shows that the social benefits of more years of schooling are greater for girls than boys. For instance, regions that

have invested in girls' and women's schooling have relatively fast-tracked in development due to improved women's participation and contribution to economic and social development (King & Winthrop, 2015; Schultz, 2002). Scholarly literature also provides a plethora of evidence showing the benefits of female education. For example, when women attain more years of education, countries experience improvements in human capital, maternal health, fertility, family planning and agricultural production (King & Winthrop, 2015; Lockheed, 2008).

Although there have been significant gains in advocacy and strategies for girls' education in general, gaps persist for adolescent girls, and especially young mothers living in marginalized contexts (King & Winthrop, 2015). A complex and layered intersection of socio-cultural and socioeconomic factors works to produce and reproduce gender inequality that leads to many girls getting pregnant and dropping out of school in SSA. Scholars like Mukudi (2002) and Stromquist (2003) outline the intersectional nature of challenges, such as poverty, cultural dispositions, and government policies, among other factors. These factors work together to pose barriers to adolescent girls' schooling, exacerbating the marginalization of girls and young women in education. To effectively address the layers and intersections of these challenges, it is important to include the voices of the girls themselves. By drawing insights from their lived experiences, it is possible to gain a nuanced understanding of their problems, in order to develop effective mitigation strategies.

Teenage Pregnancy, Motherhood and Schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa

Teenage pregnancy has been identified as a factor that contributes significantly to girls dropping out of school before completing a full cycle of basic education, thereby

leading to a persistent gender inequality gap in education (Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Onyango, Kioli, & Nyambedha, 2015; Sathiparsad & Taylor, 2011). An adolescent girl's unplanned pregnancy is often the result of gender power imbalances, hierarchical social power relations, and sexual inequality between men and women (Sathiparsad & Taylor, 2011). Available data shows that pregnancy accounted for 13.9% of teenage girls who were not in schools in South Africa in 2006. A study conducted by the Population Council in Kenya (see Undie, Birungi, Odwe, & Obare, 2015a) shows that 21% of adolescent girls reported having been pregnant and dropping out of school. This study revealed further that the majority of girls who became pregnant and dropped out of school did not re- enter due to the stigma and ridicule associated with pregnancy, both in school and in the wider community. The study also indicated that re-entry and continuation policy guidelines were not implemented in most schools, and that a suitable framework to monitor and evaluate the implementation and progress of the policy was lacking. Another study from South Africa offers additional findings regarding the implementation of the South African School Act (SASA) (Republic of South Africa, 1996), an act that makes it illegal to exclude pregnant girls from schools. The study shows that about 32% of 14- 19 years old school going girls who had ever become pregnant have re- entered school because of the presence of the SASA (Bhana, Morrel, Shefer, & Ngabaza, 2010). However, the Act does not clearly specify the treatment of pregnant learners and learner-parents while in school

Teenage pregnancy continues to be one of the major challenges to the achievement of Education for All (EFA) (Leach, Dunne, & Salvi, 2014; Onyango et al., 2015). It causes and maintains a difference in transition rates between male and female students. School transition and completion rates among girls dwindle due to several factors including teenage

pregnancy and motherhood (FAWE, 2004). Differential gender power relations are a major cause of teenage pregnancy and motherhood. The gender power asymmetry constrains young women's sexual choices and ability to negotiate safe sex. Social construction of sex and sexuality, which depicts female sexuality as subdued yet applauds male sexual dominance, contributes to these constraints and consequently encourages girls to succumb to male pressure (Arango, Morton, Gennari, Kiplesund, & Ellsberg, 2014; Leach et al., 2014). Adolescent girls' lack of access to sexuality education, limited ability to negotiate sexual relationships, and restricted access to reproductive health information and services all contribute to teenage pregnancy and early motherhood (Leach et al., 2014).

The challenge that most communities, schools, education ministries and governments continue to grapple with is how to integrate young mothers into the schooling systems (Arango et al., 2014; Bhana et al., 2010; Onyango et al., 2015; Undie et al., 2015a). Many national governments in SSA have adopted global initiatives on gender equality and have targeted policies supporting girls and women, particularly in education (Glick, 2008). However, many of these countries continue to grapple with effective ways to include young mothers in the mainstream educational and schooling systems, as many girls – particularly in SSA – continue to withdraw from school due to teenage pregnancy (Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Undie et al., 2015a).

In many societies in SSA, teenage pregnancy and motherhood are perceived to be incompatible with schooling. Studies outline ways historical and contemporary moral, cultural and social norms combine to construct and pathologize teenage pregnancy and motherhood outside of marital family contexts (Bhana, et al., 2010; Moletsane, Mitchell, & Lewin, 2015). The agency of pregnant girls and young mothers continues to be suppressed

as teenage pregnancy and motherhood is socially constructed as unacceptable, shameful and punishable in popular and everyday discourses (Bhana & Mcambi, 2013). For instance, a study by Bhana et al. (2010), which explored teachers' responses to teenage pregnancy and parenting in South Africa, revealed that most school principals and teachers reproduce gender violence and inequality by not being ready to admit and support pregnant learners or mothers in their schools, the presence of the policy notwithstanding. Similarly, studies by Beninger (2013), Undie et al. (2015a), and Vandayar, Dzimiri, Runhare, & Mulaudzi (2014), show that although school authorities express concern about the welfare of pregnant learners and young mothers, they nevertheless view teenage pregnancy as stigmatizing and these girls as poor role models for the school. Such attitudes create an exclusionary and unwelcoming school environment that marginalizes young mothers.

Furthermore, studies reveal that young mothers who go back to school encounter challenges, and lack support from fellow students and teachers. This hinders their ability to accomplish their educational goals (Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Moletsane et al., 2015; Onyango et al., 2015). Young mothers in schools are subject to the school's rules, regulations and policies, which can reproduce discrimination, marginalization and social injustice towards the girls. Moreover, teenage pregnancy and motherhood are not condoned by schools due to society's disapproval of open displays of teenage sexuality.

School Continuation & Re-Entry Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa

Efforts to promote school continuation and re-entry policies for young mothers in SSA are complicated by the existence of divergent policy implementation. Some policies (e.g., Tanzania's) deny pregnant girls and young mothers the opportunities to continue or re-

enter schools. Others are unclear in ways that make it difficult for girls and young women to know their rights. In Kenya, Zambia and South Africa, for example, existing policies are poorly-implemented. Only in rare cases do clearly-formulated policies correspond with effective implementation (e.g., Botswana) (Chilisa, 2002). Mashishi and Makoelle (2014) divide the policies on learner pregnancy into three categories: (a) expulsion policies which symbolize direct violation of girls' fundamental human rights; (b) re-entry policies, which allows pregnant girls to come back to school after giving birth; and (3) continuation policies, which allow pregnant girls to continue at school until the time of their babies' birth. The authors point out that school continuation and re-entry policies are common in countries that have ratified the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) and the *Conventions on the Rights of Children* (CRC) Mashishi and Makoelle (2014, p. 377) further note that re-entry policies subtly violate girls' right to education through a "retreat ideology," a situation where school authorities suggest to pregnant girls and young mothers that an option for continued schooling includes voluntarily withdrawing from school with the option to return after they give birth. However, in many cases, girls who opt for voluntary withdrawal from school do not return.

The current policy frameworks on learner pregnancy in most countries in SSA are silent on services for learner mothers and on how young mothers might care for their newly born child. A major challenge for young mothers, their families, and communities, is how to balance conflicting demands of childcare and schooling (Moletsane et al., 2015). Due to lack of clear guidelines on how to accommodate young mothers, schools can be a hostile environment with punitive measures for young mothers who fail to accomplish their

homework or follow in schools' structured routines (Bhana, 2008; Bhana et al., 2010; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Moletsane et al., 2015).

In Kenya, every individual has a right to an education (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The re-entry policy to help young mothers return to schools came into law in 1994 (Undie et al., 2015a). According to the Kenya *2009 Demographic Health Survey* (Onyango et al., 2015), 18% of girls have experienced a pregnancy by the age of 18 years, making it one of the major causes for teenage girls dropping out of school. Studies also reveal that most of the girls who drop out of school due to early pregnancy do not resume school after childbirth despite the policy's provision for it (Onyango et al., 2015; Undie et al., 2015a; Undie et al., 2015b). In Kenya, it is estimated that between 10,000 and 13,000 girls drop out of school annually due to pregnancy, but approximately only 1,200 return after giving birth (Onyango et al., 2015). Despite the school re-entry policy in Kenya having clauses of unconditional readmission for young mothers, it was evident at a meeting organized by the STEP UP and Population Council with school principals in Homa Bay county to have a dialogue on the re-entry and continuation policy, that many school principals thought young mothers should only be readmitted if they showed remorse for becoming pregnant (Undie et al., 2015b). This provides evidence that the mere existence of a re-entry policy does not translate into accessible schooling for young mothers.

Researching the Challenges to Young Mothers' School Continuation

Over the past two years, I have been investigating the challenges faced by pregnant teenagers and young mothers in informal urban settlements in and around Nairobi as they seek to re-enter school to complete their education. The study employs the participatory

visual approach of photovoice to provide agency and voice for pregnant teenagers and young mothers in the policy discourse (Nyariro, Muthuri, Hani Sadati, Mitchell, & Njeri, 2017; Mitchell, 2011). Fifteen young mothers and pregnant teenagers between the ages of 13 and 19 years and living in Korogocho, one of the largest slums in Kenya, participated in the photovoice project in August 2017. Photovoice, a qualitative visual research methodology, relies on the use of cameras by participants to explore stories, experiences, or ideas about a social issue. Participants underwent training in photography and visual ethics, adhering to a "no faces" (Mitchell, 2011) approach in taking photos for research purposes. Following the training, participants (girls and young mothers) went into the community in groups of four or five to take photos that corresponded with the research question, and which were guided by a photovoice prompt: "What are your challenges as pregnant girls and young mothers in this community?" The participants took over 100 pictures in total. Each one chose three to four of their photos, which they judged as best representing the issues, and wrote captions for each photo to further explain the meaning that the photos had for them. They created four photo narratives based on the selected photos, identified the common themes, and presented their findings to the community.

Although the study is ongoing, three major themes emerged from the initial photovoice activity: (a) the absence of clean and affordable daycares, (b) lack of supportive and safe social and physical environments, and (c) poverty. The photos taken by the girls and young mothers to highlight absence of clean and affordable daycares include one featuring a young mother helping in a family business with her child on her back (Figure 2). This picture signifies how young mothers have to attend to other roles and childcare. Such situations make it impossible for them to combine those roles with childcare and demands of

schooling. Another photo (Figure 6) depicts a ramshackle metal building that says, “baby care” and has a contact telephone number written on the door, to show the inadequate state of most available daycare facilities within the community. In contrast to this, an additional photo (Figure 11) showed a concrete block building in a fairly clean environment; the caption explains that young mothers lack finances to afford such clean and reliable daycares. Pictures and captions that highlight the lack of supportive social and physical environment include one showing young girls sitting and walking unattended by the roadside (Figure 5). Another showed community members sitting by the roadside and gossiping about pregnant girls (Figure 8). A photo of a group of young men sitting idly by the roadside was featured to illustrate the state of hopelessness in the community and inability of young men who impregnate young girls to support them with childcare (Figure 10). Photos relating to poverty include one of young mothers looking for used plastic and metal at the dumpsite to resell for an income (Figure 9), and another of a young mother walking in a business area looking for a job (Figure 7). Another photo showed young mothers washing used sacks for recycling and resale in a dirty river (Figure 4), and young mothers engaging in the businesses of hand-washing clothes to generate income, instead of going back to school (Figure 1).

The three themes identified by young mothers – the absence of clean and reliable daycares, lack of supportive social and physical environment, and poverty – create multiple factors that pose barriers to school continuation and re-entry for young mothers living in urban slum contexts. Education sectors therefore need to adopt feminist and multi-pronged approaches to break these barriers to make education accessible to young mothers. This entails prioritizing women’s voices through participatory and creative techniques such as photovoice.

Figure 1. Young mothers hand-washing clothes to earn an income.[6]

Figure 2. A young mother helping out in the family business with her child on her back

[6] All images were produced and captioned by the young mothers participating in the study.

Figure 3. Male business owners lure young girls into sexual relations in exchange for money and gifts.

Figure 4. Young mothers washing used sacks in a dirty river for recycling and resale.

Figure 5. Irresponsible upbringing of girls from a young age leads to early pregnancy.

Figure 6. Young mothers lack the finances to pay for clean and reliable daycares.

Figure 7. A teenage girl is looking for employment

Figure 8. Community members sitting by the roadside gossip about pregnant teenage mothers.

Figure 9. Young mothers looking for old plastic and metal at the dumpsite to re-sell for an income.

Figure 10. A state of hopelessness in the community.

Figure 11. Lack of clean and efficient daycares.

Using Photovoice to Re-Conceptualize School Re-Entry Policies for Young Mothers

Most policy-making processes entail top-down technical approaches to policy formulation and design. Such approaches mean that only experts who are deemed to possess the requisite knowledge can identify problems and interventions for policy beneficiaries. Many well-intended policies fail to deliver their intended goals because of poor policy uptake due to mismatched need identification and interventions. The narratives about the challenges to schooling provided by the young mothers were curated and exhibited by the young mothers themselves to some selected audiences. The young mothers, in collaboration with the researcher, used the photovoice exhibition to engage the local community to raise awareness about some of the challenges faced by pregnant girls, young mothers, and policy-makers to encourage dialogue about policy. This approach reflects the work of De Lange,

Mitchell and Moletsane (2015) with young women in South Africa to address sexual violence on university campuses, and their emphasis on using local knowledge and putting girls' voices at the center in formulating policies that affect their lives directly. In this study, the photovoice activity successfully exposed some of the barriers to schooling for young mothers in low-income contexts. This came from their depictions of their lived realities, which show the importance of girl-generated data and its potential to challenge the power dynamics. Through generating evidence themselves, girls and young women can positively influence the policy-making process.

The findings from the study highlight the following: (a) the intersecting challenges facing young mothers' school continuation and re-entry, (b) the need to incorporate girls and young mothers' voices and lived experiences in the formulation and design of robust school re-entry and continuation policies and interventions; and (c) the need to adopt a participatory approach to policy-making to address those issues. The policy literature provides a plethora of policy design frameworks, most of which are based on the conventional linear and top-down approaches. However, the multilayered and intersecting factors that cause marginalization of girls in education make it important to adopt intersectional and ground-up participatory approaches to policy formulation and design. Such approaches support the utility of feminist epistemologies such as feminist standpoint and perspectivism, and participatory visual approaches, as ways of re-conceptualizing effective policy-making (Acker, 1987; Rixecker, 1994). In their work with young women in South Africa, De Lange, Mitchell and Moletsane (2015) emphasize the importance of ground-up approaches and the value in locally constructed knowledge. Hankivsky and Cornier (2011) view an intersectional approach in designing education policies as an effective way to address gender

inequality, as it acknowledges the layered and interlocking factors that work together to exclude or marginalize girls in education.

Feminist epistemological standpoint theory suggests that there are many social and "knowing" contexts, and therefore interrogates conventional concepts of knowledge creation by considering how female knowers might challenge dominant ways of knowing (Acker, 1987; Rixecker, 1994). Additionally, it cautions against both exploitation and silencing of women's "voices" in the research process. Rixecker (1994) acknowledges the absence of a feminist epistemological standpoint in most policy design and argues that this approach can expand the constructs of policy design and create a more inclusive and participatory approach to public policy design and analysis. Employing a feminist policy design allows for a re-conceptualization of the policy-making process by including a range of policy actors, including policy experts and intended policy beneficiaries, thereby expanding participation, increasing inclusivity, and being accommodative to alternative knowledge construction methods.

Policy-makers need to reform the normative process of policy formulation from a top-down approach to a ground-up approach where their policy decisions are based on the locally constructed knowledge drawn from the lived experiences of the intended policy beneficiaries. This calls for active participation of the beneficiaries – in this case pregnant girls and young mothers – in identifying the challenges to their school continuation and providing suggestions for possible mitigations. The photovoice project in this study demonstrates how voices of girls and young mothers can expose the daily struggles in their lives that act as barriers to their schooling and inform the identification of targeted intervention and policy reformulations that cater to their specific needs (King & Winthrop,

2015). The learnings from this project will be shared with policy-makers in the form of an exhibition and exhibition catalogue to start a conversation on how to involve policy target populations, and specifically girls and young mothers in this study, in informing policy decision making on matters that concern their lives. This research project aims to mobilize the existing resources with the local community to garner support for the education of young mothers and to create awareness through sexual health education among youth in the community. The photo-narratives of challenges to young mother's education created by the young mothers will be shared with education stakeholders and policy-makers to discuss how to incorporate the voices of the young mothers in Korogocho, and those elsewhere in the country, in revising the school re- entry and continuation policy.

Participatory visual methodologies are important tools to incorporate the voices and lived experiences of pregnant teenagers and young mothers in the school re-entry and continuation dialogue. Kirk's work (Kirk & Garrow, 2003) forms the foundation of my central argument in this article. Her support for visual and other participatory approaches to generate knowledge from lived experiences of girls and female teachers in emergencies, and to convey policy messages for girls' education, is complemented by the photovoice study described in this article. The study with the pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers advances Kirk's, which highlights the importance of employing multifaceted approaches to solving the issues of girls' education through collaboration between feminist scholars, educators, communities, activists, policy beneficiaries and policy-makers in conceptualizing effective educational policies and interventions. Kirk successfully combined academia, advocacy, and activism, demonstrating that a multi-pronged strategy is needed in order to provide a comprehensive solution for girls' education.

The use of participatory visual methodologies, such as photovoice, act as important tools to interrogate hierarchical and positivist paradigms in research, civic engagement, modes of representation and knowledge production (Mitchell & Sommer, 2016; Weber, 2014). The participatory nature of photovoice, for example, calls for synergies and partnerships in policy designs from the initial problem identification phase, through to implementation and evaluation (Mitchell & Sommer, 2016; Weber, 2014).

