

**A Phenomenological Discourse Analysis of *harassed* female 'skinscapes' in select public spaces in Cape Town**

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## **Key words**

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Linguistic/Semiotic Landscape

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Intersectionality

Gender

Body

## Abstract

### **A Phenomenological Discourse Analysis of *harassed* female ‘skinscapes’ in select public spaces in Cape Town**

Street harassment refers to the unsolicited verbal remarks and nonverbal gestures that women are subjected to by men when moving through (public) spaces. The dominant discourse sees this phenomenon as firstly a gendered interaction. In this sense, men are construed as initiators and women as recipients, although this is not always the case. Secondly, the remarks are often viewed as solely sexualized in nature. Lastly, public spaces are seen as male realms in which the actions of males are context specific, whereby the public nature of space sees it as conducive for inevitable street harassing events. This study seeks to understand how street harassment unfolds in the South African (post-apartheid) context. Drawing on Phenomenological Discourse Analysis approach, the study focuses on interview accounts of six participants from across the demographics whose experiences represent a microcosm of *harassed* female skinscapes in and around Cape Town. Phenomenology is a useful entry point to understanding emotive recounts of traumatic events in the lives of the participants, specifically street harassment. Public space is approached through the lens of Linguistic Landscapes (LL) which focuses on language and linguistic artefacts as they are arranged or located in space. For this study, the perception of and bodies in space comes to the fore. Hence, it is the interplay between space, body and the phenomenological account of the body as a corporeal ‘site’ of harassment which is a focal point. The findings reveal that women and girls are indeed recipients of street harassment because of their gender, whereby their bodies are sexualized through the remarks they are subjected to. However, the intersection of gender with other categories of social classification show how the phenomenon also fosters other systems such as race, class, religion and ethnicity in relation to

the physicality of the female body. Also, street harassment does not solely solidify genders as two binary systems, but makes way for an understanding of street harassment that occurs in intra-gendered interactions as well. Importantly, as opposed to the static theorization of space as public and largely interchangeable, it is found that space is dynamic and comes to inform the events of street harassment in different ways. Hence, the significance of drawing on the body, space, emotion and all other intersecting facets of identity is that it produces a multidimensional view of women through space, in this case the streets of Cape Town.

## Declaration

I declare that *A Phenomenological Discourse Analysis of harassed female 'skinscapes' in select public spaces in Cape Town*, is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name.....

Date.....

Signed.....

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCING STREET HARASSMENT

### 1.0. Background

Street harassment is implicated in the genuinely public world or public spaces<sup>1</sup> where people are strangers to each other. It refers to the unsolicited interactions made up of verbal utterances and nonverbal gestures which are primarily directed at women and girls. Men and boys are mostly the culprits who produce such utterances and gestures that are evaluative in nature toward women and girls. These utterances often emerge in the form of comments which are sexualized and makes reference to the physical appearance of females with regard to their bodies or dress codes. Some may argue that the interactions are complimentary, playful and flirtatious in nature. However, many features contrast these 'light-hearted' connotations as they are passed to unacquainted members in public spaces and may be considered objectively degrading and humiliating as these evaluative comments tend to focus on parts of the physical body which is not normally available for public scrutiny (Gardner, 1995).

Street harassment represents itself as an inter-disciplinary field of inquiry. Hence, this academic scholarship is undertaken in a range of fields, namely that of Feminist Legal studies, empirical and qualitative Social Psychology Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Language and Communication Studies and Sociolinguistics. Regardless of its inter-disciplinary nature, all scholars agree that street harassment is a behavioural and linguistic

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<sup>1</sup> The term, "genuinely public world" is used by Bernard and Schlaffer (1984) and refers to spaces which are public such as shopping malls and public transportation in relation to semi-public spaces such as university institutions and so forth. Here we can also use the term, "public space" which Goffman defines as any regions in a community freely accessible to that community" (1963, 8).

practice which solidifies rigid, socially-constructed gender identities pertaining to 'appropriate' gender performances of femininity and masculinity. In this way, it exacerbates and perpetuates power differences between females and males, thereby normalizing the global gendered-hierarchy wherein males occupy the top position and females the bottom. However, some events of street harassment also show the ways in which the gendered hierarchy is contested and resisted in instances where women do not fulfil their expected role of submissiveness.

The reason as to why women and girls are most often the recipients of unsolicited interactions in public spaces is owed to the sociological understanding of them as being categorized as open-persons (Goffman, 1983). An individual who falls within an open-persons category is unusually different or similar to others, whereby the norm of civil-inattention is breached. In many Western societies, civil-inattention refers to 'acceptable' ways of acting toward strangers in public, whereby the act of ignoring people you do not know is regarded as appropriate<sup>2</sup>. When women and girls are in public spaces, it is argued that men may view them as such open-persons which implies that women are acting out of 'role' by being there or that it is required of them to be 'open' to the public. Street harassment is therefore seen as that which symbolically functions as 'punishment' for traversing through public spaces which are seen as solely a privilege belonging to males.

The term, street harassment, is not a universal, fixed one, whereby many other labels are also used. These labels range from 'street hassling', 'street remarks', 'stranger harassment', 'peer harassment', 'eaves teasing', 'piropos' and so forth. Certain terms are used depending on the scope of studies relating to this phenomenon as well as geographical contexts, whereby a

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<sup>2</sup>Goffman (1983) notes that civil inattention is a well-known practice in urban cities regarding the Western culture. It refers to making eye-contact from a distance of eight to ten feet, averting the eyes and raising them again with a mid- distance. Notably, staring at someone is considered a cultural taboo.

particular term may be favoured by native speakers. However, the abundance of labels is also a subtle reflection of the under-theorized nature of this phenomenon, whereby academics and lay individuals are still grappling with this concept. In this sense, the phenomenon remains an ambiguous one, whereby scholars have not agreed upon one fixed label in which it can be understood across disciplines.

Many reasons have been put forth to explain why street harassment remains an under-theorized area of inquiry within the academic sphere. Firstly, because the phenomenon is pervasive and embedded in everyday public life for women and girls, the event is normalized as that which is context-appropriate in public spaces and is viewed as trivial and inevitable. Secondly, from a feminist legal perspective, street harassment does not fall within the scope of legal redress. In this sense, if the phenomenon had legal implications attached to it, there would be difficulty in identifying those individuals undertaking ‘harassing’ behaviours as the spatial organization of public spaces, such as over-crowding, for example, may allow men to gain advantage on the anonymity which the space affords. Additionally, particular verbal utterances may not be viewed as harmful in any way by those communicating it, but may be thought of as complimentary or playful on the part of both communicator and recipient. This places emphasis on its very ambiguity. However, as opposed to its complimentary or playful connotations, street harassment is theorized as that which negatively affects the lives of women and girls globally. For example, in Japan, the situation concerning the public harassment<sup>3</sup> of women has led to the design of ‘women-only-train cars’ to be used during peak hours (Fairchild and Rudman, 2008). Also, in some African countries, women are encouraged to wear lip plates, not solely as decoration, but to inhibit their countering and contestation of inappropriate verbal utterances, because to do so might result in heavier abuse (Yankah, 1998:17, in Mashiri, 2000:64). A lip plate is a form of body modification,

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<sup>3</sup>Fairchild and Rudman (2008) favour the term, “public harassment”, over “street harassment”. For the authors, the former places more emphasis on the public nature of this type of harassment.



specifically piercings, whereby a large or small disc is placed into a pierced hole in either the upper or lower lip in which the mouth is simultaneously stretched. These piercings are worn as ornaments for beautifying purposes.

It is the above situation that is a driving force in the step toward including street harassment in academic “Conversations” (Gee, 2011), whereby scholars seek to bring attention to it as being a social problem worthy of academic inquiry as well as an area of public policy concern. Scholars within the field of Social Psychology (Fairchild and Rudman, 2008; Dhillion and Bakaya, 2014; Chaudoir and Quinn, 2010; Wesselmann and Kelly, 2010) argue that street harassment is a form of sexual harassment on the basis that it includes unwanted sexual acts which is a main tenet thereof. However, it is argued that an abundance of sexual harassment literature focuses on unwanted sexual acts specific to work and school sites, but have tended to leave out forms of sexual harassment that occur beyond these domains. However, street harassment does differ from the traditional understanding of sexual harassment in some respects. For example, in the case of the latter, the ‘perpetrator’ may be known and well-acquainted to the victim and therefore easily identifiable. However, in the case of the former, it is enacted between strangers. Also, where sexual harassment is viewed as specific to institutional settings, street harassment is constituted in the genuinely public world, such as streets, public transportation and generally any place to which unacquainted members have access. However, despite these differences, street harassment is argued to be a form of sexual harassment as the psychological consequences on the part of the recipient resulting from sexual harassment is similar to those resulting from street harassment, whereby it is also seen as being more prevalent.

The term, street harassment, is favoured among scholars (Bowman, 1993; Thompson, 1994; Tuerkheimer, 1997; Laniya, 2005) in the feminist legal discipline, whereby other labels are rejected on the basis in which they trivialize the event. It is argued that street harassment is a

suitable term, whereby “street” makes reference to its public nature and “harassment” represents it as something which has a significant negative psychological impact on the recipients thereof. The term, however, does not overtly make reference to its gender-specific nature. It is argued that to do so would exclude men who are harassed by women and ignore the prevailing of intra-gendered forms of harassment. However, it is also argued that the experiences of women and men should not be viewed as equivalent, whereby the harassment of women in public spaces is more prevalent and is rooted in a system wherein females are marginalized globally (Thompson, 1994).

A common theme amongst feminists scholars is that the street harassment of women has largely gone ignored due to its gender-specific nature. For a phenomenon to be gender-specific means that it is experienced on the basis of a woman or girls gender, whereby someone outside of the gendered-group is implicated therein, but does not experience its ‘harms’. Street harassment is therefore argued to be a form of sexual subordination (Tuerkheimer, 1997) on the basis of a woman or girl’s gender as female, whereby men and boys most often inflict these harassing behaviours, but do not experience and understand its harms. This results in men most often believing that unsolicited interactions are harmless, whereby women may view it as harmful. It is these very inconsistencies that have hindered the event of street harassment as being noticed as a ‘real’ problem, whereby the harms have largely gone invisible solely on the basis of its gender-specificity (Tuerkheimer, 1997). Therefore, it is argued that something which affects a disempowered group will lack a name, a history and in general a linguistic reality (West, 1987). Due to the gender-specificity of street harassment, feminist legal scholars aim to make ‘visible’ the harms inflicted by this phenomenon. An important aspect in achieving this is having women ‘Name’ their experiences. This entails giving women the opportunity to define their unique experiences and to speak about the harms inflicted upon them.

With regard to these harms, firstly, it is argued that street harassment affects women's mobility (Bowman, 1993). In this sense, street harassment makes way for a split between the public sphere of the man and the private sphere of the woman, whereby the private sphere is seen as less important. Similarly, from a feminist geography perspective, it is argued that public spaces privilege men at the expense of women (Rosewarne, 2005). Secondly, street harassment entices feelings of being vulnerable to the ever-present possibility of falling victim to heavier crimes such as rape and assault which is a uniquely female-gendered-experience. Because of these harms, it is argued that street harassment is an active contributor in fostering and producing a "sexually terroristic culture" (Sheffield, 1987 in Kissling, 1991:456). Thirdly, street harassment creates a sexually-objectifying culture, whereby women's bodies in terms of its very physicality are theorized as being passive objects continuously subjected to the "active male gaze" (Young, 1993:55 in Tuerkheimer, 1997 184-183).

Within both Western and African cultures, female bodies are regarded as sexual objects in a number of ways within mass media, advertising and pornography. The 'unwanted' attention experienced through street harassment is therefore argued to be another form of the way in which female bodies are regarded as sexual objects through verbal utterances such as, for example, 'hey sexy' or 'gorgeous booty' and so forth. Hence, this shows the means by which the bodies of women and girls are solely valued for their external appearance as well as how it can be used and consumed most often by males. It has therefore been argued that to continuously be subjected to sexual objectification, women may internalize what is said about them or to them and begin to self-objectify. Hence, they may believe what is said about them whether 'negative' or 'positive' as well as also view their bodies as something which should solely be valued for its physical appearance. This also results in women being conscious and monitoring their dress codes which foster the belief that street harassment is primarily

enacted because of ‘provocative’ clothing or even that they can prevent rape and other forms of unwanted actions by modifying the way they dress. However, these views are not left uncontested (Dhillion and Bakaya, 2014).

Street harassment and the harms it implicates are theorized as being largely universal and homogenous in nature and have also been placed into two categories, namely feeling like an ‘invasion of privacy’ and enticing a related fear of rape and heavier abuse (Bowman 1993). Because of this homogenous view, scholars advocate for an understanding of the experience of street harassment as that which may differ depending on a woman’s gender as female and its intersection with other social categories of classification. It is argued that within the Western context, street harassment operates as a young girl’s first memorable experience of what it means to be a sexual being which is one that leads to shame and confusion (West, 1987). Similarly, in many African societies, it is argued that the commencement of being subjected to sexual remarks prevails as a ‘rite of passage’ for young girls (Mashiri, 2000). Another interesting study conducted aims to highlight the differing experiences between African American women and European American women. The study concludes that African American women may be familiar with gendered-interactions which are similar to street harassment. However, they do not enjoy it as is often believed, because the experience is reminiscent of a history which was bent on disrespect, degradation and inhumane sexual mistreatment to which black women have been subjected to by white men (Davis, 1994). Scholars therefore advocate for the need to continuously build on this discourse so as to elicit differing perspectives and experiences of street harassment among women and girls.

Studies also show that street harassment is a performance of masculinity which makes reference to “social practices linked to the position of men in the gender order, and socially distinguishable from practices linked to the position of women” (Connell, 2005: 01). In this sense, men’s superior position of dominance toward women is also solidified.

The activity on the part of men and boys is theorized as crossing the lines of religion, age, class, race and geography. However, it is argued that the nature of the event may vary depending on the age, status or class of the man. Studies have also shown that street harassment is engaged in so as to form male solidarity and bonding and that situational factors, for example, a space which facilitates anonymity might allow for the conduciveness of the activity (Bernard and Schlaffer, 1984; Chaudoir and Quinn, 2010).

Scholars also argue that the harassers engaged in street harassing behaviour can be placed in three categories, namely, dominance harassers, predatory harassers and strategic harassers (Langelan, 2003 in Thompson, 1994:327). These categories are instrumental in showing that harassing behaviour does not come as a result of one specific reason, but male dominance is believed to underlie all acts. Scholars also urge for a focus which go beyond the sole harasser, but to look at external factors, such as society's role, whereby a dominant male hegemony fostered by advertising, media and pornography may also be implicated. An argument purported for the Western context argues that the many positive changes in women's lives in terms of education and work have allowed them to be in public spaces more often, thereby subjected to harassing behaviour (Bowman, 1993). This notion is also salient in many African societies, whereby public spaces are construed as dangerous and the private space (home) is purported as being a safe space which come as a result of patriarchal protection (Fregoso, 2003 in Dhillion and Bakaya, 2014).

Within the sociolinguistics discipline, scholars (Kissling, 1991; Mashiri, 2000; Aguchar, 2016; Ramairez-Cruz, Correa and Mancera, 2016; Millan, 2016) focus more on the structure, content and function of the speech act on the part of the harasser. A common theme amongst scholars in this field is that speech acts cannot be understood in relation to the public spaces in which it occurs. In this sense, the idea of the public/ private split which is the realm of the male and female respectively are only viewed as artificial divides which create gendered

hierarchies between the two sexes. This perspective also diminishes sexes which are found on a continuum of male to female. Additionally, the view of street harassment whether from the point of view of those enacting it or being acted upon as seen as forms of gender performativity is also problematized. Scholars therefore advocate for the need to place these discursive practices in broader historical, political, gender and economic systems (contexts) so as to make visible how these systems foster language practices and how language in turn fosters, refutes or transform these. In this sense, scholars take as a starting point that the discursive practice within the street harassing event may foster systems of gender, but it is also open to uncovering how other systems are fostered. This approach to documenting the verbal and nonverbal practices encapsulated in street harassment provides a move forward from the homogenous, universal understanding of street harassment as that of solely being an ‘invasion of privacy’ or as that which results in a related fear of rape and other forms of abuse. Hence, by focusing on the linguistic aspects itself, more insight can be given into why, for example, particular speech acts are considered complimentary or not.

### **1.1. Statement of the problem**

The literature above distils a picture as to why this study is important, whereby the significance of this is based on four factors – (1) the literature indicates that street harassment is in no way a trivial issue. Instead, it is pervasive and affects the lives of women and girls globally. More specifically, however, (2) less attention is given to the way in which public space may lend itself to the conduciveness of street harassment, not solely on the basis of its public nature, but as that which is imbued with a dynamic of emotion and history. Thirdly, (3) a sole focus on the structure of language alone does not provide insight into the everyday, lived experiences of street harassment and how this may be experienced differently by the recipients thereof. Fourth and lastly, significantly to date, (4) street harassment has not been

documented in the South African context. This presents itself as an omission which cannot be ignored as issues of inclusion and exclusion within public spaces as brought about by the apartheid (1948-1994) era continue to be pertinent.

## **1.2. Research aim**

Using a Phenomenological Discourse Analysis approach, this study focuses on interview accounts of street harassment in public spaces in and around Cape Town. Phenomenology is a particularly useful entry point to understanding emotive recounts of traumatic events in the lives of the participants, specifically street harassment.

Public space is approached through the lens of Linguistic Landscapes (LL) which focuses on language and linguistic artefacts as they are arranged or located in space. For this study, the perception of space and bodies in space comes to the fore. Hence, it is the interplay between space, body and the phenomenological account of the body as a corporeal 'site' of harassment which this study focuses upon.

## **1.3. Research questions**

The research questions are set to achieve the research objectives. The questions are:

1. How do participants define street harassment in the South African context?
2. How do participants position themselves within the event of street harassment?

3. How do the experiences of street harassment differ between participants as a result of their gender and its intersection with other social categories of classification?
4. How are (public) spaces perceived as being conducive for the unfolding of street harassment, more specifically:  
  
How are the discourses of space and/ or the semiotics specific to space drawn on and spoken about in the participants' accounts, and how does street harassment unfold across time and space?
5. Which phenomenological feelings are attached to the events of street harassment and what causes these, more specifically:  
  
How are the bodily practices, the semiotics of the body and feelings experienced through the body expressed through language?
6. Lastly, what does the unfolding of street harassment, as made evident through the personal accounts of the participants, reveal about larger issues regarding identities, space, power, mobility and women in a post-apartheid South African context?

#### **1.4. Research Hypothesis**

Given the dynamic of public space and of identities in space as brought about by South Africa's political history of racial segregation, this study foresees that the data will allow analysis to transcend a view of street harassment as being solely gender-specific and sexualized in nature (Kissling, 2001; Achugar, 2006; Millan, 2016; and Bailey, 2016). In this sense, it will also tie in issues of race, class, temporality and place as important factors. Hence, this study may be a move forward not only in allowing for a more inclusive approach



to understanding street harassment, but may also deconstruct its mainstream “figured world” (Gee 2011) and/ or dominant discourses when considering its unfolding in the context of post-apartheid South Africa.

### **1.5. Scope of study**

In terms of participants, this study focuses primarily on the experiences of women and girls. This does not mean that it chooses to ignore or exclude men that may also be affected by it through its enactment by women and girls. However, a global gendered-hierarchy is continuously operating, whereby women are most often in the bottom position. Hence, regardless of the many changes which have occurred almost globally in order to redress the structures of patriarchy which exist in a host of societies and spheres of life, women remain ‘oppressed’ in a number of ways. This study therefore acknowledges the ever-present ‘inferior’ position of women especially in public spaces and therefore aims to bring their experiences to the forefront. Additionally, the sites of study as discussed by the participants and are mentioned in the analysis sections does not mean that street harassment only prevails therein. These spaces, however, should solely be viewed as a microcosm for other spaces in which street harassment may also occur.

## 1.6. Cape Town: An overview

The sites of interest for this study are Greenhaven, Big Bay, Bellville, Cape Town Central Business District (CBD) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC)<sup>4</sup> in the city of Cape Town.

In 1950, the city's population had increased to 742 400. Regarding the Population Registration Act of 1950 which was passed in a manner which conformed to the new National Party (NP) apartheid (1948-1994) government, 361 300 were classified as coloured, 307 000 as white and 74 100 as bantu. During this time, the NP government passed the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953, which extended the rigid residential segregation to the coloured and Indian sectors of the population (Wilkinson, 2000).

In Cape Town, the implementation of the Group Areas Act led to the dismantling of well-established communities. By the 1960's, forced removals of roughly 150 000 people to new public housing estates or townships created in the apartheid era and built on the Cape Flats prevailed. The most remembered eviction was the obliteration of the inner city areas of District Six which was first identified as a 'slum'<sup>5</sup> in the 1940's, and in 1966 declared a white group area. This changed the city's social geography during the 1960's and 1970's (ibid, 2000).

In 1990, South Africa's political situation changed due to the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) and other political organizations that were against the apartheid policy. This gave rise to the NP's abandonment of the apartheid system and South Africa's political transition to a democratic country (ibid, 2000).

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<sup>4</sup> A discussion of these sites as well as why they are discussed will be given in chapter 4 (Research Design and Methodology).

<sup>5</sup> A slum refers to an overcrowded street in an urban space which consist of people living in poverty

### **1.6.1. Cape Flats crime and class**

The Cape Flats are the least desirable and hospitable areas in Cape Town. They inhabit the city's poorest residents who are mostly made up of those racially classified as black and coloured. The population in informal settlement areas in the Cape Flats is higher and may rise to between 350 and 450 people per hectare. According to the national census in 2011 the Cape Metropolitan area comprised of nearly 3 million people, whereby coloureds make up 42.4%, black African 38.6%, whites 15.7% and Asian 1.4% (2011 Census Cape Town). This differs from other parts of the country where black people are in the majority and coloureds are in the minority.

Due to unemployment and poverty in particular sectors of Cape Town, there are increases in crime as well as a systematic illegal drug economy. Due to ineffective policing, informal institutionalizations of anti-crime vigilante groups have emerged. The situation in the more wealthier suburbs in Cape Town, however, contrast this, whereby concerns about an increase in crime against people and property have led to private policing and the installation of closed circuit television surveillance. A law-and-order approach most often prevails in these areas which mean that residents will call the police instead of informally approaching their neighbours for assistance of any sort (Wilkinson, 2000).

In the current post-apartheid context, South Africa's political racial history is still evident in the spatial geography of the city, whereby individuals belonging to the same racial group still reside together in spaces created in the apartheid era. Different racial groups belonging to the same class may reside together in the same place, but most often this is a temporary situation as people move in and out of their place of residences for schooling and work purposes. Individuals living in wealthier areas have fears of crime or the invasion of the 'other'. Due to

this, gated communities have been created, whereby a new form of “apartheid” occurs amongst people belonging to different classes.

The spaces that are of focus in this study are located in the city of Cape Town, South Africa, which acts as a microcosm for other public spaces where the act of street harassment may also occur. Cape Town is an important site of research, because its political history of apartheid (1948-1994) has shaped and continues to shape the spatial geography of the city, whereby it is argued that regardless of the abolishment of the apartheid law, it remains a “city of contrasts” (Hayhurst, 2000: 1).

### **1.7. Summary of chapter**

This chapter introduces current work on the social phenomenon of street harassment across disciplines and importantly within the sociolinguistics field. The gap in current academic knowledge is identified as stemming from less attention being given to the way public spaces lend themselves to the conduciveness of street harassment, how the structure of language alone does not provide insight into the everyday, lived experiences thereof and that the phenomenon has not been documented in the South African context. The general aims of this study focuses on interview accounts of street harassment in and around Cape Town. Public spaces are approached through the lens of Linguistic Landscapes, whereby the interplay between space, body and the phenomenological account of the body as a corporeal ‘site’ of harassment is a focal point. The study follows a qualitative Phenomenological Discourse Analysis approach where bodies, space and identity intertwine and become important factors in the recounting of instantiations of street harassment.

## **1.8. Structure of thesis**

Chapter one has provided the aforementioned introduction to this research.

Chapter two reviews literature on street harassment across disciplines, and more importantly within the sociolinguistics field.

Chapter three provides the theoretical framework, whereby it discusses the various theories which underpin this study.

Chapter four provides the Research design and methodology that this study undertakes. The design of study, sampling procedure, sample size and data collection processes are elaborated upon. Limitations to the research as well as ethical conditions are provided in this chapter.

Chapter five is the first of three analysis chapters. This chapter focuses on street harassment and post-apartheid public spaces.

Chapter six is the second analysis chapter which addresses street harassment and the semiotics of the body.

Chapter seven is the third analysis chapter which focuses on street harassment and the organization of space.

Chapter eight is based on a discussion pertaining to the preceding analysis chapters in relation to the answers that this study seeks to answer

Chapter nine provides concluding remarks as well as future research recommendations for scholars wanting to undertake a study which documents street harassment in the South African context.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0. Introduction

Street harassment is a complex social phenomenon which has been taken up differently across disciplines. To begin, I review literature produced within the discipline of Social Psychology, specifically the correlation between street harassment and sexual harassment. Here, the work by MacMillan, Nierobisz and Welsh (2000), Fairchild and Rudman (2008) and Wesselmann and Kelly (2010) are particularly enlightening. Thereafter, I review literature on sex, gender and gender performativity with regard to femininity. Here, the work by Butler (1988, 1990, 1993), Coole (1997), Ahmed (2014) and Gee (2011) finds expression.

Next, I review literature made within the feminist legal discipline and feminist geography discipline with regard to street harassment. Here the literature by inter alia Bowman (1993), Thompson (1994), Tuerkheimer, (1997), Laniya (1995) and Rosewarne (2005) finds expression, but I also include those writing from the social psychology discipline as mentioned above. Additionally, I review literature on ‘bystander sexism’ which focuses on how street harassment can affect those not directly implicated in the altercation. Here, the work by Chaudoir and Quinn (2010) is important.

Literature on men and masculinities and its relationship to street harassment are also important. Here, the work by Connell (2005), Laniya (2005), Wesselmann and Kelly (2010) are particularly useful. The final literature reviewed emanates from the sociolinguistics discipline. Here, the work by Tannen (1991), Coates and Cameron (1989), Milroy (1980), Lakoff (1972, 1975), Banda and Oketch (2009), Kissling (1991), Mashiri (2000), Millan (2016) and Cruz, Correa Mancera and Bailey (2016) are employed.

## **2.1. Street harassment as sexual harassment**

Within the discipline of Social Psychology, scholars (MacMillan et al, 2000; Fairchild and Rudman, 2008; Wesselmann and Kelly, 2010) state that street harassment is a form of sexual harassment. The differences between sexual harassment and (stranger or street) harassment is that the former is often theorized as occurring in institutional settings such as school and work sites, whereby the latter occurs beyond these domains, such as in public spaces among males and females who are unacquainted with each other. Scholars within the Social Psychology discipline prefer to term the phenomenon 'stranger harassment' so as to place emphasis on the unacquainted nature between individuals within the event. Street harassment as it is studied here can be seen as a subcategory or form of sexual harassment on the basis of it including unwanted sexual acts, that which is a basic tenet of sexual harassment specific to institutional settings.

Literature pertaining to sexual harassment specific to institutional settings is placed into three main areas. These are (1) sexual coercion, (2) gender harassment and (3) unwanted sexual attention (Gelfand, Fitzgerald and Drasgow, 1995 in Fairchild and Rudman, 2008:340). Briefly, sexual coercion is a direct request or requirement of a sexual act in return for a job or school related reward(s), gender harassment is the degradation of women among men (i.e. group level), such as making jokes about women which position them as 'sex objects' or posting<sup>6</sup> pictures of women which portray their bodies as being sex objects. Lastly, unwanted sexual attention is the degradation of women at the individual level such as treating a woman as a sex object, for example, sending her an email which is regarded as inappropriate, grabbing and/ or touching her or constantly staring at her.

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<sup>6</sup> Preferably on online platforms and chat sites.

It is noted that women may frequently view and label sexual coercion as a form of sexual harassment. However, this is experienced by roughly only 5%-10% of samples in their study which makes it a rare occurrence. Gender harassment, on the other hand, is more prevalent as it is experienced by 50% or more samples followed by unwanted sexual attention (Galfand et al, 1995 in Fairchild and Rudman).

While researchers (see Klonoff and Landrine, 1995; Klonoff, Landrine and Campbell, 2000; Landrine et al, 2003; Landrine and Klonoff, 1997 in Fairchild and Rudman, 2008: 340) who inspect sex discrimination identify that it can occur in a variety of settings which occur beyond the domain of school and work sites, their findings fall short in separating the effects of being harassed by strangers as opposed to known perpetrators as is the case in institutional settings.

The authors draw on the work of Gardner (1984), the first scholar to write about the phenomena of street harassment. In her study, she provides an empirical focus which details: the context in which it takes place, the participants therein, the behaviours that are characteristics of stranger harassment, interpretations people have of stranger harassment and the strategies which are employed to avoid stranger harassment. Gardner's data is derived by conducting 506 interviews with 293 women and 213 men. From her analysis, it is evident that street harassment is similar to researchers within the Social Psychology field's conceptualization of it as sexual harassment or 'unwanted sexual attention'. Fairchild and Rudman state that although Gardner's research allows for a clear representation of the experience of stranger harassment, the connection between it (stranger harassment) and literature on unwanted attention seems to be over-looked.

MacMillan, Nierobisz and Welsh (2000) conducted the only study which documents differences between unwanted sexual attention from strangers and known perpetrators. The



authors draw on data collected in 1993 from a national sample consisting of Canadian women who responded to the violence Against Women survey (VANS; Johnson and Sacco, 1995), which focus on the data from 8 items measuring stranger and non-stranger sexual harassment. The stranger harassment items evaluated whether the respondents had ever received, as stated “an offensive phone call, received unwanted attention, (i.e. anything which does not pertain to touching, catcalls, whistling, leering or blowing kisses) been followed in a manner that frightened them or experienced indecent exposure of some sort” (MacMillan et al, 2000:341). The items measuring non-stranger sexual harassment represented both *quid pro*<sup>7</sup> and hostile environment sexual harassment. Their study reveal that 85% of the women reported experiencing stranger harassment and the majority experienced unwanted sexual attention (e.g. catcalls and leering), contrastingly 51% experienced non-stranger sexual harassment and 5% reported having experienced *quid pro* sexual harassment.

MacMillan’s et al’s (2000) research is therefore an indication that stranger harassment may be a more prevalent problem than sexual harassment as is traditionally understood, whereby it also has a more consistent and significant impact on women’s fears in relation to non-stranger harassment. The survey indicates that stranger harassment reduces feelings of safety while walking or being alone at home during the night, using public transportation and walking alone in a parking garage.

Fairchild and Rudman note that since sexual harassment and stranger harassment are related, there are similar negative physical and psychological consequences. However, extending work on sexual harassment that include experiences thereof that go beyond work and school

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<sup>7</sup> Quid Pro is the Latin word for ‘something for something’ or ‘this for that’ defined as “a favour or advantage granted in return for something”,  
[https://www.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=https://dkru86weszx9t.cloudfront.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/quid-pro-quo.jpg&imgrefurl=https://www.grammarly.com/blog/quid-pro-quo/&h=800&w=1520&tbnid=WBq5Y68x97y49M:&q=quid+pro&tbnh=160&tbnw=304&usg=\\_\\_nn7yUR3dhOSIUhvVUTmmPJ7LIPj4%3D&vet=10ahUKEwj11fLu67rbAhUGD8AKHbeXDegQ9QEIKjAA..i&docid=bkfh5\\_9yXAKL2M&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj11fLu67rbAhUGD8AKHbeXDegQ9QEIKjAA](https://www.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=https://dkru86weszx9t.cloudfront.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/quid-pro-quo.jpg&imgrefurl=https://www.grammarly.com/blog/quid-pro-quo/&h=800&w=1520&tbnid=WBq5Y68x97y49M:&q=quid+pro&tbnh=160&tbnw=304&usg=__nn7yUR3dhOSIUhvVUTmmPJ7LIPj4%3D&vet=10ahUKEwj11fLu67rbAhUGD8AKHbeXDegQ9QEIKjAA..i&docid=bkfh5_9yXAKL2M&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj11fLu67rbAhUGD8AKHbeXDegQ9QEIKjAA)

sites allow the authors to discuss notions of self-objectification and the accompanying fear of violence which had not directly been addressed in traditional sexual harassment literature. Because their study and findings encapsulate what many feminist scholars discuss, their contributions to street (stranger) harassment are provided in later sections of this chapter.

## **2.2. Feminism Theory: sex, gender, gender performativity**

Butler (1988, 1993) critiques the Structuralist feminist tradition on their distinction between “sex” and “gender”. For these (Structuralist feminist) theorists, sex is argued to be a matter of biological differences and a biological ‘truth’, whereby gender follows sex to encapsulate this. However, in Butler’s post-Structuralist theorizing of sex and gender, she argues that sex should not be thought of as a matter of biological differences or a biological ‘truth’. Instead, she urges her readers to think about sex as being relevant only because discourse and power makes it so.

Butler views sex as being ‘normative’ or what is called a “regulatory ideal” (an ideal way in which genders should be materialized) (Foucault 1970, 1987, in Butler, 1993), whereby gender, on the other hand, follows and comes into being through the process in which these regulatory ideals *materialize* sex into genders. This materialization is continuously achieved through a reiteration of these ‘norms’ or regulatory ideals, thereby showing the social constructedness of gender, but also the ways in which gender is constrained by its regulatory ideals.

Where I note that the materialization of sex refers to the enacting of gender/s, Butler refers to this as gender performativity<sup>8</sup> which she defines as a “reiterative and citational practice by

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<sup>8</sup> We may use the terms gender performativity and the materialization of genders interchangeably.

which discourse produces the effects that it names” (1988:2). In this sense, what constitutes the ‘body’s’ gender comes as a result of the effect of ‘power’ which is produced through discourse/ language. In thinking about the way in which discourse and power constitutes the materialization of the ‘body’ and its gender, Butler draws on a Speech-Act theory inspired by Austin (1962), whereby she states, “[A] Performative is a Discursive Practice that enacts or produces that which it names” (2003: 6). In this sense, the power to ‘name’ and the power which in turn is emanated through ‘naming’, do not exist independently, but gains ‘authority’ by materializing in accordance to what is dominant and considered the ‘norm’. These dominant norms comes to, as Butler states, “interperlate” the body and create over time durable discourses of what is considered a ‘normal’ or ‘non-normal’ gendered ‘body’ in terms of speaking, acting, valuing and believing. The body is therefore *bounded* by these discourses and performs its gender in relation to what is considered a comprehensible body.

Butler notes that ‘bodies’, however, do not always perform their gender/s according to the norms by which their materialization is informed. Hence, the very performative nature of gender means that there exists room for it to be performed differently. However, its performative nature is influenced and limited by conduct and conformity with regard to societal norms (discourse and power) which contributes to false perceptions that there is a ‘truth’ of gender. Butler proposes that in place of the conception of construction, readers should familiarize themselves with the notion of ‘matter’ that which relates to the process of the materialization of bodies that stabilizes and becomes hegemonic overtime.