Conclusion

There is an urgent need for integrating feminist frameworks to promote systematic government educational policy reforms and evaluation, in order to achieve gender equality (King & Winthrop, 2015). A broad conceptualization regarding the causes of teenage pregnancy, and prioritizing and centering the voices and lived realities of teenage girls, will deepen the understanding of ways economic, social, political, and cultural factors intersect to create barriers to schooling and challenges pregnant girls and young mothers in low-income and marginalized contexts face. Unfortunately, economic, social, cultural and political factors intersect in interconnected ways to impede the schooling process of marginalized girls. Therefore, adopting a multi-pronged approach that combines a feminist epistemological standpoint and participatory visual methodologies to formulate education policies for marginalized girls in urban poor contexts who face an increased risk of discontinuing school is a valuable strategy. The use of participatory visual approaches like photovoice for research with girls and young women will help to make their voices heard in ways that make sense, are of significance to them, and empower them to become active in the policy processes where decisions are made that affect their lives. The participation of girls and young mothers in the policy formulation will democratize the process and enable

the girls and young mothers to take ownership of the policies that directly affect their education.

Finally, in an article which is meant to pay tribute to the work of Kirk and her concern for the voices of girls and young women in policy dialogue, I want to end with a point about policy related to pregnancy and school continuation. The girls and young women offered many ideas about the barriers to their school continuation. I suggest that education policy-makers in low income countries should adopt a feminist framework and participatory approach. The current re-entry policies for young mothers in most low income countries need to be revised to be girl-centered and accommodate structures that would support the implementation of the revised policies as follows: (a) provide subsidized, clean and reliable daycares that young mothers would enroll their children as they attend school to facilitate their school re-entry and continuation; (b) include age appropriate comprehensive sexuality education and counselling in schools to promote healthy teenage sexuality and mitigate against unplanned teenage pregnancy that would act as challenges to teenage girls' schooling and; (c) provide conditional cash transfers for young mothers who return to school to subsidize their living expenses and that of their children. The three strategies suggested above when implemented together would offer a comprehensive intervention that would encourage young mothers to re-enroll and continue with their schooling. The strategies also offer preventive measures to reduce incidences of teenage pregnancy while also catering to the well-being of the children of the young mothers.

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Connection Piece One

I began conceptualizing my research study with the general idea of finding out about different forms of violence—personal, collective, and systemic—that girls experience in schools and in education systems generally. As I continued to read on this topic, I realized that a lot of studies have been done on various forms of violence that exist in education systems (Dunne et al., 2006; Dunne & Leach, 2007; Leach, 2003; Leach & Mitchell, 2006). Further, most interventions to address and protect girls from gender-based and sexual violence were done in schools and other educational contexts. I reflected on what this meant for the rest of the girls and women who are out of school and will never attend school in their lifetime for various reasons.

Research shows that education and being at school can protect children and girls from violence and empower them not only to recognize acts of violence but to seek redress for them (De Lange, Mitchell, et al., 2015; Moletsane et al., 2015; Parkes, 2015). Girls who drop out of school at a tender age and do not return have more chance of experiencing gender-based violence in their lifetime than those who complete at least a full cycle of basic education and they lack the knowledge of how to address this and how to prevent future incidents of violence. After synthesizing the benefits of education for girls, my next step was to explore the literature on the major reasons behind girls dropping out of school. Unplanned teenage pregnancy, poverty, forced and early marriage, and the lack of financial resources to pay for the overhead cost of education are factors that interact in complex ways to cause girls between the ages of 13 and 19 to drop out of school and fail to return.

A further review of the literature revealed that there are both international and national policies that promote gender equity and the education of girl and that aim to close the persistent gender gap in education. These international treaties advocate for equal access to resources and

education for all children and these have led many countries in SSA to ratify their local laws and formulate policies that promote education for all that target inclusion, access, and equal participation for vulnerable children, among them pregnant girls and young mothers. Some of these international treaties that have been ratified by Nation States into their national laws include CEDAW and CRC. School continuation and re-entry policies for pregnant girls and young mothers are among the policies that some countries in SSA have formulated to address the persistent gender gap in education. I conducted a scoping review of studies on school continuation and re-entry policies in selected countries in SSA to document their effectiveness. The data revealed that some countries have implemented school continuation and re-entry policies (Silver, 2019, 2020) while others do not have them at all (Selby, 2018). Other countries have implemented policies which prevent pregnant girls and young mothers from attending school (Makoye, 2017).

However, in all the countries whose inclusion policies I reviewed, in spite of the policy framework meant to keep them in school, the number of teenage girls who drop out of school and fail to return as a result of unplanned pregnancy remains high. In Kenya, where this study was conducted, the first school continuation and re-entry policy was implemented in 1994. The rate of teenage pregnancy in the country is relatively high at an annual average of 23% of girls between 13 and 19 becoming pregnant while in school (Onyango et al., 2015). Early research reports suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the conditions that cause early unplanned teenage pregnancy and anecdotal data shows a spike in the rates of teenage pregnancy in the country (Partridge-Hicks, 2020; Plan International, 2020). Globally, data projects that the COVID-19 pandemic will push many more girls out of school.

Employing the arts-based participatory visual methodology, Photovoice, I sought to understand the challenges to school continuation and re-entry for young mothers from their own perspectives. This methodology provided ways for the pregnant girls and young mothers to make their voices heard about an issue that affects their lives. Next, I curated the findings from the Photovoice study into a Photovoice exhibition which I presented to educational policy makers during a school continuation and re-entry validation workshop in Nairobi. The Photovoice exhibition was displayed at the local community in Korogocho where the pregnant girls and young mothers presented their findings to the community members and began an important conversation on the causes of the high rates of teenage pregnancy in the community and ways in which this could be addressed. At this exhibition, the girls and the young mothers identified the lack of daycare facilities, poverty, and a non-supportive social and physical environment as major factors that led to their dropping out of school after becoming pregnant. The Photovoice exhibition showed how various social, cultural, economic, and political factors interact in complex ways to create barriers that keep pregnant girls and teenage mothers out of school. I also displayed the Photovoice exhibition to education policy makers at a validation workshop for school continuation and re-entry policies.

In the next chapter, I turn to the ethical challenges of conducting participatory visual research in this study with vulnerable pregnant girls and young mothers.

CHAPTER 5

Using Photovoice for Ethical Research with Teenage Mothers in Kenya[7]

Abstract

The tension that often arises between current ethical guidelines and the key principles of participatory visual methodology complicates researchers' negotiations for ethical approval from Institutional Review Boards particularly when working with participants who are considered vulnerable. In this chapter, I draw on my photovoice study with teenage pregnant girls and young mothers in an urban slum in Kenya to explore some implications of a dynamic approach to doing ethical participatory visual research. In doing so, I deliberately raise more questions than answers so as to further the discussion about the ethical challenges in PVM especially in relation to vulnerable populations.

KEYWORDS: Photovoice, Ethics, Teenage Pregnancy, School Re-Entry, Slums, Kenya.

Introduction

Participatory visual methods, such as photovoice and participatory video, continue to break barriers as collaborative research techniques that fore- ground the voices of participants and have the ability to reach a wide audience (MacEntee et al. 2016; Mitchell and De Lange 2011). Yet, as Andrew Clark (2012) reminds us, participatory visual researchers can encounter ethical dilemmas that threaten to undermine the core principles of participatory visual research (PVR). Specifically, researchers who use participatory visual methodology (PVM) acknowledge that conflict can arise

[7] Nyariro, M. (2021a). Using Photovoice with Young Mothers in Kenya. In R. Moletsane, L. Wiebesiek, A. Treffry-Goatley, & A. Mandrona (Eds.), *Ethical Practices in Participatory Visual Research with Girls: Transnational Approaches.* Berghahn Books.

between current ethical guidelines and the key principles of this research methodology. This conflict complicates researchers' negotiations for ethical approval from Research Ethics Boards (REB) when they are working with participants who are considered vulnerable. For example, while REBs require that researchers ensure participants' confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy during and after the research process, not only do visual tools often make this impossible, but these REB requirements also undermine the methodological principle of retaining the participatory research environment as a democratic space (Clark 2013).

In this chapter, I delineate the process of seeking ethical approval for a participatory visual study with young mothers and pregnant girls and young women in Korogocho, an informal urban slum in Nairobi, Kenya (see Nyariro 2018). I offer reflections on the ethical dilemmas, or what Clark refers to as "ethical moments" (Clark 2013: 68), that I encountered while using photovoice to explore the challenges faced by these young participants who attempt to re-enter school and complete their education, and with whom I conducted fieldwork between July 2017 and September 2019. Following Larry Gant and colleagues (2009), I argue that by over-policing PVR, Research Ethics Committees (RECs) can inhibit its use as an effective tool for civic engagement and activism in relation to urgent local and transnational issues that impact on girls and young women. I begin by providing some theorizations on PVR and its use in social science research. Following this, I draw on the literature to discuss the ethical dilemmas visual researchers are likely to face when using PVM and the common ethical concerns they contend with in balancing ethical and professional principles of PVR. I then offer my reflections on the process of obtaining ethical approval for the photovoice study I conducted with the young mothers to deepen the understanding of ethical tensions experienced by participatory visual researchers. In the discussion that follows, I explore the tensions of using visual images in PVR after which I draw from my

photovoice study with the young pregnant girls and mothers in Korogocho slums to highlight some implications for a dynamic approach to an ethical stance in PVR, especially work with girls and young women. As I conclude the chapter, I deliberately raise more questions than answers to continue the discussion about the ethical challenges that arise in the use of PVMs, especially as it relates to vulnerable populations like the young pregnant girls and mothers in this impoverished urban slum.

Understanding Girlhood in Sub-Saharan Africa

As Marnina Gonick and Susanne Gannon write, "Girlhood Studies . . . is interested in girls, but also in what we mean by girls and how the concepts of girls and girlhood signify in the broader society" (2014: 1). What it means to be a girl or the qualification behind being considered a girl, is fluid and dependent on time and place. Historically, in most sub-Saharan African societies, a female was considered a girl before menarche. Despite her age, once a girl reached menarche, she was automatically considered a woman and was expected to engage in activities associated with womanhood, including marriage, childbearing, and childrearing. Further, to a great extent in many African communities, even allowing for post-colonial change, a girl was (and continues to be) identified by her race and socioeconomic status. For example, older women who worked as servants in white and Indian households were considered girls, often referred to their domestic employers as "house-girls" to indicate their subordinate role in the household.

In contemporary African contexts, including in Kenya, the definition of girl and what qualifies her to be called a girl has shifted. This is determined by her age, social class, schooling status, and life events such as childbirth and marriage. Young female children from poor backgrounds are likely to leave school prematurely, get married, and bear children at a very young age. They are also likely to work as housemaids in middle- to upper-class households both as young girls and as older women, and are thus caught between the shifting parameters that

mark the definition of a girl. As young girls serving as housemaids entrusted with adult responsibilities such as meal preparation and taking care of the household, in spite of being called girls, they are considered women. In contrast, the daughters of their employers, often in the same age group as the housemaids, continue to be regarded as girls until they are married. Because of this fluidity and the unstable definition of who counts as a girl, females from low-income and marginalized places like urban slums are often denied the experiences and processes of girlhood. Instead, societal expectations and the demands put on these girls propel them to quickly transition from childhood to womanhood. The pregnant teenage girls and young mothers from the Korogocho slum with whom I worked, whose ages ranged from thirteen to nineteen, fell into this category.

Problematizing Unplanned Teenage Pregnancy, Motherhood, and Schooling

Unplanned teenage pregnancy is a global health problem, but countries in sub-Saharan Africa are disproportionately affected (Birungi et al. 2015; Undie et al. 2015). Specifically, studies show that in the Global South, unplanned adolescent pregnancy is one of the major contributing factors to girls dropping out of school (King and Winthrop 2015; Leach et al. 2007; Leach and Mitchell 2006; Onyango et al. 2015). According to George Onyango, Felix Ngunzo Kioli, and Erick Nyambedha (2015) unplanned pregnancy among adolescent girls accounts for about 23 per- cent of the teenage girls who drop out of school annually the world over, with the majority coming from sub-Saharan Africa. In most societies in sub-Saharan Africa, teenage pregnancy and motherhood are seen to be incompatible with schooling; thus, many girls drop out of school when they become pregnant (see Onyango et al. 2015). School-age girls in this part of the world face unique intersecting challenges that contribute to girls dropping out of school and failing to re-enter, a factor in the perpetuation of the persistent gender gap between girls and

boys in school (and educated men and women). These girls are usually in marginalized and relatively inaccessible places and are, therefore, hard to reach (Hawke 2015; King and Winthrop 2015; Leach et al. 2007; Leach and Mitchell 2006). In Kenya, 59 percent of girls aged fifteen to nineteen are affected by teenage pregnancy. My study explored the barriers to school re-entry for such young mothers in a poor urban slum of Nairobi. The aim of the study was to offer a contextualized, evidence-based understanding of why teenage mothers continue to drop out of school and fail to return despite the school re-entry policy that has been in place in Kenya since 1994 (see Birungi et al. 2015; Undie et al. 2015).

Overarching Principles of Participatory Visual Research

Participatory Visual Research (PVR), as part of arts-based community research, is considered to be a dynamic approach that draws from various methodological frameworks, some based on feminism(s), such as participatory action research (PAR) and community-based participatory research (see Acker 1987; MacKinnon 1989; Minkler 2004; Nyariro 2018). These frameworks highlight the value of generating grassroots knowledge to help shift decision-making from top-down to bottom-up, thus upholding the value of locally constructed knowledge (De Lange et al. 2015; Moletsane et al. 2015; Shamrock 2013) and making this knowledge available through transnational activism.

Using PVM with historically marginalized populations can be a way of centering their lived experiences and voices in decision-making (Mitchell and Sommer 2016). The visual artifacts, including photovoice exhibitions, digital stories, participatory videos, and cellphilms, produced by marginalized groups in particular contexts can be used to highlight participants' voices and agency as vital components for social transformation in communities (Goodhart et al. 2006; Mitchell and Sommer 2016; Plush 2013). In addition, while PVR effectively helps to

generate evidence that is context-specific, because of the ability of the visual artifacts developed to move beyond geographical and political borders, these artifacts developed locally can also be used for transnational engagement and activism (Eisner 1995; Weber 2014), particularly for girls and young women in remote areas. This enables them to participate, through the artifacts that they create, in transnational conversations in which their voices can be heard in ways that may not have been otherwise possible. The images and productions created by participants can promote transnational learning and networking at a global level for transnational girlhood solidarity and feminist movements.

Such transnational collaboration was recently illustrated by an event organized by the "Networks for Change and Well-being: Girl-led 'From the Ground Up' Policy Making to Address Sexual Violence in Canada and South Africa" project1 that took place at Montebello, Quebec, in July 2018. The transnational event, "Circles within Circles," used visual work created by girls and young women from Canada, South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sweden to understand the impacts of sexual violence against marginalized girls and young women and how this violence might be addressed in different national contexts. The photovoice narratives created by the young mothers and pregnant girls in Korogocho on barriers to school re-entry formed part of an exhibition of visual artifacts produced by girls and young women that addressed sexual and gender-based violence affecting girls and young women in various contexts. In their photo narratives, the young mothers identified poverty, an unsupportive social and physical environment, sexual violence, and the lack of affordable and efficient daycare as some of the barriers to their school re-entry after unplanned pregnancy and motherhood.

Given the geographic distance between Canada and other countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa, some girls and young women from these southern countries were not able to

attend the event in person because of factors such as poverty and the (often related) inability to secure travel visas. However, the researchers who work with these girls in their home countries came up with creative ways to facilitate their remote participation, including screening pre-recorded messages from girls who were unable to attend the event. Here was transnational girlhood in action as their voices were made to count in the presentations of their visual products.

The "Circles within Circles" event also included a series of participatory visual and digital activities in which the participants (girls, young women, and adult researchers and stakeholders) together produced artifacts that focused on the experiences of girls and young women, particularly their experiences of sexual violence, in various communities. This enabled the girls and young women to participate in a transnational analysis of the issues and to engage in dialogue to envision ameliorative action needed at the local and the global level—a rare opportunity for those who are usually excluded from such conversations due to their age and other factors

Current Ethical Dilemmas in Participatory Visual Research

While PVM can be used by historically silenced girls and young women as tools to engage in transnational activism and advocacy against social injustice, as stated above, researchers using these tools, particularly with vulnerable populations, often encounter resistance from REBs. In seeking to protect participants from systems that produce, reproduce, and perpetuate oppression, REBs require participatory visual researchers to provide a detailed justification for choosing a visual methodology that will likely make the identities of research participants public or fail to ensure their anonymity, rather than conventional qualitative methodologies.

As Sarah Flicker and colleagues (2007) and Päivi Löfman et al. (2004) remind us, the current ethical principles and guidelines adopted by many REBs emerged as a result of abuses experienced by and harm caused to research participants largely by the unethical approaches taken by some studies involving human subjects. As these authors point out, this led to the formulation of the Nuremberg Code in 1947 (see Flicker et al. 2007) that created strict ethical guidelines and principles to protect human research participants from potential harm and exploitation.

Despite their benevolent intent, these ethical guidelines can act as barriers to the potential benefits of PVM, such as promoting participants' agency and voice in highlighting their experiences and perspectives through the visual artifacts they create. The guidelines can be counterproductive and can undervalue participants' agency as well as silence their voices, the very challenge participatory research seeks to address (Clark 2013; Flicker et al. 2007). Further, the REB guidelines tend to contradict the methodological principles of PVR, a situation exacerbated by the non- and under-representation of participatory visual researchers on REBs (Flicker et al. 2007; Wiles et al. 2011, cited in Miller 2018). Consequently, studies that employ PVM with populations that are considered vulnerable are subjected to deeper scrutiny and called upon to justify the use of such methodologies, with conventional qualitative methods being the yardstick against which they are measured.

Given the principles of the Nuremberg Code (see Flicker et al.2007), there have been advancements in the social sciences to implement more progressive and democratic methodologies, like PVM, that promote democratic research processes (Flicker et al. 2007). Despite the shared power between researchers and research participants in participatory research, REBs continue to apply stringent ethical regulations to safeguard participants' confidentiality,

privacy, and anonymity, which may be impossible to ensure in such work. This can cause conflict for the researcher in relation to maintaining a balance between the principles of PVR and the ethical regulations demanded by REBs.