### **2.2.1. Interpellating the body**

In this section, the study considers the ‘body’ in terms of embodiment and affect, that being not solely attending to the discourses and the power it emanates which allow ‘bodies’ to be interperlated, but how individuals feel about these interpellations and how the ‘body’ is constructed or matters in relation to or against these interpellations. Coole (1997) argues that within the social science disciplines, the body, in terms of embodiment [and even affect] has not been a focus of much scholarly attention due to the “mind/ body dualist” approach. In this sense, embodiment is viewed as distinct from the mind and habitual. In this sense, that which is not an act of agency and is therefore deemed unrelated in explaining and understanding collective life. She further argues that the limitation in an approach to studying the body within the social sciences are that scholars, as stated,

[T]end to comment on other texts that discuss the body; objectify the body within a theoretical structure or present embodiment as a discursive construction—a legible text—that effaces its materiality (Braidotti 2000, 42ff, Shilling 2003 in Coole 2007:417).

In this sense, scholars focus exclusively on culturally dominant discourses, but have paid less attention to the role of agency in producing counter-discourses of the ‘body’. Hence, she argues that scholars should gear their attention toward what is ‘normative’ with regards to ‘bodies’ and the identities that they bear. Also, they should go further, whereby they attend to how what is considered normative is deconstructed. This is done through attending to the lived experiences of individuals whose identities materialize in contrast to the way in which dominant discourses interperlates it. This approach to studying the body therefore requires phenomenological attention to the senses which is the ways in which social actors experience their bodies as well as the way in which structures of power which is brought about by

dominant discourses and/ or interpellations and the power it emanates inform these experiences.

In regarding the body, from a phenomenological sensuous perspective, as a 'relevant' tool of inquiry, key phenomenologists (Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, de Beauvoir and Bourdieu)<sup>9</sup> have urged scholars to regard the body as a 'powerful actor' and it is their early work which informs Coole's study. In recognizing the 'body' as a 'powerful actor' it is described in philosophical terms as being 'two-dimensional' which is one that is passive as well as 'active' and reflexive. Here, a distinction is made between what is known as the 'objective body' and the 'phenomenal, lived body'.

Coole notes that the body in terms of its 'two-dimensionality' is significant because it describes a body that is "...simultaneously lived and effacious (interiority), and constrained and vulnerable (exteriority); one that is accordingly both vehicle and victim of power" (1997: 416). In this sense, the body's lived and effacious nature can be regarded as the means by which the 'body' or the bearer of the 'body' is agentic, whereby it has a certain manner of being in the world. In this way, the body performs particular identities in relation to or against the many ways in which the body is interperlated through discursive power. However, this very materiality (of the 'body') also renders it passive, whereby it is visually seen by others and is continuously subjected to the many inevitable interpellations which directly or indirectly 'communicate' whether the construction of the body is done 'correctly' or 'incorrectly' which in turn may impact affectfully on the self. As is stated,

...the body's exteriority [...] situates [it] within intersubjective fields and socio-corporeal hierarchies where they are rendered passive and fragile. The flesh is vulnerable to material and well as symbolic violence and pain. It is objectified,

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<sup>9</sup> No dates are provided by Coole (1997). However, she solely mentions these scholars in her philosophical paper.

imprisoned and exploited. It is further subjected to the look, the gaze, the surveillance of the others... its surfaces are marked and inscribed by others, such that different bodies are recognised and categorised, disciplined and excluded (Satre 1956, 347ff.; Merleau- Ponty 1968; Foucault 1979, 195; Asad 2003; Butler 2004, in Coole, 1997:416).

What is important to note is that dominant discourses and the power it emanates which allows 'bodies' to be interperlated always has a particular bearing on the bearer of the body. In this sense, from phenomenological, sensuous point-of-view, social actors are always in the process of feeling a certain way about these interpellations as well as always being in the process of challenging these interpellations (or not). This is in line with Ahmed's argument in which she states that "we need to begin to think of the skin as a surface that is felt only in the event of being impressed upon by others" (2014:73). Similarly, Leder states that

[T]he body is only absent when it is perpetually outside itself, caught up in a multitude of involvements with other people. And so experiences of exposure [arising from interpellations] become lived as a return to the body, or as a rendering present to a consciousness of what has become absent (Leder 1990, in Ahmed 2014:73).

It may therefore be important to consider how discourses in street harassing events interperlate (regulate and mobilize) female 'bodies' in Cape Town, but also how these 'bodies', in turn, through embodiment, respond to these dominant discourses which have the power to regulate and mobilize them.

### **2.2.2. Problematizing the category of women**

Butler's (1990) views of sex and gender critiques the Structuralist feminist theorization of the category of "women". These feminist theorists assume that a universal identity can be understood through the category of "women" and that their oppression has a commonality. However, their theories draw solely on the experiences, and in turn, representation of that which is a white, heterosexual, middle-class feminism.

For Butler, this theorization is problematic as it ignores the social constructedness of the category of women. This may come about due to racialized, class, ethnicized, sexualized and regional differences among women in relation to the commonality of gender, thereby problematizing the hegemonic 'normativity' of a white, heterosexual, middle-class experience.

### **2.2.3. Gender relations**

Connell (2005) states that when thinking about gender, there is likelihood to assume that issues related to gender are subsequently women related issues. However, he argues that gender is relational and is about relationships of desire and power. Therefore, even if one is to possess an understanding of gender based on the misconception of it merely being a matter of sex and/ or bodily (biological) differences, one should bear in mind that there are two (or more) terms in this difference. In this sense, the materialization of sex into genders does not solely relate to the female gender, but a broad division of human bodies into female, but also male and 'other' bodies. It is this broad division of bodies which is indicative of gender divisions.

With regards to Butler's understanding of sex, gender, gender performativity and the problematization of the category of women, within the event of street harassment, then, women (and men) are expected to perform their gender accordingly. This performativity of gender refer to the means by which individuals are socialized from a young age with regard to how they should act, thereby accepting certain gender roles and regarding genders (male and female) as complimentary. Hence, false perceptions and ideals of gender performances are materialized in street harassing events.

### **2.3. Is street harassment gender-specific? A feminist approach**

Within the Feminist legal discipline, scholars (Bowman, 1993; Thompson, 1994; Tuerkheimer, 1997; Laniya 1995) favour the term, street harassment. Other labels are rejected on the basis in which they trivialize the event. Laniya offers a reason as to why the label, street harassment, is sufficient. She notes that labels such as 'street hassling' or 'street remarks', for example, are not adequate, because the event is more than a 'remark' or a 'hassle', but instead that "which is an assault on women's psychic sensibilities, whereby it is used as a tool to systemically subjugate women" (1995:100). In other non-western contexts, more slang terms are used which equally trivializes the event. For example, Dhillon and Bakaya (2014) who through their study aim to understand the lived experiences of women in public spaces within the context of India, note that the term 'eve-teasing' is used. Although this term is problematic in nature, it is noted that 'eve-teasing' is depicted in many Hindi films as an act of 'romantic love'. The term itself is seen as inadequate on the basis in which it draws on the biblical discourse of women as personifying "eves" as temptress who provoke men, whereby "teasing" denotes the occurrence as 'playful' in nature (Ramasubramanian and Oliver, 2003; Baxi, 2001, in Dhillon and Bakaya, 2014).



Returning to Laniya and her advocating for the term street harassment, she further states that street harassment is an appropriate label, whereby “street” makes reference to the fact that it is a specific type of harassment which occurs in public places, whereby “harassment” highlights the negative psychological effects it inflicts upon women. She notes that the term does not hint at its gender-specific nature as she believes it should. However, she argues that to do so would be inadequate, whereby it would exclude men who are harassed by women as well as ignore the fact that intra-gendered forms of harassment also prevails. However, she cautions against attempts to equate the two experiences, whereby to do so, she argues, would be to assume an equal, objective world in which men and women experience the effects and harms of an occurrence in the same manner. She states, then, that when these two experiences are compared, the social construction which equates males with power and females with powerlessness is ignored. She therefore advocates for the need to have scholars go further than simply using the term, street harassment, whereby they should also explain its features so that those using the term can have a consistent and shared understanding of what is meant by it. This study argues that the definitions associated with the phenomenon of street harassment are sufficient as it may encapsulate unique behavioural forms across various contexts. However, labels associated with the phenomenon are problematic. This study also adopts the term, street harassment, as it is in line with phenomenological, sensuous orientations. In this sense, it is geared toward understanding how individuals feel about street harassment.

Although street harassment encapsulates a wide range of behaviours, Bowman states that it has some defining characteristics and she proposes what she calls a “working definition” thereof as posited below:

The targets of street harassment are female; (2) the harassers are male; (3) the harassers are unacquainted with their targets; (4) the encounter is face to face; (5) the forum is a public one, such as a street, sidewalk, bus, bus station, taxi, or other places

to which the public generally has access, but (6) the content of the speech, if any is not intended as public discourse. Rather the remarks are aimed at the individual (although the harasser may intend that they be overheard by comrades or passers-by), and they are objectively degrading, objectifying, humiliating, and frequently threatening in nature (Bowman 1993: 523-4).

Feminist legal scholars note that a common theme within feminist jurisprudence is that the law (most often consisting of males) refuse to take issues affecting women seriously. One such issue is the street harassment of women in public spaces. They argue that legal consideration should be geared toward that of street harassment as it restrains women's liberty. Bowman, one of the first feminist legal scholars to address the inadequacy of the law in protecting women, quotes Locke in which he states that liberty "is to be free from restraint and violence from others; which cannot be where there is no law" (Locke, 1956 in Bowman, 1993: 520). Bowman states that in the case of women, their liberty in the sense of freedom from restraint is therefore seen as being constrained through street harassing events as it limits a woman's geographical mobility. Put another way, women cannot participate and enjoy public spaces as equal citizens in relation to men. Hence, Bowman argues that street harassment "accomplishes an informal ghettoization of women – a ghettoization to the private sphere of hearth and home" (2003: 520) a situation worthy of legal consideration and redress. Feminist Geographer, Rosewarne (2005) similarly states that public spaces privilege men at the expense of women.

Tuerkheimer (1997) suggests another reason as to why street harassment has not been considered problematic and worthy of legal redress as well as has not been given much attention across disciplines generally. She states that this comes as a result of the gender-specificity of street harassment. She explains that for a phenomenon to be gender-specific means that it is experienced by someone solely on the basis of their gender/sexuality,

however, the harm, if any, is implicated by someone outside of the gendered group. Street harassment is therefore theorized as being gender-specific as it is experienced by women solely on the basis of their gender/ sexuality, but is most often implicated or brought about by those outside of the gendered group, that being men and boys. The harms associated with it is also largely gender-specific as it is experienced solely by women, but remains rather invisible to the wider male culture. This accounts for the inconsistent nature of the way in which street harassment is understood between the sexes with men often considering it as harmless and playful while women find it to be harmful and disturbing. This inconsistency is further reinforced by the fact that street harassment is not readily visible to men, as Tuerkheimer states, drawing on her own unique experiences, particularly that street harassing behaviour usually stops when she is accompanied by men in the public space. For this reason, Thompson (1994) notes that many attempts have sought to have men experience what women go through on a daily basis.

It is the very inconsistencies between how street harassment is understood between the genders that has allowed its uniquely gendered harms to go invisible and largely unnoticed across legal legislature and academic disciplines in general which further compounds the lack of general agreement in which to term the phenomenon. Hence, this explains West's assertion in which she states, "an injury uniquely sustained by a disempowered group will lack a name, a history, and in general a linguistic reality" (1987: 81-85).

#### **2.4. Fear of rape**

It is argued that street harassment invokes fears of rape and other crimes as the events are often experienced as frightening and threatening. These fears, however, are believed to be realistic. For example, Langelan suggests that a potential rapist may harass women on the

street to determine which ones are easy 'targets', this is a process she calls 'rape testing'. She explains that when a woman is passive and non-assertive during the initial harassing stage, she will display these similar behaviours while she is being raped. This passive response would therefore render the woman a suitable 'target' as opposed to those who are more assertive and confrontational (Langelan 1993, in Thompson, 2004).

Tuerkheimer argues that this precise fear of rape is a uniquely gendered experience. She explains that women are always vulnerable in spaces where men are also present, because "... gender is constructed along lines of power, where men are dominant and women are subordinated, and where the locus of [their] oppression is [their] sexuality" (1997: 197). Hence, when women are harassed, this subordination is reinforced, whereby they are reminded that they are under constant threat of sexual violence. In this way, street harassment functions as a salient warning of the all-present threat of sexual violence, whereby it is not a product of a sexually terroristic culture, but a factor in actively producing it. Kissling who seeks to understand the multiple functions of street harassment quotes Sheffield as defining a sexually terroristic culture as "a system by which males frighten and, through fear, control and dominate women" (Sheffield, 1987, in Kissling, 1991: 456). This is synonymous with Tuerkheimer's argument in which she states that street harassment is not necessarily related to any immediate danger as may be theorized by scholars. Instead, it is an evocative reflection of male dominance and the inescapable reminder of women's vulnerability to various forms of harm.

Although women's experiences of street harassment are relayed as that of being an invasion of privacy, Tuerkheimer, however, argues that scholars have a responsibility to relay these harms in ways that reflect its gender-specific nature and not that of being gender-neutral. As she argues, the harm of street harassment is not only related to, but dependant on a woman's sexual subordination. In this vein, she notes that academics have not directly addressed this

phenomenon adequately. Additionally, this accounts for why Tuerkheimer's definition of street harassment operates in stark contrast to that of Bowman's, and scholars in other disciplines generally, whereby she states that,

[S]treet harassment occurs when a woman in a public place is intruded on by a man's words, noises or gestures. In so doing, he asserts his rights to comment on her body or other feature of her person, defining her as object and himself as subject with power over her. As a practice, street harassment embodies and perpetuates women's sexual subordination (1997: 167).

I argue that Tuerkheimer's definition is also sufficient. The right to comment on her body and specifically 'other feature(s) of her person' shows the ways in which the remark may transcend that of solely concerning the body's physicality in terms of its sexuality and may be inclusive of other understandings of power and dominance. This is indeed a consideration which may be a step forward for this study.

In dialogue with Bowman, Tuerkheimer finds her naming of the harms, namely "a loss of liberty" and an "invasion of privacy" problematic. For Tuerkheimer, Bowman's phrasing of these harms relays it as being largely gender-neutral in nature, whereby there is no indication of its gender-specific nature that which she believes is a crux of the phenomenon. She states that through these terms, Bowman fails to mention the greater gender-specific distress. She states that "by framing [womens'] unique harms as synonymous with male-experience, we essentially deny that [their] suffering is gendered" (1997: 183). She therefore advocates for the fact that only once scholars relay that gender-specific harms is a clear reference to a woman's sexual subordination can these harms become visible to the male culture and be remedied.

Tuerkheimer also finds Bowman's suggestion that street harassment 'accomplishes an informal ghettoization of women' problematic as it implies that women, in a very small-minded and archaic manner of thinking, should stay at home and never leave the domestic, private sphere or that they never leave this sphere at all. Tuerkheimer, however, states that women do not stay at home, but instead they walk the streets and endure the suffering. She also cautions against attempts in having women try to make men understand what they go through on a daily basis such as that of gender swapping through clothing (cf Thompson, 1994), because she argues that when men, even dressed up as women are harassed and may have insight into what it feels like, it is still essentially a woman's experience. She concludes by arguing that when women are sexually harassed, they have more than their 'privacy invaded', but unwillingly become objects available for men's utilization. The notion of woman as 'object' becomes evident in the ways in which street harassment results in sexual-objectification, and in some cases self-objectification.

## **2.5. Sexual objectification**

Fredrickson and Robert note that a central feature of sexual objectification is that "[b]odies exist within social and cultural contexts, and are also constructed through sociocultural practices and discourses" (Fredrickson and Robert, 1997:8 in Fairchild and Rudman, 2008). It is argued that within the Western culture, women's bodies are constantly regarded as sexual objects in diverse ways such as through pornography, in the media and advertising. However, regardless of the ways in which women's bodies are depicted as sexual objects, an underlying crux of all forms of sexual objectification is the experience of being treated as a body (or collection of female body parts) which is valued, most often, for its use or utilization by others (most often males).

Tuerkheimer states that “objectification is fundamental to the ways in which the female gender has been socially constructed... [whereby] being objectified is a paradigmatic element of the experience of womanhood”, she further quotes Young who states that

part of the situation of being a woman is that of living the ever-present possibility that one will be gazed upon as a mere body, as shape and flesh that presents itself as a potential object of another subject’s intention and manipulation, rather than a living manifestation of action and intention (Young, 1990 in Tuerkheimer 1997: 184).

The ‘unwanted attention’ experienced through street harassment is therefore seen as another example of women being regarded as sexual objects, whereby comments, both ‘complimentary’ (nice legs) and derogatory (fat bitch), show that the harassers underlying intention is that they are in a dominant position to judge and evaluate the bodies of women.

Scholars argue that sexual objectification experienced through street harassment results in negative effects, such as that of self-objectification. Kelly and Rudman state that

the consequences of objectification arises when the woman begins to objectify herself (i.e. self-objectify); women regard themselves as mere sex objects, to experience body shame and to chronically monitor their external appearance (2008:348).

Similarly, Tuerkheimer notes that to be “constantly subjected to the male gaze, women come to evaluate themselves through it [...] [women’s] identities are therefore connected to their external appearance in ways that men’s identities tend not to be” (1997:185).

The above situation regarding self-objectification is quite evident in a qualitative psychological study conducted by Dhillon and Bakaya (2016) in the context of India. Their study reveal that women tend to take certain measures to avoid attracting attention to themselves by using non-sexual parts of the body (arms, hands and so forth) as well as

scarves to cover and protect the more sexual body parts (breast, legs and so forth). These measures taken are reflective of the belief that rape, for example, occurs as a result of the way in which women dress, whereby people often believe that women can prevent sexual violence by monitoring their dress codes. The unwanted attention brought about by street harassment is similarly also often taken up as something which is believed to occur because of the way a woman dresses.

Thompson (1994) refutes the view of street harassment as being a result of 'provocative dress codes' and draws on a documentary created by Maggie Hadleigh West which illustrates this. The documentary highlights the pervasiveness of sexual abuse in a sequel to a documentary film entitled "Warzone". In this particular documentary, Maggie is the protagonist, whereby she notes that she wore 'non-provocative' clothing such as a jean, shirt and a jacket while traversing in public. However, regardless of her dress code, she is harassed by 112 men from across different race groups for the duration of 7.5 hours. Her harassment includes being subjected to vulgar remarks as well as having her breasts pinched and her buttocks slapped. Therefore, Thompson rejects the argument that women are 'asking' for harassment by wearing 'revealing' clothing as the documentary allows her to conclude that street harassment cannot be explained or justified on the basis of the way a woman chooses to dress. This argument therefore compliments Tuerkheimer's understanding of street harassment as something which affects women primarily because of their gendered subordination and not that of anything else. Hence, it is evident that women and their identities are taken up as interchangeable in street harassing events.

Tuerkheimer explains that some scholars are of the belief that if a woman considers the complimentary remarks made by men as such (a compliment), then objectification has not occurred. However, she argues that regardless of the way in which an evaluative comment is



received and interpreted, the woman's body is nevertheless a passive object, whereby harassers are in a dominant position to judge it.

A psychological response to woman who regarded sexual remarks as complimentary is offered by Fairchild and Rudman (2008). They assert that when women regard 'complimentary' commentary as positive, it is reflective of the way in which she had been conditioned into believing that her value as a woman is determined by her body. In this sense, objectification nevertheless occurs.

## **2.6. Bystander experiences**

Psychological effects experienced on the part of the recipients directly involved in the events of street harassment is widely addressed as seen in what has been discussed thus far. However, it is argued that less attention is geared toward the effects which street harassment might have on those witnessing the event. Chaudoir and Quinn's (2010) empirical psychology study is important here as it focuses on women's group level responses to street harassment (or sexism) which they argue had received little empirical attention.

In order to address the gap in knowledge, the scholars draw on understandings from social identity perspectives (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) and Intergroup Emotions (Mackie et al, 2000; Smith 1993, 1999) to examine the possibility that being exposed to an event of what they call, bystander sexism, may elicit group-based responses from U.S undergraduate women. In this sense, a woman who overhears or witnesses a street harassing event which she is not directly involved in will still be affected by it as the subject (women) may see herself as part of the gendered-group affected by this type of sexism and not just as an individual. Specific experiences of sexism may also be a point of reference for how women perceive and react to men in general, because sexism implicates group-based

identities which are prejudiced acts toward women based on their gender, whereby the perpetrator is most often male. In this sense, the actions of one sexist man may serve to influence women's perceptions of all men.

Social Identity theories make way for an understanding that individuals may differ to the extent that they view themselves as individuals vs. interchangeable members of a social group (gender). In the context of gender, for example, it is argued that environmental stimuli can influence women to navigate from thinking about themselves as individuals to now thinking about themselves as interchangeable members of the larger social group of women. Intergroup emotions theory which extends knowledge on identity perspectives suggest that when women's group identities become salient, their emotions and motivations shift to reflect their group concerns as opposed to their individual concerns. Hence, when a woman views an instance of sexism, her group and gender identity as such becomes salient and she may subsequently experience emotions and motivations on behalf of her gender (i.e., intergroup response) rather than as an individual person (i.e. intraindividual response) who is unaffected by the event, because she is not directly involved in the altercation. This occurs because she is now thinking about herself as an in-group member who subsequently also becomes concerned with the out-group (i.e. men). Hence, when gender-group identity is made salient women may experience emotions and motivations toward the out-group (men) based on whether the current situation may help or harm women as a whole.

The public nature of what the authors choose to term 'catcalls' (in relation to outdoor acts of sexism) are likely to be overheard by other women, namely bystanders, whereby as earlier noted, these remarks may affect them. Hence, a case of bystander sexism may prevail, that which Chaudoir and Quinn define as "an instance wherein a woman is not directly involved in the immediate social context of the sexist event targeted at another woman, but is exposed

to the event nonetheless” (2010:625). Due to her group-based membership, then, she may also begin to feel a sense of anger toward the man (or men) implicated in the event.

In this study, the emotions which are experienced on witnessing an event of street harassment are important. This may provide an alternative view for how women experience public spaces in Cape Town, but may also give insight into how women can be sources of protection for others.

## **2.7. Differing experiences of street harassment by women and girls**

The literature to be discussed on the differing experiences of street harassment is attentive to Butler’s critique of the category of women as seen as being that of a universal identity, whereby there is a commonality with regard to their experiences. Scholars therefore also advocate for the need to understand the differing experiences expressed by women within street harassing events. In this sense, street harassment is not seen as something which is experienced in the same way due to the commonality of gender among women, but instead may differ on the basis of other identity categories in relation to (and/ or intersected) gender such as race, age, ethnicity and so forth.

Tuerkheimer argues that women may be affected in different ways if they are members of other disempowered groups. For example, Davis (1994) states that for a very young girl street harassment prevails as her first encounter of what it means to be a sexual being; an event that produces shame and confusion. The situation is similar in the African context, for example Mashiri (2000) who focuses on what he terms, street remarks, between males and females in Harare, Zimbabwe, notes that sexual evaluative comments functions as a ‘rite of passage’ for young girls. In this sense, from a young age, girls are conditioned and socialized into

believing that their gender is a point of reference for their sexual vulnerability in relation to males and that they are generally in an inferior position within the gendered hierarchy. For this study, it would be interesting to consider how children, specifically young girls experience street harassment in Cape Town as I note that there seems to be a dearth in literature pertaining to the relationship between this phenomenon and children.

It is believed that street harassment may also differ with the race, class or the ethnicity of women and the particular gendered interactions to which she has become familiar with. Davis' work is also widely referenced within feminist scholarship on her study in which she attempts to identify the differences in street harassing experiences between African American women and European American women. It is noted that in many African American communities, African American women and men engage in sexually orientated banter (bandage or humorous banter) in public (Gardner and Kramarae, 1994, in Bowman, 1993) which is referred to as 'rapping'. Where many scholars have pointed out similarities between rapping and street harassment, others has even gone as far as stating that because of this, African American women enjoy receiving street remarks, and are therefore not harmed in anyway by them (see Patterson, 1991, in Bowman, 1993). Although 'rapping' may exhibit similar features to that of street remarks, it differs on the basis in which the event of street harassment occurs. Namely, women are not ratified speakers, but are intended to overhear what is being said to or about them. Furthermore, 'rapping' is an agreed-upon interaction, whereas, street harassment prevails and persists even when women take active measures to avoid as well as express dislike toward it.

Significantly, it is noted that even though African American women may respond assertively to 'rapping', even within this context, speech rights are unequal. Davis concludes that although African American women may be familiar with gendered-interactions which resemble street harassment, they, however, do not enjoy it, because the experience is

reminiscent of a history bent on disrespect, degradation and inhumane sexual mistreatment to which black women have been subjected to by white men. Scholars therefore advocate for the need to build on this discourse so as to elicit differing perspectives and experiences of street harassment among women and girls which may come about because of their gender and its relation to/ and or intersection to other identity categories. This is important for the study at hand, because by eliciting these differing experiences it may become evident that street harassment may shift from being viewed as solely a gendered issue, but perhaps something which is racialized as well.

## **2.8. Theories of masculinities: gender relations and wider factors**

Connell (2005) understands gender to function as a social arrangement with which different historical circumstances take different forms. In relation to Butler's (1990) argument, he argues that biological reproduction is not reflexive of particular gender practice. Hence, the notion of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are what he calls, gender practices, whereby these (masculinity and femininity) are understood as gender projects, that which he defines as "dynamic arrangements of social practice through time in which we make ourselves and are made as particular kinds of beings" (2005:3). It is this particular gender-shaping of practice, he argues, that is found at every level of social reality. Importantly, it does not exist in isolation from other kinds of social relations. Hence, Gender is an aspect of all social situations, though in some events, particularly street harassing events, as it is understood in the feminist discipline, it may appear more salient.

When considering the behavioural and linguistic practice of street harassment, this can be understood as a social practice which solidifies the social construction between gender(s). This perpetuates the global gendered hierarchy which exist wherein females occupy the

bottom, subordinate position (in terms of their ‘femininity’) in relation to men who occupy the top, dominant position (in terms of their ‘masculinity’) in relation to women. The practice and consequences thereof, on the part of females, is a constant reminder which reinforces this. The relationship between masculinity and street harassment is taken up next.

Connell’s argument that gender involves both men and women index the importance of it being relational. Connell argues that to understand gender inequalities, it is essential to research the more *privileged* group (men) as well as the *less-privileged* group (women). This, he argues, requires more than a theorization of men as a given category. Hence, it is important to examine men’s gender practices and the way the gender order define, position and constrains men. This refers to “masculinity” that which Connell defines as “the patterns [...] of social practices linked to the position of men in the gender order, and socially distinguishable from practices linked to the position of women” (2005:1).

Traditionally speaking, Connell argues that hegemonic masculinities were understood as a pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not solely role expectations in relation to a gendered identity) that made way for male dominance over women. Hegemonic masculinities were distinguished from other masculinities, for e.g. subordinate masculinities. It was not assumed to be normal or/ and a given on the part of men, whereby only a minority of men might enact it. However, it was considered normative in the sense that it embodied the most ‘honoured’ way of being a man, whereby it required all men to position themselves in relation to it and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men. It is in relation to this group and to compliance among heterosexual women that the concept of hegemony (a specific form of masculinity) was substantial.

Connell notes that the above, traditional understanding of masculinity existed in thought, but it did not have physical or concrete existence and is defined in terms of the logic of a gender

system based on patriarchy. However, this type of hegemony came into existence in specific circumstances and was open to the possibility of change. Hence, there could be a struggle for hegemony, whereby older forms could be replaced by new ones. With regard to this, then, masculinities can be understood and viewed as multiple, whereby there are hierarchies of masculinities, one such form often being defined as a “hegemonic” pattern for a given society. Masculinities are also viewed as both collective and individual, whereby they are vigorously constructed in social life. Furthermore, masculinities are not clear-cut, but are inherently complex, whereby they change over time. In this sense, masculinity (or ways of being a man) is not fixed to one set of gender performances and/ or practices, but is fluid (ibid, 2005).

Where Connell states that because gender is relational and also requires a study of man and masculinities, it is no surprise that scholars indebted in the work of street harassment seek to understand why men engage in street harassing behaviour. Given the points as outlined in the gender relations model, it is evident that although street harassing events are practices of masculinity, the unfolding of and motivation for its practice differs, although its underlying cause is always that of a stance of male dominance toward women. The literature I further review illustrates this.

Langelan in her study divides harassers into three categories, namely predatory harassers, dominance harassers and strategic/ territorial harassers. Briefly speaking, predatory harassers harass for sexual satisfaction, dominance harassers harass to reassert men’s power over women and strategic/ territorial harassers harass to protect male environments (Langelan, 1993, in Laniya, 1995). Laniya notes that Langelan’s categorising of the harassers are both problematic and instrumental. With regard to the latter, it shows that harassing behaviour among men is not a uniform phenomenon as it fulfils multiple functions. However, regardless of these (multiple functions) male dominance seems to underlie them all.

Considering the three-part category, it is also considered problematic as it does not account for race-based or socio-economic harassing behaviour. For example, Laniya notes that a homeless man might harass a well-dressed, middle class woman not solely on the basis of her gender as female, but because of her class and privilege (which may be perceived) which operates in stark contrast to his. Hence, as a means of empowering himself from his marginalized position as a homeless man, he may be attempting to bring to the fore the only power he has left which is his manliness. This he then reasserts in public spaces (Laniya, 2004).

Laniya states that it is important to go beyond the sole harasser (man or boy), but instead to consider wider motivations such as phallogentric and misogynistic systems that foster and encourage such acts. For example, a study conducted by Benard and Schlaffer (1984) in which they conduct survey based interviews with 60 men about their intentions after they (the authors themselves) were harassed by them on the streets. Their findings reveal that 20% of the men state that they only engage in street harassment when they are in the company of other men, thereby supporting the explanation that the harassment of women is a form of male bonding which demonstrates male solidarity and joint power between them. Of this group, 15% of the men state that they consciously set out to anger and humiliate their victims, whereby they engage in using derogatory commentary and threats. Notably, some men state that they genuinely believe that women enjoy receiving attention while others claim that the activity is a form of harmless flirting.

With regard to situation factors, specifically being in groups vs being alone in public, several situational factors might influence the frequent nature of sexual harassment such as group norms which are defined as “general and consensual standards of behaviour that are considered common or appropriate in a specific context” (Cialdini et al, 1991; Forsyth, 1995, in Wesselmann and Kelly, 2010:3). These norms may have an influence on the behaviours of



the group members even in the event that they do not necessarily agree with these norms. Several authors agree (Asch 1995, 1956; Cialdini et al, 1991; Forsyth 1995; Pryor et al, 2003, in Wesselmann and Kelly, 2010) that if group members perceive norms to be tolerant for sexual harassment, even if these norms are not supported, men will be more favourably disposed to engage in these sexually harassing behaviours.

In relation to group norms, another important factor is the physical or implied presence of other group members. Wesselmann and Kelly draw on a host of literature which is instrumental in suggesting that being a member of a group can lead to a sense of anonymity and deindividuation which allows for the conduciveness of various types of uninhibited behaviour. Research on deindividuation and uninhibited behaviour suggests that anonymity is an important element (Diener 1979; Diener et al, 1976 in Wesselmann and Kelly, 2010), whereby uninhibited behaviour tends to be more self-centred, aggressive and less socially regulated than under less anonymous forms of interaction (Kiesler et al, 1984; Sproul and Kiesler 1986 in Wesselmann and Kelly, 2010). This research argues that it is also important to consider the spaces and which aspects thereof allow for the conduciveness or not for harassing behaviours.

The topic of street or stranger harassment has received little empirical attention, therefore there is no direct indication that stranger harassment is likely to occur in groups of men. However, some researchers imply that this may influence the unfolding of the events. For example, in a later study conducted by Gardner (1995) she states that stranger harassment is perpetrated by groups of men. Additionally, her research also supports the notion of group bonding. For example, she argues that stranger harassment may serve as an enjoyable experience for the men involved. Finally, Dall'Ara and Maass (1999) study reveals that the presence of other group members may make the inter-group context more salient, whereby this saliency equals an "us vs them" (men vs women) mentality and may further encourage

and foster bonding motives among males (Dall'Ara and Maass, 1999, in Wesselmann and Kelly, 2010). Although this study is not entirely interested in understanding why men harass women, it would be interesting to uncover what women's perceptions are of the forms of harassment which they are subjected to.

## **2.9. Gender and language**

Thus far, the literature review indicates that street harassment is a behavioural practice which solidifies rigid gender roles within the system of gender relations. Although behavioural practices encompass a wide range of acts, in this section the focus is more on verbal utterances. In this sense, particular ways of talk as well as the content thereof is said to be indicative of performing a particular gender. However, in the sociolinguistics discipline, scholars refute the view that forms of talk, in this case street remarks, index a particular gender. Additionally, where outside public spaces and inside private spaces are construed as male and female realms respectively, the idea that these public spaces are sites in which particular forms of male talk are appropriate as well as conducive for inevitable street harassing events is also contested. At this point, it is wise to revisit some of these foundational arguments as well as to look at how these have been incorporated into the study of street harassment within the sociolinguistics discipline.

Scholars (Lakoff, 1972, 1975; Milroy, 1980; Coates and Cameron, 1989; Tannen, 1991 and Banda and Oketch, 2009) focus on the different conversation styles among males and females, whereby the literature places emphasis on the fact that the linguistic behaviour among the sexes differ. Tannen (1991) labels conversation between males and females as cross-cultural forms of communication, whereby socialization results in these differences. She views female conversation as that which constitutes providing support, gaining

confirmation, negotiating intimacy and reaching consensus. In this sense, the sole purpose of female conversation is seen as that which is aimed at maintaining relationships. Male conversation, on the other hand, is seen as serving the purpose of giving or obtaining information. Tannen's views as they stand here have not been left uncontested.

Coates and Cameron (1989) argue that the linguistic behaviour of males is often used as a 'norm' against which the linguistic behaviours of women are evaluated. For example, Cameron (1997) state that the linguistic behaviour of females are viewed as deficient in contrast to that of males, whereas the latter are said to communicate to be competitive, whilst females, on the other hand, communicate to be cooperative. Additionally, males are said to communicate for status, whereas women communicate for intimacy. These arguments, however, call forth much criticism.

Milroy (2001) and Nichols (1983) provide an argument with regard to the use of the standard variety. They state that gender does not determine the use of a particular standard variety. Instead, the nature of the relationship, for example, the people with whom males and females frequently interact on a spectrum of gender roles determine their social roles in terms of language-use. Banda and Oketch's (2009) arguments compliment these views, whereby they describe functional multilingualism as a process of "adopting and adapting different languages in their repertoires for different social roles and contexts" (2009:197). In their study, the authors indicate how females reconceptualise power by demanding the use of the local variety, therefore transgressing the 'dominant' role played by males. In this particular interaction, females also indicated how the use of multilingualism as opposed to the 'language of power' foster and aid community development. When focusing on the African context, the authors raise the need to understand the social and cultural structures in which African males and females communicate, instead of viewing males as more powerful from a socioeconomic perspective as is the trend in Western literature. A need, then, to understand

the power relations from a sociocultural perspective is seen as being required. Another issue taken up within Banda and Oketch's (2009) study is that Western and African social organizations do not cohere with regard to what is considered as a male or female role. Their arguments therefore rest on the notion that anyone can perform a particular gender 'role', in this case the way in which one speaks.

## **2.10. Street remarks, content, structure and meaning**

Gardner defined street remarks as,

[e]valuative commentary from men that women, especially young women, are subjected to whenever they are unaccompanied by men in urban areas. Women do not feel free to return similar commentary to men. The comments vary in content (although they are typically about the woman's appearance) and in tone, ranging from a seemingly harmless 'hello baby' to vulgar suggestions and outright threats (Gardner, 1984).

Goffman (1963) defines these evaluative commentaries as "public markers", whereby he regards it as neutral, thereby emphasising its complimentary nature. Gardner (1989), however, in dialogue with Goffman, states that remarks may be complimentary in nature, but many other features contrasts these. In this sense, it violates the norms of what is considered to be complimentary behaviour as they occur in a public place, are passed among members of the opposite sex, whereby the expected response to a compliment, "thank you", is unacceptable and often produces escalating altercations within street harassing events. In this sense, the remarks often refer to parts of the body not normally available for public

examination and the remarks are not always positive, but could be derogatory, whereby no engagement from the recipient might lead to abuse.

With regard to Gardner's definition as mentioned above, it had been rendered incomplete by Kissling (1991) as it does not make any reference to the nonverbal element of this practice. Questions surrounding its so-called complementary characteristics as well as its lack of making explicit its nonverbal features are addressed in the circulation of contemporary studies as is mentioned below.

More recently, within the sociolinguistic field, scholars focus on the content, structure and form of street remarks within street harassing events to assist going beyond traditional understandings thereof as being as 'invasion of privacy' and causing a related feeling of a 'fear of rape'. Through a focus on particular remarks, the scholars uncover why these remarks cause these particular feelings and why they are taken up as either complimentary or not. Additionally, a focus on these allow them to go beyond the traditional view of street remarks as being indicative of a particular gender role, but how these are contested and reworked within the event. Furthermore, they also aim to show how the street remarks are not merely context-appropriate to the public sphere (space) in which it circulates. In essence, then, this approach to understanding street harassment embraces the fact that street remarks may be indicative of gender performativity and reflexive of the public nature of space, but it also leaves room to the understanding thereof as being indicative of the fostering of other political systems such as race, ethnicity and so forth.

Piropos, a type of flirtations street talk in the Chilean context has been studied by Achugar who argues that piropos is a particular "type of discourse practice that reflects and constructs a sociocultural order that promotes unequal gender roles" (2016: 501). Against the backdrop of the sociolinguistic understanding of language as playing a pertinent role in the production

and reproduction of society (in this case fostering gender systems), current work, however, investigate how language practices change in response to social change and how language practices are altered in order to transform society.

Achugar argues that piropos (street remarks) can be understood by situating it in their sociocultural contexts that establishes the unquestionable social norms of interactions in a particular social group and place. In other words, messages need to be situated in dynamic socio-historical and cultural contexts, whereby changes observed in the production and reception of this type of discourse practice reveal the nature of the relation between language, culture and society.

Previous linguistic analysis focuses on stylistic analysis that brings to the fore its romantic tone (Beinehauer, 1978 [1929] in Aguchar, 2016) or its display of morphological and lexical uses (Preisig, 1998 in Aguchar, 2016). In Socio-pragmatic studies, authors explore the negotiation of image and politeness in connection to Piropos in various geographical contexts (see Calvo Perez, 2005; Scherler, 2005). In these socio-pragmatic investigations, piropos is been considered a form of compliment in Spanish-speaking cultures (see Haverkate 2002). However, more recently, this discursive practice has also been focused upon to highlight its changing nature and the meaning it may have for different participants (see Achugar, 2002; Fridlitzius, 2009; Gomes Lopez, 2002; Malver and Gonzales, 2000, in Aguchar, 2016). This particular double meaning (as compliment or not) constitutes a threat to the positive image of the recipients, whereby there is no intention to please or compliment (Guitierrez-Kivas, 2014, in Aguchar, 2016). From a conceptual metaphor perspective (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) studies find piropos to be metaphors which represent women as objects that construct traditional images of femininity.

Millan (2016) in her study analyses piropos in terms of their structure to analyse the way in which the piropos portray women and promote or maintain dominance toward women. From a compendium (Chilena 2008) sixty-seven piropos are selected and grouped according to the conceptual metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003) they represent. Lakoff and Johnson argue that most of our ordinary mental concepts are metaphorical and that they structure everyday activity, whereby piropos metaphorically conceptualize the way women are seen.

Bailey (2016) compares remarks men make to women on the street in four different languages. However, the author shows that that the normative conventions of interactions amongst strangers are disregarded. In this sense, the detailed description in terms of the interactional organization of these speech events show that it is not the literal meaning of the utterance, but the interactional structure that function as a space to perform and constitute a male identity which threatens a woman's positive face.

In the African context, specifically the Shona-speaking society in Zimbabwe, men are often the initiators of remarks as it is derived from a culture that celebrates male super-ordinance. Makuma states that "in Shona society men are commonly stereotyped as fierce animals whose maleness is visibly imposing" (Makuma, 1995: 379, In Mashiri 2000:57). On the part of the women, there are no linguistic comparisons, whereby this gap is due to the likely assumption that these attributes are not feminine ones. Hence, being subjected to that 'bottom' position, men assume that women will not be ratified speakers in these communicative events.

Where in the Western context, it is noted that in the streets, women are subjected to evaluative commentary which concerns their physical appearance, whereby street remarks often "accuse women of inferior looks, improper action and moral defects" (Gardner 1984),

Mashiri notes that the situation is similar in Zimbabwe. To provide context with regard to the lives of women within this African context, Mashiri draws on Obbo who states that,

[W]omen are viewed as the upholders of traditional ways of life and they often find themselves as scapegoats for society's confusion and conflict over what the contemporary role of women should be and for the dilemma produced by adjusting to rapid social change (Obbo, 1980 in Mashiri 2000: 58).

When women are wearing westernized clothing as opposed to traditional ones, they receive remarks which reflect stereotypical views about urban women. Society therefore believe that as 'bearers of culture' women should be protected from the influence of Western culture such as wigs, cosmetics, short dresses and pants. As MacFadden states, "men judge women especially by the way they dress and can be heard expressing sentiments that imply an assumed association between sex work [prostitution] and certain types of clothes" (MacFadden, 1992: 173, In Mashiri 2000: 59). This perpetuates the notion that certain types of clothing condone improper behaviour on the part of the male which is similar in the Western context as mentioned earlier. Hence, 'liberated women' who are not confined to the traditional norms are perceived as being 'dangerous' as they might influence other women. Street remarks therefore constructs womanhood in terms of sexuality as well as appearance.

Significantly, where the scholars urge their readers to not solely think about these remarks as maintaining a particular system of gender, but as that which could foster other systems as well, it is evident that their findings and writings thereof still lean toward that of fostering and contesting the gender system and its respective gender roles. However, this presents itself as an opportunity in which the study at hand may be a step forward to accurately search for ways in which street harassment can be theorized as well as be a depiction of other systems as well.



One way to link the experiences recounted during this study with the broader context is its connection to what Gee (2011) calls figured worlds<sup>10</sup> or dominant discourses emergent from the instantiations of street harassment.

## **2.11. Figured Worlds**

Language-users do not only use words based on their definition or on their form-function general meanings. Instead, language is used based on the ‘typical stories’ or simplified theories of what people take to be ‘normal’, ‘appropriate’ or the opposite thereof and so forth. The term, figured worlds, is used to refer to these ‘typical stories’. Holland defines it as,

A socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others. Each is a simplified world populated by a set of agents who engage in a limited range of meaningful acts or changes of state as moved by a specific set of forces (Holland, 1998: 52 in Paul Gee, 2011: 71).

One way to think about figured worlds is that they are descriptions or ‘images’ of a ‘simplified world’ in which prototypical events unfold. They are peoples’ first thoughts or taken-for-granted assumptions about what is considered ‘typical’ and ‘normal’. Notably, these simplifications leave out many complexities, whereby they are points of references for unfair action, dismissive, or derogatory assumptions about others. In this sense, they implicate people in exclusions which is not at first obvious and in which people are unaware of making.

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<sup>10</sup> In the forthcoming analysis chapters, figured worlds is used interchangeably with dominant discourses.

Additionally, figured worlds are linked to “simulations in the mind” (Gee, 2011:78) which help individuals think about certain things as well as prepare them for action in the real world. Because the experiences individuals have are shared with others, the simulations in peoples’ minds come to extend with other figured worlds (although not perfectly). These shared figured worlds help people to ‘act together’, specifically prototypical simulations support figured worlds (ibid, 2011).

Figured worlds are not fixed or static, whereby what is taken to be ‘typical’ may vary across cultural and social groups. Often, when people recollect traumatic and/ or significant events, they link it to extraneous figured worlds. This practice would be interesting for this study.

Additionally, figured worlds do not only operate in the mind of individuals, but also as Gee states “in the world [in terms of] books and other media and in other people’s heads and people we can talk to” (Gee, 2011:72). Hence, figured worlds exist in society, whereby it is maintained and even resisted by those who have the power to influence, such as the media, authoritative figures and so forth. In this sense, it is what people are taught about what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ and in turn that which guides their behaviours.

We can therefore argue that figured worlds exist in conflict as people may have loyalty and commitment to competing or conflicting figured worlds, whereby it also shows one way in which more powerful groups in society may influence less powerful groups. Figured worlds are therefore implicated in the politics of space, harassment, gender and other social issues at play, whereby the linguistic act and/ or discourse of granting or denying someone or something a social good (stating what is right or wrong) always prevails (ibid, 2011).

## **2.12. Summary of Chapter**

This chapter reviews literature pertaining to street harassment across different disciplines. The underlying crux of all the arguments made is that the phenomenon is indicative of gender and power, more specifically, how rigid gender roles are solidified as a means of maintaining a gendered-hierarchy in which males occupy the top position and females the bottom within both behavioural and contextual space. Hence, the literature gives rise to important conclusions, namely, that street harassment may be seen as a form or subcategory of ‘sexual harassment’ and whereby regarding it as such allow scholars to uncover harms which have not necessarily been made salient in traditional sexual harassment literature. I also review literature made within the discipline of feminist legal scholarship which indicate that street harassment is gender-specific in nature. In this sense, women and girls are victims primarily because of their gender as female and that the accompanying harms is also gender-specific. This means that they are experienced by females and is rather invisible to the wider male culture.

Following these feminine theories, a review of theories pertaining to masculinity begins which highlight the reasons as to why men are primarily the initiators of street harassment. Importantly the phenomenon is undertaken on the part of men in continually performing their identity of masculinity in relation to women. Furthermore, a review of the way in which street harassment is studied in the sociolinguistics field is provided, whereby the section begins with street harassment from the point of view regarding the content and structure of language. Finally, it is an integrated approach to studying street harassment that makes new insights to the phenomenon possible.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.0. Introduction

This chapter introduces theories which underpin the study. It is divided into two broad sections specifically Linguistic/ Semiotic landscape Studies and Phenomenology. The former introduces the field of Linguistic Landscapes (LL) in terms of its foundational studies, developments and a theoretical offshoot. Here I will refer to the work of Landry and Bourhis (1997), Milani (2013), Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003), Jaworski and Thurlow (1996), Lefebvre (1991), Peck and Stroud (2015) and Amin (2015).

The latter section proceeds with a discussion on Phenomenology and complementary theories, namely that of Discourse Analysis and intersectionality. Here I will refer to the work of Crenshaw (1989, 1995), Martínez-Ávila and Smiraglia (2013), Stark and Brown Trinidad (1997), Gee (2011), Bechtold, (unpublished paper), Vanhoozer (1988), Searle (1968), Lykke (2010) and Levon (2015).

#### 3.1. Linguistic/ semiotic Landscapes: its roots and development

This study is framed within the developing Linguistic/ semiotic Landscape field. Within the discipline of Linguistic Landscape (LL) studies, the earliest work pertaining to the relationship between language and (public) space is owed to the seminal study by Landry and Bourhis in what they call Linguistic Landscapes. For the authors,

The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration (1997:25).

The authors distinguish between private and government signage. The latter referring to signs found in the road, names of places and inscriptions displayed on state buildings. The former, on the other hand, refers to language displayed on store fronts, business institutions, billboards as well as on both public and private modes of transport. At the inception of their study, they hypothesized that publically displayed language may be a precise indicator of the ethnolinguistic vitality of communities residing in a particular place.

Their study spans a ten-year long period, whereby they work with aggregate, questionnaire data which is collected among francophone high school students in parts of Canada. Their findings contrast their hypothesis and reveal that instead of the displayed language as being indicative of the ethnolinguistic vitality of a certain group of people, it is, however, an indicator of the power and prestige of certain languages. Moreover, private signs are more indicative of the diverse and multilingual language usage among residents.

Where Landry and Bourhis' seminal work addresses issues of ethnolinguistic vitality in place, other scholars (Cenoz and Gorter, 2006; Ben-Rafael *et al*, 2006; Backhaus, 2006) also respond to the demand for the study of language, signage and their creation in places. However, their focus is on the ways in which language ideologies are represented in the landscape whilst also gearing their attention toward issues of authorship and purposiveness. As opposed to the quantitative method set forth by Landry and Bourhis, their approaches, however, are more qualitative in nature as it allows scholars to tap into the relationship between language and ideologies which are subjective on a personal and individual level. Additionally, scholars have come to realize that language (text) is not the only way in which communication can be achieved as other semiotic modes such as image, sound, colour and so forth is also capable of producing communication and meaning. This is influenced by the pioneering studies of Kress and Van Leeuwen who argues that as opposed to language, other semiotic modes are also capable of fulfilling a communicative purpose (Kress and Van

Leuween, 1996). Hence, focus is not solely on language, but on its interplay with image, sound, colour and other semiotic modes.

The collection of studies on Linguistic Landscapes published by Gorter (2006b) position their work as a direct offshoot from Landry and Bourhis' view of Linguistic Landscapes. However, their studies differ, whereby as opposed to using questionnaires, they draw on site-specific data which brings forth the national (local) and international (global) inclination of the signs, predominantly through the presence of English and other languages not occurring naturally in the area (see, cf. Ben-Rafael *et al* 2004, 2006; Backhaus 2006; Cenoz and Gorter 2006; Huebner, 2006; MacGregor, 2003; MacArthur 2000, Shlick 2002).

The significance of this early foundational work is that the numerical data (both quantitatively and qualitatively collected) is a departure from studies that addresses issues of ethnic co-existence in place as it draws the attention of scholars toward an awareness of public signage, as opposed to policy documents, as a resource for the implementation of language policies. Significantly, while quantitative studies laid the initial groundwork into LL studies, a call for greater inclusion regarding space widened the playing field.

### **3.2. Linguistic/ semiotic Landscapes: The spatial turn**

In this section, I draw on the work of Jaworski and Thurlow (2006) in which they theorize semiotic landscapes in terms of its interplay between language, visual semiotics and spatial practices. With regard to this interplay, space as a semiotic resource and the discursive construction of space are important. The former refers to spatiality and/ or spatialization which are understood as “the different processes by which space comes to be represented, organized and experienced” (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2006:7). Here, Lefebvre's (1991)

dimensions of space are important, that being (1) conceived space (mental and represented images of space), (2) perceived space (equivalent to material/ physical space responsible for economic production and social reproduction) and (3) lived space which is produced through the intersection and/ or interaction of both conceived and perceived space (Lefebvre, 1991). Within these dimensions of space and/ or spatialization, linguistic and other semiotics defines or organizes the meaning of the spatial practices and social practices enacted amongst these. This is in line with Scollon and Wong Scollon's (2003) arguments with regard to different semiotic markings as all interacting with each other.

It is further argued that space is discursively constructed which is as stated "shifts absolutist notions of space towards more communicative and discursive conceptualizations" (see Harvey, 1989, 2006; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey and Jess 1998, in Jaworski and Thurlow, 2006:6). The arguments by Scollon and Wong Scollon illustrate what is meant by this. As stated,

All semiotic systems operate as 'social semiotic' systems... All semiotic systems operate as systems of social positioning and power relationships both at the level of interpersonal relationships and at the level of struggles for hegemony among social groups in any society precisely because they are systems of choices and no choices are neutral in the social world (Scollon and Wong Scollon, 2003:7).

In this sense, the moral/ and or social order is represented in the spatial order of physical concrete spaces. Scollon and Wong Scollon therefore note that some material spaces can only facilitate authorized discourses and particular types of social action and in turn social actors, whereby the interactions they form with others should be context-specific. Hence, dominant or non-dominant discourses and/ or figured worlds are embodied by social actors, but they are also disembodied and found in the signs among them. However, the 'social order' is most

often not maintained and realized spatially as unauthorized spatial practices occur such as transgressive semiotics<sup>11</sup> and unauthorized social actions<sup>12</sup>. Hence, as Amin (2015) states with regard to public spaces, there is always a body-space performance at hand. Hence, some performances are afforded by space, but performances may also go against what the space affords (Amin, 2015).

In addition to performances being afforded by or going against what the space affords, space also comes to mean different things for different people, as Jaworski and Thurlow in their quotation of others brings to the fore,

how we view and interpret space is contingent on geographical, social, economic, legal, cultural and emotional circumstances, as well as our practical uses of the physical environment as nature, territory, aesthetic judgements... drawing on religious beliefs and references, historical discourses, politics of gender relations, class, ethnicity, imperial projects of colonialization- all of which are still present today and consistently reproduced in... [the] landscape, (Massey, 1994; Cosgrove, 2008, [1998]; Crouch, 1999; Cartier and Lew, 2005; Osborne, 2000, in Jaworski and Thurlow, 2006: 3).

Therefore, each society's 'moral order' is reflected in its particular spatial order and in the language and imagery by which that spatial order is represented. Hence, the social is spatially constituted, and people make sense of their social identity in terms of their environment. This study extends an understanding of social order and the transgression thereof to practices of communities. Schieffelin and Ochs' (1986) view of 'practices of communities' is defined as "...communities of social aggregates which can be studied by an analysis of their everyday

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<sup>11</sup>Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003) define transgressive semiotics as any sign that is in the wrong place. For example, a price tag lying on the side walk would be transgressive as it is not in place (a shop/ a consumable good being sold).

<sup>12</sup>Unauthorized practices in spaces is dancing in the proceeding of a court case or consuming alcohol in spaces which it is prohibited in and so forth.



and varied cultural practices and activities which may be, but are not necessarily defined by those shared practices...” (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986 in Baquedano-Lopez and Kattan 2007:78). Hence, it is important to decode the linguistic landscape, whereby a reading thereof may reveal that it reproduces and sometimes resists social order. Another noteworthy turn is the inclusion of the body in Linguistic Landscapes as is discussed below.

### **3.3. Skinscapes and the body**

Skinscapes is a theoretical advancement borne out of Linguistic Landscapes, wherein Peck and Stroud argue that the field (LL) should extend to include the ‘body’<sup>13</sup> as a “corporeal landscape or ‘moving discursive locality’” (2015: 133). They further state that the body as a ‘corporeal landscape’ or ‘moving discursive locality’ can be explained in these terms,

Just as a linguistic landscape may be carried on placards and t-shirts, so can landscapes be carried on the surface of the skin. In like manner to how inscriptions exterior to the body may frame performances of self, so do corporeal features such as hair and bodily inscriptions also frame (re)presentations of place that subsequently offer affordances for situated relevant identity work. And just as instances of linguistic landscapes, say in the form of signage, may fit seamlessly, or not into the places in which they are found, so are inscriptions on the body calibrated for body part (2015: 134-5).

The authors seek to understand what they call, “contemporary place-making”, a term which lends itself to the notion that bodies are always in the process of mattering in some way or another in (public) space. The way in which this occurs is determined largely through the negotiation and narratives of the semiotics of the body. In this sense, the idea of how a body

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<sup>13</sup> In terms of its identity and affect

matters, whereby specifically the term, matter, can be thought of as broadly referring to the way in which bodies are 'read', taken-up, received as well as feels in place and how this is influenced by discourses (interpellations) external to the body. The authors illustrate this point through their study which focuses on a specific corporeal genre, namely tattooing, whereby charting the process of inking by the participants at a tattoo parlour in Cape Town (cf. Peck and Stroud, 2013) reveal the complexity associated with the ways in which bodies aspire to matter through specific corporeal markings, but also how identities exist in tension (or not) with greater racial, cultural and social discourses accompanying it.

Skinscapes is not limited to scholars with an academic interest in tattoos per se, whereby it is argued that, as stated, "... tattooing [is]... tak[en] to stand proxy for many of those processes behind a variety of other markers of visible difference inscribed on the skin such as race and gender" (2015: 135). Hence, the study at hand considers the different ways in which women's bodies come to matter through events of street harassment in public spaces.

### **3.4. Geosemiotics**

Scollon and Wong Scollon note that geosemiotics is the understanding of signs, symbols and bodies in (public) spaces and the notion of indexicality and indexibility attached to these. The former refers to "the property of the context-dependency of signs, especially language..." (2003:3). However, the latter is most often fully studied in relation to language. Within the study of geosemiotics, scholars are interested in the context-dependent meaning of the semiotic systems in the material world as opposed to language. Hence, indexibility is more prominent here which refer to the ways in which "sign systems and language indexes other semiotic systems in the world" (2003:7). In this sense, the meaning of semiotic systems (signs, symbols and bodies) 'in place' is not solely derived in and of itself, but in relation to

other semiotic systems as well. Importantly, what needs to be remembered is that these semiotic systems have most often been studied in isolation and never in interaction with each other. Hence, scholars place emphasis on one of these semiotic systems, whereby the other systems are regarded as context.

When considering the study at hand, then, attention to the geosemiotics of space may provide insight that would otherwise go unnoticed as is the case in the current theorizing of street harassment in the sociolinguistics field. Hence, as opposed to simply focusing on the interaction order of street harassment and how particular discourses and/ or figured worlds are embodied in the social actor and determines how they form interactions with others, it would be interesting to consider how the embodiment of discourses is used in the interaction order or how the resistance thereof index something about the material world in which it is found. In this sense, how the meanings of these embodied discourses in the interaction order is derived not just through discourses about identity, but also from the public spaces in which these events occur. Put another way, the research aims to establish how particular public spaces in Cape Town become conducive for the unfolding of the event of street harassment.

### **3.5. Gender and space: A worthy consideration**

Milani (2015) argues that the study of Linguistic/ Semiotic Landscapes ignores issues of gender and sexuality. This comes about as a result of the fact that LL studies was originally influenced by research on language attitudes (see Landry and Bourhis: 1997 above) and language policy (see Shahomy 2006). These two main avenues of sociolinguistic inquiry is therefore less attentive toward issues of gender and sexuality in favour of other categories of social classification such as ethnic and national identity which shapes the general direction of LL inquiry. However, Milani argues that it is imperative to pay attention to issues of gender

and sexuality and its relationship to public spaces as they are “two important axis of power along which public spaces are structured, negotiated and understood” (2013: 1). In his study, he addresses the niche he identifies. Specifically, he investigates a data set of sexed signs which may easily go unnoticed.

When considering that the majority of earlier LL studies are mostly influenced by research on language attitudes and language policies, it is no surprise that scholars have been more attentive toward ethnic and national identity in relation to language, because the crux of this discipline is largely language-orientated. Gender and sexuality, on the other hand, may be given more consideration in other disciplines, for example, in gender and feminist studies. However, to compartmentalize a focus on particular categories of social classification into distinct disciplines would be to ignore the interconnectedness or intersection of categories of social classification as well as to believe that some categories are more important vectors of power in relation to others.

Therefore, where public spaces are indicative of language ideologies, as was the case in earlier, traditional LL studies, the development of the field, such as a focus on language and its interplay with other semiotic modes as well as the ethnographic turn in the field may now easily lend itself to overt (and sometimes covert) representations of how public spaces reflect issues of gender and sexuality. Hence, it would be interesting to consider the various ways in which street harassment contributes to gendering space as well as how other systems are also fostered.

### **3.6. A Phenomenological approach**

This section provides two discussions, one on Phenomenology and the other on Discourse Analysis (DA) which are two distinct schools of thought, whereby their focus and goals are different. Thereafter, I will proceed by discussing the ways in which these two approaches can be combined in a complementary form to establish what is called a Phenomenological Discourse Analysis. Here the work of Stark and Brown Trinidad (2007), Martinez- Avila and Smiraglia (2013) and Gee (2011) will find expression.

Phenomenology is described as that which “involves the use of thick description and close analysis of lived experience to understand how meaning is created through embodied perception” (Stark and Brown Trinidad 2007:1). It contributes to a deeper understanding of lived experience by making salient the taken-for-granted assumptions about ways of knowing.

Through an examination and analysis of individual experiences, phenomenological analysts seek to document the meaning and common features (or essences) of an experience or event. It is argued that “the truth of an event, as an abstract entity, is subjective and knowable only through embodied perception, [whereby] meaning is created through the experience of moving through space and time” (ibid). Phenomenologists therefore ask questions about lived experiences. For the scope of any study adopting a Phenomenological approach, semi-structured interviews are applicable, whereby the objective of the interview is to elicit the participant’s story.

With regards to the communicative event, both the researcher and the participant assume that their words will be understood as spoken and intended (i.e. their words will speak for themselves). This contrasts Discourse Analysis, where language is regarded as ambiguous in nature, simply put, people do not mean what they say and they do not say what they mean.

### **3.7. Discourse Analysis and spoken language**

Discourse Analysis is an umbrella term which refers to the study of language produced in any medium or channel. This relates to both spoken and written texts. A number of scholars (see Cameron, 2010; Jones, 2010; Gee, 2011) define Discourse Analysis as ‘Language-in-use’ which centres on the context, situation-specific or situated meanings of language-usage as well as the ways in which individuals use language to accomplish certain things. These range from personal, political and social projects.

Historically, the study of language took on a Structuralist approach, whereby there was a primary concern with the ‘text’ which at the time referred solely to the ‘sentence’ which is defined as larger units of meaning as opposed to simple clauses or words (Bechtold III, unpublished paper). This focus was visible in the development of grammar. In response to the narrow focus of Structuralism which does not account for the contextual or situation-specific aspects of language, there arose a greater interest in “ordinary language”, also known as naturally occurring speech. Vanhoozer (1998) argues that Language can only be understood in the situation and circumstances of its use. Furthermore, Austin (1962) in his study on the limits of syntax, argues that there is a performative dimension to communication. For Austin, language and action is viewed as inseparable, whereby this notion led to his development of a “speech act theory”. Herein, Austin makes a distinction between Locutionary (speaking the words), illocutionary (what is being done by speaking the words) and perlocutionary (what is accomplished by speech, in other words, how do words function in communication) speech. Searle (1969) builds on this in which he posits a comprehensive typology of speech in which he argues that speaking a language is about engaging in a complex, rule-governed form of behaviour.

Discourse Analysis moves beyond the grammatical rules, but acknowledges the human element therein. Hence, it focuses on how language-users and their use of discourse as a whole, work to serve its intended contextual or situation-specific communicative function. In this sense, how people use language in the maintenance of figured worlds.

### **3.8. Phenomenological Discourse Analysis (PDA)**

By examining the differences between Phenomenology and Discourse Analysis, one important distinction can be made and that is, Phenomenological analysts work with the assumption that meaning and reality is created through 'lived experiences'. These are subjective and knowable only through embodied perception of moving through time and space (Stark and Brown Trinidad, 2007). Discourse Analysts, on the other hand, work with the assumption that reality and meaning are created through the use of language, whereby this can be illuminated by looking at the ways in which people use language to accomplish a variety of things (Gee, 2011).

Discourse Analysis, on the one hand, is a tool in which analysts can view the ways in which discourses create hierarchies and inequalities which are sustained, thereby providing 'normative' assumptions surrounding relationships, categorical classification and so forth. However, on the other hand, discourses also becomes a tool in which what is considered 'normal' or 'essential' in nature is deconstructed through an account of the different 'lived experiences' of individuals. Hence, reality is a social and discursive construction. Therefore, where Phenomenology asks questions about the lived experiences of individuals, whilst taking into account that these lived experiences may be different, Martinez- Avila and Smiragalia state that by combining Phenomenology with Discourse Analysis "[...] help[s] to reveal the artificiality of the power inequalities and the exclusions in the creation of

knowledge....” (2013: 1). In this sense, Phenomenology is interested in the ‘why’ and ‘what’ questions’, such as ‘why’ the lived experiences of the individuals affects and causes them to perceive ‘what’ in their knowing process. Discourse Analysis, on the other hand, asks the ‘How’ question, such as ‘How’ do the different discourses (which act as strategies of control in society) affect the perception of concepts in those individuals and the imposition of dominant meaning in a universal system (ibid, 2013). Hence, it is important to take into account the phenomenological, lived experiences of the individuals at a personal, individual level. However, it is also vital to further document the ways in which these phenomenological feelings come as a result of broader structures which are sustained in society and is brought about by language-usage.

### **3.9. Intersectionality**

The term, intersectionality, was first coined by Crenshaw (1989, 1995), who in her study highlights the inadequacy of the anti-discrimination laws available for women of colour in the United States of America. In her study, she argues that black women may experience discrimination similar to other black individuals and be protected by anti-discrimination laws on the basis of their race. Black women may also experience discrimination similar to other women and be protected by anti-discrimination laws on the basis of gender. However, when black women experience discrimination as black women, there are no laws to remedy the intersection of multiple categories of subordination and not the additive category of race and gender.

With regard to intersectionality as a theoretical and methodological tool, it is important to analyse how different categories of social classification are intertwined as mutual processes of transformation and not as mere additions (gender plus and/or other categories). A number



of scholars (McCall, 2005; Lutz et al, 2011; Lykke, 2010) define intersectionality in different ways. This comes primarily as a result of the fact that intersectionality is not incorporated in quite the same way across studies and disciplines. However, I will provide a definition of intersectionality as provided by Lykke as she argues that it can be considered a “broad umbrella-like definition” which has certain key dimensions. She states that,

Intersectionality can be considered a theoretical and methodological tool and entrance point to, firstly, analyze how power differentials and normativities based on discursively, institutionally and/ or structurally constructed sociocultural categorizations such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age, generation, dis/ability, nationality, mother-tongue and so forth, *interact*, and in so doing, produce different kinds of societal inequalities and unjust social relations. Secondly, it can also be understood as a tool to analyze how intertwined power differentials and normativities are built around a resignification of categorizations and normative identity markers, and, how, social actors negotiate the power-laden relations and conditions within which they are embedded (2010:50-1).

As a theory, intersectionality grew momentum within the feminist discipline, whereby it rests on the belief that a single category in and of itself is not sufficient to account for individual experience and behaviour. So, too, from a language perspective, it is argued that scholars do not have to view linguistic practices as reflexive of predetermined social categories. Intersectionality therefore becomes a suitable theory as it provides scholars with a framework for understanding, as Levon states, “the totality of inter-locking social forces that underlie linguistic practice” (2016: 296).

An understanding of intersectionality in relation to linguistic practices are important as it may provide insight into how the participants within this study draw on a number of linguistic

resources as a means of reflecting the multiplicity of their identities. However, intersectionality is also important in relation to feelings and experiences in place.

### **3.10. Summary of chapter**

In this section, I firstly discuss Linguistic Landscapes in relation to the field's foundational studies and development and its spatial turn. I also gear attention toward the subfield of LL studies with regard to skinscapes and the body as a theoretical advancement within the field. I then proceed with a discussion on geosemiotics and end the section on a discussion pertaining to the relationship between gender and space.

Thereafter, Phenomenology and Discourse Analysis is foregrounded as two distinct schools of thought which, when combined, offers a more nuance analyses of data which is rich in emotive language. The Phenomenological Discourse Analysis approach allows this study to widen and deepen the context so as to provide an insightful, new layer in the analysis of texts which may otherwise go unnoticed. Intersectionality completes the theoretical framework as it connects the variables found in this study, such as class, gender, race and others to a cohesive whole.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.0. Introduction**

This chapter details the design of study, sampling procedure, sample size and data collection techniques. Limitations to the study as well as ethical conditions are provided.

#### **4.1. Design of study**

The data collection process for this study spans the duration of March 2016-December 2016. Although street harassment is a social phenomenon that can affect men and women alike, this study focuses primarily on the experiences of participants who self-identify as women. The participants' ages range between 20 and 35. Because 18 years is the legal adult age in South Africa, this allows participants to take full responsibility for their participation in the study as well as provide their own consent as opposed to having to ask parents or guardians for consent on behalf of minors.

In terms of race, it is important for me to use participants which reflect the racial makeup in South Africa. Because South Africa's racial classification is still in effect, people habitually classify themselves as black, white, coloured or Indian. Participants are also informed of their right to not classify themselves or to choose a different racial group. In this study, the desire to create a microcosm on street harassment is reflected in the representation of all four racial groups as a means of avoiding any bias. In this sense, the elicitation of different experiences of women in relation to the phenomenon of street harassment is achieved, whereby the

differences would come about as a result of gender, notably female, and its intersection with race and other identity categories.

In terms of sample size, 'quality over quantity' prevails. In this sense, a larger amount of participants does not necessarily mean that it will generate more data which can be used to respond to the questions outlined for this study. Therefore, a focus on 'quality over quantity' means that a smaller number of participants are preferable provided that the interviews generate answers pertinent to this study.

#### **4.2. Participant makeup: sample size, gender, age and race**

The following section describes my sample group in terms of size, gender, age and race. Firstly, in terms of sample size and gender, this study is informed by six participants who identify as female. In terms of age, my participants are all of adult age ranging between that of 23-30 years. In terms of the participants' race, two self-identify<sup>14</sup> as 'coloured', two as black, one as white and lastly, one as Asian. Hence, the racial makeup of my sample is that of black, coloured, white and Asian.

In the South African context, the category of Asian typically refers to those of Indian descent. However, none were available during the data collection period. This study therefore extends this category to include anyone of Asian descent. The Asian participant in this study hails from South Korea and was studying at UWC at the time of data collection.

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<sup>14</sup> These identity markers were signalled during the interview by the participant.

### **4.3. Participant sampling**

I draw on a purposive approach as a means of sourcing participants. Purposive sampling refers to a situation in which a researcher needs to source a targeted sample quickly. In this sense, very early on in the research process, a clear idea of who should be sourced for the study was planned. There are, however, many forms of purposive sampling, whereby this research specifically draws on what is known as “typical case sampling”. This is defined as “... a type of purposive sampling useful when a researcher wants to study a phenomenon or trend as it relates to what is considered “typical” or “average” members of the affected population” (Crossman 2017:01). In terms of my study, I walked around the university premises with the aim of sourcing female participants.

### **4.4. Participant information**

Below is the list of participants used for the study. Note that pseudonyms are used throughout to protect their privacy.

‘Ayesha\*’, 29, female, coloured , lawyer, Fluent in English and Afrikaans.

‘Jennifer\*’, 30, female, coloured , call-centre agent, Fluent in English and Afrikaans.

‘Thandi\*’, 23, female, black, student (UWC), Fluent in English and isiXhosa.

‘Zinzi\*’, 24, female, black, student (UWC), Fluent in IsiXhosa with lesser proficiency in English.

‘Taylor\*’, 28, female, white , student (UWC), fluent in English and Afrikaans.

‘Ji-yoo\*’, 23, female, Asian, student (UWC), fluent in South Korean with lesser proficiency English.

#### **4.5. Description of select sites**

It should be noted that the sites discussed in this section were not chosen to be of focus beforehand. Instead, they are discussed because the participants mention these sites as being an integral part of their harassing events in the accounts given. Hence, drawing on the interviews, I find that instances of street harassment spans a variety of spaces in Cape Town, namely: Greenhaven, Big Bay, The University of the Western Cape (UWC), Bellville and Cape Town Central Business District (CBD). A description of these sites is provided below:

##### **4.5.1. Greenhaven**

Greenhaven is a residential area in Cape Town's southern suburbs located 16kms from Cape Town's CBD. It is a mixed social class, (working and middle class) coloured area. It forms part of the Southern suburbs, which is a predominantly English and Afrikaans speaking area. Mixed religious groups such as Muslims, Christians and Indians live in the residence.