While such ethical governance strives to protect participants from harm, it can also act to limit the potential benefits that come with progressive and democratic research methodologies such as PVM on breaking the silence on issues that are rarely talked about (Miller 2018). For this rea- son, Clark (2012, 2013) argues that instead of adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, REBs should evaluate each study by analyzing its methodological principles and investigate whether the benefits of using such methodologies outweigh any potential harm. Clark does, however, caution that "situated ethical approaches are not a panacea to the ethical issues raised by visual researchers" (2013: 2), and reiterates that a situated ethics helps only to resolve some of the ethical dilemmas experienced in participatory visual studies in the contexts in which they occur. For Clark, what is needed is situational reflexivity on the part of researchers to enable them to offer a more ethically appropriate visual methodological approach.

Photovoice: A Tool for Young Mothers and Pregnant Girls to Speak Up and Speak Out

Photovoice is a community-based feminist participatory visual method commonly used to explore issues affecting vulnerable populations such as girls and young women (see Gant et al. 2009; Johnson et al. 2012; Wang et al. 2004). As Ben Boog (2003) and colleagues note, photovoice is widely embraced as a feminist and community-based participatory research technique to minimize power imbalances between researchers and participants, particularly where researchers are working with marginalized girls and women. Photovoice enables participants to have ownership and control over their own narratives in the research process.

Photovoice can also serve as a tool for transnational understanding, activism, and advocacy against common social ills that affect girls and women globally. Due to their mobility, the visual images, and the accompanying messages girls and young women create to understand and address the daily challenges they face can reach policymakers and audiences locally as well nationally and internationally. The photovoice exhibition produced by the pregnant girls and young mothers in my study has been viewed in Kenya and far beyond its borders. As a feminist researcher involved in transnational girlhood work, I have facilitated the dissemination of these photovoice findings to different national and international audiences. As an educator, I have also used the visual artifacts to demonstrate to my students the ways in which participatory visual approaches can be used to expose and address human rights violations and social injustices.[2]

Using Photovoice with Young Mothers and Pregnant Girls

As mentioned above, the study discussed in this chapter used participatory visual methods, largely photovoice, to explore the experiences of pregnant girls and teenage mothers as they negotiated their re-entry or re-enrollment in schools. The project offers the opportunity for an examination of the contradictions and reflexivity to which Clark (2012, 2013) draws our attention. My application for ethical approval by the REB of my university raised concerns about my use of participatory research with this group. In particular, my plan, informed by the principles of participatory research, to have the young mothers and pregnant girls present/disseminate their findings during the community photovoice exhibition, was questioned. The REB argued that this would lead to further stigmatization of the young women and their further marginalization in the community. However, my rationale for having the young Kenyan women present their findings to the community was, true to the principles of participatory research, to privilege their perspectives by not speaking or presenting on their behalf. I also hoped that hearing from the girls and young

women themselves presenting their own narratives would help address the stigma surrounding teenage pregnancy and motherhood in relation to schooling and that this would encourage the community, together with these participants, to explore ways of addressing the barriers they encounter.

While a participatory visual researcher can experience many different ethical challenges in the field, it is also true that these vary in relation to the contexts and the biographical backgrounds of the participants with whom one is working. Here, I give an overview of what I call the "Ethical Cycle" in an attempt to describe the ethical dilemmas I experienced at various stages of my research, from the conceptualization of the study to my application for ethical approval, and data generation, analysis, and dissemination. These ethical dilemmas included negotiating ethical clearance with the REB, deciding on the sampling frame, negotiating informed consent and assent, balancing researcher guidance and facilitation during the photovoice activities while allowing for participants' individual responses, centering the voices of the participants while ensuring their anonymity and privacy, and balancing my role and the roles of the participants in the dissemination of the findings.

Ethical Application and Approval

The process of applying and acquiring ethical clearance is the gateway to ethically sound fieldwork that involves humans (Clark 2013). For the participatory visual researcher, in particular, this can mark the beginning of a complicated and conflicted personal, ethical, and professional self. Normally, REBs expect researchers to look ahead to possible ethical issues that may arise during fieldwork and develop, beforehand, prescribed mitigation to the anticipated ethical problems. But researchers who have conducted social science fieldwork are well aware that, more often than not, some unforeseen ethical issues arise during fieldwork (see Clark 2012).

In participatory research, some of these ethical challenges can be resolved only through collaborative reflections that result in mutually acceptable action by the researcher and the participants. However unintentionally, the REB's objective to protect the participants assumes that they are passive research subjects who lack agency and the ability and will to speak up and speak out. Because ethical reviews and approval processes are not neutral, factors such as historical or current examples of the exploitation of participants in a particular field or context, individual committee members' previous experiences in similar research contexts, and poor understanding of the proposed research methodology and the context of the study can influence ethical review processes (Flicker et al. 2007).

Recruitment of Participants

Participants are at the center of any research process. My initial proposal was to draw my sample of participants from the African Population and Health Research Center's (APHRC 2002) Nairobi Urban Demographic and Health Surveillance System (NUDHSS). However, from this database, there was only one girl who had dropped out of school because of teenage pregnancy. Yet available literature confirms that unplanned teenage pregnancy is one of the major causes of girls dropping out of school in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in low-income and marginalized contexts such as the Korogocho slum. Therefore, using my networks in the local community to identify and recruit pregnant teenagers and young mothers who had dropped out of school as a result of an unplanned teenage pregnancy, I changed my sampling strategy to snowballing. The eligibility criteria were that a participant had to be pregnant or a mother between the ages of thirteen and nineteen, be out of school at the time of the study, and had lived in Korogocho during the three years preceding data generation (see Nyariro 2018). In total, I recruited fifteen pregnant girls and young mothers to participate in the study.

Negotiating Consent with the Young Mothers and Pregnant Girls

The process of obtaining consent in research based in PVM is not linear but involves a back-and-forth negotiation between the researcher and the participants. As required by my REC, I informed the participants in detail about the benefits and implications of taking part in the study, their autonomy to withdraw from the study, and their right to choose not to participate in some activities without penalty. Despite some participants' lack of active participation during discussions in the sessions we had together, I followed feminist and anti-oppressive practices that lessen exclusion by embracing varied ways of participation, including silence. To do this, I encouraged participants to contribute in ways that they found comfortable, including taking photographs, selecting images to photograph, or choosing which pictures to include in the photo narratives.

Taking the Photographs

In the first phase of the study, participants were engaged in a photovoice activity. After being informed about visual ethics, which included asking for permission to take pictures of people and/or their property, not taking pictures of people's faces, not taking pictures of young children, the fifteen participants formed four groups of three or four. In their small groups, they practiced taking pictures with the digital cameras I provided. Each group was given two cameras with labels identifying their group number and the function of the camera. All cameras labeled "1" were designated for participants' use to take photographs of what they considered to be barriers to their continued schooling, while the cameras labeled "2" were to be used to take process photographs of the participants in action. I trained the participants on how to rotate the cameras within their groups to ensure that everyone took four photographs in response to the prompt that guided the photovoice activity: *What challenges do you face in this community as*

pregnant girls and young mothers? Working in their small groups, participants discussed what the prompt meant to them and where in the community they wanted to take their pictures. On their walks around the community to take their photographs, each group was accompanied by two community security officers recommended by the young mothers themselves. In total, in response to the prompt, the participants took over a hundred photographs.

Because of the high migration rates in and out of slums like Korogocho, studies have shown that sustained participation in longitudinal studies can be challenging. By the second phase of my study, most of the participants from phase one had migrated out of the slums, thereby falling out of the study area. I, therefore, recruited a new cohort of participants following the same selection criteria described above. As a result, of the thirteen participants recruited to participate in the second phase of the study—the exhibition of the photovoice products created by the fifteen girls and young mothers who participated in phase one—only two had participated in the first phase of the study.

The aim of the photovoice exhibition was to gather audience responses to the photo narratives that would generate community conversations about how to support teenage mothers to continue and complete their education. First, the thirteen participants from the second cohort participated in viewing, validating, and responding to the photovoice exhibition. I introduced the participants to the purpose of the study and the research questions, and, together, we discussed the photovoice prompt that had been used. We then proceeded to validate the findings presented in the photovoice exhibition.

Following the same procedures with participants in the second cohort as I had with participants from the first, I asked the participants about their daily struggles as young mothers in their community and took notes on what they identified as their daily challenges. I then

proceeded to un- veil the exhibition for the young women to view. This was followed by a discussion about which images they could relate to. In the discussions that followed, each of the participants identified three photographs in the exhibition to which she could relate and that directly reflected aspects of her lived experience.

As part of their response to the exhibition, the participants from the second cohort took part in a second photovoice activity. The prompt that guided the second photovoice activity was *Picture solutions to the challenges presented in the photovoice exhibition that you just viewed.* Again, the participants divided themselves and worked in groups of three or four. As I had done with the first cohort of participants, I trained them on the basic use and operation of cameras, including how to focus and shoot good quality photographs, how to view the photographs taken using the review and forward buttons, how to delete unwanted photographs and, finally, how to select their photographs for printing, analysis, and presentation. After this training session, the participants went to different parts of the community in their smaller groups. Some of the locations in which the participants took their pictures included the local community market, the nearby river, alleys, and the streets (see Illustrations 7.1 and 7.2 below).

Illustration 7.1. A polluted river in the community where women wash sacks for recycling. Photograph by the project participants

Illustration 7.2. An isolated alley where girls and women risk being sexually assaulted. Photograph by the project participants.

The thirteen participants took 132 photographs in response to the prompt. Each participant chose four photographs she wanted to use to create her photo narrative. Following the advice of Claudia Mitchell (2011) and Ginger A. Johnson, Anne E. Pfister, and Cecilia Vindrola-Padros (2012) on working with visual images, I asked each participant to write a short account of what each photograph meant to her (see Illustration 7.3 below).

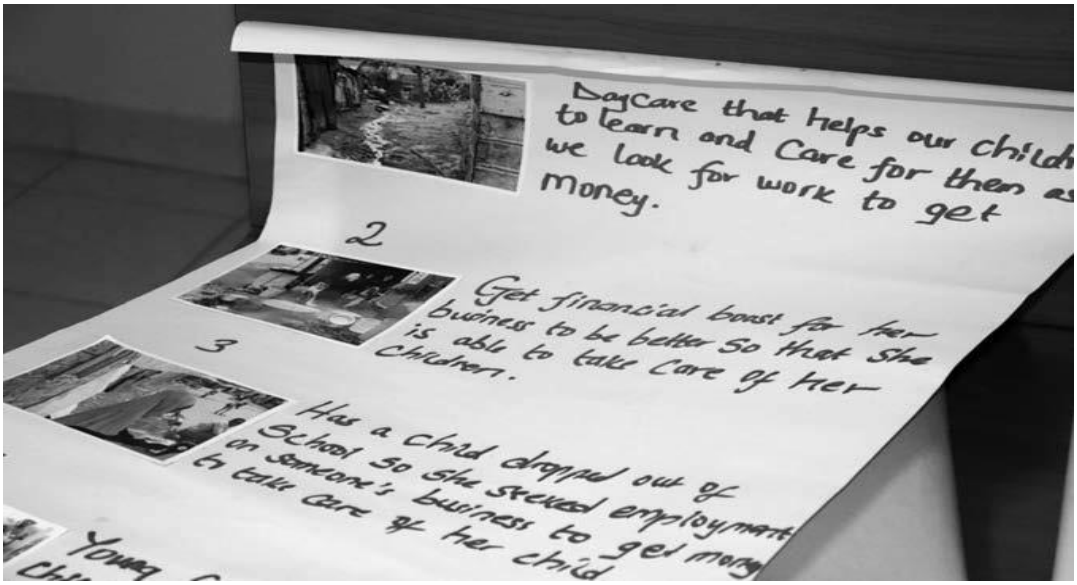

Illustration 7.3. A photo narrative with captions of the meaning of each photograph selected by the participants. Photograph by Milka Nyariro

Working with the Photographs

Like any research methodology, PVM is informed by particular methodological guidelines and principles that must be upheld for the research to be considered ethical. Despite the democratic nature of PVM, power imbalances may still be present because the researchers have professional and technological knowledge and the obligation to ensure that the re- search meets the threshold of both ethical and methodological standards (Johnson et al. 2012). As a Kenyan scholar residing in Canada and working with pregnant girls and young mothers in Kenya, I remained conscious of the power imbalance that my position could introduce into the research process. I, therefore, constantly checked the extent of my guidance, taking precautions not to take total control of the research process. For example, aside from training the participants on operating the cameras and the portable printer, I had the participants form their own working groups and decide which part of the community they wanted to photograph.

Once each participant had chosen the photographs that were important to her and printed them out, they discussed the photographs they had selected in small groups. Following Mitchell (2011) and to respect the anonymity and autonomy of people, I ensured that the participants excluded photographs of identifiable people who were not part of the research team. Participants also reflected on the photographs and were free to withdraw any that they did not want to have included in the photo narratives for public viewing. Each of the smaller groups then presented their findings to the larger group, following which we engaged in a discussion to identify the common themes that emerged in these findings (see Nyariro 2018).

Confronting some Ethical Dilemmas of Participatory Visual Research

Juxtaposing the ethical tensions against the standard ethical requirements of the REC, in this section, I outline some of the ethical dilemmas I encountered and how I attempted to mitigate them. By so doing, I aim to contribute to the ongoing conversation on strategies for identifying and addressing some of the ethical dilemmas in PVR, particularly for feminist scholars located in the Global North who work with girls and young women in the Global South.

Ownership of the Photographs

Since PVR results in tangible material products or artifacts, questions of ownership are likely to emerge as an ethical dilemma: Who owns the artifacts? (Clark 2013; MacEntee et al. 2016; Mitchell 2011). The products and by-products of participatory research such as photographs, photo narratives, and photo exhibitions present ethical questions regarding who keeps them, who gets to choose the audience to which the images are shown, who decides where the images should be shown and for what purposes they should be used, where the images should be stored, and who can access them and when this may happen (MacEntee et al. 2016; Clark 2013).

In this study, an ethical dilemma related to ownership of the artifacts was related to how I would uphold the PVM principle that participants have the right to ownership of their creative work while adhering to the REC's requirement that research data be used strictly for research purposes. To address this, ownership of the research products was discussed with the participants before, during, and after the photovoice activity. After these discussions, the participants and I analyzed the photographs collectively and destroyed all those that had identifiable faces of other people in them. As part of our agreement, participants took with them photographs in which they appeared.

Ensuring Privacy, Anonymity, and Confidentiality while Centering Participants' Voices

Considering the high levels of crime in this urban slum, I was concerned about the safety of the participants and of the cameras, given that they contained data. In response to this, as mentioned above, through the recommendation of the young women, I recruited security persons in the community to ensure their safety. While using local security personnel known to the participants was a reliable strategy for ensuring their safety (see Illustration 7.4), it made ensuring their privacy and anonymity difficult. Hiring security personnel from outside of the community was not an option as this decision would have been met with hostility from community gatekeepers.

Ensuring total privacy and the complete anonymity and confidentiality of participants while working with the images was not possible. Some participants appeared in the images intentionally while acting out social phenomena that they wanted to represent. Furthermore, complete anonymity in PVR may counteract the very intention of doing the work, which includes breaking the silence around problematic or controversial issues that are not openly discussed in the community. This speaking out requires the participants to assume an advocacy role as activists in

creating awareness in a wider audience either in person or through the public display of their visual work (see Gant et al. 2009).

Illustration 7.4. A local security person accompanying a young mother to take pictures. Photograph by the project participants.

Clark has argued that "anonymizing data in PVR defeats the very purpose of collecting the visual data, and that disguising the images that are produced by participants can dehumanize those represented in them" (2013: 71). Informed by this, I believe that preventing the young mothers in my study from participating in the community exhibition (as required by the REB) would perpetuate the silencing of their voices and would serve to reinforce their stigmatization as bodies of shame not worthy of appearing in public spaces such as schools. In spite of the REB's reluctance to have the young mothers participate in the community exhibition, since their status as pregnant girls or as young mothers was no longer private, engaging in these conversations with

the community and other stakeholders, I believe, served to address the stigma of teenage pregnancy and motherhood and foster ways to support these girls and young women in going back to school.

Dissemination of the Findings

One of the ethical obligations in social science research is to contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge and social change by making research public and sharing research findings with a variety of audiences. Such dissemination can take place very shortly after the data is generated, thereby enabling the researcher to go back to the field to fill in any gaps that may be identified. In PVR, dissemination is an interactive process that involves both the active involvement of participants in communicating the meaning of their images to an audience, and engaged viewing as the audience interacts with both the images and the producers and reflects on what the images mean to them. The findings from my photovoice study with the young mothers and pregnant girls were first disseminated to the Korogocho community at a local exhibition. Subsequently, the findings were disseminated to a much wider audience, including local policymakers, educators, and education practitioners. For the reasons discussed above, disseminating the findings at the community level was done in collaboration with the young participants.

Although desirable, this kind of collaborative dissemination is seldom possible in national, international, and transnational forums like conferences because of logistics and financial constraints. However, I have been able to represent my findings on behalf of the participants at such forums. Despite the ethical debate that surrounds representation, participatory visual work allows transnational researchers, including those working with girls and young women in the Global South, to use participants' own work to represent their voices at international and transnational forums in which they would otherwise not participate. For example, as stated above, the photovoice posters were also exhibited for an international audience at the "Circles within Circles" event.

Conclusion

It is commendable that both participatory visual researchers and REBs are taking steps to protect vulnerable groups and communities from harm and exploitation in research processes. However, since there has been exponential growth in creative research methodologies, it is time to expand the current standard ethical guidelines to embrace the principles of these newer methodologies, including PVM. As proposed by Clark (2013), REBs need to adapt and apply a situated and negotiated ethics that will consider the methodological principles and rationale for the newer methodologies. This means that ethical guidelines cannot be applied uniformly to all studies during the review and approval process (Clark 2012, 2013; Flicker et al. 2007). Rather, REBs should acknowledge contextual variance and recognize that working ethically is not a stable, linear, or static process but a series of ongoing negotiations, reflections, interpretations, and experimentations (Clark 2013) that should be allowed to evolve with the emergence of new research methodologies. REBs can further benefit by expanding their review committees to include the representation of researchers using a variety of newer methodologies like PVM to provide detailed and expert understanding during review processes (Flicker et al., 2007).