##### **4.5.2. Big Bay**

Big Bay is situated in Blaauwberg and is North up the West Coast and is 20kms away from the centre of Cape Town, but is in close proximity to Melkbos Strand so as to be viewed as the starting point of the West Coast. The space has two main attraction sites, namely one that is popular for beach activities and sport as well as another attraction off the shore in the form of Big Bay's Eden on the Bay which is described as a new mixed development which host residential and office space, shops and restaurants. The space was a historically whites-only one. However, it currently still inhabits mostly those who are racially classified as white (<http://www.sa-venues.com/attractionswc/big-bay.php>).

#### **4.5.3. The University of the Western Cape (UWC)**

The University of the Western Cape is 12kms away from the Cape Town city centre and is the youngest of all universities in the Western Cape. It has a legacy of combating oppression, discrimination and disadvantage, whereby among academic institutions it has been at the forefront of South Africa's historic change. In 1959, parliament adopted a legislation which established the University College of the Western Cape as part of the college of the University of South Africa for people classified as coloured. In 1960, the first group of 166 students were enrolled and offered limited training for lower to middle level positions in schools, the civil service and other institutions designed to serve a separated coloured community. In 1970, the institution gained the status of being termed a university, whereby it was able to provide courses allowing for degrees and diplomas. UWC's key concerns in higher education arise from its legacy in helping the historically marginalized participate fully in the academic sphere and in life at large (<https://www.uwc.ac.za/Pages/History.aspx>).

#### **4.5.4. Bellville**

Bellville is located close to UWC and because it is approximately (12 miles) 20kms away from the city centre, it was founded as a “12 mile post” and/ or Twelfth Mile Stone which place emphasis on this distance. It was first known as “Hardekraaltjie”, but was renamed to “Bellville” in 1861 and was a historically whites-only place. However, it has become much more diversified. Notably, it is called home by people who are racially classified as black and coloured. Recently, it has become known as ‘Little Somalia’ because of its large number of transnational migrants (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/places/bellville>).

#### **4.5.5. Cape Town Central Business District (CBD)**

Cape Town CBD is a major business district in the heart of Cape Town's metropolitan area and a financial centre of the Western Cape (WC) and South Africa. The South African parliament is located there and the WC provincial government and the city of Cape Town municipality have their head offices located in the Cape Town CBD. This is also where the High Court is found and where high-profile cases are tried. Importantly, Cape Town's CBD functions as a space in which different activities bring people to it from working, touring, eating out and clubbing. While many people from across different race and class groups converge there, it is still out of reach for 90% of the city's population (<https://www.travelground.com/accommodation-in/cape-town-cbd/about>).

#### **4.6. Interview data**

One-on-one, in-depth interviews with each of the participants at the venue of their choice are conducted. In terms of the participants sourced at UWC, the interviews are held on the university premises. Interviews with other participants are conducted at their homes.

Before conducting the interview, I remind participants about the research in terms of its topic, background and the questions it seeks to answer. I further provide them with a consent form which entails similar details which they in turn read and sign. Additionally, participants are assured of their anonymity as well as told that they have the choice of withdrawing from the interview at any given time depending on whichever reasons. In such an instance, their interviews would immediately be discarded. With regard to participants who are interested in knowing how their interviews would be used for the study, I inform them that they would



have the opportunity to read the final write-up of the dissertation. No monetary compensation is given in exchange for an interview session.

The interviews are conducted in English and consist of a series of open-ended questions. Participants are encouraged to elaborate on their answers and are also assured that they can ask questions if they need clarity. The questions centre on eliciting what the participants' unique understandings of street harassment is as well as inquiring if they have any unique experiences that they wish to share (for a full list of the interview questions, please see Appendix A).

#### **4.7. Data analysis process**

This study uses a Phenomenological Discourse Analysis method as indicated in chapter three to analyze the data generated by the interviews conducted. The focus of the analysis is on phenomenological lived experiences of the individuals at a personal, individual level, relating to street harassment. Simultaneously, however, the Discourse Analysis approach looks at the ways in which these phenomenological feelings are brought about by broader structures which can be made evident through the creation of sustainment in society due to language-usage.

Phenomenological considerations, specifically emotions, inner states and feelings which this study is interested in may be significantly subjective to the point where it cannot be applied to other sorts of data used and therefore not form part of the more common themes, issues or points that the data illuminates. Hence, when doing a pure Discourse Analysis on its own without phenomenological consideration, these subjective feelings will be treated as minor details which may not bear much significance on the final analytical findings as it would often be seen as extraneous information. However, I consider all aspects of the data, even

those that did not converge, specifically the phenomenological aspects which allow me to undertake the task of providing detailed analysis as they in turn give rise for an even deeper understanding of lived experience. This I believe does ‘justice’ to the qualitative nature of this study. In this sense, I pay attention to emotive language as well as non-verbal gestures which accompany the participants’ speech during the interview.

After conducting each interview, I transcribe it as a means of creating a transcription (see the legend used and transcribed interviews in Appendix B) which is defined as “the details of speech (gaze, gestures and actions) or writing that are arguably deemed relevant in the context and that are relevant to the arguments the analysis is attempting to make” (Gee, 2011: 117). In the case of my data, the details of speech which is accompanied by gaze and gesture is important. This allows me to note ‘minor details’ which may also be important in the analysis of my transcription which would otherwise go unnoticed. Hence, my detailed transcription note such minor details pertaining to long or short pauses, silence, laughter, hesitations, nonverbal gestures and so forth.

I organize my analysis in such a way that the material and/ or arguments which resonate with one or more of the participants are clustered together in themes. Finally, I further organize these themes into three main groups which is representative of the three analysis chapters in this study. At this point, two important factors should be noted, (1) quality over quantity proves to be successful as the participants share more than one street harassing account.<sup>15</sup>(2) Due to the complexity of the accounts given by participants, no data excerpt fits perfectly into one analysis chapter per se. It should also be mentioned that for ease of reading, pseudonyms which are typical of religion or racial group are given to the participants so as to easily follow the analysis.

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<sup>15</sup> Due to this, participants are discussed and brought to the fore in more than one analysis chapter, as different accounts of their street harassing events are discussed.

#### **4.8. Limitations of the study**

Whilst conducting the interviews for this study, I encounter a phenomenon academically termed, “the Observers Paradox” (Labov, 1972). The term refers to the challenges sociolinguistic researchers encounter when conducting field work when gathering data on natural speech which is hindered by the presence of the researcher. Hence, the paradox lies in the fact that where the research subject is aware that their speech will be used for scholarly research, they will adopt a formal register when speaking. However, if the researcher was absent, the interviewee would instead adopt a more casual register. Hence, in the case of interviews held, I find that many of the participants are not intimidated by my presence as researcher per se, but they are more intimidated by the research tool used, that being the audio-recording device. The knowledge of knowing that their interview accounts are being recorded therefore influences their speech, whereby they adopt a more formal register, whilst also not being comfortable to share their true insights about particular situations. Also, the participants assume that the questions asked should elicit a ‘correct’ answer, and when they are uncertain about what this ‘answer’ should be, they avoid or not respond to the questions asked. Hence, as researcher, I am acutely aware that many things which may have been said in the absence of the recording device are left unsaid due to its presence.

A strategy employed by Labov in making the participants forget about the unnaturalness of the interview situation is to have them retell street games or life threatening situations. Labov therefore argues that when subjects retell emotional stories which occur in their lives, they are likely to be overtaken by the memory of that significant incident. In that moment, they would pay less attention to their manner of speech, yielding to a more casual style register. Similarly, I face the challenge of the Observers Paradox. However, as the interviews progress, I am simultaneously able to overcome it as I find that the participants tend to forget

about the audio-recorder at the time and are therefore relaxed. This allows me to gain a more detailed account of street harassment.

#### **4.9. Summary of chapter**

This chapter discusses the study in terms of its design, specifically which sample in terms of size, gender and race I wanted the participants to exhibit. I further discuss the interview process and data analysis procedure. Lastly, the limitation of the study is given.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### STREET HARASSMENT AND POST-APARTHEID SPACES

#### 5.0. Introduction

This chapter foregrounds the experiences of street harassment within public spaces which relate to a wider discourse regarding post-apartheid living. The three participants drawn on in this chapter are Taylor, Thandi and Ji-Yoo. A short description of each participant precedes each subsection.

#### 5.1. Taylor\*

Taylor self-identifies as a white woman. She is aged 28, lives in a residential area in Bellville and speaks English and Afrikaans. What follows is an analysis of Taylor's perception of street harassment in relation to race, gender, class and public space. The first extract lays the foundation as well as provides cues into the account of her personal experience which follows through the unfolding of the interview.

##### 5.1.1. Extract: 1

Turn 1. Interviewer: How would you define the term street harassment?

Turn 2. Taylor: I would define street harassment as you being in a particular space and someone actually harassing you constantly where to the point you feel uncomfortable or you feel uhm not part of that space like you are not welcome

Turn 3. Interviewer: And have you ever you know ever experienced any forms of street harassment?

Turn 4. Taylor: Yes I have

Turn 5. Interviewer: So before we get into your experiences in what spaces are like are like prevalent for you?

Turn 6. Taylor: In terms of harassment==

Turn 7. Interviewer: ==hmmm

Turn 8. Taylor: I'm quite an active person so when I do jog in the mornings or the evenings outside on the street I get harassed quite often==

Turn 9. Interviewer: ==Which streets are these==

Turn 10. Taylor: hmm Bellville where I reside in also when I am running in a other space that I'm not usually use to and I come across people that are there

Turn 11. Interviewer: and if you before we get into your experiences how do you feel when you move through Bellville

Turn 12. Taylor: well (*inhales deeply*) it's quite (*sighs*) it's quite difficult to say because uhm if I'm not driving I don't feel anything when I'm driving but when I do walk or run in my area uhm there are certain phases that I go through like in my area I feel quite comfortable so there's like minimal of me feeling uhm like I'm going to be harassed but the further I go from where I where I stay uhm the chances of me feeling that uncomfortable uhm presence it increases

Taylor's definition of harassment reveals three things. Firstly, that space is implicated in the event rendered significant through the adjective, 'particular' (turn 2), which shows that Taylor wishes to convey that there is something about the space, in terms of its characteristics that allows it to be implicated. Secondly, that harassment itself is described as being a conscious act or effort on the part of the harasser, whereby the word-classes, adverb and verb, 'actually harassing' (turn 2), is presented as being a form of behaviour which is persistent; 'quite often' (turn 8) and is enacted by that whom she describes as 'someone' (turn 2); another human being. Thirdly, she explains that this 'harassing' behaviour in turn invokes feelings of discomfort and results in her not feeling part of and welcome[d] in the space at hand (turn 2).

As the interview unfolds, the account shows how 'space' is given meaning. For Taylor, the space in which she experiences harassing behaviour is Bellville which is the name of both a residential and occupational working area. For Taylor, the space is solely her place of residence in which she experiences frequent forms of harassing behaviour during both the evenings and the mornings when she is 'jogging' (turn 8). Through this, Taylor argues that her identity of being an 'active' women results in negative reactions. When thinking about the ways in which this identity of 'active[ness]' is embodied through physicality, I argue that it is a body which is always mobile as it experiences and always seeks pleasure through physical movement such as exercise. However, where this 'active' identity is embodied quite physically through a mobile 'jogging' body, I find, however, that her body is symbolically made immobile through harassing behaviour.

Interestingly enough, when Taylor is asked what inner emotions is experienced on her part when moving through Bellville, she states that the question is a difficult one to answer (turn 11). This difficulty is owed to there not being one single emotion which she can use to describe these feelings. In this sense, different emotions are felt depending on the activity (jogging, driving) she undertakes and where she traverses. Taylor explains that '... I don't feel anything when I'm driving' (turn 12), however, when she 'walks or runs' in her own area, that being Bellville, she feels comfortable (turn 12). Hence, she does not experience the possible anticipation of being harassed. However, the further she moves in terms of physicality from her space of residence, feelings of discomfort occurs; '... the chances of me feeling that uncomfortable uhm presence it increases (see turn 12). Here, it is wise to return to the turn in which she says that she '... feel[s]nothing [when] driving'. This feeling operates in contrast to the feelings of discomfort when walking or running. I argue that where her body feels more at ease when 'driving', this comes about as a result of the body being physically present in a sometimes situated and/ or moving semiotic artefact that being the mode of

transport, in this case the car. When this car is in motion, it offers Taylor protection as she is fleeing in public space and plausibly not around long enough to be harassed. She is therefore also provided a swifter form of movement, and even when the car is motionless, it provides an external barrier from potential harassers in that she now has doors that can lock, hard metal that cannot be pierced, and therefore a functioning physical barrier between her body and others. In this sense, the body in terms of its “exteriority” (Coole, 1997) or “skinscape” (Peck and Stroud, 2013) is not easily seen by the others outside. In other words, the car becomes Taylor’s private, safe space even when it is situated in the public outside space. Hence, she is free to drive, but not jog or walk. Where in the sociolinguistics field current studies on street harassment argues that the phenomenon cannot be understood in relation to the physical spaces in which it occurs, in the case of Taylor the opposite is true. Hence, movement through certain public spaces and being situated or not in the semiotic artefact of the car is an integral part of how Taylor feels in terms of safety. This becomes even more evident as the analysis continues.

Taylor’s assertion that she ‘feel[s] nothing’ when driving stands in contrast to the hyper-awareness of self which she expresses throughout the interview. As I have noted, this walking or running signals a physical mobile body in space without the barrier of the car. This body is therefore more easily accessible to other bodies in terms of “interpersonal distance” (Goffman 1988) and also symbolically a body made immobile through feelings described as that of culminating in ‘phases’, whereby within her space of residence, then, there is a lack of discomfort. However, the further the body physically moves feelings of discomfort begin to arise.

It is quite ironic and contradictory that Taylor posits her place of residence as being the space in which she experiences ‘minimal’ feelings of anticipated harassment, where she earlier, however, states that it is specifically Bellville in which she is subjected to harassing



behaviour when engaged in jogging. I argue that these contradictory feelings experienced on the part of Taylor makes way for an understanding of space itself as being socially constructed, whereby feelings may change across space and time resulting in 'phases' of feeling more or less vulnerable. One could begin to understand this as a geosemiotics of emotion as feelings of vulnerability and comfort are explained in geographical terms. This is a point she reiterates further when juxtaposing the busy street of Cape Town with the residential area of Bellville. This therefore explains Taylor's interchangeable use of the words, 'jog' and 'run' (see turn 8 and 10). The former referring to a more relaxed embodied physical state, whereby the latter refers to more rapid movements of the body. This show the ways in which different psychological states as evident in language (run, jog) become embodied when experienced in the physical world. In this sense, Bellville is understood as being a safe space and that which she also highlights as being home. However, depending on the treatment (i.e. harassing behaviour) received in the physical space, home is also a space of alienation when one does not feel welcomed; 'you feel uncomfortable or you feel uhm not part of that space like you are not welcome (turn 2).

At this point in the analysis, attention is focused on Taylor's identity as female. When considering the ways in which the socially situated identity of female is understood within the public context, particular figured worlds is enacted through language. Hence, the figured world relating to public space which is largely posited as dangerous allow Taylor to feel emotions such as comfort and discomfort as expressed through language and is also a reflection of embodiment. Hence, Taylor, a self-proclaimed fit young woman, points out that her desire to maintain an active body is also not easy as her body becomes vulnerable to street harassment and ultimately leads her to veer away from outside activities. This is in contrast to how she feels when she is in a moving vehicle; a space she feels offers her more safety.

As the interview progresses, I begin to see a subtle picture of the ways in which complexity arises when considering street harassment in relation to Taylor's active female identity and its intersection with a multitude of other situated identities. To the enquiry of her own personal experiences of harassment, Taylor provides the following account. Please note that the use of Standard Afrikaans is in the **Georgia font**.

### 5.1.2. Extract: 2

Turn 14 Taylor: uuuhm well it dates back to when I was very young uhm growing up as a white person in a coloured area you sort of already feel uncomfortable because you don't look like everybody else and uhm you sort of have to try really hard to fit in so you end up changing your accent or you end up changing the way you dress or the way you speak to people and you sort of uhm you don't know what's acceptable or not at such a young age so your sort of just accept any anybody's uhm reaction to you so they would always call me whitey white girl or use derogatory terms pertaining to my skin colour uhm ya==

Turn 15. Interviewer: what type of derogatory terms? I know that it's maybe embarrassing to say things but I mean==

Turn 16. Taylor: == Boer (farmer) was one of them that stuck for a really long time I remember when I started running in my area uhm I got called a white vark [pig] by a group of young boys who was playing in my road uhm I also got called uhm what's that guy (.) Hendrik Verwoerd's daughter (.)

Turn 17. Interviewer: Oh my word==

Turn 18. Taylor: ==Ya uhm and be careful cause apartheid I will bring back apartheid that sort of notion ya uhm==

Turn 28. Taylor: Uncomfortable definitely I felt actually like I didn't want to be part of the race cause I (.) like knowing what white people did back in the day and knowing that I possibly will never do that

uhm and then I'm also being labelled into this category it (*sighs*) made me feel unwanted I did not belong to any group because I cannot be in this space uhm because I wasn't welcomed in this space==

Taylor recounts a memory which occurs in her childhood. This is signalled through the words, 'well it dates back to when I was very young', whereby the adverb, 'very', renders this period significant. She describes the space in which she grew up in, in this case, Bellville, as being a 'coloured space'. In terms of race, she positions herself as a 'white person' who already feels 'uncomfortable' therein (see turn 14). Here, it is evident that the ways in which her identity as white positioned (and/ or intersecting) in relation to a 'coloured' space allows her body to inhabit feelings of discomfort. This discomfort comes largely as a result of not looking like everyone else from a physical, racial point of view, whereby her skinscape stands out. She states that because of this, she 'tr[ies] really hard to fit in' (turn 14). The adverb and adjective, 'really hard', signal a conscious effort to fit her 'white' body into the 'coloured' space as a means of being accepted. However, she does not want her 'white' body/identity to be accepted, but instead seeks to blend in, in other words fit in. The fitting in of a body, in this case, means inhabiting these sorts of chameleon-like traits of wanting to look like everyone else. This is in line with her aspiration regarding how she wants her skinscape to "matter" (Butler, 1990) in Bellville.

For Taylor, fitting in is an embodied activity in which she undertakes particular bodily practices in Bellville. Specifically, she changes her accent, the way she speaks to people as well as changes the way she dresses and the way she styles her hair (turn 14). Taylor provides no linguistic cues pertaining to which identity she seeks to or 'tries really hard' to enact. However, it may be inferred that she attempts to disassociate herself and her body from her 'white' identity in terms of dressing, speaking and styling her hair into something other than that (white) and something to be accepted.

The aspirational identity that Taylor seeks to enact through embodiment, however, is not a successful pursuit on her part. Instead, the identity put forth through the shaping of her skinscape is not taken up as such, instead her identity and/ or body comes to matter in ways in which she does not intend. Her skinscape is read through the prism of the apartheid legacy as she is called a 'boer' 'whitey' and 'white girl' and later other 'derogatory terms pertaining to [her] skin colour' by 'a group of young boys who [were] playing in [her] road' (turn 14). Her body is further subjected to, dissected and demeaned by the derogatory descriptions of her as a 'white' vark [pig]' and 'Hendrik Verwoerd's daughter' (turn 16 and 19).

Clearly, these monikers index an anachronistic social era in South Africa, specifically the four decades of apartheid. The label '**Boer**' has a long standing history of white Afrikaans domination with white farm owners (most often males) subjugating black farm workers. Hendrik Verwoerd is known as the architect of apartheid, so plausibly being called his daughter is meant to tie Taylor to the actions of the white regime. Here, in the current post-apartheid context, these discourses evidently prevail. Taylor's gendered identity seems to operate in parallel to her race through the words 'whitey' and 'white girl' which make clear reference to this. She is further described as a 'white vark', whereby specifically 'vark' which is the Afrikaans translation for the English noun, 'pig', is a symbolic reference to filth and is doubly impactful when encoded in Standard Afrikaans or the language of the oppressors as it was known during apartheid. As is evident, intersectionality reveals how particular racial groups, in this case, how the category of white is built around normativities held by the residences of Bellville in a post-apartheid South Africa.

From a discourse analytic position, the monikers may be referred to as a form of hate speech, whereby these discourses provide insight into the very negative feelings held by the 'coloured' residents of Bellville toward the 'white' resident therein. However, from a Phenomenological Discourse Analytic (PDA) position, I argue that these discourses function

as forms of racial interpellations which seek to bind Taylor's 'white' body and further, as is seen, give way for an understanding of what emotions are felt on her part because of this. Here, the figured worlds held by the residents of Bellville, specifically that of the 'young boys' regarding their understanding of 'white' people is enacted and performed through their use of derogatory names to call Taylor. Hence, in this instance, the ways in which Taylor's body comes to matter in place; not solely seen and taken up in gendered terms, but in relation to her racial identity; 'whitey', 'white girl', 'white vark'. In turn, her race is further implicated in apartheid discourses; 'boer' and 'Hendrik Verwoerd's daughter'. While I can never irrefutably state whether the tone of the boys were humorous or not, this study, however, infers that her body is taken up as being a site of reproach; 'be careful [she] will bring apartheid back' (see turn 17, 19 and 21).

It is important to elicit the phenomenological feelings which beset Taylor in relation to these racial interpellations. She states that she felt 'uncomfortable definitely'; the adverb 'definitely' (turn 28) places emphasis on the embodied feeling of discomfort. Also, her account shows how she consciously distances herself from her race. This need to disassociate comes largely as a result of how the body comes to matter in place; a white female in relation to apartheid discourses. She equally inhabits an understanding of the ways in which the body matters, noting an awareness of her racial group as being implicated in apartheid by a white regime as well as noting the anxiety that comes with, too, being grouped as part and parcel thereof. She states, 'being labelled into this category... knowing that I will possibly never do that' (turn 28). The adverb, 'possibly', functions as a rather humorous linguistic cue, plausibly signalling doubt or hesitancy on her part. However, I argue that we can never be in a position to state that there is a possibility that she will do what the white regime did. Instead, this linguistic cue may be viewed as evident of the very ambiguous nature of language.

Taylor's account also shows that she is experiencing a case of shame in belonging to a racial group who was once implicated in the oppression of non-whites in the apartheid era. She then ends the account by stating, 'I did not belong to any group because I cannot be in this space uhm because I wasn't welcomed in this space' (turn 28). The alienation from both the dominant racial group (coloured) and space (Bellville) show the way in which feelings of not belonging to any group makes evident how she does not want to be a part of the white race as she attempts to disassociate herself from the legacy of apartheid. Taylor does not feel welcomed in Bellville, a largely 'coloured' dominated space despite trying to fit in and be accepted through emulating this group (through stylizing her hair and clothes). However, even the aspirational identity which she seeks to enact is not accepted. Hence, she feels as being not part of a racial group (white) as well as not part of any other group both in terms of wanting to be the other as well as wanting to be part of the space at hand. Despite her youth and therefore clearly not part of the apartheid generation, she is still lumped in with a particularly ignominious white group. Ironically, white citizens who benefited from apartheid would reside in wealthier areas which are still today populated by other wealthy white people. This indicates that although Taylor self-identifies as white, she does not form part of the elite upper-class wealthy whites. In this sense, Taylor is being punished for the crimes of apartheid, but judging from her social class and place of residence, she does not directly benefit from this time period.

The insights as reflected by Taylor may be argued to be those that she holds as an adult. There is a large impossibility that a 'very young' girl can inhabit feelings of shame toward her race based on the discourses of apartheid. Hence, it may be that recounting a childhood memory as an adult allows Taylor to interpret these forms of harassment from a more adult perspective. Furthermore, her account reveals that street harassment not only functions as an interaction between the genders (male and female) and is something which is sexualized as is

currently theorized, but also ties in issues of race. This evidently shifts street harassment to being a phenomenon which may be racialized. Significantly, Taylor's account reveals that street harassment also occurs among children. This is an issue that is generally not taken up and spoken about at length in the current literature reviewed.

### 5.1.3. Extract: 3

Turn 33. Interviewer: And my last question would then be in what times of the day would this happen to do?

Turn 34. Taylor: In the morning when I'm running uhm from what I can==

Turn 35. Interviewer: ==is this recently now as well ==

Turn 36. Taylor. ==Yes this is this recently==

Turn 37. Interviewer: So this has been going on for a long time and nothing has changed?

Turn 38. Taylor: no nothing has changed I think what the only thing that have change that has changed is uhm if I should be harassed it would be the groups of men that are harassing me so what has changed was I was use to to small children just like spitting words or whatever hmm but as the older I get and also the spaces that I go through I find like construction men=

Turn 39. Interviewer: ==definitely==

Turn 40. Taylor: they always harass me and uhm even the homeless they harass me as well hmm so I think the groups that inflict this harassment changed

Although the interview reveals that street harassment is that which is primarily enacted by men as is described as something that 'has been going on for a long time', whereby 'nothing has changed' (turn 37) Taylor, however, states that the only thing that changes is the 'groups of men who are harassing [her]' (turn 38). Hence, Taylor states that at first she was accustomed to 'small children just spitting words at [her]'. The use of the verb 'spitting' is reminiscent of the more common, vulgar behaviour of people physically spitting in public

spaces, but also functions as a metaphor which reveal Taylor's feelings of being disrespected. Emblematic of this sentiment is her exchange with the 'group of small boys playing in the road' in Bellville and their racial interpellations.

Taylor further states that at becoming older, she is subjected to harassment by different groups of people depending largely on which spaces she traverses, whereby harassing behaviour is enacted by 'construction men' as well as the homeless. It is wise to consider these forms of harassment in relation to those which prevail as a result of her race as different spaces give rise to different types of harassment. In other words, different oppressive categories of social classification become more or less salient depending on the space in which Taylor finds herself in. Here, I make reference to one occurring in Bellville and then in Cape Town.

Thus far, Taylor's accounts make evident the intersectional nature of identities and space. Hence, her body is not solely 'read' in place as female or as white per se. In this sense, she is not just a female subjected to interpellations by males (boys), but a white female in relation to 'coloured' boys in Bellville which she understands as being a 'coloured area'. However, regardless of the very intersectional nature of identities of social classification, some identities are rendered more visible than others across space and time. This is also made evident in the following extract.

#### **5.1.4. Extract: 4**

Turn 19. Interviewer: ==so your street harassment it was more of it wasn't like you a women and I'm gonna comment or catcall you it was more like based on race==

Turn 20. Taylor: == uh yes it was based on race but it depends also on the space like like when I'm in Bellville area it's more of more of a race thing and uh when I was working in Town uhm Cape Town



usually around Adderley street then it was more of a more of me being a woman being a female woman walking alone uhm==

21. Interviewer: == and then what would be said in in spaces opposed to Bellville?

22. Taylor: what would be?

23. Interviewer: what would be said by the harasee?

24. Taylor: ==oh==

25. Interviewer: The harasser sorry

26. Taylor: ==“you look sexy” and “why are you gonna why you showing your legs?” and and “your legs look nice” uhm ya it was very much like me being a woman dressed in a certain way and having my hair done a certain way uhm ya

On the one hand, Taylor makes a distinction between Bellville and Cape Town, specifically Adderley Street, stating that when in the former, street harassment is ‘based on race’ and ‘is more of a race thing’. On the other hand, in Cape Town it is more about ‘being a woman being a female woman walking alone’ (turn 20). This is understandable taking into consideration the difference in types of spaces. On the one hand, Bellville is a public space, but it also comes to function more as a residential close-knit space, whereby it hosts most often, a group of specific people, in this case, coloured residents. In this space, Taylor being white is the most salient aspect of her skinscape which elicits harassment. Her racial identity therefore comes to be more readily visible in relation to her other identities. Cape Town, Adderley Street, however, is Cape Town’s largest street which hosts more diverse groups of people in space and functions more as a diverse public space in relation to the close-knit space of Bellville. Here, her solitary gendered identity as female becomes more salient. Her gender is made evident through ‘dressing a certain way’ and having her ‘hair done in a

certain way' which gives rise to the more 'common' sexualized remarks such as 'why are you showing your legs?' and 'your legs look nice' (turn26).

Thus far, Taylor's accounts are instrumental in showing that street harassment is gender-specific in the sense that Taylor's gender as female renders her body vulnerable in a number of ways. However, when considering the intersection of gender with other categories of social classification and place, street harassment takes many different forms across place and time.

As Taylor's account continues, it becomes clear how 'gender' and 'race' are not the only identity markers which function within the account. Rather, issues of gender as intersecting with class also plays a significant role in harassing behaviour. This is made evident in the following extract.

#### **5.1.5. Extract: 5**

Turn 32. Taylor: ...and it's not the type of coloureds that are well-off so you get your hardworking middle-class hardworking people going to work working hard walking to work taking public transport and then you get this white girl that just thinks she can come in here and do the things that they do so it's sort of like uh it's a class barrier as well so they not use to seeing even when I go to the Spar they not use to seeing such a white person in their Spar because there's mainly coloureds you know ya

Taylor makes a distinction between what she calls 'the type of coloureds that are well-off'. I infer that she refers to middle-class coloureds in terms of occupation and salary, in contrast to the blue-collar, working class 'coloureds'. She describes the latter as being engaged in 'going to work', 'working hard' and 'taking public transport'. Taylor signals that she believes that where she is also engaged in these very same activities as a 'white' female, it is that which causes frustration on the part of the coloured residents. She positions herself as a 'white'

person who is largely seen as someone ‘who just thinks she can come in here and do the things they do’ (see turn 32). Hence, as opposed to a racial barrier between ‘coloureds’ and ‘whites’, harassing behaviour is also seen to derive from a ‘class barrier’ within the specific space. She also notes that when she goes to Spar (name of a supermarket), her racial identity as being ‘such a white person’, the word, ‘such’, placing emphasis on the way in which her body stands out is readily visible as the residents are not accustomed to seeing her racial group in what she defines as ‘their Spar’. The possessive pronoun ‘their’ places emphasis on notions of ownership of space, in this case, ‘The Spar’ belongs to ‘coloured’ people because there are ‘mainly coloureds [there]’. Issues of class are further exemplified in another account which she shares. The exchange unfolds as follows:

#### **5.1.6. Extract: 6**

Turn 44 and 46. Taylor: well there’s nothing really that you can do because you don’t wanna start a fight uhm but this one time this guy harassed me I was in Town and I was walking with my boyfriend and my boyfriend just happens to be coloured and is really dark-skinned and uhm (.) this old homeless man he said uhm (...) your boyfriend’s just with you for your money white people always have money and my boyfriend just turned around and he got so upset he wanted to hit him and I just said you know it’s not worth it just leave it and walk on and as we were walking on I could still hear him like calling names and all that so ya that’s not very pleasant (*lowers tone*)

It is wise, at this point, to refer back to Taylor’s reference to Town, specifically Adderley Street. She states that when she is in this specific space, her gender as female in relation to the way she dresses as well as being alone in space allows harassment to prevail. This results in the surfacing of the more common sexualized remarks. However, as is evident in the excerpt above, Taylor becomes a target for street harassment when she is accompanied by her romantic partner, that being her boyfriend.

An examination of the way in which she introduces her boyfriend is significant. His racial identity is made explicit in the statement: ‘my boyfriend just happens to be coloured and is really dark-skinned’. Describing her boyfriend’s race as coloured prefaces her account that follows. Hence, these linguistic cues already provide insight into the fact that the harassment is racialized. Also, describing her boyfriend’s skin tone as ‘really dark-skinned’ is important as the darker an individual was, the less desirable their identity was during the apartheid era.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the use of the adverb, ‘really’, places emphasis on her boyfriend’s ‘dark-[skin]’, thus showing that his racial identity of being ‘coloured’ is largely obvious in relation to her (‘such a white...’) racial identity (see turn 32 earlier extract). Perhaps, this accounts for why, in earlier extracts, I find that Taylor, through the aspiration of fitting in and disassociating herself from her race assumes that this is as easy as simply changing her accent, hair and clothes (see earlier excerpts, turn 14).

Returning to the discussion pertaining to being harassed whilst being accompanied by her boyfriend, Taylor states that ‘this one time this guy harassed me’. She further reveals his identity, whereby ‘this guy’ is described as being a ‘old homeless man’<sup>17</sup>, whereby he (old homeless man) said ‘your boyfriend’s just with you for your money white people always have money’. The exchange is a rather unusual one. Where we are most often accustomed to homeless people within public spaces who beg for money, thus rendering their role performance, from a geosemiotic point of view, ‘in (public) place’ as largely context-specific where civil-inattention is habitually breached (Scollon and Wong Scollon, 2003). However, in this case, the discourse enacted by the beggar does not feed into his identity as one, but rather reflects his particular figured world pertaining to knowledge on his part regarding

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<sup>16</sup> Notably ‘light’ coloured people could apply for reclassification as white during apartheid.

<sup>17</sup> Although the race of the vagrant was not stated, we know that white vagrants are few and far between so most likely this was either a coloured or black vagrant.

white people and wealth. Also, his remarks regarding them being a cross-racial couple is marked by the wider context of South Africa's political history of racial segregation.

During apartheid, one of more pernicious laws was the Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 which prohibited inter-racial relationships between racial groups in South Africa. Arguably, the abolished law is now being reproduced through the remarks made by the vagrant within the current post-apartheid context. Also, where the harasser makes reference to Taylor's boyfriend who according to him is solely courting her because of her assumed wealth also show the ways in which her boyfriend's identity of 'coloured' comes to be attached to the stereotype promulgated during apartheid that coloureds are liars, thieves and people generally not to be trusted.

Taylor further describes her boyfriend as in the process of 'turning around' to confront the vagrant as he was 'so upset' and 'wanted to hit [the old homeless man]'. I argue that Taylor's boyfriend's physical embodied actions are a reflection of how he felt at the time toward the discourses or rather, figured world, held by the old homeless man and taking a significant dislike to it. Upon seeing the actions of her boyfriend, Taylor reveals that, as she states, 'you know it's not worth it just leave it and walk on'. It is evident that the male body of Taylor's boyfriend is more agentic in eradicating a rather untrue world view pertaining to his courtship with Taylor as he wishes to engage in acts of physical violence. Taylor's boyfriend simultaneously constructs his own gender as male as strong in relation to that of Taylor who enacts a less-agentic identity of one who does not readily wish to confront the harasser. Instead, she persuades her boyfriend to 'just leave it and walk [away]'. Both actions, however, equally feed into the understanding of what is felt on the part of both Taylor and her 'coloured' boyfriend toward the words of the harasser, but in quite different ways. We see, however, that even when walking away, the physical mobility of both the bodies of the harassed in place is symbolically made immobile by the continuous banter of the homeless

man; 'as we were walking on I could still him like calling names and all that'; something which Taylor describes as 'not very pleasant'. Ultimately, the power appears to be retained by the homeless beggar. Where the account reveals that women are harassed even when being accompanied by men, this contrasts the view of the opposite being entirely true as is the case in the literature reviewed. When questioned as to what her responses are to harassers in general, Taylor replies:

#### **5.1.7. Extract: 7**

Turn 48. Taylor: firstly (*sighs*) firstly when you young you know you so naïve and ignorant you wanna stand up for yourself and defend yourself and uhm throughout the years I've learnt that it's pointless nothing gets done and the more you defend yourself and the more you defend your gender and your race people are just gonna come back at you (.) so I use to stand up and swear at them and just turn around and show you know that I'm not this weak person that they can just prey on hmm but now actually I actually I just ignore it I I look the other way I have to walk the other way because even if I'm running in the area and someone comments something about my physical being me being a female or me being sexy or good looking I actually feel threatened to the point that (.) I'm going to I might get raped or they might do something because I'm weaker than them or they outnumber me so ya so jogging with my pepper spray or knife is [best]

Briefly speaking, the first account shared by Taylor is a recollection of a childhood memory, whereby looking back she describes her childhood-self as not knowing what is acceptable or not and accepting anybody's reaction toward her. I argue that this is quite natural as being young does lead to an inability to not possess knowledge pertaining to what is right, wrong, acceptable or not. However, in the following excerpt it is quite ironic that Taylor equates the need to, as a child, wanting to stand up for and defend herself as being that of 'ignorant and naïve'. Here, countering street harassment is not equated with positive agency, but instead as something which is seen in a negative light. However, she further provides cues pertaining to why she feels this way toward the possibility of doing so. She states that in the act of

countering street harassment, she would, as stated 'I use to stand up and swear at them and just turn around and show you know that I'm not this weak person that they can just prey on'. Using profanity such as 'swearing' is a means of countering and deconstructing a rigid figured world held by the harasser pertaining to her as being a female; that being a 'weak person' and 'one that they can prey on'. This statement equally provides her unique understandings of femininity as being constructed as 'weak' in relation to men. Also, the noun, 'prey', allow me to see how Taylor positions herself not just as 'weak' female, but also as an animal, whereby the linguistic cue, 'prey', pertains to the acts of hunting and killing amongst animals. Here, street harassment is described as being synonymous with this ruthless language.

Earlier in the interview, Taylor states, 'there's nothing really you can do because you don't wanna start a fight (turn 44 earlier extract), whereby throughout the years of experiencing harassing behaviour, she has learnt that countering these is seen as 'pointless as nothing gets done' (turn 48). Here, the act of defending and standing up for herself, is seen, on the part of Taylor as ignorant and naïve. This comes as a result of as she states, 'the more you defend yourself and the more you defend your gender and defend your race people are just gonna come back at you' (turn 48). Her account shows that the act of defending her gender and race is simultaneously an act of deconstructing the hegemonic figured worlds which results in exclusions within public spaces. As is seen, for Taylor, defending her 'race' entail a defence against her white body and the interpellations it is subjected to in a 'coloured area'. Namely, that of being labelled a 'white vark [pig]', 'boer', 'Hendrik Verwoerd's daughter' and a site of reproach, 'be careful [she] will bring apartheid back' (see turn, 16 and 18 earlier extracts). The act of defending her 'race' is equally an act of trying to fit in through embodiment (turn 12). This entails using profanity as a means of eradicating the view of women as 'weak'. However, regardless of these defence mechanism, it is rendered as 'pointless' as nothing gets

done and people are ‘still gonna come back at you’. Taylor further states that, ‘but now actually I actually I just ignore it I I look the other way I have to walk the other way’. Here, ‘ignoring’, ‘look[ing] the other way’ and ‘having to walk the other way’ is not simply an inability to deconstruct exclusionary figured worlds, but is instead an agentic embodied act and bodily practice of defending herself from physical harm, because for Taylor, sexualized comments pertaining to her ‘physical being [her] being a female or [her] being sexy or good looking’ (turn 26 earlier extracts) allows her to inhabit feelings of being ‘threatened’ (turn 48), whereby there is a belief on her part that she might ‘get raped’ or ‘they might do something else because I’m weaker than them’. She is viewed in the eyes of the harasser as being ‘weak’, whereby they may also outnumber her. She therefore states that she takes safety precautions such as ‘jogging with [her] pepper spray or knife’. Here Taylor’s description of her bodily-practices in spaces is reflective of how her body becomes agentic because of the protective, defensive semiotics. Notably, the belief that she will be subjected to heavier abuse and sexual violence compliments the current theorizing of street harassment made by feminist legal scholars.

The final extract pertains to an encounter she had whilst traversing with her niece in Cape Town. Her niece is seven years old and is described as ‘light of complexion’ in skin-tone, but however, not ‘fully white’ as her father is described as being ‘coloured’.

#### **5.1.8. Extract: 8**

Turn 52. Taylor: hmmm uhm well it’s not particularly to well I was with my niece and she’s light of complexion just like me just that her father is uhm coloured and she was my sister’s my sister’s child and we were we were walking one day in her area and she stays close to town and this small boy told her that she is so good looking that he will rape her==

Turn 53. Interviewer: == wow oh my word==



54. Taylor: ==and she's seven years old (.) she didn't know what it means and she asked me and when I heard that I absolutely I stopped and I wanted to kill him (*laughs*) but I told him that does he even know what it means what that word means and he said yes he does because she's so good looking and she can't wait he can't wait until she's bigger

Turn 55. Interviewer: oh my word

Turn 56. Taylor: ya I I was taken aback and from that moment I told my niece to not go out of the house because if there are people walking around like that then obviously that's going to be negative so ya (*lowers voice*).

Taylor introduces her boyfriend through mentioning his race and subsequent colour of his skin as being an early indicator that her form of harassment which took place when she is with him is racialized in nature. In this particular extract she also introduces her niece by means of firstly mentioning the colour of her skin tone. She says, "...she's light of complexion just like me just that her father is uhm coloured... (turn 52). A number of reasons can be put forth for why she says this. Perhaps Taylor's description of her niece 'being light of complexion' just like her and not 'fully white' may have spared her from a form of harassment which Taylor endures as a child. Notably, as seen, at a young age Taylor is harassed based on race. However, her niece's harassment comes as a result of her attractive appearance.

Her niece's place of residence which is in close proximity to Cape Town CBD is where the harassing event unfolds. She states that when walking in the area with her niece they are approached by a 'small boy' who tells her niece 'she is so good looking that he will rape her===' (turn 52). Here, Taylor's feelings of being threatened to the point that she will be subjected to rape when countering street harassment is literally something that her niece is subjected to regarding the recounting of the interaction between the 'young boy' and her niece. The boy explicitly states his intentions to engage in the sexual act of 'rape' with her

niece on the basis that she is 'so good looking', (52). The adverb, 'so', places emphasis on the attractive physical appearance held by the seven year old girl which unfortunately also renders her young body as a site of would-be sexual harassment. This is in line with the theories made in the social psychology and feminist disciplines, notably that street harassment presents itself as a means through which the bodies of females are objectified.

Taylor further explains that being '[only] seven years old' at the time means that her niece possesses no understanding of 'rape' and what it means. This is equally reminiscent of Taylor's recounting of her own childhood memory, whereby she describes herself as not knowing what is acceptable or not and accepting anybody's reaction toward her. In this sense, she is defenceless and innocent. Taylor describes herself as 'absolutely stop[ping]', whereby the adverb, 'absolutely', placing emphasis on the very necessity of having to counter and respond to this form of harassment as well as the need to 'want to kill him [young boy]'. This is brought about because of her niece's lack of knowledge and age. Taylor nervously laughs after saying this realizing the connotations associated with the act of 'killing' someone. However, these linguistic cues give insight into the very repulsion expressed on the part of Taylor in what she witnesses. Taylor engages in conversation with the 'small boy' asking him, 'doesn't he even know does he know what the word [rape] means', whereby he reiterates stating that 'he does'. Hence, the boy positions himself as knowledgeable about rape. His contention that he 'cannot wait' until her niece is bigger [older] paints a disturbing picture for Taylor.

The account reveal that as opposed to adult female bodies, the body of a minor and her physical appearance is, too, the basis for harassment in public spaces as the young boy eagerly pronounces his intention to commit assault on a seven year old girl. Taylor's niece is largely ignorant about rape, but the young harasser is clearly more knowledgeable about this topic thus reinforcing the very real reality of a woman's body as being passive and a site of

harassment regardless of age. At this point I wish to reiterate that the account by Taylor reveals that street harassment takes place between children. The fact that this is an under-theorized area of concern as the literature reviewed indicates is a serious omission which cannot be overlooked.

It becomes quite clear that outside public spaces are inherently constructed as hyper masculine spaces and thus gendered, whereby the body of the seven year old girl is excluded. This exclusion is further reinforced by the advice given by Taylor in which she uses her understandings of figured worlds which is influenced by outside spaces as being dangerous for women. She says that from that moment onward her advice to her niece was to 'not go outside of the house' because of potential harm which she may encounter. The 'young boy' with his disturbing remarks regarding his intention to rape her niece plays an important role in the retraction of space. Here we see how space refracts around Taylor's niece as she is 'schooled' on her role as a passive, mute actor in public space both by the boy, but more so by Taylor herself. Here it is evident that public and private spaces are viewed by the participant as male and female realms respectively as is indicated in the literature.

Ideally, there is an expectation that young girls may learn about sexual violence in a safe environment and not through first-hand accounts. However, this particular account is instrumental in showing the ways in which Taylor's niece learns about rape on the street. The boy's comments are doubly dangerous as her good looks render her body vulnerable and immobile. This is in line with the arguments made in the social psychology and feminist discipline, specifically the way in which the female body is objectified and valued for its external appearance and its consumption (rape) by others (Tuerkheimer, 1997; Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997 in Fairchild and Rudman 2008). Hence, a supposed compliment is a thinly veiled threat of impending harm and how these sexual interpellations come to bind the body of the seven year old girl, not just symbolically, but also from a spatial point of view. Her

aunt instructs her to limit her physical movements to that of the home which is constructed as the safe, domestic sphere. In this case, public space is constructed as dangerous with interactions between males and females (even from this very young age) tenuous at best and teeming with sinister intentions. Taylor's definition and experiences of street harassment both feeds into as well as contrasts dominant definitions thereof. Current studies pertaining to street harassment presents the phenomena as largely taking place between females and males, whereby the exchange thereof most often consist of sexualised gestures on the part of males pertaining to female bodies in terms of their physical appearance and dress codes. Indeed Taylor is at times subjected to these forms of gestures when she is labelled as 'sexy' and questioned about why she is 'showing her legs'. Additionally, her niece's form of harassment is a perfect example of this. In this sense, gender does in some instances play a sole role in her harassment. However, given Taylor's childhood account, it is evident that the phenomenon is not solely sexualized, but also racialized. The next participant is Thandi, who similarly discusses her experiences of street harassment in relation to public space.

## 5.2.

Thandi\*

The following account excerpt is generated by an interview conducted with 'Thandi', a 23 year old Xhosa-speaking woman who self-identifies as 'black'. She recounts an event of street harassment which she and her friend, Buhle\*, also racially classified as 'black' is implicated in while visiting Big Bay, a historically whites-only mall during the apartheid era.

### 5.2.1. Extract: 1

Turn 4. Thandi: okay this is how I I I feel about street harassment this is how I define it I define it as you not knowing who I am and feeling that you have the right to say something about the way I'm dressed about the way I move about my body about anything that concerns me when you a total

stranger to me and doing it in a very uhm insulting and intimidating way that's my definition of street harassment

Turn 5. Interviewer: and have you ever been a victim of street harassment?

Turn 6. Thandi: yes many times many times I've been a victim as a young girl==

Turn 7. Interviewer: == before uhm we like before we get into uhm (.) your experiences in which spaces do you find that you always a victim?

Turn 8. Thandi: In most spaces like when I'm in TOWN I will get something like that across all races I I can get something like that from a coloured man from a black man you know white man not not really but there are some white rude white boys you know who would say some for instance this is also...

Thandi positions street harassment as being something most often enacted by those who are 'total strangers' in relation to her whereby, they '[do] not [know] who [she is]'. However, regardless of the unacquainted nature between herself and the harassers, they (harassers) are portrayed as enacting an authoritative position of 'having the right' to enact discourses pertaining to the way she dresses and moves her body (turn 4). She also regards the discourses as enacted on the part of the harassers as having undertones of being insulting and intimidating in nature. Hence, not only does her definition compliment the common, dominant figured world pertaining to street harassment, but it also feeds into an understanding of the way in which she feels about their actions, as something which is negative; 'insulting and intimidating' (turn 4). Arguably she most often experiences it, as she states 'many time many times a young girl' (turn 6). The repetition of the words, 'many times', show that the phenomenon is something which she is familiar with as it occurs often. Additionally, she also positions herself as being victim because of her gender as female and youth, specifically 'young girl'

When asked in which (public) spaces she most often experiences street harassment, she states in 'Town' (Cape Town CBD), whereby it will be something enacted by people from 'across

all races' (turn 8) Intriguingly, however, she makes the point of saying that street harassment would not be perpetrated by a 'white man'. She contrasts this point with her assertion that street harassment occurs most often by a 'coloured man', a 'black man', and 'rude white boys'. The fact that she mentions the identities of 'man' and 'boys' in relation to their racial identity shows that the activity is not just enacted across all races, but also across all ages as is evident in the words, 'man' and 'boy'. This is in line with current literature pertaining to the way in which street harassment is not determined by either age or race. Furthermore, the fact that she uses the adjective, 'rude', in relation to the actions of the 'white boys' and not in relation to the actions of the men may show that the event of street harassment is considered by her, in a sense, that which is normal behaviour on the part of older males, but as something markedly disrespectful on the part of the more younger white boys.

Thandi's description of the white boys as 'rude' may suggest that their harassment has more to do with disrespecting and/ or insulting her person outright as opposed to catcalling her which often carries the threat of sexual violence. Also, the mentioning of each race group, namely, 'coloured', 'white' and 'black' is testament to deep-seated knowledge and possible acceptance of apartheid racial categories<sup>18</sup>. However, the fact that she mentions 'Town' (Cape Town's CBD) as a singular space in which she is subjected to harassment from 'across all races', shows not only the diversity of different groups of people within one space, that being Town, but also the de-segregation of public spaces, whereby Town, in turn, reflects this geographical, desegregated nature. All in all, despite the differences which come about due to race and age, street harassment is, however, positioned as enacted primarily by males.

Thandi affirms that she is a victim primarily because of her gender as a 'young girl', whereby the unsolicited interactions are enacted by males, that being men and boys. This, however,

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<sup>18</sup>The effects of these categories were further enforced in the creation of the Group Areas act of 1960 which effectively grouped races inequitably into the geographical racial segregation which still persists today.

comes from males across the racial and age range. However, the adverb, ‘also’, show the means by which Thandi seeks, through her account which follows, to broaden the scope of what is most often perceived to be the primary features of street harassment. In the extract below, the white South African English accent (WSEA) is encoded in Arial Unicode MS.

### 5.2.2. Extract: 2

Turn 8. Thandi: ==for instance this is also street harassment something that happened just two days ago my friend and I I was I was I was at Big Bay you know we had dinner and there was my friend from Johannesburg and then as we exit the restaurant walking towards the car this white couple uh approaches us they like “hey girls what are you doing here so late?” and we like no we we were having dinner in this restaurant and the lady said “oh so how are you gonna shame how are you gonna get home?” and then we’re like no we fine she’s like “you taking a cab boyfriend you know sugar daddy?” something like “thaaaaat or whaaaat what are you taking home?” and then [Buhle] said oh no we driving and she said “oh you driving you driving your Mercedes Benz what boyfriend’s car?” you know all those intimidating questions like I I was looking at her like what who does this white women think they are asking us such such such questions she doesn’t know us and why couldn’t she have like kept quiet or couldn’t she have asked oh you taking your car and accept that like does it mean a black person can’t drive or something like that and some like for me==

Turn 9. Interviewer:==And that was for you street harassment?==

Turn 10.ThandiJi-Yoo: ==that that was harassment that was racism on **fleek on the street**...

In the above extract, Thandi shares this particular account of street harassment as the event happened just ‘two days’ prior to the interview, whereby it is still fresh in her mind and

plausibly influenced her to recount this particular experience. She begins by saying, ‘this is also street harassment...’ (turn 8). When evaluating the adverb, ‘also’, I find that this linguistic cue shows that the participant accepts the dominant figured world pertaining to street harassment put forth by me earlier in the interview.

Thandi explains that she and her friend, Buhle, who resides in ‘Johannesburg’ were having ‘dinner’ at a ‘restaurant’ situated in ‘Big Bay’, which is an historically whites-only mall. She notes that as they ‘exit[ed] the restaurant’ they were ‘approach[ed]’ by an unknown ‘white couple’. I come to understand this white couple as being two mature heterosexual women. The naming of the public space, ‘Big Bay’, and the mentioning of the racial identity of the ‘couple’ as ‘white’ shows that it is the specific space as well as the race of the harassers that forms an integral part of the interaction. Additionally, while the nature of the relationship between the two white women cannot be known irrefutably, the impression Thandi has is that the women are friends and not in a romantic relationship. Hence, the noun, ‘couple’, denotes that there are two women involved in the exchange.

At this point it is wise to note that when Thandi relays what is being said by the ‘white’ couple’, she stylizes a somewhat exuberant middle class white South African English (WSAE) accent. Thandi draws on this stylization every time she reports on what either of the two women said. This form of stylization feeds into an understanding of the ways in which Thandi feels about the words of the women. Hence, she does not view them solely as harassers, but as white harassers. This point becomes progressively clearer as her description of the event continues.

On approaching Thandi and Buhle, the ‘white couple’ is described as saying ‘hey girls what are you doing here so late?’ At first, it could be inferred that this question stems from



genuine feelings of concern on the part of the couple for Thandi and Buhle who are positioned as being of a much younger age in relation to the women. Hence, it may seem that the noun, 'girls', as opposed to 'ladies' call for concern in wanting to know what they are doing in the space so late given the dominant figured world of public spaces as being constructed as dangerous, especially for females at night. Also, the greeting, 'hey', comes across as being of a friendly nature. However, it is what is further said on the part of the 'white couple' which shows that the encounter enacted on their part has less to do with feelings of concern toward Thandi and Buhle, but instead has more to do with the "policing" (cf. Steyn and Foster, 2008) of the presence of two 'black' female bodies in the historically whites-only mall. Hence, perhaps the reference to Thandi and Buhle as 'girls' might not be about a perceived age-gap between, but has more to do with the infantilizing of the grown female body by rendering them as mere 'girls' as opposed to ladies. In this sense, what is said on the part of the couple comes to inform our understanding of the way in which Thandi and Buhle's bodies come to matter in space. Specifically, the way in which their bodies matter reflect the dominant figured worlds, or in other words, dominated discourses, which is associated with 'black' female bodies. These discourses become evident through what is further said by the 'white couple'.

When questioned as to what they are doing in that space at hand 'so late', Thandi states that they inform the 'white ' couple' that they '...were having dinner in this restaurant'. In response, the white couple says, 'oh so how are you gonna shame how are you gonna get home? ...' I argue that because of South Africa's history of racial segregation, more specifically geographical segregation, there already exists presuppositions that the 'girls' do not reside within Big Bay as it is quite far from the townships. Hence, 'home' is inferred as being quite a distance away which begs the next question 'how [exactly] are you gonna

get home?'. Thandi and her friend respond with 'no we fine', which is followed by yet another suggestive enquiry, specifically 'you taking a cab? Boyfriend? Sugar-daddy?'

The options of Thandi and her friend's possible exit range from 'cab' (paid transport service), 'boyfriend' (heterosexual relationship) to 'sugar-daddy' (older gentleman who provides financial rewards for sexual services rendered by a much younger woman). The latter is by far the most injurious of the three options as it depicts Thandi and her friend as involved in salacious and questionable activities. By casting these descriptions, the white couple show that there is a belief on their part that the girls have not enjoyed a meal in an elitist area on any account of their own, such as having a job and being able to eat-out on their own expense. Instead, their presence is seen as being afforded by some male figure, either a 'boyfriend' or a 'sugar-daddy' and that they are not able to afford paying for their own taxi cab. Notably, most often when referring to sugar daddies in relation to black women, a reference is made to white men. Hence, in this sense, it could be inferred that the white couple believes that if Thandi and Buhle are in a romantic relationship with white men, then this relationship will not be a "normal" romantic one of sorts, but instead one which is a representation of the favour for a favour scenario that comes to inform relationships that women have with 'sugar-daddies'. Furthermore, it becomes clear that the white women do not think that Thandi and Buhle can have a "normal" romantic relationship even with a 'boyfriend', because this said-boyfriend is depicted as merely being someone whom they can capitalize and benefit from.

The insinuating comments goes a long way in depicting 'black' women as sex workers (prostitutes) which in turn reinforces the logic that black young women cannot simply be enjoying a meal in Big Bay in like fashion as the white couple themselves in normal, healthy romantic relationships (if they are there with a partner). Where Thandi and Buhle respond by

saying ‘no we driving’, they are presented by yet another final question ‘oh you driving you driving your Mercedes Benz [?] what boyfriend’s car [?]. Here again, the questions thrust on Thandi reflects a belief that if they are driving a car, specifically a Mercedes Benz, a rather expensive model, then the car could not be owned by Thandi or Buhle, but rather by one of their boyfriends (sugar-daddies). Clearly, even Thandi’s insistence that they are driving is challenged by the white women.

Thandi stylizes a WSAE accent at critical points in her recounting which allows us to imagine the exchange even more clearly. Reporting on her perception and recollection of the comments made by the white couple, it is evident that the manner in which Thandi and her friend are approached function as a means to strategically disempower them in the exchange. Thandi describes the questions as being ‘intimidating’ as it is insulting and not borne out of genuine concern. Also, the question ‘who does this white women think they are?’ indicates that the race of the older women is an important factor in the way Thandi experiences the event. Hence, she describes these questions in negative terms, such as being ‘intimidating’ in nature because she and her friend are unacquainted with the women as well as they could not accept the answer which they provide such as ‘we’re driving’. The countering of the couples questions reflect a systematic dissection of Thandi’s rationale for taking up space in Big Bay. Thandi’s exclamation that ‘that was harassment that was **racism of fleek** on the street’ confirms beyond a shadow of a doubt that, at least for Thandi, this is truly an instance of street harassment, albeit somewhat different from Taylor. Before deepening the analysis into ‘racism on fleek’, it is important to note the ways in which intertextuality is enacted through the interview.

For all intents and purposes, Thandi’s recounting of this particular experience of street harassment is akin to a typical ‘police report’. When engaging with the extract as a police

report style, I see the ways in which Thandi and Buhle's 'black' female bodies once prohibited from this whites-only mall appears still not readily accepted. Hence, a cause for alarm, concern and related surveillance on the part of the white couple prevails. The white women's 'curiosity' (at best) or 'outright racism' (at worst) results in them questioning Thandi and her friend relentlessly. A need to know when and with whom they will be returning to their homes (likely presumed to be historically blacks-only spaces') suggest that the space in which they are currently found dining out is simply not where they belong. Hence, not only is the white couple "policing" space, but it can also be inferred that are "policing" for the purity of white race within the space at hand.

It is at this point that I will be discussing the turns taken by Thandi (and Buhle) within the communicative event. However, firstly, it is wise to note that Thandi's and her friend's skinscape appears to be interperlated in a very negative fashion by the white women when traversing through this historically whites-only mall. We see that Thandi and Buhle have produced a counter-discourse to the once dominant-one pertaining to the prohibition of black bodies pre-1994. However, this once-dominant discourse had become a handed-down hegemonic discourse and is largely implicated in their treatment post-1994 in the space at hand. Also, rather than simply ignoring the white couple, Thandi and her friend engage in conversation with them through answering their questions. Hence, their answers such as, 'we were having dinner in this restaurant', 'no we fine' and 'no we driving' in relation to the questions asked, acts as a means of defending or seeking validation for their presence there.

Revisiting the police report style, I argue that lexical choices such as standard English words such as 'exit' and 'approached' could easily have been replaced with the less standard forms such as 'left' the restaurant and 'came' closer to us. The word 'exit' is often used in phrases such as 'he exited the building' in cases of criminal accounts. Similiarly, the word 'approached' is often used to describe an ominous oncoming threat as in 'he approached with

a knife'. The lexical choices are arguably drawn upon due to everyday criminal activity which is pervasive across South Africa. However, the use of other standard forms and/or formal lexical choices over others, for example 'Johannesburg' over the more informal 'Joburg' or 'dinner' over 'supper' may signal the need to index status or prestige. On the one hand, Thandi is aware that she is being recorded, but on the other hand she may also be seeking to establish a middle-class, educated identity to ratify her presence in that space. This is in line with the argument put forth that language is also reflexive of a multitude of identities. Furthermore, she uses the expression 'on fleek' to describe the discourses of the white women. The term, 'on fleek' is a popular cultural reference and is most often used among 'young' people. Initially, the term referred to well-groomed eyebrows, most commonly associated with the phrase 'your eyebrows are on fleek'. Plausibly, when she describes the altercation as 'on fleek', she does not mean to imply anything positive about it, instead she is referring to the perfect execution of 'racism' as realized by a youthful individual engaged in an interview setting. Lastly, the guttural rolling of the /r/ in the word, 'street' is quite intriguing as it quite recently gained favour amongst aspiring political leaders in the country. This guttural /r/ is most often used to invoke feelings of 'black consciousness', in other words, pride toward one's identity and is often heard in political speeches when referring to allies as comrades (cf Ribbens-Klein, 2016). However, this pride is built on the marginalized position of the black identity both locally and globally as well as reflected through the relentless interrogation on the part of the white women. What is significant about the account offered by Thandi is that her street harassing event deconstructs the view that the phenomenon is enacted between males and females and that it is a gendered interaction. Instead, we begin to see that Thandi and her friend's gender as intersected with their racial identity as black allows them to be subjected to what she believes is an example of street harassment. Hence, not only does this account, too, show the ways that as opposed to street

harassment being a gendered interaction, it becomes more of a racialized one. Significantly, the fact that Thandi and Buhle are not harassed by men, but by boys compliments Butler's critique pertaining to the view that the category of "women" has a commonality because of gender. In this sense, then, inequality exist even within the category of women, whereby this results from Thandi and Buhle's gender as female as being intersected with their racial category as black and the harassers (female couple) having their gender intersected with the racial category of white. South Africa's history of racial segregation therefore currently gives rise to a form of intra-gendered street harassment, an issue worth of further documentation and study. Furthermore, as opposed to public spaces being viewed as not relevant in understanding why street harassment occurs, clearly the account reveals that public space is very much implicated in the event. Hence, 24 years post-apartheid, the fact that once-historically whites-only spaces have become desegregated is still, unfortunately, not readily accepted. Hence, apartheid discourses, specifically the Groups Areas Act of 1960 becomes reproduced through the actions of the white couple and comes to inform Thandi's event of street harassment.

Next, the third and final instalment in this chapter is that of Ji-yoo who comments on her view of street harassment from a transnational perspective.

### 5.3. Ji-Yoo\*

The following interview is held with Ji-yoo, a 23 year-old woman who comes from South Korea and self-identifies as Asian. The interview with Ji-yoo is a rather challenging one. This comes as a result of the fact that the participant is from South Korea and is of Asian nationality. Her proficiency in English is not as fluent as the other participants. The following

excerpt and analysis provides particular understandings and insights pertaining to the ways in which foreign nationals, specifically women, experience street harassment.

### 5.3.1. Extract: 1

Turn 1. Interviewer: How would you define this word street harassment (.) if you had to just explain it in your own words (.) how would you define it?

Turn 2. Ji-yoo: Like Cape Town

Turn 3. Interviewer: uhm ya like what do you understand by the word street harassment cat-calling all those things?

Turn 4. Ji-Yoo: Cat-calling what what is that?

Turn 5. Ji-Yoo: like when a woman is walking down the road (.) and a guy would like make comments to her oh hey sexy hey beautiful==

Turn 6. Ji-yoo: ==oh (*smiles shyly*)==

Turn 7. Interviewer: == and there's a term we use it's called street harassment ==

Turn 8. Ji-yoo: ==hmm==

Turn 9. Interviewer: ==so how would you define that term

Turn 10. Ji-yoo: I dunno I really don't like that because...

I begin the interview by asking the participant what she understands by the term, street harassment (turn 1) She responds with the answer, 'like Cape Town?' (Turn 2). I infer that she seeks to find out if I aim to seek clarity on what her understandings thereof entail with regard to Cape Town specifically. I argue, however, that this inference is valid on the basis that when describing her experiences thereof, she does not at first draw on a phenomenon which occurs in the local context in which this study is situated, but draws on an experience

which occurs in her home country as will be evident in the proceeding of the analysis. I further draw on the term, 'cat-calling', the more slang label thereof and one which I personally believe my participants would relate to. However, she does not understand this label, whereby she responds with, 'catcalling what what is that?' (Turn 4). I then draw on the common features thereof, one which is a representation of the figured world of street harassment, wherein I position it as a phenomena primarily affecting women, whereby remarks are sexualized in nature; 'like when a woman is walking down the road (.) and a guy would like make comments to her oh hey sexy hey beautiful=' (turn 5). I further explain that the label street harassment is most commonly used to refer to this phenomenon. It was only once I begin explaining its features that the participant shows an awareness of knowing what I mean by street harassment. This is evident by the linguistic cue, 'oh' provided with a nonverbal gesture, a shy smile (see turn 6) and confidently further stating, 'I dunno I really don't like that' (turn 10). The exchange beginning from turn 1- 9, then, lays the foundation for and is the basis for the recounting of her personal experience which follows.

At this point, it is wise to note that this brief exchange is reflective of the many arguments made in the feminist and gender disciplines. Specifically that the under-theorized nature of street harassment means that there is not one, fixed universal label which can be used to explain this phenomenon. In this sense, in the absence of a sufficient label, we as researchers are most often forced to draw on its common features (see turn 5), whereby it is found that the participant is more familiar with what the phenomenon entails, but is less familiar with what it is labelled. Bearing an awareness of what street harassment is the participant draws on an experience which she encounters in Mitching, an area in South Korea. The interview proceeds as follows.



### 5.3.2. Extract: 2

Turn 10 (continuation). Ji-yoo: ... uh when I was in Mitching I I wear the short uhm skirts and then ... and then like some of them like black men (lowers tone) they they they like looked (.) from up and down and then after that I don't wear a skirt

Turn 11. Interviewer: You don't wear a skirt anymore?==

Turn 12.Ji-yoo: ==no==

Turn 13. Interviewer: okay (.) uhm so what was what did these guys tell you?

Turn 14.Ji-yoo: Like hey sexy like those thing and I I really hate that

Turn 15.Interviewer: and were there any witnesses... like who saw which saw that happening?

Turn 16. Ji-yoo: ... hmmm ya many times

Turn 17. Interviewer: and what did they do

Turn 18. Ji-yoo: sometimes they following==

Turn 19. Interviewer: ==hmmm

Turn 20.Ji-yoo: and sometimes they like whist whistling

Turn 21. Interviewer: hmm okay

Turn 22. Interviewer: and and how do you feel when these things are happening to you?

Turn 23.Ji-yoo: Angry sometimes and (...) very (...) I don't know how to say but it's very not nice

Ji-yoo explains that she is subjected to street harassment primarily because of the semiotics of the body, more specifically the way her body is stylized; 'I wear the short uhm skirts' (turn 10), whereby her physical body was in turn gazed upon by whom she refers to as 'black men' '[who] like looked at [her] (.) from up and down'. She further states that because of this she

no longer wears a short skirt. Linguistic cues furthermore reveal that, as opposed to her body being stared at, harassers also make remarks based on her appearance such as ‘hey sexy and those things’ which she in turn describes as that which she ‘really hate[s]’. Also, other nonverbal gestures such as ‘following’ (turn 18) and ‘whistling’ (turn 20) is described as being used by the harassers.

The first extract provided by Ji-Yoo feeds into, as well as compliments, the dominant figured world pertaining to women and public spaces, one which I, as researcher, too, draw upon in the interview. In this sense, women are subjected to unsolicited verbal and non-verbal gestures primarily because of their gender which is visible through the stylization of the body. Hence, this shows the means by which the female body is objectified. The body is thus sexually objectified where in turn sexualized comments are produced which are largely based on physical appearance. One could also argue that perhaps Ji-yoo drew on this particular account because she thought that that was what I, as interviewer, wanted to hear as her first account (first extract of this section) sounds similar to the examples I pose. Hence, one is not too certain whether she merely repeats what is said by me because of her inability to bring herself across adequately in the language used for the interview. However, despite the intersectional nature of identities of social classification as is evident in both the accounts provided by Thandi and Taylor, within the context of Mitching, however, Ji-yoo’s account shows that her gender as female is most prominently visible. Hence, her gender becomes an oppressive category of social classification which in turn results in her particular unfolding of street harassment. This event allows her to be limited in her clothing options so as to avoid further street harassing events.

Phenomenological feelings expressed such as ‘I really don’t like that (turn 10) and ‘I really hate that’ (turn 14), shows the negative feelings felt on the part of the harasser, whereby the adverb, ‘really’, places emphasis on these feelings and can be argued is used as a means of

bringing across the message that these forms of harassment is not enjoyed as it may be presumed on the part of the harasser.

I also note that when Ji-yoo speaks about her harassers, in terms of labelling them, she refers to them in racial terms, 'black men'. However, when she does this, she lowers her voice which may stem from her own idiolect or from her cultural background. This, too, is signalled at later parts of the interview. In this sense, there is a bit of hesitancy and uncertainty to categorize her harassers into a racial category. At this point, it is wise to discuss the demographics of South Korea in terms of the black populace. Immigrants from first world nations such as Europe are generally well-received. However, accepting immigrants who are non-white and dark-skinned such as Thai's, Africans and Filipinos are frowned upon ([www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Demographics\\_of\\_South\\_Korea](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Demographics_of_South_Korea)). In this sense, black men and more generally, black people, are in a marginalized position both locally and globally. Arguably, Ji-Yoo's hesitancy to explicitly speak about the negative actions on the part of those racially classified as black could be derived from Ji-Yoo's unwillingness to marginalize them through discriminatory language. If so, she would be doing so at the risk of marginalizing her own experience of street harassment.

Where Ji-yoo shares an account which is situated in the context of South Korea, I was eager to find out what her experiences had been like as a South Korean in the context of South Africa, more specifically Cape Town, seeing that she had been residing in this local context for roughly 6 years. When evaluating my own turns, I find that as researcher my belief that she had been harassed as a South Korean countless times comes across rather strongly in the interview (see turn 2 and 45 below). Linguistic depictions of Asian people are encoded in Arial Narrow. The exchange further unfolds as follows:

### 5.3.3. Extract: 3

Turn 21. Interviewer: == where you are obviously confronted by men (.) on a daily basis

Turn 22 Ji-yoo: ... I don't know it's quite similar

Turn 23 Interviewer: hmm in what ways are is it similar and in what spaces do you find these things happening to you

Turn 24 Ji-yoo: In Town

Turn 25. Interviewer: In Town Town CBD

Turn 26.Ji-Yoo: Yes

Turn 27. Interviewer: and how do you feel as a South Korean woman when you are in Town

Turn 28. Ji-yoo (... )

Turn 29. Interviewer: It's fine you don't have to speak a certain you can just speak you know and (.) it's fine

Turn 30.Ji-Yoo: I don't know (*laughs*)

Turn 31. Interviewer: So when you walking in Town how do you feel

Turn 32.Ji-Yoo: hmmm you know I've been to (...) what is that called? When uhm when you doing the Visa thing?

Turn 33. Interviewer: hmm ya

Turn 34.Ji-Yoo: What is that called?

Turn 35. Interviewer: hmmm is it visa applications?