Notes

1. As noted in the Introduction, "Networks for Change and Well-being: Girl-led 'From the Ground Up' Policy Making to Address Sexual Violence in Canada and South Africa" is an international and interdisciplinary partnership that brings together government and community-based organizations focusing on girls and young women (Co-PIs: Claudia Mitchell, McGill University, Canada, and Relebohile Moletsane, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa). This international initiative aims to study the co-creation of knowledge about sexual

violence in institutional settings as informed by girls and young women themselves, using innovative approaches that aim to shift the boundaries of knowledge production and policy change.

2. This was an undergraduate level class on Human Rights and Ethics I taught at Mc- Gill University in 2018. The course objectives were to introduce students to the field of human rights, to the intersection of education and human rights, and to human rights education as a scholarly field and an educational practice. My pedagogical approach was participatory and based on critical pedagogy that encouraged the teacher trainees to apply the use of participatory visual methodology (PVM) in interrogating social injustices and human rights violations in schools and educational systems and explain how this feeds back to the larger society. I conducted two photovoice training workshops with the students and applied the use of participatory visual approaches in the students' group projects. The prompt that guided the photovoice class group project was: *Picture what makes you feel safe and not so safe on campus*.

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Connection Piece Two

Arts-based participatory research methodologies like Photovoice, which I used in this study, emphasize the value of generating grassroot knowledge to inform decision and policy making. Usually used for conducting research with marginalized populations in society like the pregnant girls and young mothers from Korogocho, these methodologies have creative ways of generating newer perspectives on social problems from the point of view of the participants who so as to center their voices, spur their agency, and promote advocacy on issues that directly affect them. All this requires those who identify with the issues to come out publicly to speak up and speak out about the social injustices they are facing in their community. Juxtaposing these roles against the ethical principles that guide all research activities highlights the fact that tensions can exist between Institutional Research Ethics Board and participatory visual researchers on the issues of participant privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, and consent during participatory visual research processes.

While acknowledging that ethical principles are governed by Ethics Boards and Committees to protect participants from exploitation and harm by researchers and by the research processes, we need to recognize that if they are applied universally to studies that adapt participatory visual approaches in order to offer participants a democratic space and freedom to choose to make their voices heard, they can limit the potential benefits that come with participatory methodological approaches like Photovoice. Scholars like Clark (2012, 2013) and Flicker (2007), therefore, urge Institutional Research Ethics Boards to adopt situated ethical approaches to resolve some ethical dilemmas that occur in participatory visual studies. While applying for ethical approval from my institution, the ethics committee was adamant that bringing the girls and young mothers to the community Photovoice exhibition to present their

findings would expose them to further stigmatization. However, when I was in the field and during the Photovoice workshop, I explained the risks and benefits involved in participating in community exhibitions and let the participants choose whether or not to take part. All participants chose to attend the community exhibition and they contributed to a constructive dialogue about the conditions related to unplanned teenage pregnancy in their community and the challenges that continue to keep them out of school despite knowing their right to continue their schooling.

Other than starting community conversations that may lead to social change, the ultimate goal of arts-based research is to reach policy makers. The literature shows that research findings from qualitative studies generally, are rarely used by policy makers in making policy decisions. The policy making landscape is still hierarchical and elitist and does not embrace a wider participation of voices, particularly those of marginalized groups. Findings from other studies that adopt participatory visual methods show that there are some challenges that participatory visual researchers face when seeking to engage with policy makers, who are the ultimate audience, with findings from arts-based participatory and visual research. Policy makers may show explicit or implicit forms of resistance to findings from participatory visual studies with marginalized groups, who are in any case the policy target population or beneficiaries (Mitchell, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2017b; Rivard & Mitchell, 2013; Treffry-Goatley et al., 2018). For participatory visual researchers, it takes much more effort and time to come up with unique strategies to get policy makers to look at the results of their participatory visual studies, and to reflect on them and use the findings to inform policy decisions (Rivard, 2016; Thompson, 2009).

In this study, the pregnant girls and young mothers from Korogocho curated their Photovoice findings into a Photovoice exhibition that I presented to educational policymakers

during a validation workshop for a school continuation and re-entry policy workshop in Nairobi as I discuss in chapter four of this manuscript-based thesis (Nyariro, 2021b). The Photovoice exhibition displayed factors that act as barriers to pregnant girls' and young mothers' school continuation and re-entry from their own perspectives.

In the next chapter, I turn to the discussion about how the educational policy makers reacted to a Photovoice exhibition that was curated by girls and young mothers to give their perspectives on the challenges they face in continuing with schooling.

CHAPTER 6

"We have heard you but we are not changing anything": Policymakers as audience to a photovoice exhibition on challenges to school re-entry for young mothers in Kenya[8]

Abstract

The policy-making process can be complex and hierarchical and can often disenfranchise many people. Policy dialogues seldom enlist marginalised populations such as girls and young women who are the intended policy beneficiaries of key areas related to their sexuality and well-being. To address this, researchers working with girls and young women are increasingly adopting arts-based participatory visual methods such as photovoice, cellphilms, drawings and collage, among others, to conduct girl-led research. The goals of using the products of these research approaches are to inform policy and decision making and incorporate the voices of this marginalised group in such conversations on issues that concern them. However, this is not without its challenges.

This focus reflects on policymakers' responses to a photovoice exhibition and the policy dialogue that followed. The exhibition came out of a study which used photovoice to explore the challenges of 15 pregnant girls and young mothers in Nairobi, Kenya to staying in or re-entering the school system. Analysis of my experience using the photovoice exhibition to generate a

[8]Nyariro, M. (2021b). "We have heard you but we are not changing anything": Policymakers as audience to a photovoice exhibition on challenges to school re-entry for young mothers in Kenya. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*. https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2020.1855850

dialogue with policymakers reveals that despite recent efforts to democratise, policymaking is still exclusive and hierarchical. While the photovoice exhibition demonstrated how girls can, in theory, lead from the ground-up in policymaking through arts-based participatory research approaches, getting the policymakers to engage with the exhibition in which the girls identified contextual factors that keep them out of school proved to be more complex. Policymakers might still show resistance to the views of other policy stakeholders, particularly the policy beneficiaries who are often at the outer margin; this can be due to the power dynamic and elitism that exists among the different groups and individuals involved in policymaking. The views of policy beneficiaries are crucial in formulating effective policies – but are currently not considered by policymakers.

Introduction

Contrary to assumptions that policymaking is neutral, various scholars discuss how it can be a layered, complex and multidirectional interaction among different policy actors (Liasidou 2012; Young 2007). Education policymaking, like any other policy processes, can be polarised, resisted and characterised by an unequal power distribution among policy actors (Liasidou 2012; Nyariro 2017), which determines which voices are prioritised and can inform decision-making.

Despite the increase in social policy research in sub-Saharan African, studies show that research rarely informs policy processes (Liasidou 2012; Young 2007). The low research uptake in policymaking notwithstanding, the majority of education policy reforms that do respond to research findings are usually driven by large quantitative data (Ajakaiye 2007; Liasidou 2012; Young 2007). However, quantitative data sometimes fail to capture contextualised experiences and stories, especially those of hard to reach learners (Liasidou 2012).

Arts-based participatory and visual methodologies offer alternative ways for the historically marginalised groups to narrate their stories and experiences in educational research. Scholars like Claudia Mitchell, Nayden de Lange and Relebohile Moletsane (De Lange, Mitchell & Moletsane 2015; Mitchell, De Lange & Moletsane 2017; Mitchell & Moletsane 2018) have used arts-based participatory visual approaches to conduct educational research with marginalised girls and children in sub-Saharan Africa to advocate for social change within their communities and influence policy change (De Lange, Mitchell & Moletsane 2015; Moletsane, Mitchell & De Lange 2015). In their book Participatory Visual Methodologies Mitchell, De Lange and Moletsane (2017) document how they and other researchers working with girls and women have used arts-based visual approaches to produce tangible visual research products that change how communities view and address various social phenomena. The authors highlight that participatory visual methodologies contribute to enhancing research participants' reflexivity and empowering them to take action that might bring positive social change in their lives and their communities and inform policy. These and other social science researchers acknowledge the usefulness of arts-based approaches in three key areas: empowerment of the individual and group of participants who produce arts-based visual products; consciousness raising in the community about a social problem; and influencing policymaking by displaying the arts-based visual products to policy and decision makers. Of particular importance for the analysis in this article is literature which suggests that researchers are increasingly adopting arts-based visual participatory approaches because of their girl-led and from the ground up approach to both research and policymaking (Mitchell et al. 2017; Hayhurst 2017).

In Kenya, it is estimated that between 10000 to 13 000 girls drop out of school each year due to pregnancy, and only 1200 return after giving birth (Onyango, Kioli & Nyambetha 2015).

This article examines policymakers' responses to a photovoice exhibition created by pregnant girls and young mothers living in Korogocho, an urban informal settlement in Nairobi. The photovoice images emerged from a larger study which sought to explore the challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant girls and young mothers. Findings from the larger study suggest lack of clean, affordable and efficient daycare facilities, poverty and a non-conducive social and physical environment as the main challenges to young mothers' school re-entry (Nyariro 2018).

The objective of the photovoice exhibition was to present the perspectives of young mothers on challenges to their school re-entry to policymakers, as well as their urgent needs during the revision of school re-entry policies. Therefore, this focus aims to answer the following question: How did education policymakers see/receive/understand and act on a girls' photovoice exhibit designed to challenge and change school re-entry and completion policies? Data for this article come from my fieldnotes as a participant observer (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault 2015; Tracy 2019) at a one-day workshop about how policymakers reacted to my oral presentation of findings and the photovoice exhibition during a workshop to validate school re-entry policies held at the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) in Nairobi, Kenya.

In the first section of the article, I problematize teenage pregnancy and describe the research context. Specifically, this article builds on my previous work which discusses the barriers to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant teenage girls and young mothers living in low-income urban informal settlements contexts (Nyariro 2018) and reflections on ethical dilemmas when using photovoice with young mothers (Nyariro 2021a). In the second section I delineate the complexities of the policy process and ways in which the process is polarised and politicised. I discuss the ways in which global education policy initiatives influence local

education policies focusing on gender equality in education through the inclusion of at-risk and marginalised girls. In section three I discuss the use of arts-based participatory visual products as tools for policy engagement when working with girls as 'girl-led' and 'from the ground up' research and policy-making approaches. In the fourth section I discuss the main themes that emerged from my engagement with policymakers when I presented the photo exhibition that was curated by the out of school pregnant girls and young mothers in Korogocho at a validation workshop for school continuation and re-entry policies, organised and facilitated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). In the conclusion I discuss the complexities of using the products of arts-based participatory visual approaches created by girls in informing the policy process. In particular, I draw on my own experiences as a researcher using participatory visual approaches to get educational policymakers to re-think, re-define and expand the classification of what is considered 'reliable data' that might inform educational policies to include those created through arts-based participatory and visual research methodologies by historically marginalised populations, like girls from marginalised settings such as urban informal slums like Korogocho.

Theorising teenage pregnancy and school re-entry policies in sub-Saharan Africa

Several countries in sub-Saharan Africa are grappling with how best to address the problem of early unintended teenage pregnancy and education. As part of education sectors' response to preventing early unintended pregnancy or teenage pregnancy, Eastern and Southern countries of the sub-Saharan Africa region signed a Ministerial Commitment on Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Adolescents and Young People which aimed to reduce the rate of early unintended pregnancy by 75% by 2020 (UNESCO 2018). A lack of access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for adolescents

and young people between the ages of 15–19 years is recognised as a key driver of early unplanned teenage pregnancy by most countries in the Eastern and Southern region of sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO 2018). In addition to the Ministerial Commitment, some of these countries have put in place school continuation and re-entry policies for pregnant girls and young mothers to continue with their education, despite early unintended pregnancy and motherhood among girls of school-going age. Countries such as South Africa, Malawi and Zambia have ensured that pregnant girls and young mothers continue with their education through formulating policies and policy guidelines to help in the reintegration of these girls back into schools (Bhana, Shefer & Ngabaza 2010; Menon et al. 2018; Runhare et al. 2014; Silver 2020). Despite the progressive action seen to be taken by some of these countries to bring pregnant girls and young mothers back to school, the rates of adolescent mothers who are out of school continue to soar. For example, in Zambia 29% of girls aged 15–19 years have given birth (Chiyota & Marishane 2020; Kaphagawani & Kalipeni 2017), and approximately only 38% of girls at primary school level and 65% at secondary level seek readmission (Zuilkowski et al. 2019). In South Africa one-third of females fall pregnant by the age of 19 years and account for 80 000 unplanned babies annually (Mkwananzi 2017; Odimegwu & Mkwananzi 2016). In Malawi the rate of teenage pregnancy remains high at 35% of all females aged 10–19 years, despite a decline between 2000 and 2011 (Kaphagawani & Kalipeni 2017).

However, other countries such as Tanzania, Burundi, Equatorial Guinea and Sierra Leone have taken a retrogressive turn and banned pregnant teens and young mothers from attending school (Makoye 2017; Medica Xpress 2016; Selby 2018). Further, countries such as Gambia and Angola, which have some of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy on the continent, do not have policies on teenage pregnancy and schooling (Hodal 2020). Banning pregnant girls and young

mothers from attending school has attracted the attention of international bodies and human rights activist groups, which have condemned such policies. These critics highlight that denying these girls education is not only an infringement of their fundamental human rights, but will also serve to further trap them in the hard to break cycle of poverty, leaving them perpetually at the margins of society (Sperling, Winthrop & Kwauk 2016). The World Bank responded to the ban in Tanzania by withholding education funding to the country beginning in 2017 and only reversed this decision in July 2019 with an agreement that the funds will be used to improve access to education for all children, including pregnant girls and young mothers (Balla 2020). In Sierra Leone the rates of teenage pregnancy soared as a result of the increased incidence of sexual violence during the Ebola outbreak. The government's response – to pass a policy that banned pregnant teenagers and young mothers from attending school – was overruled after human rights and women's organisations led by Equality Now sued and won against the government in the Economic Community of West African States court, leading to lifting of the ban (Hodal 2020).

The literature shows that teenage pregnancy and young motherhood is a global social problem which disproportionately affect girls and young women in developing economies and low-income contexts (Birungi et al. 2015; Levy & Weber 2010; Nyariro 2018; Onyango, Kioli & Nyambetha 2015). Studies conducted on teenage pregnancy employ the normative interview and narrative methodologies (Bhana & Mcambi 2013; Birungi et al. 2015; Onyango, Kioli & Nyambetha 2015); very few have employed the use of arts-based and participatory visual approaches that centre the voices of these girls and young women. As I describe elsewhere (Nyariro 2018), I hoped that photovoice would expose, in innovative ways, the challenges that

continue to keep pregnant girls and young mothers from continuing with their education despite the presence of both global and national policies that outline their right to it.

Kenya has an Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health policy that, among other objectives, aims to promote adolescent sexual reproductive health and rights, contribute to increased access to information and age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, reduce early and unintended pregnancies and reduce sexual and gender-based violence among adolescents (Kenya Government 2015). In addition, the country has had a school continuation and re-entry policy since 1994, which aims to enable pregnant teenagers and young mothers to continue with their education (Onyango, Kioli & Nyambetha 2015; Undie et al. 2015a). Despite this, the number of pregnant girls and young mothers who drop out of school and do not go back continues to grow due to a lack of clear policy guidelines and weak implementation of the policy (Birungi et al. 2015; Undie et al. 2015b). Scholars have documented the impact these policy gaps have in the lives of girls and young women (Birungi et al. 2015; Onyango, Kioli & Nyambetha 2015; Undie et al. 2015b). In my own research, two years after phase one of the study I only managed to trace and mobilise 3 out of the 15 young mothers from the first cohort of participants to take part in phase two of the study. My follow-up of the remaining 12 participants through telephone contacts and household tracing revealed that some were now married or had been married at least twice in a span of two years; others had had a second baby or were having subsequent pregnancies.

Some had totally given up on going back to school and were engaged in ‘hustling’ or ‘economies for survival’, like doing laundry in the neighbouring estates, hawking goods and engaging in commercial sex work in Nairobi’s nearby central business district. Kenya continues

to lose economic and social opportunities by letting girls fall through the educational cracks as a result of the slow process of educational policymaking and policy reform.

Navigating the Policy Landscape through Photo Exhibitions

The aim of arts-based participatory and visual research extends beyond the process and reflections by the participants to engaging a wider audience beyond the research team. Although audience engagement is an understudied sub-field within arts-based participatory and visual research, the importance of the feedback from the viewers (also referred to as audience) cannot be overemphasised (Mitchell et al. 2017). Curating and exhibiting photovoice exhibitions by the participants or researchers is the anticipated peak of the arts-based participatory and visual research cycle. Participatory visual researchers acknowledge that displaying a photo (voice) exhibition for viewing by family, community members and policymakers is the most crucial, yet understudied, part of participatory visual research that aims for social change. Studies show that exhibitions can enlighten the community and inform policymakers who are central in advocating for and enacting social change. In her work with Chinese rural women, Caroline Wang and colleagues held an exhibition for policymakers, referred to as a photo novella, about a women's reproductive health and development programme (Wang, Burris & Ping 1996).

In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, researchers have also used exhibitions to engage policymakers. Rivard (2016), for example, describes a photovoice study with adolescent girls in Rwanda, focusing on their perspectives on sport and physical activity. Recognising the difficulty of reaching policymakers in the Ministry of Education, Rivard created a PowerPoint presentation and findings book that she took to each follow-up meeting with policymakers. In other studies, a photovoice exhibition from a participatory evaluation of women's economic participation and childcare in Korogocho in Nairobi was exhibited to policymakers from the Ministry of Health at

the African Population and Health Research Centre (Mitchell et al. 2017). In her work with young people and community members in Tiwai Island in Sierra Leone, Thompson (2009) held an exhibition of photovoice work in the lobby of a government building in Freetown, which ministry officials had to walk past to reach their offices.

An important finding across these studies is the recognition that exhibitions – typically considered a fundamental aspect of participatory visual research – are not the end but just the beginning of policy dialogue, and that taking into consideration audiences (or audiencing, as visual theorist Gillian Rose (2012) terms it) is a critical feature of participatory visual research with girls (and other marginalised groups) to contribute to policymaking and decisions regarding their lives.

Research context and methodology

This article comes out of a larger study conducted in Korogocho, the second largest informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya, which consists of seven villages situated 12 km from Nairobi's central business district. Typical dwellings are made of mud and timber walls with discarded tin cans used as roofing material. A typical living unit might be 10 × 10 feet with a single room. Korogocho is characterised by extreme absence of essential services such as schools, health facilities, childcare and clean water, and poor housing and infrastructure. The settlement is also characterised by high rates of unemployment and exposed to violence, insecurity, high rates of sexual and domestic violence, and teenage pregnancy (Emina et al. 2011; African Population and Health Research Center 2002a Q2, 2002b, 2014).

Phase One: The objective of phase one of the study was to use photovoice to examine the barriers to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant teenage girls and young mothers who live in Korogocho. The prompt that guided the first photovoice was 'What are the challenges that

you face in this community?' The participants divided themselves into groups of 4 to 5 participants and went into the community to take photographs of what they perceived as their challenges.

Phase Two: Internationally, researchers have used arts-based participatory visual products as tools for policy engagement when working with girls as "girl-led" and "from the ground up" research and policymaking approaches (De Lange, Mitchell & Moletsane 2015). On 20 August 2019 policymakers from the MoEST held a validation workshop for school re-entry policies. The workshop was organised and facilitated by the MoEST and the objective was to finalise the school re-entry policy guidelines. Because I had been in contact with the MoEST since beginning my fieldwork in July 2017 and had established rapport with some policymakers, I was invited by one who was liaison at the MoEST to present my findings during the workshop. In social science research having a liaison contact is important in accessing settings such as policymaking that are hard to access (Brantlinger et al. 2005; Natow 2020; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault 2015).

Although the invitation to the workshop was purely serendipitous, it was a great opportunity to present the findings and the photovoice exhibition, given the bureaucracy and difficulty I would have experienced trying to mobilise even a few policymakers to view and react to the exhibition together. Before the beginning of the workshop, I hung the six 36 × 24 inch vinyl photovoice exhibition panels on walls next to the workshop rooms using duct tape. The first panel contained the title of the exhibition and the curatorial statement and the second the process photos, while the other four panels presented the three themes identified by the young mothers as barriers to their school re-entry: poverty; absence of clean, affordable and efficient daycare; and a non-supportive social and physical environment.

During the workshop I presented the findings orally, accompanied by a Power-Point presentation that highlighted key images and their captions. At the end of my presentation, I invited the policymakers to take a few minutes during their health breaks to view the exhibition and give me their feedback. I took notes of the comments and other informal conversations with the policymakers and workshop participants from partnering organisations.

Analytical Processes

As a participant observer in the one-day validation workshop for school re-entry policies led by the MoEST in Nairobi, I had to rely on the fieldnotes I wrote shortly after the event as the starting point for analysis. In those first fieldnotes I wrote mostly about the general conversation, interactions and verbal and non-verbal, formal and nonformal communications between myself and the policymakers. I also noted down what I had heard from the conversations among the policymakers themselves regarding the guidelines for school re-entry policies in general and their reactions to the photovoice exhibition specifically.

When I first looked back at what I had written, I realised how technical the notes were, with little of the emotion I had been feeling: I wonder what the audience thought about the exhibition, generally. I feel that it did not receive the kind of reaction that I had hoped. I totally understand that it takes more than a one-time-contact with policymakers for research to make impact in influencing policy decisions, and I did not expect them to instantaneously change the course of draft policy document that they had been working on for the past three years because of this exhibition but seeing some senior officials walking out of the workshop without even taking a glimpse at the exhibition and others simply not taking that much interest in viewing the exhibition during the health breaks as I had invited them was somehow disappointing. (Author's fieldnotes, 20 August 2019).

When I went back to these field notes three days after the workshop, these were my further thoughts: With all fairness to the policymakers, I think that it was beyond the objective of the workshop to hold a dialogue about the exhibition and I should appreciate the opportunity that I was given to present the findings and display the exhibition. I know that I need more time to have the policymakers view the exhibition a few more times and reflect on them if the findings were to influence a policy decision. (Author's fieldnotes, 22 August 2019).

Reflecting and writing on the following statement that I had recorded in my notes,

"We have heard you but are not changing anything at this point," these were my thoughts as reflected in my fieldnotes: "This statement could also have meant that they acknowledge the perspectives of the girls and the young mothers but given how far they have gone into drafting the document, maybe it was not possible to incorporate these perspectives into the policy guidelines" (Author's fieldnotes, 22 August 2019). Aligning with other feminist researchers offering reflexive accounts of exhibitions and screenings, the fieldnotes were just the beginning of an analytical process. Mitchell (2015), for example, writes about how she used a multiple exhibiting approach. In one reflexive account she draws on her fieldnotes to reflect on the response to the same photovoice images produced by Ethiopian youth in three different settings.

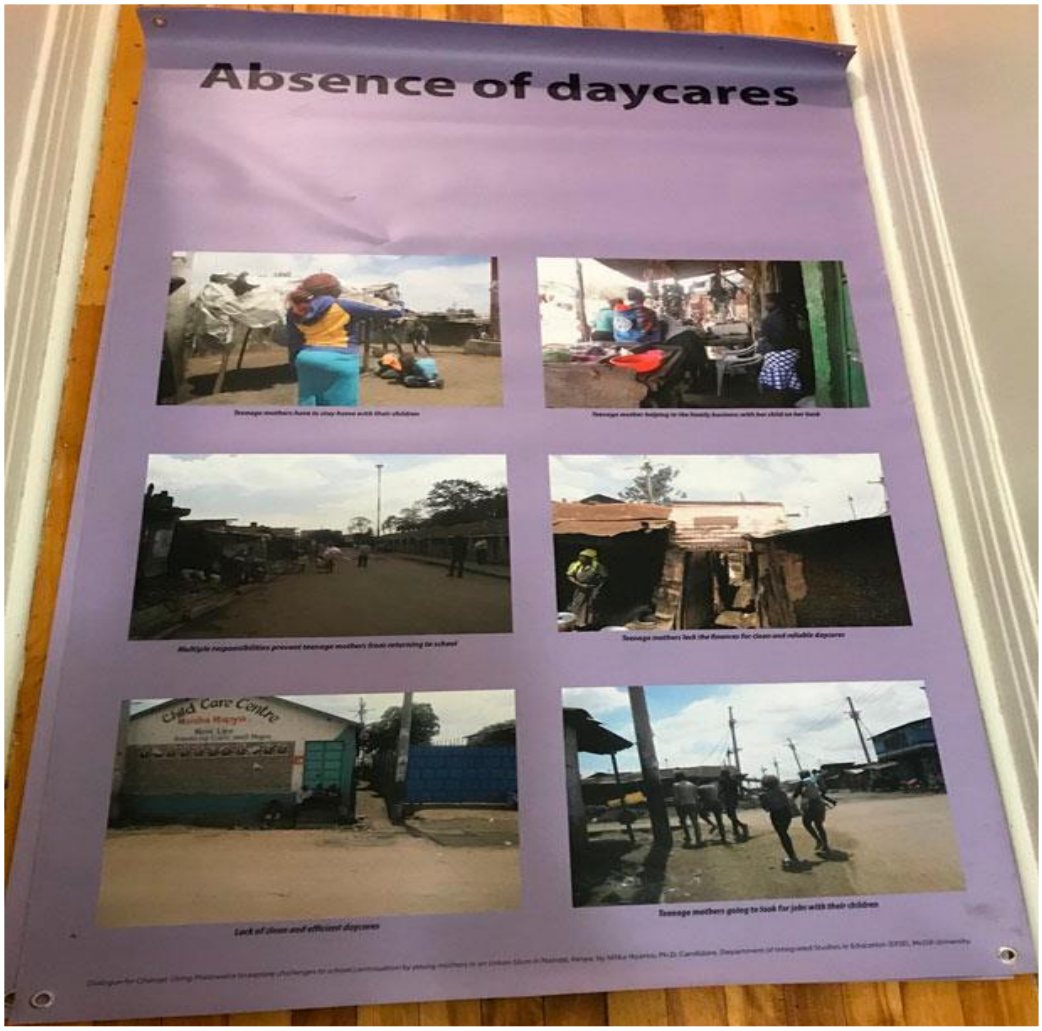

Figure 1: Sample of the photovoice exhibition panel

In another account, offered in the final chapter of Participatory Visual Methodologies (Mitchell et al. 2017), she uses her fieldnotes to recall and write about two exhibitions of the same photos produced by mothers in Korogocho as an entry point to advocating for researcher reflexivity. One account highlights the ways in which the social setting itself might get in the way of policymakers and researchers taking the images seriously. The other account draws attention to another social situation where community members might be apprehensive about wandering freely around a public space looking at photos. For MacEntee (2015), her feminist writing

practice is organised around several stages. She bases her account on work with South African youth, interrogating the relationship between cellphones and gender-based violence in and around schools. In the first stage she begins by reading through the fieldnotes, followed by reading the academic literature related to the topic of study, and then writing again and reading again while looking for intersections between the fieldnotes and the academic literature. The second stage involves taking excerpts directly from fieldnotes, adding excerpts from academic literature, drawing on one-on-one interviews and her memory of the workshop. In the third stage, she describes the workshop processes, giving her understanding of the events and insights into her thoughts and motivation, and finally offering her interpretations.

Clearly the process is far from being straightforward. Indeed, it is only when we start to tell the story – or what Van Manen (2016) observes as "the writing is the writing"' – that we start to realise how much more emotion is involved. For me, it was important to try to ground my feelings, thoughts and observations in work that would allow me to bring a feminist lens to my fieldnotes and my memory of the events of the workshop. To do this, I adopted Sandra Harding's feminist standpoint epistemology (Harding 1992) to interpret the policymakers' reaction to the photovoice exhibition. Feminist standpoint epistemology holds three main views: that knowledge is situated; marginalised groups have an advantage of being able to identify biases that the dominant group cannot see; and knowledge should be built upon the perspectives of the marginalised groups. Feminist standpoint epistemology's claim is that knowledge is created through struggle between dominant and marginalised voices and perspectives. According to Sandra Harding (1992, p.443): Knowledge claims are always socially situated, and the failure by dominant groups critically and systematically to interrogate their advantages social situation and the effect of such advantages on their beliefs leaves their social situation a scientifically and

epistemologically disadvantaged one for generating knowledge.…these accounts end up legitimating exploitative 'practical politics' even when those who produce them have good intentions. Harding (1992, p. 443) further argues that "the activities of those at the bottom of such social hierarchies can provide starting points for thought from which humans' relations with each other and the natural world can be visible." She claims that "experiences and lives [of the marginalised] have been devalued or ignored…" and decisions on their lives left in "the belief and activities of people at the centre who make policies and engage in social practices that shape marginal lives" (Harding 1992, p. 444). For me, the photovoice exhibition represented the voices of the pregnant girls and the young mothers during the school re-entry validation workshop.

As I reflected on the exhibition and what I had read about policy-making processes which show that they can be slow, hierarchical and often not informed by qualitative research (Ajakaiye 2007; Harber 2017; Liasidou 2012; Lingard 2009), I also began to see the challenges of advocating for the inclusion of marginalised voices in decision and policymaking in new ways. In a sense, in my reflections I was comparing my observations and interpretation of the policy validation workshop to other studies on policymaking in order to generate the themes from the policymakers as audience for the exhibition.

My hope with the exhibition was that the images and messages would begin a conversation on how to improve the current re-entry policy from the perspectives of the intended beneficiaries. Being a Kenyan woman with previous research experience in Kenya advantaged me with a nuanced and prior understanding of the socio-cultural and political contexts in which I was conducting the research. From a feminist standpoint, I understood both the systemic oppression that girls and women, especially those from marginalised contexts, experience regarding decisions on their lives. In my view the photovoice exhibition challenges this dominant

view by having the pregnant girls and young mothers, who are often marginalised, voice their perspectives on challenges that prevent them from re-entering and completing school.

Policymakers as audience: Responses to the exhibition

This focus aims to answer the research question: How did education policymakers see/receive/understand girls' photovoice exhibition designed to challenge and change school re-entry and completion policies? From my analysis of the policymakers' non-engagement with the photovoice exhibition, resistance from the policymakers emerged as the main theme that is supported by the power they hold in the policymaking process. By resistance, I am referring to the policymakers' reluctance to actively and closely engage with the photo exhibition created by the out of school pregnant girls and young mothers. After my PowerPoint presentation, I invited the policymakers to walk around and view the photo exhibition that I had mounted on the walls outside the workshop room. After the PowerPoint presentation one of the senior policymakers commented "We have heard you, but we are not changing anything at this point." Reflecting upon this remark, it is evident that being invited to the policy discussions might not necessarily translate into the individuals' or group's view being considered to inform policy formulation.

Further, although made in passing, this comment and the nonengagement of policymakers both with my oral presentation and the exhibition might support evidence which shows that policy processes are politicised and rarely informed by research findings (Liasidou 2012; Ajakaiye 2007).

Some key policymakers at the validation workshop did not view the photo exhibition hanging on the walls during the health breaks, as I had invited them to do. Rather, they left the workshop shortly after it began in order to attend other meetings, without even passing the photo

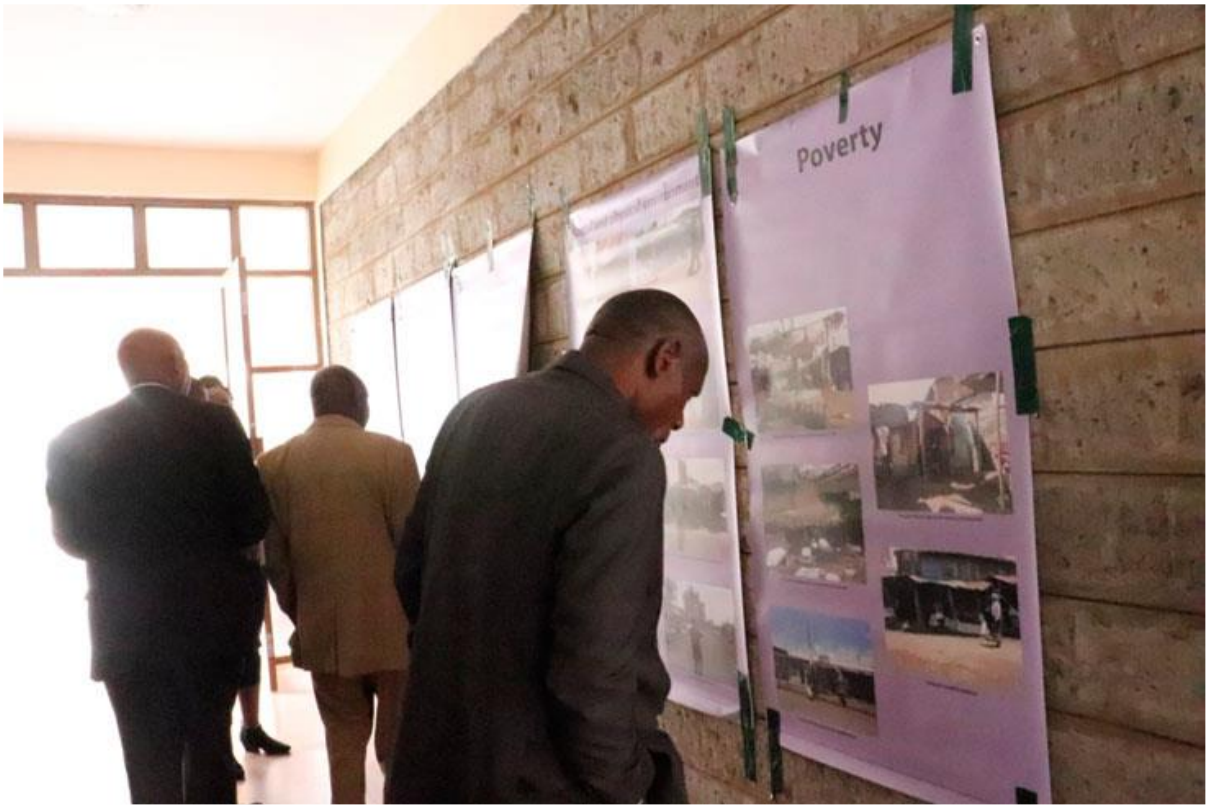

exhibit to see what the girls and young mothers pictured as challenges to their school re-entry, as I mentioned

Figure2: Participants at the validation workshop for school re-entry policies at KICD, Nairobi.

in my presentation. The few policymakers who took an interest in viewing the photovoice exhibition were mainly junior and middle level policymakers who hesitated to engage in deeper discussion about the exhibition.

It was beyond the scope of my fieldwork to fully account for what I perceived as resistance in relation to the policymakers' response to the photo exhibition created by the girls and young mothers expressing their challenges to school re-entry. Nonetheless, the silence, non-response and lack of engagement both regarding my oral presentation and the photovoice exhibition raised questions for me about how willing policymakers are to consider divergent views, particularly from the policy beneficiaries in policymaking. In their study of re-entry policy in Zambia, Chiyota and Marishane (2020) reveal that voices of young mothers are never considered when formulating re-entry policies, which contributes to their ineffectiveness. From my analysis, the current top-down approach to policymaking should be interrogated to make it accessible for the beneficiaries to share their views on how to improve policies.