Turn 36.Ji-Yoo: Home affair

Turn 37 Interviewer: yeah Home Affairs ya

Turn 38.Ji-Yoo: ya there's a lot of uhm beggars==

Turn 39. Interviewer: ==hmm==

Turn 40. Ji-Yoo: They they just following every time and then sometimes they run to me so I I was very scary

Turn 41. Interviewer: and what did they say when they ran to you

Turn 42. Ji-Yoo: I don't just begging for the money==

Turn 43. Interviewer: == hmm==

Turn 44. : Ji-yoo: == and then sometimes they like I'm because I'm Asian so they they like they think they saying like "ching chong chong" or something

Turn 45. Interviewer: Oh my word

Turn 46. Ji-Yoo: ya but I'm not Chinese I'm Korean so it's totally different but I I understand because they like many people knows like most Asians are coming from China because they only know China I don't know maybe

Turn 47. Ji-Yoo: ya

Turn 48. Interviewer: So they'll make those little gestures because they think that you're Chinese

Turn 49. Interviewer: Oh okay and what other instances have you had of cat-calling in Town because I'm sure you've had so many as a woman I'm sure you've had so many experiences

Turn 50- Ji-Yoo: hmmm no I'm not like a I'm not a club person so I don't know

When making a comparison between her experiences of street harassment in South Korea in relation to her experiences in the local context of Cape Town, she states that it is 'quite similar' (turn 22). However, her account thereof reveal that as opposed to harassment occurring as a result of her gender as female which is further reinforced by the physical stylization of the body such as wearing short skirts. In the context of Cape Town, however, harassment comes as a result of her gender as female and its intersection with her perceived

nationality. She draws on an occurrence which took place in Cape Town CBD, specifically one which occurs when she visited 'Home Affair[s]' (turn 36) situated therein to do what she calls the 'visa thing' (turn 32).

Briefly speaking, where a 'Visa' is a document which is needed when travelling or staying in a country other than your own, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) which is situated in Cape Town CBD is the place in which one applies for a Visa. According to their (DHA) online website, the Department of Home Affairs is described as being "[a] custodian, protector and verifier of the identity and status of citizens and other persons resident in South Africa" (<http://www.dha.gov.za/index.php/about-us>). The mentioning of the DHA and the 'visa things' in the interview reinforces the reality that Ji-yoo is not a citizen of South Africa, but instead an individual with a foreign body which is out of place. Ironically, where the Department of Home Affairs is a place which acts as a "custodian, verifier and protector of identities ...", Ji-yoo, too, embarks on being a "custodian and verifier" of protecting her own identity as Asian as relayed in her account to explain the recounting of a form of street harassment which she is subjected to in CBD.

Ji-yoo explains that within the context of Cape Town CBD, there are a lot of 'beggars' (turn 38) who engage in nonverbal forms of intimidation such as 'just following every time' and 'then sometimes they run to me' (turn 40), whereby they would beg her for money, 'just begging for the money' (turn 42) At this point, it is wise to note that the unsolicited interactions brought about by beggars are commonplace. In this sense, what is considered a breach in civil-inattention on the part of Ji-yoo might not be taken as such on the part of the beggar as 'begging for the money' is seen as being largely context-appropriate whereby discourses enacted on the part of the beggar compliments their role-performance and identity from a Geosemiotic point-of-view. In this interaction, Ji-yoo is constructed as having the identity of a 'would be-benefactor'. This is consistent with Scollon and Scollon's (2003)

work on role performance being context-specific as seen with beggars who are expected to be acting their expected role in a genuinely public space. This behaviour is therefore normalized. However, significantly, it is what is further said on the part of the beggar in relation to begging for money which does not solely construct Ji-yoo's identity as a would-be-benefactor, but instead constructs her identity in terms of her perceived nationality.

Ji-yoo explains that the beggars engage in the verbal gestures of making nonsensical sounds such as 'ching chong chong' (turn 44) which are common racist depictions of Asian people. She believes that these gestures come primarily as a result of harassers mistakenly believing that she is Chinese. However, Ji-Yoo explains that while she is Asian, she is South Korean. The perception of her identity as Chinese is rationalized on Ji-yoo's part when she states, 'like many people knows like most Asians are coming from China because they only know China I don't know maybe' (turn 46). Her reference to the influx of Chinese people to South Africa could be borne out of the fact that there has been a sharp increase in economically powerful investors from China. In this sense, Ji-yoo's skinscape is misread in place as it is taken up as being Chinese, whereby 'ching chong chong' are utterance descriptions closely associated with the phonology of Mandarin language for example. While these utterances are nonsensical linguistically, it functions as a way to mock Ji-yoo in the interaction, thereby highlighting her perceived nationality. Hence, Ji-yoo's gendered identity as female is not readily visible 'in place' within the Cape Town context, however her gender as intersecting with her perceived nationality becomes salient. The visibility of her perceived nationality comes to show the ways in which her body matters in place; her body is read as Chinese, but also, the remarks on the part of the beggar, reinforces the very notion that her body although in place is also out of place i.e. a foreigner staying abroad.

When asked if she experiences any other instances of street harassment, she says 'no I'm not a club person'. Because of my knowledge of Cape Town, I argue that Ji-yoo says this because

she believes that the variety of night clubs in Cape Town mean that people most often come to Town to engage in a night of clubbing. Nevertheless, we could infer that she is implying that the club scene is a site which is fertile ground for street harassment as women, after consuming alcohol, may be placed in a vulnerable position especially in over-crowded spaces.

#### 5.3.4. Extract: 4

Turn 51 Interviewer: so does this only happen with beggars

Turn 52.Ji-Yoo: hmmm ya and black black people (*lowers tone*) sometimes

Turn 53.Interviewer: and what does this black people what does these black people tell you?

Turn 54.Ji-Yoo: it's same like they whistling even I'm driving if I If uhm the window is down they if I'm driving and passing from them passing by them then they just say something like

Turn 55. Interviewer: Can you remember what was said?

Turn 56. Ji-Yoo: sometimes like **ching chong chong** or china or like hey or like kissing you know kissing sounds==

Turn 57.Interviewer: ==ya==

Turn 58. Ji-yoo: ya

Turn 59. Interviewer: and what do you think what is it about that space that made them say okay it's fine for me to to cat-call her

Turn 60. Ji-Yoo: .... what do you mean by that?

Turn 61. Interviewer: Like what would uhm like what makes that space uhm suitable for them to to do these things to you or what makes you a suitable candidate for them to cat-call you

Turn 62. Ji-Yoo: Like if there's no people (.) and if they are with their friends

Turn 63.Interviewer: They'll do these things to you?



Turn 64. Ji-yoo: hmm==

Turn 65. Interviewer: ==okay what and which times of the day does this happen?

Turn 66. Ji-yoo: During night or like whole day

Turn 67. Interviewer: Whole day ==

Turn 68. Ji-Yoo:==Whole day ya even like in the morning if I'm driving to to school sometimes they'll do that

Turn 69. Interviewer: So it's all about whistling and always making reference to your (.) nationality

Turn 70. Ji-Yoo: Ya

Turn 71. Interviewer: and how do you feel in those moments

Turn 72. Ji-Yoo: Like at first I was like very angry and then I wanted to like I want to say back like those things but now I just ignore it

We find that the rest of the interview further states and clarifies what was previously said on the part of the Ji-Yoo; that harassers are most often 'beggars' and 'black people sometimes', (turn 51, 52), thereby constructing the activity as that which is most often enacted by beggars. Additionally, these harassers are engaged in both verbal and nonverbal gestures, such as 'whistling', (turn 52), 'making kissing sounds' and saying 'ching chong chong or china' (turn 56). She states that the spaces become most suitable for harassers to engage in these forms of behaviours when spaces are largely secluded; 'if there's no people' as well as 'if they are with their friends' (turn 62). Ji-Yoo's statement reinforces the notion that street harassment facilitates male bonding and solidarity as made evident in many social psychology studies (Fairchild and Rudman 2008; Dhillion and Bakaya, 2014; Chaudain and Quinn 2010). These events are explained as occurring at night, 'whole day' (turn 66) and even in the 'mornings'

when she is driving to school, (turn 68). Hence, it is not engaged in at a specific time of the day, but rather at various occasions throughout the day.

Significantly, Ji-yoo states “even I’m driving if I If uhm the window is down they if I’m driving and passing from them passing by them then they just say something like” (turn54). Contrastingly, Taylor’s account sees her more relaxed in her private mobile transport. Ji-yoo, however, finds that even though her body is physically mobile, the fact that the ‘window is down’ still allows her to be harassed. Here, it is also evident that space and especially the situated semiotic within it (the car) comes to be an integral part of her street harassing event. This account, like Taylor and Ji-yoo’s contrast the notion that public space can be theorized in anyway conducive for street harassing events.

Also, Ji-yoo’s body is further made immobile as she is unable to counter the event of street harassment, whereby she states that she inhabits feelings of anger; ‘at first I was like I was very angry’ and a need to want to answer back; ‘I wanted to like I wanted to like say back those things’ however, the body is rendered a silent, mute object on the linguistic landscape as she states that she ignores the gestures which are set in place. She therefore also succumbs to the idea that the best response is no response. This is in line with the idea that the expected role performances of women within street harassing events are ones of intimidation and submissiveness in relation to the more superior position men hold.

Ji-yoo’s account is instrumental in showing the way in which her body comes to be a skinscape which can be read in place and whereby the reading of her body/ identity as Chinese facilitates street harassment on the part of the harasser. Her agency does not materialize within the event itself, but rather within the interview, where she seeks to make clear her identity as an Asian woman, an identity which appears to have been largely overlooked in Cape Town.

#### **5.4. Summary of chapter**

This chapter foregrounds the way in which dominant discourses of particular spaces as brought about by apartheid leaves behind a legacy which comes to inform the way in which female bodies traverse through and is treated in space. Hence, I find that Taylor and Thandi are not solely recipients of street harassing events on the basis of their gender, but because of their identity as female which intersects with their racial groups as white and black respectively. These identities therefore become more visible and are rendered as oppressive categories of social classification based on where they reside or traverse. Furthermore, the account given by Ji-yoo provides for a particular understanding of how transnational bodies move through local spaces, whereby her gender as intersecting with her ethnicity is drawn on as a resource in the unfolding of her particular unsolicited communicative event.

## CHAPTER SIX

### STREET HARASSMENT AND THE SEMIOTICS OF THE BODY

#### 6.0. Introduction

This chapter foregrounds the experiences of street harassment in relation to the semiotics of the body in public space. The three participants drawn on in this chapter are Ayesha, Zinzi and Thandi.

#### 6.1. Ayesha\*

The first participant, Ayesha, is a 29 year old female and lawyer working in Cape Town CBD. She self-identifies as a coloured, female Muslim and speaks Standard English. Her account of street harassment gives insight into the many difficulties she experiences when working at the High Court. This comes as a result of her occupational identity and its intersection with other ‘oppressive’ categories of social classification which allow her occupational identity to be rendered invisible.

##### 6.1.1. Extract: 1

Turn 6. Ayesha: ==Street harassment would be for me uuhm can I give like a scenario?==

Turn 7. Interviewer: ==Hmm definitely==

Turn 8. Ayesha: ==Uhm if I’m walking somewhere and whether it’s males or female passing comment or either the way I look or dress uhm either the way I look or what I’m wearing they can either say something negative or something positive but it’s something where I didn’t ask for them to speak to me they just feel that they can just speak to me and say something so that would be (.) like harassment

Turn 9. Interviewer: Harassment okay (...) uhm okay so now that you've actually defined in your opinion what is street harassment my question would then be have you ever been at the receiving end of street harassment?

Turn 10. Ayesha: Yes==

Turn 11. Interviewer: ==okay==

Turn 12. Ayesha: ==All the time==

I begin my interview by inquiring what Ayesha's unique understanding of street harassment is and she proceeds by asking if she can give a scenario (see turn 6). For Ayesha, street harassment is rendered significant through the means in which it occurs whether '[she's] walking somewhere' and 'males or females can pass comments' (turn 8). These comments are seen as coming about as a result of the physicality and stylization of the body as noted when she says, 'the way I look or the way I dress' (turn 8). Comments are regarded as that which can 'either [be something] negative or positive' (turn 8) in nature. However, it is regarded as street harassment when the verbal communication is unsolicited, 'but it's something where I didn't ask for them to speak to me they just feel that they can speak to me and say something...' (turn 8). Ayesha's definition of street harassment compliments the many dominant, figured worlds, specifically the idea that harrassing verbal commentary is elicited by a woman's physicality. However, regardless of these comments negative or positive content, it is regarded as harassment on the basis of it not been solicited on the part of the recipient. Ayesha, however, states that harassment can be enacted by both female and males. Here again, this view contrasts the phenomenon as solely being something which is enacted by males. In the extract that follows, Ayesha elaborates on when and where she is harassed. Here she provides the time of day as well as gives a bit of contextual information surrounding Cape Town CBD.

### 6.1.2. Extract: 2

Turn 18. Ayesha: It's uhm city life (.) concrete build-up areas uhm because it's during the day it is uhm quite busy public area uhm it's not a certain area or like in a alley or things like that it's open there's many people walking around everyone's free doing their own thing uhm doing whatever they need that needs to be done whether they working or whether they tourists or whatever that==

Turn 19. Interviewer: == Okay so that's like the CBD Cape Town?==

Turn 20. Ayesha: == that's the CBD the working area of Cape Town=

Turn 57. Interviewer: = So which times of the day does this happen because I mean if you work in Town you up and down in Town whole day to get lunch or whatever=

Turn 58. Ayesha: In the mornings early mornings because court starts at 10' o'clock so I'm usually like going to court like quarter to ten (.) 10 to 10 round about that times and if I have to do other things in Town like deliver documents or go fetch documents or so forth or just go to court for whatever reason then it would be like during the day==

Turn 59. Interviewer: So it's just during the say that this happens? ==

Turn 60. Ayesha: == During the day=

Turn 61. Interviewer: uh ya (.) so you mentioned that it would happen during the day uhm at certain at that particular time which is in the morning and that you've always been a victim of street harassment

Turn 62. Ayesha: I've always been a victim=

Ayesha is a lawyer and states that she most often experiences street harassment in Cape Town CBD, a space in which she spends most of her time as she is based at the High Court in the city centre. She describes Cape Town CBD as having characteristics of 'city life' (turn 18). This places emphasis on its (Cape Town's) very busy, public nature as opposed to that of

a smaller city, neighbourhood or township. These descriptions become more salient as she provides further insight into the place, stating that because ‘it’s during the day it is uhm quite [a] busy public area’ (turn 18), whereby the adverb, ‘quite’, places emphasis on the great number of people moving through the public space each day. She also states that it is ‘open’ in contrast to ‘a certain area or like in a alley (turn 18). Hence, this genuinely public characteristic shows that the space does not solely facilitate particular interactions, social actions and discourses. As she states, it inhabits ‘many people walking around’ and being ‘free doing their own thing that needs to be done whether they are working or whether they are tourists or whatever’ (turn 18). Ayesha experiences street harassment when she is engaged in carrying out duties pertaining to her occupation such as in the morning at 10:00am when court starts as well as during the day when she needs to deliver documents or go to court. In this way, her victimization becomes fused with her daily work routines and in this sense, being harassed becomes part and parcel of what it means for her to work as a lawyer in Cape Town’s CBD.

In the below three extracts, Ayesha discusses street harassment in relation to her formal attire whilst at work, the way she is addressed both by people on the street and criminals awaiting trial. Please note Arabic is encoded in Bookman Old Style and Kaaps is encoded in Calibri.

### **6.1.3. Extract: 3**

Turn 24. Ayesha: Okay so when I go to court I have to dress in a certain way (.) so I would wear the cloak the black cloak what I would call robed (.) so if you robed you would wear your black cloak (.) your bib uh you can either wear pants or skirt I would usually wear skirt most of the time you can’t really see what you wearing underneath because of the cloak that’s so long uhm everyone can see that you are going to court that you’re dressed as a lawyer but then people would still pass comments and say things like oh you look like a flower today or if there’s criminals being escorted to court they

would be like you know screaming out of out of the vans like oh awe girl and uhm oh *salaam girl* and things like that I wouldn't obviously say anything back but they would like disrespect me by thinking that they can just speak to me in a certain way

Turn 26. Ayesha: ==*Salaam girl*<sup>19</sup>Awe girl and not like like like good morning or anything that I would actually respond back to (.) but I feel like the way that they speak to me shouldn't be in that sense especially when I'm like dressed in a certain way in my **work** clothes going to court...

Turn 32. Ayesha: ...I wouldn't be asking for the attention but they would see me and they would say certain things like that or even if I'm not robed and I'm going to the magistrate court because it's not necessary to wear robes then I would be in the court and they would say the exact same things even though they can see I'm dressed there for a purpose not wearing casual wear so you can't just come to me and ask me for my number and such because that is not the purpose why I'm there but they would still come to me and ask me certain things like that...

Ayesha says that when she goes to court 'she [has] to dress in a certain way' and that she is 'dressed as a lawyer' (turn 24). This entails stylizing the body in accordance to her occupation as well as in relation to where her body will be positioned within the physical, concrete world, specifically the High Court in Cape Town. Importantly the reference to 'dressing as a lawyer' alludes to a role-play of sorts, whereby she wants others to act accordingly in relation to her. This is reminiscent of Scollon and Wong Scollon's (2003) geosemiotic notion of acting in accordance to what the space affords. This becomes evident later. When going to court, Ayesha says that she has to be 'robed' (turn 24). The robing of the body is rendered significant through wearing 'the black cloak' and '[the] bib' (turn 24). She further says that she has a choice of opting between pants and a skirt, often opting to wear the latter. When thinking about a skirt, one gets an imagery of an item of clothing that reveal the legs, a body part which is most often sexualized. Here, specifically insight is given into the way in which Ayesha aims to show that she is in no way complicit in the harassing behaviour

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<sup>19</sup> A short form of As-Salamu-Alaykum (Arabic greeting)



as the skirt is not readily visible, as she says, ‘most of the time you can’t really see what you wearing underneath because of the cloak that is so long’ (turn 24). The adverb, ‘so’, places emphasis on the length of the cloak, creating an imagery of a body that is fully-clothed and covered. The fact that Ayesha feels the need to qualify wearing the skirt may speak to her own ideas of ‘appropriate’ attire which provokes unwanted attention which is a point taken up later.

Ayesha intimates that civil-inattention should be maintained on the basis of her occupational identity which is made visible through the stylization of her body, ‘uhm everyone can see that you are going to court that you’re dressed as a lawyer...’ (turn 24). However, civil-inattention is nevertheless breached when ‘... people would still pass comments and say things like “oh you look like a flower today” or if there’s criminals being escorted to court they would be like you know screaming out of out of the vans like “oh awe girl” and uhm “oh salaam girl” and things like that...’ (turn 24). There are no available linguistic cues which signal what is meant on the part of the harasser in terms of what ‘look[ing] like a flower today’ (turn 24) means. However, Ayesha’s body and the semiotics thereof are subjected to the imagery of a ‘flower’. When Ayesha appropriates what is said on the part of the harassers (that being the criminals), she stylizes a typical South African Kaaps coloured accent, with the word, ‘awe’ a slang term most often used on the Cape Flats as a greeting (<https://www.capetownmagazine.com/cape-town-slang>). Similarly, the word, ‘salaam’ is an Arabic greeting. Importantly, this greeting does not necessarily signal that the individual is Muslim. In Cape Town, it is quite common for Muslims and Christians to use this greeting interchangeably, especially on the Cape Flats. Additionally, Ayesha may have been even more irked by the fact that unsavoury types were appropriating an Islamic greeting.

When thinking about the identities of ‘lawyer’ and ‘criminal’, it would seem as though the latter would have less discursive power. However, Ayesha’s skinscape is clearly not being read and further interperlated as a lawyer, but rather as a woman first. Notably, the power differences should be in Ayesha’s favour as the very physicality of the criminals is restrained. This comes about as a result of the accused inmates being ‘escorted’ by policeman to court as well as the fact that their bodies are tightly secured in police vans. However, regardless of the physical power differences in terms of occupational identity and physicality of bodies, Ayesha, however, positions the harassers (accused individuals awaiting trial) as symbolically inhabiting bodies which are more agentive than hers. Their discursive power is signalled through their ‘screaming’ from within the vans, whereby, she, on the other hand, displays less power as noted when she says, ‘I obviously wouldn’t say anything back’ (turn 24). The adverb, ‘obviously’, indicating and placing emphasis on the fact that responding to the criminals is something that never crossed her mind.

Returning to the verbal utterances made by the seemingly loud and abrasive inmates where both ‘awe’ and ‘salaam’ are forms of greeting, Ayesha regards it as a form of ‘disrespect’ on the part of the individuals, as their utterances come about as a result of ‘thinking that they can just speak to me in a certain way’ (turn 24). Hence, these ‘certain’ forms of speaking are dis-privileged by Ayesha as she compares it to the more ‘polite’, Standard English form of greeting such as ‘good morning’, a greeting which she says is something that she ‘would actually respond to’ (turn 26). I argue that perhaps it is not so much the slang greeting in and of itself that she is dis-privileging, but more the fact of who it is being said by, that being those that constitute a ‘criminal element’. All in all, however, this greeting is primarily denied a social good on the basis of her body’s stylization which she perceives as that which should allow for civil-inattention to be maintained. She says, ‘but I feel like the way that they speak to me shouldn’t be in that sense especially when I’m like dressed in a certain way in

my **work** clothes going to court' (turn 26). The adverb, 'especially', signals the fact that the semiotics of the body, in this case, the stylization thereof is above all rendered as a significant part of the maintaining or break-down of civil-inattention.

Thus far, I have considered the ways in which Ayesha wishes for civil-inattention to be maintained on the basis of the semiotics of her body, in this case the way it is stylized signalling her occupational identity as lawyer. In this sense, her skinscape and the message it signalled should have been 'read' and mattered accordingly and plausibly should have prohibited unsolicited interactions coming about as a result of verbal utterances. However, what is largely visible in place goes largely unnoticed and is rendered invisible. Regardless of the way in which Ayesha's body is stylized, she is nevertheless subjected to unsolicited interactions.

As the interview progresses, Ayesha's owes her occupational identity and its intersection with other 'oppressive' social categories of classification as being a central element in making her harassment conducive. This is evident in the following extract.

#### **6.1.4. Extract: 4**

Turn 26. Ayesha: ... and I feel that if it was perhaps maybe a man walking down the street wearing the same because we all wear the same because both men and women both have to be robed they wouldn't be treating uh the guy the same way but they feel that they can like speak to me like that==

Turn 27. Interviewer: You mentioned something the last time of if it was a white woman wearing a cloak==

Turn 28. Ayesha: ==Yes if it was a white women they they probably would not say anything but because I'm coloured and I'm female and I look young they feel they can just say something ==

Turn 29. Interviewer: And why wouldn't they say something to the white woman in your opinion?

Turn 30. Ayesha: ==Why would they? ==

Turn 31. Interviewer: Why wouldn't they? Do you think

Turn 32. Ayesha: I just think that they more intimidated by a white by a white person and and uhm and ya they more intimidated by them it's just like the whole white class thing so they wouldn't just approach a white ' woman immediately the way they would approach me I wouldn't be asking for the attention but they would see me and they would say certain things like...

Turn 35. Interviewer: What caused them or what caused you to be a victim of street harassment on that particular day what caused it?

Turn 36. Ayesha: Well because I'm female==

Turn 37. Interviewer: ==Female==

Turn 38. Ayesha: ==Because I'm female because I'm coloured and because I look young so I'm more approachable

Where Ayesha believes that civil-inattention should have been maintained on the basis of the stylization of her body, she makes a distinction between herself, male lawyers and white, female lawyers. She states that 'I feel that if it was perhaps maybe a man walking down the street wearing the same... they wouldn't be treating uh the guy the same way but they feel that they can like speak to me like that' (turn 26). The adverbs 'perhaps' and 'maybe' signals that she is not entirely certain of her statements. Nevertheless, her description is a depiction of genders (male and female) as being two binary opposites, wherein inequality comes about as a result of that identity, regardless of the occupation of lawyer which they have in common.

Moreover, Ayesha also makes reference to female women racially classified as white having more power. Put simply, regardless of the commonality of the identity of female, differences brought about through race is observed. Ayesha maintains that it is less-likely for white women to be subjected to verbal remarks, '... if it was a white women they they probably would not say anything...' (turn 28). The inability of the harassers to breach civil-inattention

with 'white women' is rendered significant through the fact that they are described as being 'more intimidated by them' (turn 32). The verb, 'intimidated', makes reference to being frightened, whereby this is seen as coming about due to what, as she explains 'it's just the whole white class thing'. Here, references to the unlikelihood of white women being subjected to verbal remarks, feelings of 'intimidation' on the part of the harasser(s) toward them and 'the whole white ' class thing is reminiscent of power differences during apartheid. However, 24 years later in a post-apartheid context, dominant discourses regarding the association between a white racial identity and power may still operate within the context of street harassment. Saliently, notwithstanding the inferior position and identity of the female gender globally, in the South African context. Ayesha points out those white women will not be subject to harassment as much due to their race, whereby their class also allows for the maintenance of civil-inattention. More importantly, it is once again evident that Butler's critique of the category of women is complimented in Ayesha's account. Hence, it is the intersection between gender, race and class which is salient here.

Ayesha believes that civil-inattention is breached with her because of other aspects of her identity, specifically her racial identity of coloured, her gendered-identity as female and from a physical point-of-view 'looking young'. Because of the multitude of these intersecting identities expressed by Ayesha, she says that 'the [harassers] feel they can just say something' (turn 28) and later she says that these identities makes her 'more approachable', (turn 38). Here, we begin to see how Ayesha desires that her occupational identity which is something that is signalled through both the stylization of her body as well as her daily activities should empower her and be highly visible in place. However, this goes largely unnoticed and she seems even more disempowered because of the invisibilisation of her rank. In this sense, other 'oppressive' facets of her identity had become visible and are believed to have allowed her to be subjected to harassing behaviour. These defining features appear to

define how her skinscape matters in place, not so much as a lawyer, but more as a ‘young coloured female’, with the coloured identity largely seen as inferior in relation to her colleagues’ white identity. Ayesha is therefore triply aggrieved as she is, in her opinion, is harassed due to her gender, race and youth.

She describes the latter point ‘looking young’ as making her appear ‘more approachable’. In terms of age, she may look young from a physical point of view, but is actually 29 years old, an appropriate age in both a physical and mental sense to be working in that field. However, her focus on her youthful physicality is owed to the lack of disrespect brought about by remarks, whereby her vernal appearance may be seen as diminishing her credibility as a lawyer on the basis of the relation between perceived age and occupation. The description of being ‘more approachable’ to would-be harassers would more aptly be described as being ‘more vulnerable’ and an easy target. This assumption holds true when considering the remarks made by the harassers, such as ‘oh awe girl’ and ‘oh salaam girl’. The noun, ‘girl’, is defined as a ‘female child’ and operates in stark contrasts to the nouns, ‘lady’ or ‘women’. It may be argued that the remarks made on the part of the accused effectively infantilize her body, thereby further disempowering her.

Insight into what makes the physical space of Cape Town CBD conducive for these forms of street harassment is provided below:

#### **6.1.5. Extract: 5**

Turn 39. Interviewer: Was there anything in the physical space that you think caused it something in the physical space that told them it’s okay for me to do this

Turn 40. Ayesha: Like the area the space?

Turn 41. Interviewer: Ya like the physical space=

Turn 42. Ayesha:==Maybe because it's sort of like male- dominated (.) so you wouldn't find like a lot of women going to court it would mostly be the men

Turn 43. Interviewer: Okay so you feel it's because it's a male-dominated space you also said that you never said anything back to them was there any other people aware of what was happening=

Turn 44. Ayesha: Yes==

Turn 45. Interviewer: == So what was their reaction to it?

Turn 46. Ayesha: ==NOTHING they would not say anything ok this is now in the magistrate court but like in in the streets that I walk in or go to the high court there would be like other people walking around but they wouldn't say anything they would not like even they would pretend that they would not even hear this being said to me

Turn 47. Interviewer: okay and your reaction was obviously you ignoring it==

Turn 48. Ayesha: ==I'm ignoring it==

Turn 49. Interviewer: ==That's your reaction to it okay have you always been if you think back to your you know you've been working at the high court now for how long?

Turn 50. Ayesha: for 4 years

Turn 51. Interviewer: for 4 years if you think back 4 years back maybe or 3 years back or 2 years back have you always been at the receiving end of street harassment in Cape Town?

Turn 52. Ayesha: Yes==

Turn 53. Interviewer: == Yes okay==

Turn 54. Ayesha:== because I would never make comments to people and I would never just approach==

Turn 55. Interviewer: == So this is an on-going thing?==

Turn 56. Ayesha: == It's an on-going thing==

Ayesha credits the proliferation of harassing incidents to the ‘male-dominated’ nature of the space. She notes that mostly men go to court as opposed to women and ‘so you wouldn’t find like a lot of women going to court it would mostly be the men’ (turn 42). Although, no linguistic cues make this evident, I infer that perhaps the occupation of lawyer is most often associated with being a male-dominated job than with being a female-dominated one. Historically, in the apartheid context, only white women were allowed to practice law, whereby in 1995, the first black woman was appointed in the Supreme Court. Although much has changed, it is still largely a male-dominated industry (<https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2015/03/women-in-history-lawyers-and-judges/>). While other interpretations may abound, one plausible reason for Ayesha’s harassment could be because although the stylization of her body is an expectation for that space given that the High Court is situated in Cape Town’s CBD, it is the fact that her occupation had gone unnoticed in relation to her gender, race and youthfulness and for this reason it may be imbued with a lack of credibility in relation to her occupation.

Ayesha says that when she is subjected to unsolicited interactions within the magistrate court, her place of occupation, she emphatically states that ‘NOTHING’ (turn 46) would be said or done on the part of those overhearing or seeing what she is subject to. The tone and the pitch which accompanies her response give further insight into how abandoned or angered she may have felt and may also then index the normalcy of this behaviour. She further states that even when she is present in the genuinely public world of being ‘in the streets’ ‘traversing most often to the high court, ‘other people’ who are in close-proximity ‘walking around’ are aware of what is happening, but they are ‘pretending to not hear what is being said to [her]’ (turn 46). ‘Pretending’ not to hear what is being said on the part of the passers-by can be paralleled with Ayesha’s practice of ignoring what is being said. Although both social actors, specifically Ayesha and the passers-by are engaged in the act of civil inattention, I, however,



argue that this may be done for different reasons. On the part of Ayesha, where she later states that she is always at the receiving end of street harassment and not the one enacting it ‘==because [she] would never make comments to people and [she] would never just approach==’ (turn 54) could be the same reason as to why she does not counter the events. However, it may also be inferred that it is because she is concerned for her own safety.

On the part of the passers-by, however, civil inattention may be maintained because it has become almost embedded in everyday life in such a way that it is treated as normal or even trivial. Hence, although Ayesha credits Cape Town CBD’s ‘male-dominated’ nature as allowing it to become conducive for street harassment, I argue that this male-dominated nature can also be extended to considering Cape Town CBD’s genuinely public nature as being conducive for harassing behaviours.

At this point, it is pertinent to revisit earlier descriptions of Cape Town as provided by Ayesha in which its day-time characteristics of ‘city life’, is reflected by it being a ‘quite busy public area... there’s many people walking around’ where ‘people are free doing their own thing... ‘doing whatever needs to be done whether they working or whether they tourists or whatever’ (turn 18, extract 2). These descriptions show that the space is a genuinely public one, whereby it does not facilitate particular interactions, social actions, social actors and discourses. Instead, there is a convergence between multiple publics, both locally situated as well as coming from abroad, whereby the space is drawn on in the pursuit of various social actions in place (Scollon and Wong Scollon, 2003). It is this very public nature of Cape Town’s CBD which allows breaches of civil-inattention, specifically street harassment to flourish. Notably, Ayesha considers unsolicited interactions as occurring on the basis of her occupational identity which is largely ‘invisible’ in relation to and intersected to the inhabitancy of her more ‘oppressive’ identity markers such as being a young-looking, coloured female. However, I argue that although space is perceived as largely unrelated to the

conduciveness of street harassment, its public nature and the subsequent disorderly nature that it inhabits may be implicated. This comes as a result of there being no rules in place which individuals have to abide to, whereby this may have allow it to become conducive for street harassment. In this sense, the space may have actually been significantly implicated in Ayesha's experience, although this comes across subtly in her account.

Ayesha accounts attempts to convey the importance of the semiotics of her body over and above her body itself. Unfortunately, the opposite is true as her stature is diminished when she is described as a girl and as an adornment in the landscapes, specifically a 'flower'.

## **6.2.**

### **Zinzi\***

Zinzi is aged 24 and a student at the University of the Western Cape. While she does not self-identify as any particular race, she does speak isiXhosa as her home language. Zinzi's account of street harassment is different in relation to the other participants, because she recounts an event in which she is not the primary victim, but instead someone who is a witness. She describes it as a harrowing experience which occurs while in a taxi on her way home.

### **6.2.1. Extract: 1**

Turn 1. Interviewer: How would you define the term street harassment?

Turn 2. Zinzi: uuh street harassment uuhm street harassment is if I'm walking in the road (...) okay if I'm walking in the road and someone just says something (...) if I'm walking and then uuhm and then someone said something that I wouldn't approve of or even if he tries to touch me then that's how that's how even by the eye contact that's how that's how

Turn 3. Interviewer: and have you ever been a victim of street harassment?

Turn 4. Zinzi: street harassment uhhh aaah yes and no with how how men or guys will will will look at you when you walk pass so I don't like that even though at that minute I will not address it I'll just walk pass and not say anything

Turn 5. Interviewer: and in what spaces have you always found yourself being harassed?

Turn 6. Zinzi: uuhm where uuuh (...) where there's a lot of people especially in the mall or in a taxi rank that's where they will always make comments...

For Zinzi, street harassment is rendered significant through her traversing by foot in a public space and having someone say something to her; 'if I'm walking in the road (...) okay if I'm walking in the road and someone just says something(...) if I'm walking and then uhm and then someone said something' (turn 2). The strategy of 'say[ing] something' would be 'something that [she] wouldn't approve of'. She also includes non-verbal gestures as forming part of street harassment, such as eye-contact and an attempt to physically touch her; 'even if he tries to touch me then that's how that's how even by the eye contact that's how that's how' (turn 2).

When asked whether Zinzi had ever been a victim of street harassment, she says, 'street harassment uuuh aaah yes and no...' (turn 4). Her response is ambiguous suggesting that she may not have readily known whether her experiences could be classified as such. Hence, she says, 'how men or guys will will will look at you when you walk pass' (turn 4). For Zinzi, being surveyed through non-verbal communication, specifically being 'look[ed] at' by both 'men and guys', making a distinction between older and younger males in what she is personally subjected to is what she considers as forms of street harassment. She further states, 'I don't like that' (turn 4), thereby denying the interaction a social good and reinforcing its

characteristics of being possible forms of harassment. However, regardless of her negative feeling, she says that, ‘even though at that minute I will not address it I’ll just walk pass and not say anything’ (turn 4). Hence, even though the participant’s linguistic cues show that being ‘look[ed] at by both men and guys’ is something she dislikes, she will not approach them about their behaviour.

When asked in which spaces she most often experiences street harassment, she says, ‘malls and taxis’ where ‘there’s alotta people’ (turn 6), thereby indexing the fact that street harassment occurs in a public space. It is a focus on just how a particular public space becomes conducive for Zinzi’s street harassment that I discuss next. Particularly, Zinzi recounts an event in which she is not primarily the victim of street harassment, but instead a witness. I, however, argue that her status as witness also allows her to inhabit the status of victim due to the feelings that accompanies what she had seen and heard.