Discussion

In Kenya, educational governance and policy formulations are managed both under the national and county government and overseen by the Cabinet Secretary of the MoEST and the County Executive Committee respectively (Kenya Law Reform Commission 2015). Generally, accessing these policymakers is a difficult task that can be time-consuming and requires continuous engagement at different levels and forums in order to disseminate research findings. This can be more challenging when the need to disseminate findings is on the part of the policy beneficiaries whose voices have been silenced and who are already marginalised. Adopting arts-based participatory visual methodologies may offer ways and opportunities for such

disenfranchised groups to express their needs effectively. However, these methodologies are not without challenges, and can face resistance from the very audiences for which they were intended – such as the decision makers and policymakers. Resistance by policymakers to the young mothers' voices through their lack of engagement and hesitance to discuss and give feedback on the exhibition shows that educational policymaking is still part of an exclusive, hierarchical and elitist top-down approach. It shows that policymakers are yet to embrace the perspectives of policy beneficiaries. Their choice to ignore the voices and perspectives of the young mothers from Korogocho and others like them is anchored in the unequal distribution of power in the policy-making arena, which concentrates power in decision making on the few policy bureaucrats at the top and centre, ignoring the perspectives of the majority (beneficiaries), who are often at the margins. An example of resistance by decision and policymakers to photovoice findings is Mitchell's analysis of the resistance of one of the senior administrators from agricultural colleges in Ethiopia to the images his students had produced in a photovoice project (Mitchell 2017, 2018). Mitchell highlights how this principal resisted seeing the 'empowerment' of students to express their concerns about their college, arguing instead that the student who took a picture of a half-empty plate of food on a chair in the cafeteria should be cleaning up the mess and not taking pictures of it to suggest food insecurity. Mitchell et al. (2017) argue that some reasons why policymakers might resist the visual evidence in arts-based participatory and visual research might be because of disbelief that the issues raised in the images actually exist. They might even question whether the participants actually created the work. Furthermore, resistance might occur because policy frameworks are still heavily anchored on patriarchal systems where the majority of senior decision and policymakers are men who might still hold patriarchal ideologies on young mothers' re-entry to school. What is clear is that

getting policymakers to be a receptive audience to photovoice images is far from straightforward. Products of arts-based participatory visual methodologies like photo exhibitions, exhibition catalogues and cellphilms, among others, are intended to be used as tools to expose social injustices, inspire social change and let girls lead in policy change on issues affecting them. Arts-based visual methodologies give girls the power and control in the research process, allow them to reflect on their lives and prioritise their voices in the policy process by giving them the chance to identify their immediate needs and strive for solutions. Scholars of girlhood studies argue that research and policymaking about girls should be done with and led by girls (De Lange, Mitchell & Moletsane 2015; Mitchell & Moletsane 2018; Kirk & Garrow 2003). Girl-led research approaches aim to produce knowledge from the perspective of girls themselves. Arts-based participatory visual research methodologies are political processes in themselves, because they enhance participation of girls in decision and policymaking. Their products, when publicly displayed, can create awareness and mobilise support to address a particular social issue that affects the well-being of girls, such as unequal access to education for pregnant girls and young mothers. Using the products of arts-based participatory visual methodologies which are created by girls, like the photo exhibition in this study, to start a policy conversation and inform the policy process can be complex. Overall, the responses of some audiences suggest that the whole area of audience engagement requires further research. In this focus I offer my experience and reflections on using a photo exhibition created by pregnant girls and young mothers from an urban informal settlement in Nairobi to engage with education policymakers and contribute to the policy conversation on school re-entry policies in Kenya. In addition to the policy process generally being slow in adopting scientific data to inform its formulations, visual data produced by marginalised groups might encounter extra layers of barriers in influencing policy processes.

This might happen for several reasons. First, because arts-based participatory research is likely to expose sensitive and hidden societal problems, the public display of such issues can cause discomfort and resistance from the communities within which they are created or the audience for which they were intended. Second, those who use arts-based participatory methodologies to express themselves in research are likely to already be marginalised, poor, living in under-resourced settings, oppressed and at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Juxtaposing the characteristics of these participants against an intended audience such as policymakers who are more powerful can result in resistance, potentially leading to their further marginalisation through lack of interest in viewing what they hold most important to them. A third challenge that arts-based participatory visual methodologies might encounter in informing policy is the normative belief and reliance on large quantitative survey data as the main source of reliable, objective and generalizable data (Lingard 2009). This might lead to overlooking data from alternative approaches such as arts-based participatory visual methodologies produced by participants themselves which give detailed and contextualised perspectives on the policy problem.

Conclusion

Clearly it takes more than just a one-time engagement for research to influence policy decisions. In this study education policymakers were not receptive to the perspectives of the young mothers on barriers to their school re-entry and completion presented through the photovoice exhibition. Their non-engagement and the remark by one of the senior policymakers that "We have heard you but we are not changing anything" shows that policymaking is not inclusive and that inclusion and participation of other stakeholders does not necessarily mean that their perspectives will be considered while making decisions about policy. Moreover, there

are some policies already in place, both at regional and national level, that address the needs of adolescents for sexual and reproductive health rights and information and services (Kenya Government 2015; UNESCO 2018). The findings of the photovoice exhibition, such as the image of a pregnant young mother carrying a child with the caption "Lack of counselling leads to multiple pregnancies" indicates the urgent need for comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education as a way of reducing the rates of early unintended teenage pregnancy. Although I cannot describe the exhibition as an unqualified success, I do not think participatory visual researchers should give up on finding ways to have the voices of girls and young women reach policymakers. We need to continue to develop innovative ways through which we and the marginalised participants with whom we work, such as the girls and young mothers in this study, can use their research products to engage with policymakers and inform policy processes. I realise that policy change takes a long time, and occurs through several engagements with policymakers and not a onetime engagement like the photo exhibition. In her reflexive analysis of participatory filmmaking by Indigenous girls and young women to address HIV in their communities, Pamela Lamb (2020) points out that there is always room for policy- and decision makers to change their minds on how they feel after the initial viewing of arts-based participatory visual products produced by the youth. This article adds to the growing body of reflexive work on exhibitions and screenings (MacEntee 2015; Mitchell 2015) as a way to deepen understanding of a key component of participatory visual research. Products of arts-based and participatory visual research, such as policy action briefs, photo exhibitions, exhibition catalogues and the 'occupying' strategy where researchers visit policymakers in their offices to make them look through the visual research findings (e.g., Rivard 2016) are all ways in which researchers have enhanced policy engagement (see Mitchell, De Lange & Moletsane 2017).

However, a lot remains to be done, especially in Kenya. Countries such as South Africa, which may have more political freedom and spaces for activism against social ills like sexual and gender-based violence are more likely, I posit, to produce research that informs policy to address such issues, as can be seen in the work of De Lange, Mitchell and Moletsane (2015) and Moletsane, Mitchell and De Lange (2015), but clearly other countries can learn from these experiences. There is a need for policymakers to be flexible and expand what they consider as valid data that might inform policy, beyond surveys to include data generated from other research methodologies such as arts-based and participatory visual methodologies produced by the participants themselves. This suggests that there is a need to ensure training on participatory visual methods and 'from the ground up' policymaking tools for those in educational leadership. It is vital that we find ways of improving policy dialogue involving marginalised groups – such as the girls and young mothers in this study – whose voices are key to formulating effective policies. I conclude this article by acknowledging that there are complexities to using the products of arts-based participatory visual approaches created by girls to inform policy processes. In particular, I draw on my own experiences as a participatory visual researcher for getting educational policymakers to re-think, re-define and expand the classification of what is considered 'reliable data' that might inform educational policies, to include those created through arts-based, participatory and visual research methodologies by historically marginalised populations like girls from marginalised settings such as urban informal slums like Korogocho.

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CHAPTER 7

Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

I was in the process of writing this thesis at the time of the outbreak of the corona virus in December 2019 that the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic in March 2020. Not only did this change the economic and social order globally but also the education trajectory of millions of children worldwide. International organizations are producing preliminary data on the effects of the pandemic on the lives of adolescent girls and so are scholars and researchers, so,

although this study does not include COVID-19, I want to highlight, in this section, how it adds another layer to the factors that contribute to early and forced marriage and unplanned early teenage pregnancy and motherhood for adolescent girls and young women, particularly in low-income settings like Korogocho.

According to a report by Save the Children (2020), the world's most vulnerable children may not have been in school before the COVID-19 pandemic, but if they were, they are unlikely to make it back when schools re-open. Among this group of children are adolescent girls, especially those who live in already low-income and marginalized settings. As in other previous pandemics and health crises like the Ebola outbreak in West Africa (Plan International, 2020; UNESCO, 2020a; World Vision, 2020b), cases of sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, forced and early marriage, and unplanned teenage pregnancy have all increased during the COVID-19 pandemic not only as a result of the pandemic itself, but also of the measures put in place by governments to contain the spread of the virus. Measures like lockdown, quarantines, curfews, closure of service centres such as sexual and reproductive

health services and centers for the reporting of crimes such as police stations, and schools have increased the vulnerability of girls and young women to gender-based violence, early and forced marriage, and unintended pregnancy. For vulnerable children, particularly girls, schools serve many purposes: learning; support and advice on life skills from their teachers; meals; and access to intervention like conditional cash transfers and menstrual hygiene management kits. With school closure, the benefiting children, who are most likely adolescent girls already at risk of dropping out of school, not only miss out on education but also on the benefits that come with attending school. Further, the closure of schools, which are safety spaces for vulnerable children leaves them more exposed to the factors that threaten their successful school continuation and completion.

Studies show that attending school protects adolescent girls from early and forced marriage and early unplanned pregnancy and childbirth (Austrian et al., 2016; Beguy et al., 2014; Beguy, Mumah, et al., 2013), benefits of education that the COVID-19 pandemic now threatens to overturn. Reports by World Vision (2020a, 2020b) at the time of the pandemic show that many adolescent girls were already out of school prior to it and some of those who were in school may not return once schools re-open because of economic hardships, having to carry out care-work for sick family members and younger siblings, entering into early marriage to escape personal economic hardships and/or as a form of revenue for the family, and early unintended pregnancy as a result of one (or many) of these factors (Plan International, 2020; UNESCO, 2020a; World Vision, 2020a). So far, it is projected that an additional 4 million child marriages may occur in the two years after the outbreak of the pandemic (World Vision, 2020a). Recently emerging data on the effects and consequences of COVID-19 shows that the rates of teenage unplanned pregnancy have increased globally (Save the Children, 2020). A report by Save the

Children (2020) has noted that the COVID-19 emergency only acerbates the already existing learning crisis since there were 258 million children and young people out of school before the pandemic and warned that girls face the greatest barriers to education, with inequalities starting early in life.

The Save the Children report further showed that 9 million primary-school age girls are likely not ever to set foot in a classroom, compared with 3 million boys who were in the same position before the pandemic, thus indicating globally the persistent gender gap in education (Save the Children, 2020). Other reports by World Vision (2020a, 2020b) also showed how the pandemic has exacerbated the existing education crises and how it will widen the gender gap. According to these reports, by the end March 2020 about 743 million girls were out of school because of school closures to contain the spread of Corona virus and out of these, approximately one million girls are at high risk of not returning to school post Covid-19 (World Vision, 2020b) given various reasons that include early marriage, unplanned teenage pregnancy, and young motherhood.

In Kenya, much of the writing on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic comes from blogs that bemoan the spiking rates of teenage pregnancy only two months after the outbreak of the pandemic (see Partridge-Hicks, 2020). A recent study on adolescent girls' transition to adulthood during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that adolescent girls in informal settlements in Nairobi were experiencing losses in education, health, and social connections which threatened their transitions into adulthood (Bellerose et al., 2020). According to the study, adolescent girls face the risk of not going back to school since some of them are already engaged in activities to earn money or are looking for such opportunities.

Since the lack of school attendance has been linked to the high vulnerability of adolescents to early unplanned pregnancy and young motherhood, these girls are even more vulnerable than they were before the pandemic. This is leading to a surge of out-of-school young mothers in the coming few years, and the negative social and economic impacts associated with that. Governments and education stakeholders should introduce incentives such as financial support for girls who need it to encourage as many girls as possible to continue with their schooling.

Summary and Discussion

Intergenerational poverty, the lack of adequate social infrastructure like housing, high levels of insecurity, the high prevalence of gender-based and sexual violence, among other factors, make girls and young women living in marginalized settings like the Korogocho urban informal settlement vulnerable to early childbearing compared to their counterparts in better resourced settings (Beguy et al., 2014). As I discussed in Chapter one, the overall goal of this study was to use arts-based participatory and visual methodology of Photovoice to explore the barriers to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers living in low-income urban informal contexts. Through the study, I sought to answer two main questions:

1. How effective are the current school continuation and re-entry policies for pregnant girls and young mothers in sub-Saharan Africa?
2. What are the policy makers' perspectives on the current school continuation and re-entry policy for pregnant girls and young mothers?

In seeking to answer these questions, I used several data collection methods and strategies. At the centre of the thesis project was the use of Photovoice methodology as a community participatory and visual method with 15 pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers

living in the Korogocho urban slum in Nairobi. The Photovoice activity was guided by the prompt "What challenges do you face in this community?" The pregnant girls and the young mothers created photo narratives from their photos and exhibited these in the local community for public viewing. This was followed by a community conversation about how to have the pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers continue with and complete a full cycle of basic education. Subsequently, I curated an exhibition from the images of the Photovoice findings for public display in the community. Later, in a second phase of the study, I displayed the Photovoice exhibition to educational policy makers during a validation workshop for school re-entry policies in Kenya. As discussed in Chapters three and six, at the center of Phase two of the study was the Photovoice exhibition for the education policy makers to document their interactions and responses to it through participant observation. I created fieldnotes during the workshop and later expanded on them more reflexively to analyze the ways in which the policy makers reacted and responded to the Photovoice exhibition.

I drew on various approaches to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. In addition to using Photovoice with out- of-school pregnant girls and young mothers and exhibiting their images and photo narratives in a workshop involving education policy makers, I conducted follow-up interviews with each of the 15 pregnant girls and young mothers to explore how they felt about the Photovoice activity and to discuss their future life aspirations. I also conducted in-depth interviews with six policy makers to explore their perspectives on why the current school continuation and re-entry policy for young mothers is not effective and to suggest ways in which it can be improved. Finally, I conducted in-depth interviews with six community leaders to explore their perspectives on the causes of teenage pregnancy in their community and to discuss

ways of addressing it and supporting the pregnant girls and young mothers to continue and complete a full cycle of basic education.

I used three analytical approaches to analyze the data for the findings presented in Chapters four, five and six of this dissertation. First, I analyzed data from the Photovoice activity through a participatory approach in collaboration with the participants to identify the challenges that they faced in their community that acted as barriers to their school continuation and re-entry. Second, I analyzed thematically interview data from follow-up interviews with the pregnant girls and young mothers, and interviews with policy makers and community leaders. I used deductive and inductive approaches of analysis which involved reading through the transcripts to identify commonly occurring themes and then reading them a second time to identify missing themes in relation to what is presented in the literature (see Glaser, 2014; Huberman & Miles, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Third, I was guided by Sandra Harding's feminist epistemological standpoint (Harding, 1992) to interpret policy makers' reaction and response to the photovoice exhibition. This standpoint argues that knowledge is situated; marginalized groups have the advantage of being able to identify biases that the dominant group cannot see; and knowledge should be built on the perspectives of the marginalized groups. I reflexively analyzed my use of Photovoice with young mothers to investigate challenges to their school continuation and re-entry (see Chapter five of this manuscript thesis). Self-reflexivity in the study (England, 1994; Pillow, 2003b; Rose, 1997) helped me to reflect constantly on my positionality within the research process and how my professional knowledge and personal experiences might introduce biases in it. I recognize that the social influences of my upbringings and my own life experiences that motivated deep interest in gender equality and girls' education and having been a young mother myself during the years of my early university education, along with my interest in

women's studies and education, might have influenced my own perspectives in conducting the research process, and in analyzing the data and interpreting the findings.

Key Findings

There are a number of key findings from this study. First, I found that the barriers to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant girls and young mothers are layered, intersecting, and interlocking social, cultural, and economic factors. Family factors like poverty, lack of parental support for girls from a tender age, and girls supporting the running of family businesses all contribute to girls dropping out of school and failing to return. The absence of clean, affordable, and efficient daycares in the community, and the lack of financial resources to pay for better daycares are among other factors that intersected in multiple ways to act as barriers to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant girls and young mothers living in low-income urban informal settlements like Korogocho. These social, economic, and cultural factors intersect in complex ways to create barriers that prevent the girls and young mothers from continuing with their schooling. I also found that policy makers and programme designers need to adopt an intersectional approach when they are formulating policies in order to identify all the factors that contribute to a particular social issue like teenage pregnancy in relation to dropping out of school. I highlight these barriers and present the findings in my first manuscript, Chapter four of this dissertation.

Second, although I did not set out to study explicitly the ethical principles of research, the study revealed clear tensions in their universal application to all studies. When applied to arts-based participatory and visual methodologies with marginalized groups, these universal ethical principles can perpetuate the marginalization of these groups by making researchers avoid doing research with them in case it does so even though such research and intervention might improve

their lives and well-being. The discussion of these ethical issues form the core of the second manuscript which forms Chapter five of this dissertation.

Third, in this study, I highlighted barriers to girl-led approaches to policy dialogue. Overall, I found that education policy making is still closed and hierarchical and it is not flexible enough to incorporate the marginalized voices of the policy beneficiaries. There is the need for educational policy making to be flexible, democratic, and participatory so that it can adopt girl-centred approaches that prioritize the needs and perspectives of the target beneficiaries of the policy like the pregnant girls and young mothers who took part in this study. Adopting a participant-led approach like the girl-led and girl-centered approaches discussed in this dissertation has the potential to develop a sense of ownership for the policy among its targeted beneficiaries. Further, in order to address effectively the issue of teenage pregnancy and schooling requires a multi-sectoral approach that involves the collaboration of different government ministries and departments. I explore these findings in manuscript three found in Chapter six.

Research Outcomes

Two research outcomes, including ideas, skills and knowledge emerged from my research.

Community conversations: In Phase one of the study, during the community Photovoice exhibition that came out of the Photovoice study with 15 young mothers and pregnant girls from the community, there was a community conversation about the causes of the high rates of teenage pregnancy in Korogocho and how to address them. This contributed to creating awareness and to raising consciousness among community members about the negative consequences of teenage pregnancy and school dropout on the lives of girls and young women, their families, and their community. Having this community conversation with the pregnant

adolescent girls and young mothers, various key groups, and stakeholders in Korogocho was important in initiating a process of deconstructing the negative construction of teenage pregnancy and motherhood as being incompatible with schooling and of the process of the de-stigmatizing of pregnant girls and young mothers in this community. In turn, my hope is that this will begin more conversations aimed at addressing sociocultural issues that contribute to early unplanned teenage pregnancy in the community, including the lack of parental support and concern for girls, and older men luring young girls into transactional sexual relationships in exchange for gifts and money.

Amplifying the voices of girls: Through this study, the 15 pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers were able to make their voices heard in the community during the community exhibitions which led to a community conversation about the causes of high rates of teenage pregnancy in the community, how to mitigate them, and how to support young mothers to continue with their education. The girls and young mothers spoke about the challenges that continued to keep them out of school despite the national school continuation and re-entry policy that was meant to keep them in school. Although it is debatable whether the policy makers paid attention to and heard the girls' voices through their Photovoice exhibition, my presentation at the workshop elicited some acknowledgement of the issues. Worryingly, some of the policy makers were adamant that they were not going to change anything. This notwithstanding, it is important to acknowledge that social change is not a one-time event but a long process that involves a continual engagement with stakeholders including the community and policy makers to create awareness and raise consciousness about the social problem and to advocate for change.

Study Limitations

It is important to acknowledge that despite this study attempting to be detailed and expansive, it also had certain limitations. First, although the findings from this study may apply to similar settings, I acknowledge that the study was contextual and may not represent the views and experiences of girls and young mothers in other contexts. Second, because I conducted this study with a small sample of only 15 pregnant girls and young mothers in Korogocho, I acknowledge that their views and lived experiences as presented in this dissertation may not be representative of other pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers living in Korogocho, in other parts of Kenya or in other areas of SSA generally. Further, the experiences of pregnant girls and young mothers from Korogocho itself may also vary depending on their social, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

Implications of the Study

As I discuss above, this study resulted in findings that have implications for future research, policy change, practice and methodology.

(1) Implications for Future Research

Three areas for possible future research stemmed from this study. First, it should explore the coping strategies of the young mothers who have re-enrolled in schools. This can offer lessons into what support the young mothers need in the designing of local intervention programs. From this study, I found that only one girl out of the 15 participants attempted to re-enter school while still pregnant; the rest expelled themselves from school the moment they realized that they were pregnant. A second area for future research that emerged from this study is to explore knowledge about the school re-entry policies and sources of that knowledge among pregnant girls, young mothers, their parents, and the general public. This will reveal the extent of local awareness of

the policy and compare that against its take up by the target beneficiaries. The third area for future research is to explore how governments have disseminated their policies on school continuation and re-entry for pregnant girls and young mothers. This will reveal the level of political will and support for the policy.

(2) Implications for Policy Change

Teenage pregnancy is not only a result of intersections of multiple factors which include socio-cultural, economic, and political ones, its effects can be adverse and can have multi-dimensional effects in the lives of both the young mothers and of their children. If governments are to address the problem of teenage pregnancy and education effectively, educational policy makers and program designers need to adopt a multi-sectoral approach which involves addressing the needs of the teenagers from different perspectives. Although many countries in SSA have incorporated international treaties into their national laws and have formulated policies to promote children's rights, gender equality, and human rights in general, pregnant teenagers and young mothers, who often come from low-income and marginalized settings and are more likely to have become pregnant as adolescents, continue to be left behind in education. There still exists a strong ideological view that teenage pregnancy is incompatible with schooling. I acknowledge that being a teenage mother comes with a number of challenges that can make it difficult to balance with schooling. However, pumping through the drain[9] girls who become pregnant while still in school only works against the social, economic, political, and general well-being of communities and society in general.

[9] I use the the idiom pumping through the drain to symbolize the systemic marginalization that forces pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers out of the education system as a result of the lack of effective policy implementation and the non-supportive structures.

The findings of this dissertation also help to deepen an understanding of the practical dynamics in policy making and the challenges in advocating for a flexible, open, democratic, and participatory policy making that centers the needs of the policy beneficiaries. There is the need for a shift in the approach by governments in SSA in their addressing of teenage pregnancy among school-going adolescent girls. In this light, I offer the following recommendations.

1. The Kenyan government should coordinate synergies and collaborations between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to make contraceptives part of an intervention into sexual reproductive health and education in schools.
2. Given the rise in the rates of teenage pregnancy in Kenya during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government should design an intervention program that specifically targets pregnant girls and young mothers to support them to continue with their education. For example, drawing from other studies, the government could establish a voucher system for childcare and a Conditional Cash Transfer for young mothers who choose to re-enroll in school.

(3) Implications for Practice

This study shows that a practical way to address the problem of early unplanned teenage pregnancy and motherhood is to apply an intersectional approach in designing interventions and controlling decision making to support pregnant teenage girls and young mothers to continue with their education. To do this, there is the need to deconstruct the ideology, as a step towards changing attitudes, that teenage pregnancy is a result of an act of deviance by young girls, and particularly adolescent girls, and to acknowledge that teenage pregnancy is a result of multiple factors and, therefore, needs a multi-sectoral approach to adequately address it. I offer some possibilities below.

Curriculum Change

Better life skills education: There is the need for schools to teach life skills beyond extra-curricular activities and clubs and incorporate this into the curriculum. Better life skills education will equip students with confidence, knowledge, and understanding of self, with better communication, negotiation, and problem-solving skills, all of which might help young people to enjoy healthy and safe sexual and reproductive health.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE): Closely connected to better life skills education is including age-appropriate sexuality education in the school curriculum. A study by Christine Panchaud and colleagues (2019) based on a comparative analysis of school-based CSE in four low-and middle-income countries shows that these programs improve young people's knowledge, self-confidence, and self-esteem, positively change attitudes and gender norms, strengthen decision making, and build strong communications skills. My study highlights the lack of high-level political support and commitment to the implementation of CSE, particularly in the Kenyan context.

Support for Pregnant Girls and Young Mothers

Healthcare and Sexual Reproductive Health: There is a need for an ideological shift around contraceptive use and access among Kenyan adolescents. It is a common perception in Kenya that contraceptives should be used only by older married women and this neglects the contraceptive needs of adolescents. This ideology can be deconstructed through media sensitization and campaigns on how adolescents can access contraceptive services. Governments in SAA, through their Health Ministries, should make contraceptives more accessible to adolescents, and particularly those living in low-income settings and those unlikely to be able to afford them should be enabled to access them free of charge. Making birth control services accessible in schools and in health facilities in communities for age-appropriate adolescents will increase their use by young people and reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy.

Psychosocial support: Future interventions should also focus on providing pregnant adolescents with psychosocial counselling, support, and assistance in a bid to prevent maternal morbidity, mortality, and school dropout.

Daycare facilities: Programs to support school-going mothers should include the creation and maintenance of daycare facilities within close proximity to schools to accommodate the babies of adolescent mothers in order to promote school attendance, improve retention and safe transitioning into higher levels of education in areas with a high prevalence of teenage pregnancy and young mothers.

Training and awareness creation: A program to provide training for teachers, nurses, and community stakeholders to prevent stigmatization, exploitation, and abuse of pregnant and adolescent mothers in schools and communities where teenage pregnancy is prevalent.

Financial support: Programs to give financial support to young mothers in the form of vouchers for those who chose to reenroll in schools will cater for their living expenses and that of their babies and enable them to attend school instead of looking for work.

(4) Implications for Methodology

This dissertation is among the few studies that employs arts-based participatory and visual methodologies to explore from the perspectives of pregnant girls and young mothers the challenges that keep them from continuing with school or re-enrolling in school despite the presence of the school continuation and re-entry policy in Kenya that has existed since 1994. Specifically, Chapter three of this dissertation discusses in detail the methodological approach that I used to conduct this Photovoice study with pregnant girls and young mothers, hold interviews with policymakers, community leaders, and follow-up interviews with the participants, and hold a Photovoice exhibition created by the 15 pregnant girls and young mothers for the community of Korogocho and another for education policy makers during a validation workshop on school continuation and re-entry policies. That chapter also adds to the discourse of curation and exhibitions being seen not as the end process in arts-based and participatory visual methodology, but as the beginning of a policy engagement and the start of conversations on influencing the policy makers' decisions, considering the challenges that this methodological approach is likely to encounter, and suggesting ways of addressing such challenges.

Final Remarks

While the study reported in this dissertation was conducted before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, like other crises and previous pandemics such as Ebola in some West African countries, it is important to note that the pandemic has caused an increase in sexual and gender-

based violence and exacerbated systems of inequality that lead to early and unplanned teenage pregnancy. These contribute ultimately to gender inequality in education. In other words, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the already existing social, economic, and systemic inequalities by worsening the factors and conditions that make adolescent girls and young women vulnerable to unplanned early adolescent pregnancy and marriage. Going forward, and in anticipation of future pandemics, it is clear that we need to put in place policies that recognize the significance of consulting with girls and young women in developing gender-responsive interventions.

My upbringing and personal life experiences as a girl and later as a young woman growing up in the highly hierarchical and patriarchal society in Kenya all contributed to my awareness of the unequal access to resources and opportunities for girls, youth, and women. In my adult life, becoming a young mother during my undergraduate studies at the university of Nairobi, facing gender-based discrimination at work, working with girls and young women living in urban informal settlements and seeing their daily struggles ignited my interest in women's studies, gender equality, human rights, and social justice issues. In particular, my desire to deepen my understanding of how patriarchy shapes the social, cultural, economic, and political norms that entrap women perpetually in subordinate positions and the vicious cycle of poverty and gender discrimination, kindled my interest in research that centres their voices and seeks to effect social change that benefits them.

The literature reviewed in this dissertation highlights the negative consequences of early teenage pregnancy on the economic outcomes (Bhana et al., 2010; Psaki et al., 2019), social and educational outcomes (Beguy et al., 2014; Gyan, 2013; Kabiru et al., 2010) health outcomes (Austrian et al., 2016; Ganchimeg et al., 2014) and general well-being of girls and young

women, their families, and their communities. Addressing teenage pregnancy in education calls for more than one-size-fits-all approaches that most governments currently use in formulating school continuation and re-entry policies for pregnant girls and young mothers. Rather, an intersectional perspective in identifying the needs and a multi-sectoral approach in addressing these needs should be adopted. From this perspective, interventions should focus on problem solving regarding the current crisis and prevention or mitigation from future crises. For example, interventions to support young mothers should include support with finance help and daycare facilities and interventions to support adolescents should prevent the occurrence of teenage pregnancy though better life skills, education, comprehensive sexuality education, access to information, to sexual reproductive health services, and to contraceptives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix i
Information Sheet and Informed Consent for Parents/Guardians
Challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant and parent-learners in Kenya

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Milka Perez Nyariro. I am conducting a study in Korogocho. This is to formally invite your daughter to take part in the study I am carrying out. This study is part of my PhD research and is under the supervision of Dr. Claudia Mitchell in the Faculty of Education at McGill University. The study is about pregnancy, teenage motherhood and schooling for girls between the ages of 13-19 years. The study aims to explore challenges that girls who become pregnant and mothers while still in school face when they want to continue with their education.

What will happen in this study and what will your daughter be asked to do?
If you agree for your daughter to participate, I would like to invite her to take part in a one-day workshop. During the workshop, your daughter will be invited to participate in discussions with other girls, take part in group photography activities using digital cameras about teenage pregnancy, motherhood and schooling. With your permission, your daughter may decide to participate in exhibiting some of the photos she and her team collaboratively took during the workshop. Additionally, your daughter will be invited to participate in a 30–45-minute one-on-one interview with me to share her experience on the topic and about the workshop. Your daughter will be asked to sign an assent form prior to the onset of this research. This is a part of our research for making sure that her rights are respected and fulfilled. Upon her participation, she will be invited to view and discuss the meanings of the pictures she and other participants took during the workshop. I hope that her participation will contribute to changing the circumstances of other girls like her by creating awareness in the community and the need for support to help pregnant and teenage mothers to complete school.

What are the potential risks and harms for your daughter participating in this study?
There is minimal but potential risk to your daughter when participating in this study. We will be exploring a topic on pregnancy and may touch on issues of sexual violence and harassment. Some things that we will talk about may make you daughter remember personal past or present experiences which may make her feel upset, sad, angry and emotional. I will let your daughter know that in case she gets sad, angry and emotional, she may let me, or any other members of the research team know immediately. She will have free access to counselling should there be a need. I will also advise all the girls to keep any information that is private and confidential if they are worried that this may make their peers to see them differently or fear that someone may talk about it outside of the workshop. Your daughter, together with other girls, will be participating in a photovoice activity that involves role plays or dramas and shooting photos on issues that they all feel are important to know around teenage pregnancy, motherhood and schooling. This will not represent your daughter's personal experience but only a representation of the groups' knowledge about such issues in the community. However, if your daughter decides that she does not want to be in any of the pictures taken by the other girls her decision

will be fully respected, and she will not be obliged under any circumstances to be in any picture. If your daughter even comes to that decision after the start of the workshop, any picture that she may be identified in will be immediately deleted. Your daughter is free to take part in this activity and she is also free not to take part. Your daughter can also choose to participate or not in any particular activity or to not answer the questions I may ask.

How will your daughter benefit from this study?

There are no expected individual benefits, but it is expected that the research will contribute to creating useful information and knowledge that can be used by the community and the national education policymakers to influence how they think about and work to ensure that girls within this community and in other parts of this country who get pregnant or become mothers while in school get the chance to finish school. By taking part in this study, your daughter will have an opportunity to talk about issues around teenage pregnancy and motherhood which are not discussed openly. Your daughter will also have the chance to represent the views of girls with similar experiences, learn to make her voice heard to community leaders and school principals, through the exhibition. Your daughter's contribution and that of other participants will be used to start a community conversation in gaining community to support for the education of pregnant and teenage mothers to help them succeed in life. Your daughter will also contribute to creating useful information and knowledge that national education policymakers may use to influence how they think about and work to ensure that girls in this country who get pregnant or become parents while in school get the chance to finish school like others.

How will your daughter be compensated for her time?

In participating in the Visual Ethics Workshop, your daughter will be entitled to Ksh. 1400.00 (CAD 12.50) and Ksh. 700.00 (8.50) for participating in a follow up interview.

Voluntary participation

If, at any time during the study, your daughter wants to stop participating, for any reason, that is possible. Any written notes or voice-recordings made up to that point will be destroyed. Your daughter's photos can be withdrawn at any time. No one will treat your daughter any differently if she decides that she does not want to participate in the study or if she decides to only show some of the pictures she and her team took and not all of them. If she wants to answer some questions, but not others, she can do that, too. It is entirely her decision.

How will I keep your information confidential?

If you accept your daughter to take part in this exercise, she will be asked to provide her name, age, schooling status and the name of the village where she is currently living. Nobody will see or know your daughter's personal information that she will share with me. I will keep this information safe from any other person. I will give your daughter another name instead of her real name to be used when she talks about her views. The reason is to make sure that nobody apart from me knows what your daughter said.

I will keep all your daughter's responses in the follow up interviews and information your daughter shares during the Visual ethics workshops private by not using her real name when I give talks (in workshops and conferences) or write about this study (in journal articles, book chapters, thesis).

I will advise all girls in the workshop to respect the confidentiality of the other girls in the group. However, I cannot guarantee that they will not talk to others about things that were said in the group discussions and activities.

All information that I collect from your daughter in this study (such as voice-recordings, photos, interview response transcriptions, etc.) will be handled carefully, and kept in a safe place, so no one but the researcher can use it. With your permission and that of your daughter, the data or this study may be used for other research studies on this same topic. However, the name of your daughter will not be associated with the photos she will take.

Your daughter's participation and contribution will be highly valued and will be of great importance to the study. The confidential result of the study will be shared with the community members, community leaders, education stakeholders and policymakers in order to identify interventions that would support pregnant and teenage mothers who which to further their education.

Sincerely,

Milka Perez Nyariro
PhD Candidate, McGill University
Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE)
514 449 1006

Questions

In case you have any questions or clarification about the project, you can contact me, Milka Perez Nyariro at 721 659 260 or milka.nyariro@mail.mcgill.ca

Indicate clearly who is to be contacted with any questions/clarifications about the project.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

---

Please answer the following questions

Do you allow your daughter to participate, photographed and be audio-taped during the Photovoice activities and interviews? Yes___ No___

Do you allow photos created by your daughter to be shown in the community and at national and international exhibitions, conferences, workshops and to other researchers, policymakers, community members? Yes___ No___

Do you allow your daughter to be identified as a participant (not by name) at public exhibitions in the community, national and international exhibitions, conferences, workshops and to other researchers, policymakers, community members? Yes___ No___

Please sign below if you consent your daughter to participate in the study

YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR SIGNATURE: _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____

YOUR DAUGHTERS' NAME: _____

Do you agree to participate, to take photos, be photographed and be audio-taped during the Photo Voice activities and interviews? Yes___ No___

YOUR SIGNATURE: _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____

Appendix ii
Information Sheet, Informed Consent and Informed Assent for Girls

For participating in a Photovoice Workshop, Community Exhibition and Follow-up Interview(For Girls 13 to 19 years)

My name is Milka Perez Nyariro. I am conducting a study in Korogocho. This is to formally invite you to take part in the study I am carrying out. This study is part of my PhD research and is under the supervision of Dr. Claudia Mitchell in the Faculty of Education at McGill University. The topic of this study is **"Challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers living in Korogocho informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya".**

Why is this study important?

The study is about teenage pregnancy, motherhood and schooling for girls between the ages of 13-19 years. The study aims to explore challenges that girls who become pregnant and mothers while still in school face when they want to continue with their education. I would like your help in identifying and naming some of these challenges and also suggest solutions to the challenges.

What will you be expected to do?