### **6.2.2. Extract: 2**

Turn1. Zinzi: I was in a taxi rank it was on a Saturday and a man it’s more like cabs (...) the cabs in town... the small taxis (...) we have those (...) so I stopped the taxi it was R5 where I stay so I stop the taxi to tell them where I’m going and in the taxi there were three or four guys guys with the driver and a lady and they were sitting at the back and I was sitting uh uh I sat in front so when the lady get off yoooooh that was that was uuuh (sigh) they were saying (begins laughing embarrassingly) I would love I would love to toto have sex with her because of how how she sounded when when she was talking and and and and and the skirt she was wearing (makes a nonverbal gesture to show that the skirt was short) I was yoooooh I was fine when I got in the taxi but the minute they started saying those things I was uuuh I’d love to have sex with her and she shes he she’s like the real deal kinda thing and when they were saying this I was like I’ve never been so disgusted not in myself but men and how they are raised uuuh that was wrong

Turn 2. Interviewer: so even though it didn't happen to you you felt==

Turn 3. Zinzi: == yes because I'm a woman and I didn't know what they were going to say about me when I when I have to get out of the taxi because when I get out of the taxi they still in the taxi and I would have felt disrespected as well just as she has been disrespected... they were talking to the taxi driver oooh did you hear that voice imagine we were in bed having sex and stuff... especially if you don't know the person and they said that that was like disrespect

Zinzi provides some contextual information surrounding the event in terms of day, the week and where the event occurred stating that 'I was in a taxi rank it was a Saturday...' (turn 1). A 'taxi rank' refers to a space when people gather to wait for public modes of transport, in this case, taxis. She gives a bit of information surrounding the type of vehicle and/ or taxi she had gotten into, stating that, 'it's more like cabs (...) the cabs in town (...) the small taxis (...) we have those (...)'. Hence, she makes a distinction between the well-known mini-buses, commonly referred to as a 'taxi' which operates in Cape Town and the smaller, light motor vehicles referred to as cabs, stating that she had gotten into the latter. She further says, '[S]o I stopped the taxi it was R5 where I stay so I stop the taxi to tell them where I'm going...'. 'Stop[ping] the taxi' makes reference to signalling to the driver that you will be using the taxi service. She also gives information surrounding the price she had to pay, that being five rand to her destination in which she resides. This is a very inexpensive fare which means that Zinzi was close to her residence by foot. She further makes reference to who is present in the taxi stating that there are 'three or four guys guys with the driver'. Here, I infer that the driver is also a male, and that the noun, 'guys', makes reference to the others being male as well. Zinzi states that there is also a woman in the cab who soon after disembarks and it is the salacious comments made about her which she finds most offensive. She provides a bit of information surrounding where everyone was situated within the taxi, noting that 'they were uh uh sitting at the back and I was sitting in front' (turn 1). Hence, I argue that the guys and the lady were situated on the backseat of the taxi cab.

Zinzi's recounting of harassment began when the men begin to overtly express their sexual intention regarding the women who had left the cab. She overhears the guys and the driver engaged in conversation about the women, and elaborates, 'so when the lady get off yoooooh that was that was uuuuh (*sigh*) they were saying (*begins laughing embarrassingly*)...' (turn 1). Verbal utterances such as 'yoooooh' and 'uuuuh,' coupled with sighs and embarrassed laughter gives insight into the unease felt on the part of the participant in relaying the event as well as her subtle reluctance to do so. However, it may also be reflective of the particular feelings which she had felt on the day in which she experienced the event. Hence, I argue that the re-telling of the phenomenon could be allowing her to re-live the memory, whilst simultaneously re-living the feelings which accompanies it.

Zinzi oscillates between speaking about what was said by the men and describing the feelings it elicited in her. Zinzi goes on to describe the obscene comments by the men as 'I would love I would love to to to have sex with her because of how how she sounded when when she was talking and and and and and the skirt she was wearing (*makes a nonverbal gesture to show that the skirt was short*)' (turn 1). The false starts show that Zinzi is not stylizing the words of the guys, instead this particular form of intertextuality gives insight into how she feels about their words, whereby their (words) are a reflection of their desire to engage in sexual intercourse with the women due to both her voice; 'because of how she sounded when she was talking' and the stylization of her body as seen with her short skirt which had revealed her legs 'and and and and the skirt she was wearing' (turn 1) which is sexualized. Here, it is once again evident that womens bodies are objectified based on physicality as the literature reviewed indicates.

She, makes reference to changes in her sense of wellbeing once in the taxi, stating, 'I was yoooooh I was fine when I got in the taxi but the minute they started saying those things I was uuuuh...' (turn 1). She then refers back to what the guys said, saying, 'I'd love to have sex

with her and she she she she's like the real deal kinda thing...' (turn 1) making, again, reference to the guy's desire to engage in sexual intercourse with the woman because 'she's the real -deal kinda thing' (turn 1) whereby, the 'real deal' alludes to the woman being a bargain to these men as she is so good looking.

The woman's voice coupled with her short skirt is the reason as to why she is objectified by the men and hence the physicality of her body is drawn on in determining her sexual worth in relation to men. Zinzi continues by saying, 'and when they were saying this I was like I've never been so disgusted not in myself but men and how they are raised uuuh that was wrong'. (turn 1).The reference to 'men' and how 'they were raised', reflects a figured world that implicates all men in the behaviour which had been displayed in the taxi and comes as a result of how they were raised, in other words, how they are socialized to act.

Significantly, the woman spoken about is not present and therefore did not hear what is said by the guys in the taxi. Nevertheless, I argue that a form of street harassment prevails, because Zinzi is present in the taxi and overhears what is being said. Hence, she inhabits the status of victim, because she claims a group identity as noted in the statement 'yes because I'm a woman' (turn 3). Arguably, Zinzi had already anticipated that when she leaves the taxi, she, too would be spoken about in a disparaging way because she is also a woman. Her anguish over what would be said about her is palpable as seen in the declaration: '...I didn't know what they were going to say about me when I when I have to get out of the taxi because when I get out of the taxi they still in the taxi and I would have felt disrespected as well just as she has been disrespected...' (turn 3).

Zinzi's account is illustrative in showing how sexualized comments which objectify the unwitting first passenger are taken up as street harassment by Zinzi later on. Intriguingly, even in the absence of the discussed woman, Zinzi feels harassed and her status as victim is

reinforced through the strong belief that when she, too, leaves the taxi, she would be on the receiving-end of remarks made by the guys primarily on the basis of her gender. This is in line with the notion of “Bystander sexism” (Chaudoir and Quinn, 2010) as discussed in the literature. Here, it is evident that Zinzi does not view herself as an individual, but is affected by what occurs, because her group identity of female becomes salient with the oblivious passenger. Gallingly, Zinzi can only imagine what would be said about her once she left the taxi. She, like the first passenger, would be unable to voice her outrage or disgust and in no way would be able to defend herself within that space.

From a physical-point-of-view, Zinzi’s body is mobile as brought about by being in a taxi commuting home. However, her body is symbolically made to be immobile as she takes no measures in moving away (physically) from what was being said as well as not addressing the situation at hand. However, even knowing that there would prevail a point when she, too, would be leaving the taxi, does not mean that Zinzi’s body would have been freed and made to be more mobile. It is the belief that she would be the subject of the guys’ topic of conversation once she leaves which she believes also makes her a victim of street harassment. Hence, although the remarks made by the guys were largely aimed at the absent woman, it symbolically, also, comes to represent the very same remarks that she foresees as being subjected unto her in her absence. In a sense, she is a victim because she is unable to contradict or admonish these men. By her silence, the men plausibly know that they have the upper hand in that space. The idea of bystander sexism which is epitomized is also evident in Thandi’s account which follows.



### 6.3.

### Thandi\*

In this section, I return back to the Thandi who provides two accounts of harassment. The first deals with an event which she is personally involved in, whereby the second emerges from observing the harassment which her friend endures. In this particular account, she interweaves various forms of street harassment, specifically those based on gender and further moving to other intersecting factors such as class, territoriality and criminality (however, these are discussed in the forthcoming chapter). In the extract below, Thandi talks about street harassment as aimed at the physicality of her body which is solely the focus of the analysis.

#### 6.3.1. Extract: 1

Turn 10. Thandi: ... and other times most prevalent types street harassments that I experienced with regards to me being a female number one as you can see I'm a very the way I'm built I'm tall I am well-built like I'm well-structured and I'm well-endowed especially by my chest and you'd find that people especially coloured and white ' people like when when it comes to white ' people it's always it's usually white ' high school boys who would say **something** you know like oh my gosh her boobs and stuff and they'd start laughing and most of my friends have like big bums I have big boobs and they have big bums and these people would look at their bums and they'd whistle they'd say all kinds of nonsense and this other time it happened here on campus and I was so shocked but it doesn't happen that much often here on campus but it happens=

Turn 11. Interviewer: =and that's why you were shocked about it=

Turn 12.Thandi: yes but it happens and sometimes you also get it from girls not just from guys you get it from girls girls who you know they come across you and they laugh about something and they'd be like look at that girl oh my gosh she's got big big boobs but that one group of girls who did that to us and stuff they were high you know they had smoked dagga and stuff so that is street harassment that according to me is street harassment=

Turn 13. Interviewer: == definitely==

Turn 14. Thandi: and that's how I have experienced it

Turn 15. Interviewer: and how do you feel uhm you mentioned that it's only white ' boys and coloured and black people from across you know

Turn 16. Thandi: Men women not so much but it's **grown** men grown men black and coloured it's **grown** men I'm telling you grown men

Thandi says that when she is subjected to street harassment on the basis of her gender as female, it most often concerns the physicality of her body. She describes 'campus' as the site of harassment. This particular point is discussed in greater detail in relation to communities of practice in the forthcoming chapter.

Thandi states, 'and other times most prevalent types of street harassment that I experienced with regards to me being a female...' (turn 10), whereby, the adjective 'prevalent' signals something that is frequent in nature. She firstly makes reference to her body providing the following descriptions, 'number one as you can see I'm a very the way I'm built I'm tall I am well-built like I'm well-endowed especially by my chest...' (turn 10). The linguistic cue, 'number one as you can see...' is signalled at me, the interviewer as she points to her chest. The descriptions of her body show that she sees her physicality in a positive light. This is signalled through words such as 'I'm tall', 'well-built' and 'well-endowed especially by my chest' (turn 10) with the latter description making reference to the size of her breasts. Thandi makes these references to her body to show that it is these, in terms of its very descriptions and shape that allow particular forms of harassing behaviour to occur. She further states, 'and you'd find that people especially coloured and white people like when it comes to white people it's always it's usually white high school boys who would say **something**...' (turn 10).

Thandi makes reference to people in terms of their racial identity signalling out ‘coloured and white people’ by the adverb, ‘especially’. However, she goes further by classifying these white people as, most often being ‘white high school boys’, signalling the young age of these ‘white’ people’ in relation to hers. I argue that Thandi may be making reference to their racial identities of ‘white and coloured’ which are racial identities that she does not form part of as she classifies herself as a ‘black’ female to show that she may have been subjected to ‘people saying something’ not solely on the basis of her gendered-identity as female, but also because of its intersection with her racial identity as ‘black’, although this comes across quite subtly. She playfully stylizes what is said by these ‘white high school boys’ stating, ‘and they’d say something like oh my gosh her boobs and stuff and they’d start laughing...’ (turn 10)

The reference to ‘oh my gosh’ with regards to her chest (‘boobs’), shows that the boys find something shocking or peculiar. Where Thandi earlier describes her ‘chest’ as ‘well-endowed’, the reference to ‘oh my gosh’ may signal a shock on the part of the boys with regard to its size. Also, the noun, ‘boobs’ is a less formal word for the more standard term, ‘chest’ which she uses, more specifically referred to as ‘breast(s)’ when regarding a women’s body. Here, Thandi’s chest is spoken about in an informal mocking fashion. Also, where Thandi makes reference to the boys who would say something about her breasts, whereby this is coupled with laughter (‘they’d start laughing’) on their part shows that her body is not necessarily sexualized per se, but the reference to laughter shows that the boys find the size of her breast humorous. Here, here again it is evident that women’s body parts are subject to objectification, in this case, ridicule and fun-making.

Furthermore, Thandi describes her friends’ body parts as ‘... most of my friends have like big bums I have big boobs and they [her friends] have big bums and these people (white high school boys) would look at their bums and they’d whistle and they’d say all kinds of

nonsense' (turn 10). By making a distinction between herself who she regards as having 'big boobs' in relation to her friends who are described as having 'big bums', it is clear that a breach in civil inattention emanates not solely from race, but from gender and physique. She states the boys would start 'whistling' which shows that these body parts are sexualized and admired, because from a westernized-perspective, 'whistling' indicates a particular admiration. However, by describing what they boys say as 'nonsense' show that she denies their nonverbal gestures and verbal remarks toward her as complementary in any way.

It is wise to return to the linguistic cues in which Thandi had first referred to her breast as 'chest', a more scientific standardized term, whereby she now also uses the informal noun 'boobs'. The switch from formal to a less formal language may signal that she is stylizing the youth talk. Hence, with regard to the females mentioned in the communicative event (Thandi and her friends), street harassment on the basis of their physicality arises primarily due to parts of their bodies which are portrayed by the harassers' as abnormal, specifically being 'well-endowed', having 'big bums' and 'big boobs'. Thandi earlier states that coloured and white guys, specifically white high school boys would be engaged in passing comments regarding the size of her breasts, whereby these comments are coupled with laughter. In relation to this, I argue that because Thandi does not form part of the coloured and white racial group in the context of South Africa, she may not have solely been subjected to these forms of 'harassing' behaviour primarily on the basis of her gender as she had put forth, but more so, because of her gender and its intersection with her racial identity as black.

The argument that I put forth may hold validity when taking into account the ways in which black female bodies, in terms of its physicality, is seen as unusual and humorous, both locally and globally. With regard to the South African context, specifically we see that the humour associated with the size of Thandi breasts and her friends' buttocks, is reminiscent of the history of Saartjie Baartman, who, due to her 'large' buttocks was exhibited as a freak show,

(Holmes, 2016). This entailed the exhibition of biological rarities which place emphasis on the ‘unusualness’ of body parts. Within the current context in which Thandi’s account is framed within dominant discourses associated with size of body parts in relation to the black female, race resurfaces through the event of street harassment as it comes to inform the way in which body parts are spoken about on the part of the participants and the harassers. The descriptions provided by Thandi, with regard to her body, reflect feelings of pride. However, I argue that these feelings of pride are built on a history of shame and marginalization that the black female body was subjected to.

In the second account given by Thandi, street harassment escalates to the point where at first her friend’s body, and then later her own, is subjected to heavier forms of abuse. Notably, the analysis shows the means by which Thandi, although always countering street harassing events, also wishes that men can be a source of protection for women in public spaces. However, after seeking help from key male figures she is let down. The account therefore gives insight into how women are forced to fend for themselves and each other in the public space.

### **6.3.2. Extract: 2**

Turn 38.Thandi: == we were in a taxi ne and this guy was say was saying all kinds of things about her you know it moved from you’re beautiful to you are a bitch==

Turn 40.Thandi:== because she was not responding to his comments whatever she was not responding to him telling her oh my gosh she’s so beautiful the things I’d to you and stuff she felt uncomfortable so she kept quiet and she continued talking to us and then the the the the the the the guy was like like “I’m talking to you why aren’t you paying attention to what I’m saying?” and she was like you know what I can’t because I’m not going to entertain what you’re saying so she moved from being beautiful I’d do this and this and this to you to a bitch to being a bitch and then when we got off the taxi in Bellville the

guy followed us and the guy started to confront her and then he wanted to hit her but I I went in between them and I told them look I'm very you see mos how I am I'm very (clicks fingers) you know like I just don't deal with nonsense so I II came in between them and then I told the guy you know what if you want to hit her you'll have to hit me first ne and then the guy was **threatening** to hit me she she pee'd in her pants that's how scared she was and this was in the taxi rank and then **straight** after that when we got rid of the guy straight after that we are walking through guys from Nigerian guys ne you can see they Nigerian by the way they dress they were wearing they those garments and these guys made silly comments about us **as well** and so I told them you know what fuck you all of you you guys are supposed to be protecting us you are supposed to be men you witnessed her getting harassed by another man you didn't do anything and on top of that you doing what you doing so those guys wanted to hit us but then there was a police van coming so we stopped that police van and the policemen they were two coloured men they told us to get on a taxi to where we are going because it's useless they they opening a case against them because they are rude they are like that I'll never forget that

The above extract talks about an antagonistic male figure which Thandi refers to as 'the guy' who was 'saying all kinds of things about her [Thandi's friend] you know it moved from you're beautiful to you're a bitch' (turn 38). Thandi provides a bit more context pertaining to what influenced these two contrasting descriptions namely that of, 'you're beautiful' and 'you are a bitch'.

We find that the 'guy' engages in using two very contrasting strategies to elicit responses, from one which is seemingly 'complementary' specifically 'you're beautiful' to the outright rude 'you're a bitch'. Without taking any context into consideration, the former can be 'read' as a form of compliment which makes reference to Thandi's friend's physical appearance. The latter, however, is more derogatory. '[B]itch' refers to a female dog, but is also a derogatory term, most often used to refer to a female. We find that Thandi's friend's 'body' is subject to these two contrasting attention-grabbing strategies. According to Thandi, the guy's assertion that 'oh my gosh she's so beautiful the things I'd do to you and stuff...' was the beginning of harassment with 'oh my gosh' signalling the man's alarm at her friend's beauty.

This is followed by ‘the things I’d do to you and stuff’ which refer to sexual activity. It is Thandi’s friend’s reaction toward these remarks which gives insight into the way she feels about his words. Her negative response to him results in the use of a more hostile language on the part of the harasser. In this particular context, the ‘positive’ reference to Thandi’s friend’s physicality; you’re beautiful, is not taken up as such, whereby she does not engage in conversation with the guy, but instead ignores him. This is clear by the statements ‘she was not responding to his comments whatever... ‘she was not responding to him..., ‘she felt uncomfortable so she kept quiet and she continued talking to us...’ (turn 40).

Hence, as earlier noted, without taking any context into consideration the words, ‘you’re beautiful’ may be read as a compliment, however, in this particular case the very act of describing her when he is not addressed or even known to the individual signals that this comment is an invasion of her personal space. In Thandi’s opinion this encroachment results in her friend displaying discomfort. The persistence of the guy is further seen with his inquiring as to why her friend is not responding to him. In Thandi’s description, she states, ‘... the guy was like “I’m talking to you why aren’t you paying attention to what I’m saying?”’. The encroachment into her space is now even further visibilized by the guy’s demand as to why she would not respond to him. In a sense, he seems entitled to an engagement with her simply because he decided to comment on her physique. The refusal to engage with him is seen by the friend’s annoyed response ‘you know what I can’t because I’m not going to entertain what you’re saying’. The reference to ‘not entertaining’ Alludes to not accepting, giving attention to or considering what is being said by the guy. Hence, it is this particular encounter between the guy and Thandi’s friend which results in the harassing behaviour, as Thandi again reiterates, ‘so she moved from being beautiful I’d do this and this and this to you to a bitch to being a bitch...’ (turn 40).

It is at this point where this particular exchange between Thandi's friend and the harasser moves from a superficial attempt at 'complementing' her to a very real attempt at harming her.

When Thandi and her friend reach their destination this did not, however, mean the end of the harassing event. Instead, 'the guy' decided to 'follow [them]', 'confront [Thandi's friend]', whereby 'he [also] wanted to hit her'. Here, a body (that of Thandi's friend) which is symbolically agentic in countering the event of street harassment within the taxi (by not responding) is now, despite being physically mobile and moving away from the harasser, is unfortunately made immobile through the altercation that follows. The man follows Thandi and her friend, confronts her friend and threatens physical harm. The immobile body (of Thandi's friend) also simultaneously becomes a 'body that feared', whereby a particular physical reaction was accompanied by this fear, specifically 'she pee'd in her pants that's how scared she was and this was in the taxi rank...'. The reference to 'pee[ing] in her pants' renders the feelings of fear significant, whereby the mentioning of 'this was in the taxi rank' shows that a personal and private bodily function such as urinating, is triggered in a public space through fear. This can be seen as an outward physical manifestation of inner feelings of fear. Not only does the man violate her social space (demanding her to 'talk' to him in the taxi), but he has now brought about a physical response produced by his threats of violence. Significantly, Thandi's friend's body is unwillingly infantilized, because urinating in one's pants is commonly associated with babies and toddlers.

Where Thandi's friend is described as being fearful, whereby this fear is simultaneously accompanied by the physical body reaction of urinating, I argue that her friend is portrayed as, to a certain extent, 'fitting in' to her expected socially constructed role as passive, fearful and subordinate in relation to the male. However, Thandi, on the other hand, describes herself as more assertive, as she defends and protects her friend, she says, '...look I'm very you see



mos how I am I'm very (*clicks fingers*) you know like I just don't deal with nonsense...". She uses the adverb, 'very', to place emphasis on her assertiveness and her ability to counter an event or situation which is displeasing to her. Hence, because of her assertive identity which she wishes to bring across, she describes herself as wanting to engage in violence with the harasser. She states '... and then he wanted to hit her but I I went in between them and then I told the guy you know what if you want to hit her you'll have to hit me first ne and then the guy was **threatening** to hit me...'. At this point, I wish to highlight two things; firstly, it is evident that the identity which Thandi wishes to bring across contrasts that of 'fitting' into a socially constructed role as female. Although violence is not always associated with male behaviour, in most cases it is construed as a performance of masculinity (Connell, 2005; Halsey and Young, 2000). Hence, Thandi portrays the male harasser as wanting to engage in the 'typical' male behaviour of violence. However, she also portrays herself as adopting this particular male 'role' showing the very performative, flexible nature of identities (Butler, 1993).

Secondly, Thandi uses the words, "mos" in 'you see **mos** how I am' and "ne" in 'you'll have to hit me first **ne**'. Intriguingly, both 'mos' and 'ne' are Afrikaans slang terms, whereby 'mos' does not have a literal translation in English. It is usually used to reinforce a statement or indicate that something is well-known or self-evident. The word 'ne' can be described as functioning much like the English question, "do you know what I mean?" whereby, an English equivalent of "ne" could be the word, "hey", such as "it's cold hey" (<https://www.capetownmagazine.com/cape-town-slang>). Where Thandi is racially classified as black, but recruits utterances most often associated with the coloured speaking community and/ or coloured racial group reinforces the fact that identity performance is not reflexive of a particular sexed body, but also that linguistic practices are reflective of the intersecting of identities which the literature reviewed reveals. Hence, Thandi may be

drawing on these coloured slang terms because it allows her to access a certain amount of street credibility (Williams, 2013). Additionally I, as interviewer, also self-identify as 'coloured' so Thandi may have been prompted to use these terms. Clearly, I cannot irrefutably state why she uses these terms, but her use of it is interesting as it appears to give her a sense of power and strength. Significantly, the account shifts away from the main male harasser and is subsequently replaced by others. Hence, Thandi's vexation produced by other male individuals encounters soon thereafter.

The repetition of the phrase, 'straight after that', as well as emphasis on the adjective, 'straight', renders the next harassing event which occurs significant through the means by which it takes place and prevails almost immediately after the first incident. Thandi states that afterward, as they were walking, they encounter 'guys from Nigeria', whereby their nationality was purportedly made evident through the stylization of their clothes. Specifically 'you can see they Nigerian by the way they dress they were wearing those garments...'. Thandi does not give any other information pertaining to these 'garments'. Hence, she infers that I am knowledgeable about what she is talking about. She states that these 'Nigerian guys' are engaged in making, as she says, 'silly comments about us **as well**'. Although Thandi does not provide any information regarding what these 'comments' entail, the description thereof as 'silly' show that they are viewed negatively. Also, emphasis on the words '**as well**' show that there may have been a relation or commonality between what was said on the part of the Nigerian guys and what was said on the part of 'the guy' in the taxi. It is at this point where Thandi confronts these Nigerian guys, whereby she says, 'fuck you all of you' with 'fuck you' being a well-known slur. Interestingly enough, Thandi says, '...you guys are supposed to be protecting us you are supposed to be men you witnessed her getting harassed by another man you didn't do anything and on top of that you doing what you doing so those guys wanted to hit us...'.

This particular statement which Thandi makes toward the Nigerian men gives insight into her particular figured world pertaining to the gender relation between males and females. The phrase, ‘... you guys are supposed to be protecting us you are supposed to be men...’, shows that, for Thandi, a ‘proper’ male performance entails the means by which men protect women, whereby this protection reinforces their gender as men. Significantly, the repetition of the phrase, ‘supposed to’ places emphasis on the fact that this particular assumption is what she generally believes to be true. Specifically that men should be protecting women. Here, it is evident that certain ways of performing and being with regard to gender materializes and becomes hegemonic (Butler 1993; Connell, 2005). For Thandi, the men had put up a poor male-identity performance, because as she says ‘you witnessed her getting harassed by another man you didn’t do anything and on top of that you doing what you doing...’. Hence, the inability of these Nigerian men in protecting both Thandi and especially her friend whose harassment she believes they had witnessed, also contributes to further harassment. Unfortunately, even after sharing her insight with these guys, they, however, are described as also wanting to engage in violence, ‘so those guys wanted to hit us’. These Nigerian men’s behaviour significantly contrasts Thandi’s socially constructed idea of a male’s gender performance. Here, I would like to mention the stereotypical image of Nigerians. They are deemed as ‘big scary looking guys’ often described as ‘drug dealers’ and not men that you would mess with. Perhaps Thandi believes that they, by their marked appearance (through clothes and physicality), would be able to overwhelm and ‘teach the taxi harasser a lesson’.

The approaching of the police van signalled another particularly frustrating interaction with men that day. Thandi and her friend take the initiative to stop the police as a means of taking legal action against the men. Thandi describes the policemen in terms of race, namely, that of being ‘two coloured men’. In this sense, she speaks negatively of all the men, whereby giving

their racial category is a form of perhaps showing that regardless of their differing race groups, their treatment toward her is due to the one identity which they all have in common – their gendered identity. I am not too certain what the reference to their racial identity entails, but I argue that we may leave this open for multiple explanations. However, the two ‘coloured policeman’, as opposed to taking any sort of action against the Nigerian men, are instead described as persuading Thandi and her friend to leave the space; ‘get on a taxi to where we are going’. Hence, the lack of legal action and response on the part of the policemen, which would come in the form of them ‘opening a case’ is simply described as ‘useless’ on their part. The behaviour of the Nigerian men is normalized by the police officers ‘because they are rude they are like that’. It is after this recounting that Thandi says, ‘I’ll never forget that’, the adverb, ‘never’ placing emphasis on the emotional effects of the experience.

Thandi’s account is an interesting one. At first, she positions herself as mere witness to the event of street harassment. However, as she recounts the experience, it is evident that she is also as much a part of the harassing event. Her performance of a non-socially constructed, expected female gendered-identity also influences the escalation of the harassing event from one that is at first based on verbal remarks to encapsulating potential violence. The account is therefore a significant example of the way in which street harassment perpetuates as well as attempts to solidify socially constructed gender roles. However, the countering thereof, especially the way through which Thandi’s friend ignores the harasser as well as expresses her dislike toward what he is saying results in her body being ‘read’ in contrasting ways within a single time-frame. The varying degree in which her body becomes a ‘site’ of harassment is alarming: she is referenced as being ‘beautiful’, then a ‘bitch’ and later, her body is subjected to threats of imminent violence. The resulting physical response of her urinating in a public space is further evidence of her harassment. Surprisingly, even the

movements away from the first harasser only results in facing more harassment, thus showing how mobility through this space is laden with anxiety, fear and anger.

Thandi's role within the account contrasts the usual 'passive' role taken on by harasses as is evident in other accounts. However, this passive role is understandable, as the account shows that countering an event of street harassment most often inevitably leads to heavier violence and abuse (Mashiri, 2000; Tuerkheimer, 1997). Interestingly, Thandi expresses an aspiration for an 'imagined' gender relation in which men do not represent superiority over women, but protection – ironically also marking women as weaker in relation to men. Surprisingly, where the policeman are supposed to protect citizens, in this case, Thandi and her friend, not by virtue of their gender, but because of their job, even this is not achieved as laying a case is described as being 'useless' as the actions of the Nigerian men are deemed 'normal'.

This final engagement with men, especially those in authority, is perhaps most damning as they receive no conciliatory remark from the police officers and are instead directed back to a taxi, the same space in which all the harassment begun in the first place. This particular account is perhaps most telling of the senseless vicious cycle that women find themselves in relation to some men in public space.

#### **6.4. Summary of chapter**

This chapter analyses the semiotics of the body. Specifically, Ayesha believes that the stylization of her body should index her occupational identity which would plausibly prohibit her from experiencing street harassing. However, unfortunately, an identity which empowers her is rendered invisible on the busy streets of Cape Town CBD. Instead, imposed notions of her identities such as a race, gender and her physicality of 'looking young' is what Ayesha perceives as reasons for breaches in civil-inattention. Ayesha's account also deconstructs the

view of street harassment as a phenomenon which fosters the system of gender as consisting of two binary opposites.

Furthermore, Zinzi's account opens up avenues in which street harassing events can be viewed as not harmful solely to those implicated therein, but also to those who are witnesses of the phenomenon to which others are primarily subjected. With regards to Thandi, her gender is brought forth primarily through the shape and size of her body which is drawn on as a resource in street harassing events. Her account, however, is testament to the ways in which black, female bodies are persistently read as 'unusual' and even 'humorous' by harassers.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### STREET HARASSMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF SPACE

#### 7.0. Introduction

This chapter foregrounds street harassment and the organization of space in relation to communities of practice. The three participants drawn on in this chapter are Thandi, Jennifer and Ayesha.

#### 7.1. Thandi\*

A deeper analysis of Thandi's interview from the preceding chapter is provided below. When returning again to turn 10 of Thandi's account, I focus on how she maps out space in relation to street harassment.

##### 7.1.1. Extract: 1

Turn 10. Thandi: ... and this other time it happened here on campus and I was so shocked but it doesn't happen that much often here on campus but it happens==

'[c]ampus' (turn 10) refers to a tertiary institution which as opposed to a genuinely public space, is more semi-public in nature. This results from social actors inhabiting the status of student, lecturer and so forth and is therefore ratified to be there in some way. For Thandi, the fact that harassment happened in that space is shocking as seen by her statement that she was 'so shocked' (turn 10) with the adverb 'so' placing further emphasis on her level of dismay. However, she states 'but it doesn't happen so much here on campus but it happens==' ... yes it happens...' (turn 10-12). This implies that regardless of the fact that street harassment is not restricted to the genuinely public world, it is recounted as something which does occur in the semi-public space of campus. Thandi talks about this delimited space with ratified people (students and staff) as offering a dignified and civilized space for her to

interact. Her reference to campus community can be captured by Schieffelin and Ochs's (1986) view of 'practices of communities' which is defined as "...communities of social aggregates which can be studied by an analysis of their everyday and varied cultural practices and activities which may be, but are not necessarily defined by those shared practices..." chieffelin and Ochs (1986, in Baquedano-Lopez and Kattan, 2007:78).

As opposed to street harassments' dominant inter-gendered nature, Thandi says, 'and sometimes you also get it from girls from girls not just from guys you get it from girls' (turn 12), whereby, the adverb 'sometimes' signals that these are exceptions rather than the norm. However, the repetition of the words, 'from girls' places emphasis on the fact that street harassment is enacted by females as opposed to just males; 'guys'. Significantly, where the physicality of female body parts in terms of its size is drawn on as a resource for verbal and nonverbal gestures, this is, too, something that occurs within inter-gendered forms of harassment. Specifically, body parts and its size are found humorous in nature with Thandi stating, 'girls who you know they come across you and they laugh about something and they'd be like look at that girl oh my gosh she's got big boobs' (turn 12).

Where Thandi implicates females as also being complicit in harassing behaviour, she however, justifies their behaviour by saying, 'but that one group of girls who did that to us and stuff they were high you know they had smoked dagga and stuff' (turn 12). In this sense, we see how the behaviour of the males is discursively constructed on the part of Thandi as being almost natural and typical on the basis of their gender. However, with regard to the girls, their behaviour is justified on the basis of them being 'high', a slang term which makes reference to feelings of giddiness experienced after the consumption of a drug, in this case, the girls are described as being 'high' because they had smoked 'dagga'<sup>20</sup>. She ends off by saying, 'that is street harassment that according to me is street harassment' (turn 12) to show

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<sup>20</sup>Slang term most often used in Cape Town and in South Africa at large to refer to cannabis.



that the inter and intra-gendered forms thereof, whereby her and her friend's body parts, in terms of its size, is drawn on as a resource in harassing behaviour on the basis of their gender are forms of street harassment.

However, returning back to its intra-gendered nature which Thandi had expressed, she also shows that as opposed to females also being implicated therein, it is most often enacted by men, whereby she says, 'men women not so much but it's **grown** men grown black and coloured men it's grown men I'm telling you **grown** men' (turn 16). The repetition of the adjective, 'grown', to describe the 'men' places emphasis on the age of these males, whereby both 'grown' and 'men' signals a somewhat mature age. However, where earlier signals that most often harassing behaviour comes from 'coloured and white guys', here she includes the racial group 'black' as well, whereby she says, 'grown black and coloured men'. I argue that she says this as a means of wanting to be more inclusive of black men also implicated therein as a means of not sounding bias on the basis that she, too, is racially classified as 'black'. Perhaps it could mean that she knows that there is a difference between black and coloured groups in South Africa and this is why she has to make this distinction. As stated previously, Thandi also self-identifies as black.

### **7.1.2. Extract: 2**

Turn 17. Interviewer: and how do you feel when this happens to you

Turn 18. Thandi: I'm very uh I'm very vocal about how I feel==

Turn 19. Interviewer:== so what would you say==

Turn 20. Thandi:==I would clap back I would clap back I would tell them voetstek or something

Turn 21. Interviewer: So you don't keep quiet as opposed to people who usually keep quiet=

Turn 22.Thandi: ==**OH HELL NOI** don't keep quiet I tell them I tell them you don't speak to me like that you know but in some spaces you feel so intimidated that you can't really say anything==

I was interested in inquiring how Thandi feels toward the forms of street harassment that she had mentioned. I find that as opposed to remaining silent and ignoring verbal remarks and nonverbal gestures as is evident with almost all of my participants, Thandi, however, is the only participant who states that she takes measures to combat street harassment. However, the choice to do so or not is largely based on where in the physical world the event of street harassment occurs. This feeds into the geosemiotics of space as certain spaces affords her the opportunity to perform a body-space performance (Amin, 2015) as a means of combating street harassment or not doing so.

When I ask Thandi how she feels when she is subjected to street harassment, she says, 'I'm very uh I'm very vocal about how I feel' (turn 18), whereby being 'very vocal' shows that she makes known and visible (in this case, to the harassers) how she feels about being subjected to their harassment, the adverb, 'very', placing emphasis on this. She says, 'I would clap back I would clap back' (turn 20) whereby 'clap[ping] back' means responding forcefully as opposed to remaining silent. The act of 'clapping back' demonstrated in the assertion, 'I would tell them voetsek or something' (turn 20) The word 'voetsek' is a slang Afrikaans word most often used in the South African context, whereby its English translation means 'go away' (<https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Voetsek>). The word is largely considered a form of profanity.