I will ask you to work in small groups with other girls. I will ask you to do some drama about teenage pregnancy and motherhood and schooling and take photos about it. You will also take photos to show the problems that pregnant girls and teenage mothers face when they want to continue with schooling and give me what you think will address this problem that you talk about. I will ask you to come to a one-day meeting where I will show you what you should do and what you should not do when taking pictures. Before I start this teaching, I will let you know why I am doing this research. I will also train you on how to use a digital camera and ways to take photos that I need for the research. I will also put you in a group of four to five girls to talk about the photos that you take. You will select some photos and write something about them and show to the other two groups. After about two days or as we shall agree, we will have an exhibition at the same place or a place close by. During the exhibition, we will show the photos that you select and write something about on poster paper to a few selected school principals and community leaders from this community. The aim of this activity will be let them know the problems and needs of girls like you concerning your education. It will help them and others to make decisions that will help in giving you and other girls who desire to complete school the support at school and in the community. This will take about 6 hours. You are free to come with your child/ren to the workshop as there will be babysitters to take care of the child/ren and baby snacks will be provided.

In addition, I will make a follow up one-on one interview with each one of you on a different date and time. We will talk in detail about the problems you have faced when you tried to go back to finish school and about some of the photos your group took. With your permission, I will use a digital voice recorder to record the interview. Your interview will be strictly private and confidential, and I will not let anybody know what we talked about and will use it for the research only. The interview will last between 30 -45 minutes.

What are the potential risks and harms of participating in this study?

There is minimal but potential risk to you when participating in this study. We will be exploring a topic on pregnancy and may touch on issues of sexual violence and harassment. Some things that we will talk about may make you remember personal past or present experiences which may make you feel upset, sad, angry and emotional. In case you get sad, angry and emotional, kindly let me or any other member of the research team know immediately. You will have free access to counselling should there be need. I also like to advise you that you keep any information that is private confidential if you are worried that this may make your peers to see you differently or fear that someone may talk about it outside of the workshop. You will be participating in a photo voice activity that involves taking photos on issues that you feel are important to know around teenage pregnancy, motherhood and schooling. You do not have to be in any of the pictures yourself. If you decide that you do not want to be in any of the pictures taken by other girls your decision will be fully respected, and you are not obliged under any circumstances to be in any picture. If you even come to that decision after the start of the workshop, any picture that you may be identified in will be immediately deleted. You are free to take part in this activity and you are also free not to take part. You can also choose to participate or not in any particular activity or to not answer the questions I may ask.

How will you benefit from participation?

By taking part in this study, you will have an opportunity to talk about issues around teenage pregnancy and motherhood which are not discussed openly. You will also have the chance to represent the views of girls with similar experiences learn to make your voice heard to community leaders and school principals, through the exhibition. Your contribution and that of other participants will be create a beginning in bring together the community to support the education of pregnant and teenage mothers to help them succeed in life. You will also contribute to creating useful information and knowledge that national education policymakers may use to influence how they think about and work to ensure that girls in this country who get pregnant or become parents while in school get the chance to finish school like others.

How will you be compensated for your time?

I will use the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)'s way of compensating people who get involved in this kind of exercise because the organization does a lot of work and other research in this area. In participating in the Visual Ethics Workshop, you will be entitled to KSh. 1400.00 (CAD 12.50) and another KSh. 700 if you participate in the follow up interview.

Voluntary participation

Your participation is your choice. You have the right to end your participation in the study, for any reason, at any time throughout the study. You can withdraw at any time for any reason, before, during or after you participate. You can ask to have photos of yourself not be shown publicly at any time. You can also ask to remove any information you give unless your name is no longer associated with it. Your photos can be withdrawn at any time.

How will I keep your information confidential?

When you accept to take part of this exercise, you will be asked to provide your name, age, schooling status and the name of the village where you are currently living. Nobody will see or know these personal things about you that you will share with me. I will keep these things

safe from any other person. I will give you another name instead of your real name to be used when you talk about your views. The reason is to make sure that nobody apart from me knows what you said. I will keep all your responses in the follow up interviews and information you share during the Visual ethics workshops private by not using your real name when I give talks (in workshops and conferences) or write about this study (in journal articles, book chapters, thesis).

I will advise all girls in the workshop to respect the confidentiality of the other girls in the group. However, I cannot guarantee that they will not talk to others about things that were said in the group discussions and activities.

All information that I collect from you in this study (such as voice-recordings, photos, interview response transcriptions, etc.) will be handled carefully, and kept in a safe place, so no one but the researcher can use it. All other information will be locked in cabinets during and after fieldwork. With your permission, the data or this study may be used for other research studies on this same topic. However, your name will not be associated with the photos that you will take.

Your participation and contribution will be highly appreciated and contribute to knowledge in the study. The confidential result of the study will be shared with the community members, community leaders, education stakeholders and policymakers in order to identify interventions that would support pregnant and teenage mothers who which to further their education.

Milka Perez Nyariro
PhD Candidate, McGill University
Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE)
514 449 1006
milka.nyariro@mail.mcgill.ca

Questions

In case you have any questions or clarification about the project, you can contact me, Milka Perez Nyariro at 721 659 260 or milka.nyariro@mail.mcgill.ca

Indicate clearly who is to be contacted with any questions/clarifications about the project.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

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Please answer the following questions

Do you agree to participate, be photographed, audio-taped and take photos during the Photovoice

activities and interviews? Yes___ No___
Do you allow photos that you create to be shown in community, national and international exhibitions, conferences, workshops and to other researchers, policymakers, community members? Yes___ No___

Do you allow you agree to be identified as a participant (not by name) at public exhibitions in the community, national and international exhibitions, conferences, workshops and to other researchers, policymakers, community members? Yes___ No___

Please sign below if you consent/assent to participate in the study
YOUR NAME: _____
YOUR SIGNATURE: _____
TODAY'S DATE: _____

Appendix iii
Information Sheet and Informed Consent for Community Leaders

Challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant and parent-learners in Kenya

Dear Community Leader,

My name is Milka Perez Nyariro. I am conducting a study in Korogocho. This is to formally invite you to take part in the study I am carrying out. This study is part of my PhD research and is under the supervision of Dr. Claudia Mitchell in the Faculty of Education at McGill University. The study is about pregnancy, teenage motherhood and schooling for girls between the ages of 13-19 years. The study aims to explore challenges that girls who become pregnant and mothers while still in school face when they want to continue with their education. I want you to help in identifying and naming some of these challenges and also suggest solutions that you think will help these girls to continue with school or go back to school after they have given birth.

What will you be asked to do in the study?
I will ask you questions and talk with you about issues of teenage pregnancy, motherhood and schooling in this community. I will use a digital voice recorder to record the interview I have with you. The interview that I will have with you will last between 30 -45 minutes.

Voluntary participation
Your participation in the study is voluntary and you don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to. You can also stop your participation at any time. There are no expected risks to your participation in this study.

How will you benefit from taking part in the study?
This exercise may or may not benefit you personally. But it will help me to learn about the problems facing pregnant girls and teenage mothers when trying to re-enroll back to school while pregnant or go back after they have given birth. The exercise may provide useful information to national education policymakers that may influence how they think about and work to ensure that girls in this country who get pregnant or become parents while in school get the chance to finish school like others. The exercise may also help this community. The problems that you will name and discuss about girls who are pregnant or become mothers while still in school and the solutions you will suggest will help make the community aware. This exercise may help to bring together the community to support the education of pregnant and teenage mothers to help them succeed in life. I will give you a small token of appreciation for taking your time in this exercise. You will be entitled to Ksh. 700.00 (CAD 8.50) for taking part in an In-depth Interview (IDI).

Will your information be kept confidential?
When you accept to take part of this exercise, you will be asked to provide your name, age, your highest level of education and the name of the village where you are heading now. Nobody will see or know these personal things about you that you will share with me. I will keep these things safe from any other person. I will give you another name instead of your real name to be used when you talk about your views. The reason is to make sure that nobody

apart from me knows what you said. I will store all things about you that you share with me in locked cabinets during data collection. I will also keep your personal views during the interview confidentially and use another name for you if I have to use your views for any data presentation.

Who can you contact if you have any questions or ethical concerns about the study?

In case you have any questions or clarification about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me, Milka Perez Nyariro by phone on 721 659 260 or via email at milka.nyariro@mail.mcgill.ca

The ethics protocol for this study was reviewed by the McGill University Research Ethics Board, which provided clearance to carry out the research. If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager, Ms. Lynda McNeil by phone on 514-398-6831 or via email at lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

Your participation and contribution will be of great importance to the study. The confidential result of the study will be shared with the community members, community leaders, education stakeholders and policymakers in order to identify interventions that would support pregnant and teenage mothers who which to further their education.
Yours Sincerely,

Milka Perez Nyariro
PhD Candidate, McGill University
Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE)
514 449 1006
milka.nyariro@mail.mcgill.ca

Please answer the following questions

Do you agree to participate in the study? Yes___ No___

Do you agree to be audio-taped during the interview? Yes___ No___

Please sign below if you consent to participate in the study

YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR SIGNATURE: _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____

Appendix iv
Information Sheet and Informed Consent for Policymakers

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Milka Perez Nyariro. I am conducting a study on pregnancy, teenage motherhood and schooling for girls between the ages of 13-19 years. This is to formally invite you to take part in the study I am carrying out. This study is part of my PhD research and is under the supervision of Dr. Claudia Mitchell in the Faculty of Education at McGill University. The study aims to explore challenges that girls who become pregnant and mothers while still in school face when they want to continue with their education. I want you to help in identifying and naming some of these challenges and also suggest solutions that you think will help these girls to continue with school or go back to school after they have given birth.

What will you be asked to do in the study?
I have chosen you to participate in your capacity as an officer in the Ministry of Education that is concerned with issues related to policy making at national or county level. I will ask you questions and talk with you about policies on gender equality and education in Kenya. I will use a digital voice recorder to record the interview I have with you. The interview that I will have with you will last about 60 minutes.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in the study is voluntary and you don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to. You can also stop your participation at any time. There are no expected risks to your participation in this study.

How will you benefit from taking part in the study?
This study may not benefit you personally. The exercise may provide useful information on national education policymakers that may influence how we think about and work to ensure that girls in this country who get pregnant or become parents while in school get the chance to finish school like others. However, I will give you a small token of appreciation for taking your time in this exercise. You will be entitled to KSh. 1000.00 (CAD 12.50) for taking part in an In-depth Interview (IDI).

Will your information be kept confidential?

When you accept to take part of this exercise, you will be asked to provide your name, age, your highest level of education and the level of Ministry that you are currently working. Nobody will see or know about personal information about you that you will share with me. I will keep data and information safe from any other person. I will givI e you another name instead of your real name to be used when you talk about your views. The reason is to make sure that nobody apart from me knows what you said. I will store all things about you that you share with me in locked cabinets during data collection. I will also keep your personal views during the interview confidentially and use another name for you if I have to use your views for any data presentation. This way, nobody will get to know that you said it.

Who can you contact if you have any questions or ethical concerns about the study?

In case you have any questions or clarification about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me, Milka Perez Nyariro via telephone on 721 659 260 or via email at milka.nyariro@mail.mcgill.ca

The ethics protocol for this study was reviewed by the McGill University Research Ethics Board, which provided clearance to carry out the research. If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager, Ms. Lynda McNeil by phone on 514-398-6831 or via email at lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

Your participation and contribution will be of great importance to the study. The confidential result of the study will be shared with the community members, community leaders, education stakeholders and policymakers in order to identify interventions that would support pregnant and teenage mothers who which to further their education.

Yours Sincerely,

Milka Perez Nyariro
PhD Candidate, McGill University
Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE)
514 449 1006
milka.nyariro@mail.mcgill.ca

Please answer the following questions

Do you accept to participate in the study? Yes___ No___
Do you agree to be audio-taped during the interview? Yes___ No___
Please sign below if you consent to participate in the study
YOUR NAME: _____
YOUR SIGNATURE: _____
TODAY'S DATE: _____

Appendix v

Information Sheet and Consent for Research Assistants

Challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant and parent-learners in Kenya

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am happy to invite you to participate as a Research Assistant in my research project. This study is part of my PhD research and is under the supervision of Dr. Claudia Mitchell in the Faculty of Education at McGill University. The study is about pregnancy, teenage motherhood and schooling for girls between the ages of 13-19 years. The study aims to explore challenges that girls who become pregnant and mothers while still in school face when they want to continue with their education. Your role in the project will be to help with logistical arrangement such as mobilization of participants, helping in setting up workshop venues, helping in taking process photos, assisting participants who need help in captioning photos, and printing of photos and planning and participating in the exhibition. You may also be required to help in logistics during the interviews such as operating recorders and taking additional notes among other roles as maybe needed by the researcher.

During your role as a Research Assistant in this project, you will have access to participants' private information and personal experiences. You are required to handle with care and ensure security of information, data and all research equipment under your care during the study. You are also required to treat all information and data that you will have access to during and after the study with utmost privacy and confidentiality. You are not to discuss such information with people outside the research team during and after the research.

Kindly read the questions below and sign appropriately before returning the form to me.

Yours Sincerely,
Milka Perez Nyariro
PhD Candidate, McGill University
Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE)
514 449 1006
milka.nyariro@mail.mcgill.ca

Please answer the following questions

Have you read and fully understand your role and responsibility in the project? Yes___ No___
Do you agree to treat all participants with respect at all times during your engagement with them in the project? Yes___ No___
Do you agree to keep all information, data and personal experiences of participants that you have access to private and confidential during and after the project? Yes___ No___

Please sign below if you consent to participate in the study
YOUR NAME: _____
YOUR SIGNATURE: _____
TODAY'S DATE: _____

Appendix vi

Institutional Ethics Approval

McGill

Research Ethics Board Office
James Administration Bldg.
845 Sherbrooke Street West. Rm 325
Montreal, QC H3A 0G4

Tel: (514) 398-6831
Fax: (514) 398-4644
Website: www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/human/

Research Ethics Board III
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 38-0617

Project Title: Challenges to school communications and re-entry for pregnant and parent-learners in Kenya

Principal Investigator: Milka Nyariro **Department:** Integrated Studies in Education

Status: Ph.D. Student **Supervisor:** Prof. Claudia Mitchell

Approval Period: September 20, 2017 – September 19, 2018

The REB-III reviewed and approved this project by full board review in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct For Research Involving Humans.

Lynda McNeil
Associate Director, Research Ethics

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* Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described.
* Modifications to the approved research must be reviewed and approved by the REB before they can be implemented.
* A Request for Renewal form must be submitted before the above expiry date. Research cannot be conducted without a current ethics approval. Submit 2-3 weeks ahead of the expiry date.
* When a project has been completed or terminated, a Study Closure form must be submitted.
* Unanticipated issues that may increase the risk level to participants or that may have other ethical implications must be promptly reported to the REB. Serious adverse events experienced by a participant in conjunction with the research must be reported to the REB without delay.
* The REB must be promptly notified of any new information that may affect the welfare or consent of participants.
* The REB must be notified of any suspension or cancellation imposed by a funding agency or regulatory body that is related to this study.
* The REB must be notified of any findings that may have ethical implications or may affect the decision of the REB.

Appendix vii
Research Permit from National Council of Science and Technology (NACOSTI)

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone:+254-20-2213471,
2241349,3310571,2219420
Fax:+254-20-318245,318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref No. **NACOSTI/P/19/82965/31137** Date: **25th July, 2019**

Milka Perez Nyariro
Mcgill University
CANADA.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on ***"Challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant and parent learners in Kenya"*** I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi County** for the period ending **24th July, 2020.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.

Appendix ix

Institutional Ethics Approval Renewal

McGill University
Research Ethics Board Office (REB-1, 2, 3, 4)
RENEWAL REQUEST/STUDY CLOSURE FORM

This form must be completed to request **ethics renewal approval** or to **close a study**. A current ethics approval is required for ongoing research. To avoid expired approvals and, in the case of funded projects, the suspension of funds, this form should be returned 1-2 weeks before the current approval expires. **No research activities including recruitment and data collection may take place after ethics approval has expired.**

REB File #: **38-0617** Principal Investigator: **Milka Nyariro**

Project Title: **Challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant and parent-learners in Kenya**

Email: **milka.nyariro@mail.mcgill.ca**

Faculty Supervisor (if PI is a student): **Dr. Claudia Mitchell**

1. Any modifications to the study or forms must be approved by the REB **prior** to implementation. **Are there any modifications to be made that have not already been approved by the REB?** ___YES __X__NO
If yes, complete an amendment form indicating these changes and attach to this form.

2. The REB must be notified of any findings that may have ethical implications or may affect the decision of the REB. The REB must be promptly notified of any new information that may affect the welfare or consent of participants. **Are there any ethical concerns that arose during the course of this research?** ___ YES _X__ NO
If yes, please describe.

3. Unanticipated issues that may increase the risk level to participants or that may have other ethical implications must be promptly reported to the REB. **Have any participants experienced any unanticipated issues or adverse events in connection with this research project that have not already been reported to the REB?** ___ YES _X__ NO
If yes, please describe.

4. Is this a funded study? ___ NO
__X__ YES. If yes, **indicate the agency name and project title** and the Principal Investigator of the award if not yourself. This information is necessary to ensure compliance with agency requirements and avoid interruption of funding.
- International Development Research Center - IDRC (doctoral award)
- Fonds Société et Culture - FQRSC (doctoral award)

Principal Investigator Signature: _____ Date: June 5, 2019

Faculty Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: 05 June 2019
(if PI is a student)

___ Check here if the **study is to be closed** and continuing ethics approval is no longer required. A study can be closed when all data collection has been completed and there will be no further contact with participants. Studies involving secondary use of data no longer need ethics approval when all secondary data has been received.

X Check here if this is a **request for renewal** of ethics approval.

For Administrative Use

Signature of REB Chair or designate: _____ Date: _____

Approval Renewal Period: _____ to _____

The researcher is responsible for ensuring that all other applicable approvals/renewals from other organizations are obtained before continuing the research.

Submit by email to lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca. **tel: 514-398-6831/6193:** www.mcgill.ca/research/research/compliance/human