When asked 'so you don't keep quiet as opposed to people who usually keep quiet?' (turn 21), she states, '**OH HELL NO**' (turn 22) which signals absurdity of doing so and again elaborates, '...I don't keep quiet I tell them I tell them you don't speak to me like that...'

(turn 22), placing emphasis on her 'very vocal' (turn 18) identity which she seeks to bring across.

As opposed to Thandi remaining quiet in the event of street harassment, the means through which she answers back, whereby she also uses profanity deconstructs the dominant figured world which constructs women as displaying less discursive power than men in the communicative event. It also simultaneously deconstructs the stereotypical view of women as being scared and timid. The attitude which Thandi exhibits is contrary to Mashiri's (2000) depiction of a 'lip plate' which adorns the woman, but simultaneously inhibits her ability to participate in dialogue at will. This attitude is the exception amongst the participants as the others appear to play the role of passive social actor by filling the gender requirement in public spaces. Despite Thandi's progressive attitude, she does, however, state that the choice to combat street harassment is largely based on the physical context in which it occurs which may offer particular affordances to do so or not, whereby she says, '... but in some spaces you feel so intimidated that you can't really say anything' (turn 22).

### **7.1.3. Extract: 3**

Turn 23. Interviewer: ==In what spaces are these

Turn 24. Thandi: like in in Town maybe on the streets in Town you know where I come from in the Township you know I go to the township a lot here in Cape Town as well you know you know in some in some spaces like that when when it's not your territory you see campus is my territory because I study here and I live here do you understand so when it happens here on campus like I put them I call them into order and I tell them you know what I'm gonna report your ass you know but when I'm in outside spaces where this is not my territory I'll first observe my surroundings so if I clap-back at this person whose gonna have my back==

Turn 25. Interviewee: uhh I get you==

Turn 26.Thandi:== Do you understand and most of the time when I'm alone look I I call people into don't let anyone speak to me anyhow but if I see if I am intimidated I just keep quiet and I walk fast and I just you know leave the specific space because I don't know what will happen to me when I talk back

Turn 27. Interviewer: So you feel safe saying it on campus because you know nothings gonna happen to you but the moment you say it so somebody outside campus you don't know what their intentions are==

Turn 28. Thandi: == yes I don't know what their intentions are I mean here on campus uhm I could have the details of the student whatever that person is and there there's always people around here on campus and you know campus is a different environment to you know a township or outside there it's a different we're all students and we we have some kind of culture and some kind of civilisation and some kind of dignified understandings of you know harassments and stuff like that we are learned people but in out in outside spaces yoh you just don't know

Where Thandi enacts an identity of someone who is agentic in reclaiming discursive power in the event of street harassment she occasionally contradicts herself by saying that '... in some spaces you feel so intimidated that you can't really say anything' (turn 22 extract 7.1). The adverb 'some' shows that feelings of fear as signalled by the verb, 'intimidated', is experienced due to particular characteristics of spaces that does not afford her the opportunity to be agentic in reclaiming her discursive power. I was rather interested in knowing what spaces constrains her agency in doing so as she makes a distinction between genuinely public spaces and spaces which she describes as being her 'territory' (turn 24). She says 'Like in in town maybe on the streets in town...' (turn 24). Here, 'town' specifically refers to Cape Town's CBD which I had discussed in previous analysis sections with regard to its genuine public nature. She further states, 'you know where I come from in the township you know I go to the township a lot here in Cape Town as well you know you know in some in some spaces like that when when it's not your territory...' (turn 24). Arguably, Thandi is

juxtaposing the Eastern Cape (a rural province adjacent to the more urbanized Western Cape) with the townships in Cape Town which is a more urban province. Hence, coming from a township in the Eastern Cape means that she does not feel as part of the townships that she visits in Cape Town. These feelings of not belonging in place, that being the townships, may come about as a result of differences in terms of class. Additionally, activities which prevail between practices of communities (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986) may abound leading Thandi to feel more comfortable in one over the other. For instance, Cape Town CBD operates in stark contrast to the township's community-orientated characteristics in terms of size of space and diversity of social actors, interaction and social actions therein, whereby it is described as a space that is 'not your territory' (turn 24). The noun 'territory' thus referring to the claiming or ownership of space as one's own which give insight into feelings of belonging, but which is also reminiscent of south Africa's geographical segregation in which people were alienated or considered as belonging in space.

The 'territory' argument put forth by Thandi is reinforced through her description of the campus space: Thandi describes 'campus' as being her 'territory' due to the fact that, as she says, 'I study here and I live here' (turn 24). In this sense, the campus or institutional space is recounted as a space of belonging brought about by her having a purpose in being there. Hence, in the event of 'harassing' behaviour she says, '...I put them I call them into order and I tell them you know what I'm gonna report your ass you know...' (turn 24). Importantly, we see that Thandi's ability to 'call [someone] into order' and to 'report [them]' (turn 24) makes reference to the demanding of proper behaviour within an institutional space. Saliently, 'report[ing]' someone is to make visible behaviour which is prohibited on the basis that it is inappropriate. In this sense, the institutional space is a safe space which affords Thandi the ability to combat street harassment more readily than in genuinely public spaces. This institutional space is semi-private and facilitates particular interactions, social actions,

social actors and discourses associated with learning at a tertiary institution. Hence, harassing behaviour is seen on the part of Thandi as a call for action in 'calling them into order' and simultaneously 'reporting' them as their harassing behaviour is regarded as largely unauthorized in space as acts of transgression. The reference to reporting 'their ass' as opposed to 'reporting [them]', signals anger, but also signals her feelings toward people whose actions are transgressive. Hence, they are described as 'asses' and not people (human beings) which is a slang term used to refer to buttocks or a horse. However, I think the former being buttocks comes across more strongly.

The idea of campus as a tightly controlled space in terms of discourse and social action is reinforced when she states, 'here on campus uhm I could have the details of the student whatever that person is and there there's always people around here on campus...' (turn 28). 'Hav[ing] the details of the student' means that harassers may not be able to capitalize on the anonymity that a genuinely public space affords. The reference to 'there's always people around here on campus...' constructs the space as safe in terms of its inhabitancy of many bodies. Hence, spaces that are secluded and isolated are largely governed by figured worlds which construct these types of spaces as dangerous, especially for female bodies, whereby they would be susceptible to crime and so forth.

Furthermore, she makes a distinction between the campus space, that being her territory and outside public spaces. She describes the campus space as a community of practice, which she had signalled as being her 'territory', markedly different from 'a township or outside' (turn 24). This difference comes about due to a common identity amongst those who inhabit the space, whereby this identity is one of being 'students' belonging in the space, firstly, because it is a place of study and learning, the University of the Western Cape is described as having 'some kind of culture and some kind of civilization and some kind of dignified understandings of you know harassments and stuff like that we are learned people...' (turn

28). Here, Thandi grants the characteristics of students in terms of ‘some kind of culture’ and ‘some kind of civilization’ and ‘some kind of dignified understanding of [...] harassment’ with a social good. The reference to ‘some kind’ implicated in their culture, civilization and dignified understanding shows that their behaviour operates in stark contrast to and is considered appropriate in relation to those who do not inhabit the status of student. In this sense, an orderly and appropriate form of behaviour is seen as being inhabited by people who are educated, whereby as she says, ‘we are learned people’ (turn 28). A particular social order is imagined which is able to be achieved on the basis of being educated and is maintained through the social ordered space of ‘campus’. Hence, she, although subtly, constructs harassing behaviour as something which is less-likely to be enacted by someone who is educated, thereby reinforcing the figured world that occupation or educational status is reflexive of behaviours which would commonly be granted social goods, whereby the inverse would also plausibly be true, i.e. being uneducated means that individuals are more likely to engage in harassing behaviour. However, it is important to bear in mind that this is her opinion based on her world view. Also, Thandi’s statement refutes the view that street harassment crosses the lines of identities (age, class, geography and so forth) as is evident in the literature reviewed.

As opposed to the institutional space which afford Thandi the ability to reclaim discursive power as brought about by its socially-ordered nature of people who can be called to account, other spaces, specifically ‘outside spaces’ are described as ‘not being [her] territory’. Hence, she says that when she is in these spaces, she will ‘first observe [her] surroundings so if I clap-back at this person whose gonna have my back==’ (turn 24). In this sense, the act of ‘observing one’s surrounding’ is to be attentive to the space she is in as a means of finding out ‘whose gonna have [her] back’ when she claps-back’, in other words, who is going to protect her when she asserts her position. She further reinforces her status of being ‘very

vocal' (turn 18, extract 7.1) whereby she reiterates that, 'look I I call people [into order] [I] don't don't let anyone speak to me anyhow...' (turn 26) as a means of reminding me about her identity as someone who combats street harassment as opposed to remaining quiet. However, she notes that when feelings of 'intimidate[ion]' occurs, 'she keep[s] quiet', "walk[s] fast and leave[s] the specific space' (turn 26). In this sense, fearful feelings are reflected through embodiment through a silent body; 'keep[ing] quiet' and rapid body movements; 'walk[ing] fast' as a means of leaving the space. These bodily practices are governed by feelings of uncertainty in terms of safety which are implicated in genuinely public spaces as brought about by figured worlds thereof which construct public spaces as inherently dangerous for female bodies, especially when they reclaim power as discussed in the feminist and sociolinguistics discipline (Tuerkheimer 1997; Mashiri 2000).

Significantly, however, this uncertainty is further reinforced by (public) spaces as inhabiting a multitude of strangers within a somewhat 'singular' space. A lack of knowledge surrounding their identity or purpose 'in place' further facilitates particular social actions and discourses resulting in inappropriate or transgressive acts within public space. While she tries to convince us that she is vocal, this is largely only possibly in an already orderly, safe space. So, in effect, she is not necessarily more agentive than any of the other participants in this study. I will now proceed with an analysis of the accounts given by Jennifer and Ayesha.

Notably, both Jennifer and Ayesha talk about street harassment in relation to the same space that of Greenhaven. Intriguingly, both have two very different experiences of the same place. As religion is alluded to by both participants, it is noteworthy that Jennifer self-identifies as Christian, while Ayesha self-identifies as Muslim, albeit subtly. Here, I will first be referring to the account by Jennifer.



## 7.2.

Jennifer\*

### 7.2.1. Extract: 1

Turn1. Interviewer: okay so basically everyone definition of the word street harassment is different  
okay so what is your understanding of the word street harassment

Turn 2. Jennifer: I think street harassment will be when somebody defies you as a human being like  
maybe while you walking in the road this people this people or person is just sort of belittling you

Turn 3. Interviewer: hmmm

Turn 4. Jennifer: and they invading your space and it makes you feel very uncomfortable

Turn5 Interviewer: and have you ever been a victim of street harassment?

Turn 6. Jennifer: I have been a victim but I don't think it was that extreme

Turn 7. Interviewer: Okay before we talk about your experience of being a victim and what happened  
can you briefly state uhm in what space in which area were you a victim of street harassment?

Turn 8. Jennifer: There is a couple of spaces but I will stick with the space where we in now in the area  
of Greenhaven

Jennifer uses hedges when defining street harassment, which makes what is said less direct. This is evident through the use of vague language, such as, 'sort of' (turn 2) and modal expressions such as 'maybe' (turn 2) and 'I think' (turn 2). I argue that she uses hedges to make evident that she is not providing her definition pertaining to street harassment with full certainty. However, regardless thereof it should be taken to be her own personal, subjective understanding of the phenomenon. For Jennifer, street harassment is rendered significant through the ways in which it happens 'while you walking down the road', whereby, someone 'defies you as a human being' and 'this people or person just sort of belittling you, 'and they invading your space' and it 'makes you feel very uncomfortable' (turn 2-3).

Jennifer states that she has been a victim of 'street harassment, 'but it wasn't that extreme'. Here, I infer that she takes the noun, 'victim', to possibly signal a severe form of street harassment, whereby she does not regard her experiences as such. What is evident is that she opts more for the word, 'cat calling', as she states later on in the interview, '= ...ya cat-calling whatever harassment... =' (turn 26, see appendix). Hence, she accepts the usage of the term street harassment within the communicative interview, but it is evident that she does not accept it as a term applicable to her experiences.

Where Jennifer notes that she experiences street harassment in a 'couple of spaces', but however, chooses to speak about an event specific to Greenhaven, shows that her experiences of the phenomenon is not restricted solely to the space at hand. In this sense, Greenhaven can be taken to act as a microcosm of other spaces in which street harassment has also occurs.

### **7.2.2. Extract: 2**

Turn 9. Interviewer: Okay and before we speak about what happened can you briefly explain if you had to tell someone who wasn't in Greenhaven what Greenhaven is about how would you what is Greenhaven all about tell us a bit about the space if you had to explain what Greenhaven is to someone whose never been here what would you tell me about the space what type of space is Greenhaven?

Turn 10. Jennifer: Well for me Greenhaven is a very I would say it's a good it's a very friendly suburb it's not like other suburbs or areas on the Cape Flats it's much more I won't say it's upper-class but (.) it's much more modernized than other areas it's not so much flats they actually come and pick up the dirt every single week it's quite fairly clean==

Turn 11. Interviewer: == and you've been living here==

Turn 12. Jennifer: == and people does know each other==

Turn 13. Interviewer: ==and you've been living in Greenhaven now for how long?

Turn 14. Jennifer: (*Laughs*) OH MY GOSH I probably lived here for like thirty not thirty years less than thirty years twenty-five years

Turn 15. Interviewer: okay and uhm so how would you say how would you how do you feel towards Greenhaven

Turn 16. Jennifer: (*Laughs*) For me Greenhaven's home I would like to have my own house here besides my parent's house of cause my own house not in this part of Greenhaven I mean the front part that's like more the upper-class

Turn 17. Interviewer: Okay

Turn 18. Jennifer: where there's green that's the whole green part of Greenhaven with all the trees

When asked to describe Greenhaven, Jennifer describes it positively when she states 'It's a good it's a very friendly suburb' (turn 10). The adjective, 'very', renders the 'friendl[iness]and 'good[ness]'of the area significant. Unsurprisingly, perhaps Greenhaven fairs better than other areas on the Cape Flats which she does not readily esteem. However, where Greenhaven is not taken to be of 'upper class' status; 'I wouldn't say it's upper class' (turn 10) it is, however, described as being 'much more modernized than other areas [on the Cape Flats]' (turn 10). She elaborates by saying that 'they actually come and pick up the dirt every single week' (turn 10). The adverb, 'actually', signal that this is a type of service delivery which residents on the Cape Flats are not accustomed to. However, the fact that residents in Greenhaven are granted this service renders the space as being described as 'quite fairly clean' (turn 10). She also states that because she had been living in Greenhaven for 'twenty five years, the space is considered as '[being] home' (turn 14-16) which alludes to a sense of belonging and pride. She notes that apart from her parents' home, where she currently resides in, she aspires to have her own house in the area as well, stating that she would like to live in the 'front part' of Greenhaven (turn 16). This is a part which she

describes as being 'more upper class' due to the aesthetics of a 'green' surrounding which feeds into the notion and meaning of the space as being called Greenhaven (turn 16-18).

Jennifer's descriptions of Greenhaven are significant – firstly, it is important to note that, as Jennifer had already put it, Greenhaven is an area on the 'Cape Flats'. This is a term used to make reference to historically coloured apartheid-created areas. These areas are most often marginalized in nature with regards to being crime-ridden, over populated and under-resourced in terms of lacking adequate infrastructure and proper service delivery (see Wilkonson, 2000). However, Jennifer's description of Greenhaven is that it is desirable to other areas on the Cape Flats. Hence, I argue that a particular social order with regard to physical space is maintained by the residents of the community. However, when gaining insight into Jennifer's experiences of street harassment within this very space, it seems that although a social order is being maintained, but a social disorder also exists. She proceeds by speaking about her specific street harassing event.

### **7.2.3. Extract: 3**

Turn 19. Interviewer: Okay so now that you've spoken about what type of space Greenhaven is uhm can you briefly tell me uhm about this experience of street harassment that you had this memorable experience that has stuck with you till now what exactly happened on that particular day first of all what day was this and what time did it happen

Turn 20. Jennifer: It was on a week day and it was early morning on my way to work

Turn 21. Interviewer: Okay and what happened?

Turn 22. Jennifer: there was also instances before this but at this occasion I was just like maybe a few months married or I think I was engaged or married and there was another instance after that when I was pregnant so as you know this [School X School X]

Turn 23. Interviewer: hmm (nods)

Turn 24. Jennifer: so what happened==

Turn 25. Interviewer: == Can you tell me abit about [Shool X] the school

Turn 26. Jennifer: Okay it's a Muslim Muslim boy's school which is supposed to be a very private school uhm and how can I say I'm not sure about the English word but they supposed to be saalig but as a woman I felt very degraded for YOUNG boys cat-calling me that time I wasn't so fat (*laughs*) I was much more thinner and I'm not even dressed as you can see I'm not a person that dress (.) sexually or whatever sleeve-less stuff I mean it was Winter or whatever time but I was dressed discreetly and they were degrading me **I HAD A RING ON MY FINGER** and I was so embarrassed because I'm such a old woman that time I was in my twenties and here's YOUNG kids flirting with me and going on...

Turn 28. Jennifer: They were whistling and going on and sometimes I use to get so angry especially when I'm on my period then I will actually swear at them and I'm hoping where's (where is) their principle or their teacher walking around

Turn 29. Interviewer: Okay=

Turn 30. Jennifer: I mean a person is a grown woman to be annoyed like that and to be degraded like that

Turn 32. Jennifer: I never felt flattered at all because even once a BOY I mean this boy is probably grade eight and he wants to come up to me

Jennifer chooses to speak about her experiences of street harassment which occurs through significant stages in her adulthood, that being when she is engaged, married and pregnant (turn 22). She also makes reference to experiences which occurs in her teenage years making reference to her secondary-schooling days (see turn 54 in a later extract). However, regardless of these different time periods, the events surrounding her experiences have

always been fairly the same in terms of who the harassers are and where in the physical space the incidents have occur. She begins her account by stating, ‘... so as you know this [school x]... it’s a Muslim Boys school it’s supposed to be a very private school and uhm how can I say I’m not sure about the English word but they supposed to be *saalig*’ [an Arabic word to refer to an esteemed behaviour in accordance with Islamic faith] (turn 26). Firstly, because this school is a Muslim Boys School, it means that, firstly, it is solely a single sex school, in terms of being an all- boys-one as well as the fact that it is a single-religious one meaning that all boys who attend the school should be affiliated with Islam. Where she states ‘...it’s supposed to be a very private school... ’ (turn 26), I infer that what she means is that the school is a Model C<sup>21</sup> one, whereby the word, ‘private’, makes reference to this. For Jennifer, there is an expectation that because the school is a Model C one as well as religiously affiliated to Islam, the boys should behave in a certain way, that being ‘*saalig*’. (turn 26). This expectation comes across strongly throughout her account, whereby on two occasions in her retelling she makes reference to the boys behaviour by stating, ‘they supposed to be holy’ (turn 54) and again ‘and plus they supposed to be all holy’ (turn 62). However, Jennifer, on the other hand, states that ‘as a woman’ [she] felt very degraded by YOUNG BOYS cat-calling [her]’ (turn 26). In conjunction with her believing that the boys behaviour is inappropriate on the basis of their religion, she also considers their behaviour as such on the basis that they are quite ‘YOUNG’ in relation to her. Her identity as woman is taken to primarily be the basis of harassment, or in other words ‘cat-calling’ which she is subjected to. Jennifer believes that street harassment or cat-calling is derived primarily from the physical appearance of a woman (in terms of her body weight) as well as the stylization of the female body in terms of how the body is clothed. Therefore, it is no surprise that she firstly justifies the actions of the boys on the basis of her weight stating, ‘that time I wasn’t so fat (*laughs*) I

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<sup>21</sup> Historically whites-only school.

was much more thinner...' (turn 26). In this sense, being 'much more thinner' is associated with physical attractiveness which she believes influences unsolicited interactions of 'cat-calling' in the first place. Significantly, Jennifer also defends herself on the basis of arguing that she did not do anything on her part to have consciously influenced the encounter, whereby she makes reference to the way she clothes her body stating, '... and I'm not even dressed as you can see I'm not a person that dress (.) sexually or whatever sleeveless stuff I mean it was winter or whatever time but I was dressed discreetly...' (turn 26).

By making reference to the way she is dressed, Jennifer seeks to enact an identity of someone who does not readily seek unwanted attention because of the way she chooses to clothe herself. However, this may also index her beliefs that women that dress non-discreetly and sexually are condoning or asking for unwanted attention from the opposite sex in public spaces. This, then, lays the basis for her confusion at being at the receiving-end of boys who she describes as 'DEGRADING [her]' (turn 26) regardless of the identity which she thought will be taken up through the way her body was stylized. Additionally, she makes reference to another semiotic of the body, her ring. Because of earlier linguistic cues, I infer that this ring is either an engagement or a wedding ring. For Jennifer, this semiotic of the body is seen to have communicated the fact that she does not seek to engage in any forms of communication with the boys and also that she is of a mature age in relation to them. In this sense, the boys actions are believed to be sexual advances which construct the interactions of males and females as romantic ones.

Unfortunately, her body in terms of its stylization and the semiotics thereof is not read and taken up in ways that she would have wanted it to be taken up by the harassers at hand. Instead, the identity which she is enacting goes largely invisible, whereby she is subjected to 'degrading' behaviour. This makes way for feelings of embarrassment, whereby she states 'because I'm such an old woman that time I was in my twenties' (turn 26). Where Jennifer, on

the one hand, was only 'in [her] twenties', she describes herself as being 'such a old woman', which does not readily make reference to a thirty year old, but perhaps someone much older. However, I argue that this exaggeration is done on the basis of placing emphasis on the age gap between the boys and her, that as being one of the primary factors regarding why she does not condone their behaviour.

#### **7.2.4. Extract: 4**

Turn 48. Jennifer: ...at this time (...) I'm already showing in my pregnancy maybe six or seven months and I mean I feel like a whale and I look like a whale and they still doing the same thing (.) with the ring on the finger and obviously pregnancy hormones is much more higher than =

As the interview progresses, Jennifer recounts similar unsolicited interactions by the boys, however, she makes reference to a period in which she was pregnant. She states that because she was six or seven months, she is beginning to show in her pregnancy. Here, I with certainty state that she makes reference to a protruding belly as well as the accompanying weight-gain that comes with being pregnant. When referring back, it is noted that Jennifer justifies the boys actions on the basis of her being 'much more thinner' (turn 26), whereby a pregnant body significantly contrasts this 'thin' figure. This comes across strongly when she makes reference to her body as 'looking like a whale', a large sea animal and also 'feeling like a whale' (Turn 48). Regardless of this fact she states that when she walks past the boys whilst looking the way she did (in the descriptions provided by her) they are described as 'still doing the same thing (.) with the ring on the finger' (turn 48). The adjective, 'still', signals that regardless of her body being described in these terms as well as again making reference to the ring on her finger, her body is still not read and taken up in the way in which she would have wanted it to be.



Thus far, I have evaluated the ways in which Jennifer wishes for the social order in terms of civil-inattention to be maintained on the basis of her body, that being the stylization and semiotics thereof. However, her body and the meanings she attaches to it have largely become invisible in the space at hand, whereby this significantly influences the ways in which her body comes to matter in place. I will further proceed by conducting a closer analysis of the harassers whilst simultaneously discussing this form of denied interaction in place.

I argue that there are three reasons as to why this particular form of interaction between Jennifer and the boys are contested and denied on her part- Firstly (1) the interaction is denied on the basis of the age-gap between her and the boys. From the very beginning of the interview, I am given insight into the age of the boys as they are described as ‘young boys’, ‘young kids’, ‘children’ and ‘teenagers’ (see turn 26, 32, 48). It is no surprise that she believes that the ‘catcalling’ she is subjected to by the boys occur because ‘that time [she] was much thinner’ (26), because this particular physicality may feed into the notion, on the part of the boys that she is young. Hence, she does say, ‘I did look a bit young that time but c’mon now’ (turn 36 refer to appendix). Subsequently, she inhabits confusion as to why on the basis of dressing discreetly, being pregnant and wearing a ring, each being a deliberate and visible stylization of the body which she believes should have communicated the message that as opposed to her being mistaken for being young, she is of a mature age. This need to communicate her age, that which had largely become invisible, has a lot of emphasis placed upon it within the interview itself, whereby she even goes to the extent of describing herself as an ‘old woman’ (turn 26). Jennifer exhibits feelings of embarrassment because regardless thereof, she is still being degraded by the boys. Hence, the behaviour of the boys in terms of verbal and nonverbal remarks and gestures, such as ‘catcalling’ her, ‘degrading’ her, ‘flirting’ with her and ‘going on’ and ‘whistling’ (turn 26, 28, 32, see also appendix). She

also recounts a memory of a boy who she infers as being ‘probably grade eight’ [approximately thirteen years old] to come up to [her]’ (turn 32, see appendix). These forms of interactions are considered inappropriate on the basis of their age in relation to hers, whom she describes as ‘I mean a person is a grown woman to be annoyed like that...’ (turn 30).

The second reason as to why this interaction is denied is the fact that in relation to them being young, their religious identity is that of being ‘Muslim’, whereby they also attend an all-boys-Muslim school. From the very beginning of the interview she says that ‘they supposed to be *saalig*’ (turn 26) and later, on two occasions, ‘they supposed to be so holy’ (turn 54) and ‘they supposed to be all holy’ (turn 67). Ironically, however, where Jennifer believes that they should act in accordance with their religion, that of being ‘*saalig*’ and ‘holy’, their very religion, however, is also seen as the very reason for their actions. Hence, she says, ‘they use to seeing a woman covered up now if they see a Christian woman and she’s just having a little open-sleeve or whatever they feel oh let me show off by my friends I can get this girl’, (turn 69). ‘[U]se to seeing woman covered up’ makes reference to Muslim woman and girls who are perceived as usually wearing the face scarf, whereby a Christian woman’s dress code may contrast this in terms of wearing a ‘little open-sleeve’ is seen as a motivator for their behaviour. Also their behaviour is seen on the basis of them being ‘all boys and now they seeing a female and now they getting all excited there’s a female there’ (turn 67, see appendix). Effectively, Jennifer is making the argument that the presence of a female body in a strictly Muslim male-only space arouses and ‘excite[s]’ the boys (turn 67). Hence, in relation to their actions as being seen as derived from their religion, I also argue that Jennifer’s reasons behind the motivation of their actions is synonymous with a wealth of literature which indicate that street harassment, or in this case, ‘catcalling’ is seen as part of the homosocial sphere and male bonding and solidarity which make reference to ‘all-boy’ spaces, the act of ‘showing off’ and showing their counterparts they can ‘get this girl’ (turn

69) (Langelan 1993; Wesselmann and Kelly 2010). Significantly, there also seems to be a gap in knowledge concerning the relationship between street harassment and religion, whereby Jennifer's account proves that more attention should be geared toward this. All in all, the actions of the boys are deemed as inappropriate which give rise to certain phenomenological feelings.

When evaluating her feelings toward the event, or in other words, catcalling, two prominent feelings emerge, that of humiliation and disgust. She states 'I never felt flattered it was really disgusting I never felt flattered at all' (turn 32) and 'I felt humiliated all the words are negative there's not even once where I felt flattered' (turn 75). I argue that these feelings are brought about by the fact that the interaction is denied on the basis of who the harassers are and unwanted exposure which is directed at her.

It was interesting to consider how harassment (cat calling) is countered on the part of Jennifer. She says, 'sometimes I use to get so angry especially when I'm on my period and I would actually swear at them...' (turn 28). Where there is a lot of stigma surrounding menstruation, especially around males, whereby a women's bad mood is associated with her premenstrual syndromes (PMS), it is quite ironic how Jennifer, as a female, feeds into this very same stereotype. Hence, where Jennifer, on the one hand, wants to be respected, not just as a woman, but as a grown woman, she simultaneously engages in particular male-dominated stereotyping which contributes to her inferior status as a woman. At this point, it is wise to consider another type of denied interaction on the basis of street harassment. This is evident in the extract below. She states:

### 7.2.5. Extract: 5

Turn 57. Interviewer: = Was there any other instances in Greenhaven where it happened with by maybe someone other than a [School X] boy

Turn 59. There (Laughs) there was something it was so really disgusting it was a old man=

Turn 60. Interviewer: = uh and what did this old man say? =

Turn 61. Interviewee:= When old people greet yes I greet but if old men flirts with you ooh girl jy lyk lekker [girl you look good] it (laughs) makes you feel disgusting and then they still turning around =

Turn 62. Interviewer: And where did this happen of *girl jy lyk lekker* [Girl you look good]?

Turn 63. Interviewee: This was also on my way to that side I dunno what the name of the road is but it's somewhere where I'm walking also to work

Turn 64. Interviewer =: okay so it's over there by the park I think? =

Turn 65. Interviewee: = and it's also a old man much older than my father

Jennifer states that, 'When old people greet yes I greet...' (turn 61). This makes reference to a form of social interaction between young people and the elderly which is considered appropriate across societies as greeting back is seen as a sign of respect. However, this particular interaction, that being between a young person and elderly, has been transgressed on the basis of their age gap. This interaction is considered that of 'flirt[ing]' (turn 61) whereby this 'old man' said, 'ooh girl jy lyk lekker' [ooh girl you look good], whereby 'they' or [he] is still described as being engaged in non-verbal behaviour of 'turning around' (turn 61). This makes reference to how her buttocks were gazed at. Hence, her body is simultaneously sexualized within the interaction. Where she stylizes the language of the 'old man' in the form of Kaaps Afrikaans which is specific to Cape Town, this gives insight into the way she feels about the old man whilst simultaneously dis-privileging the variety used by him. Jennifer describes the interaction which led her to depicting the event as 'really so

disgusting' (turn 61). These feelings are primarily brought about by a denied interaction as well as the fact that the 'old man' is described as being 'much older than [her] father'. The reference to the age of the man in relation to her father is reminiscent of the global taboo associated with females who date men who are the same age or older than their fathers.

Thus far, I have considered how the social order in terms of interactions between 'boys' and a 'grown woman' as well as an elderly man and a younger woman have been transgressed through the enactment of forms of street harassment. In the case of Jennifer and the boys, she regards her body to be read in ways that would maintain civil- inattention. Specifically, the ways in which she chooses to dress and the semiotics of her body (ring, protruding belly). She believes this will feed into an understanding of her as being mature and therefore not to be engaged in communication with. In the case of the interaction between her and the elderly 'old man' her major concern, however, emerges from that fact that she is much younger in relation to him. However, all these identities which she aspires should be visible and facilitate the interaction order had largely gone invisible within the space at hand. For Jennifer, her only visible identity is her gendered identity which I argue allows civil inattention to be breached in the first place. I will now return to a discussion on the ways in which physical space itself may have, although subtly, influenced street harassment.

Where I discuss the ways in which the interactions between the boys and Jennifer are denied on the basis of the age-gap as well as the boys' religious affiliation to Islam, I also wish to argue that the interaction is denied on the basis of where in the physical world it occurs.

#### **7.2.6. Extract: 6**

Turn 48. Jennifer: by that same people that same children in other words or teenagers the same harassment...

Turn 54. Interviewee: When I was a teenager (laughs) they also did it when I went to Garlandale but ya that was many many years ago but I notice even generations come and generations go of these [School X] they supposed to be so holy but how can they treat a woman like that and their teachers are never around because once I I also I told my mother about this that I'm gonna report them

Where Jennifer's account makes evident that she experiences harassment during three significant stages in her life, that being when she was engaged, married and pregnant, It is evident that although time passes, as reflected through these three significant time periods, her experiences within the space at hand remains the same. Hence, when I ask Jennifer if she had experienced any other forms of harassment earlier or later on in Greenhaven (see turn 47appendix) she states, 'by that same people that same children in other words or teenagers the same harassment' (turn 48). She also notes that '... but I even notice that generations come and generations go of these [school x]...' (turn 54). I argue that the repetitive usage of the word, 'same' in turn 48 does not necessarily refer to the same boy(s), but rather to similar experiences of particular behaviour by them although executed by different scholars. The implication is that the new learners are learning from the more senior ones and as the older ones leave the school they also leave behind another group of rude boys to take their place. In this way, 'generations' of young boys are informally socialized into this behaviour over the years.

I also argue that Jennifer deems the boys' behaviour inappropriate because of where in the physical world it occurs. Hence, because the boys are displaying these types of behaviours whilst being at a schooling institution, their actions are regarded as being 'transgressive' and unauthorized in space. For Jennifer, then, the social order which is supposed to be maintained in space is not constituted in the physical world by means of the boys actions. Where she states, '... and I'm hoping where's [where is] the principle or teacher around' (turn 28), the

'principle' and 'teacher' emerge as key figures within the academic space who are responsible for maintaining the order. Later, she adds, '... and their teachers are never around because once I I also told my mother about this that I'm gonna report them' (turn 54). The reference to their teachers never being around similarly feeds into the notion of how within space the social order is being disrupted by the absence of key responsible figures. The need to 'report them' shows how Jennifer, herself, wishes to reinstall order within the space at hand, whereby the act of 'reporting' someone is done as a means of bringing attention and awareness to prohibited forms of social action. For Jennifer, the behaviours of the boys are seen as being even more egregious considering their religion.

With regard to the spatial dynamic, notably the boys do not have their own private play area on the school property, but are allowed to congregate in the public park. Hence, is a fine line between the public (field/ park) and the private (boys school) divide. I argue that for the boys congregating in a somewhat public space which does not form part of the school's property and does not consist of the rules which are applicable within the schooling institution may have allowed the particular space to become conducive for behaviours which may otherwise have not be tolerated. However, even if the park is not perceived as forming part of the genuinely public world, this does not necessarily mean that unauthorized behaviour and discourses cannot prevail.

Jennifer's accounts are instrumental in showing how street harassment functions as that which transgresses acceptable and appropriate interactions between people on the basis of age, religion as well as where in the physical world it occurs. Also, the physicality of the female body itself becomes a 'site' of harassment, whereby Jennifer wants the stylization (discreet and non-sexual forms of dressing), physical contours (pregnant body/ protruding belly) and semiotics (engagement and/ or wedding ring) to become visible and read in the way in which she intends for it to be read, whereby civil-inattention is expected to be

executed on these basis. However, where the stylization and contours of the physical body is largely invisible to the boys, we see however, how Jennifer's body only becomes visible when it is sexualized and gazed upon in the case of the elderly man. These contested and denied forms of interactions causes phenomenological feelings of anger, humiliation, degradation and disgust. Lastly, I consider how the spatiality of the space in Greenhaven may have been conducive for the particular interactions between the boys and her, whereby regardless of how genuinely public or not spaces are deemed to be, there always exist scope for the execution of unauthorized behaviour, that being 'cat-calling' (street harassment) in space. Hence, the descriptions and feelings attached to Greenhaven as being reflective of that which consist of the maintenance of a somewhat orderly social order cannot be seen in absolute terms. Clearly, even within the most orderly of spaces, a social disorder is inevitable on the basis of a women's inferior position within (public) spaces and the gendered hierarchy at large.

### 7.3. Ayesha\*

This account provides an alternative view of Greenhaven wherein Ayesha contrastingly feels comforted by the Muslim community in the near-exact space and conjuring up a similar imagery which intriguingly produces very different perspective of street harassment.

#### 7.3.1. Extract: 1

Turn 64. Ayesha: ...it was on a Friday afternoon and you know in Greenhaven on a Friday afternoon it's quiet the roads are quiet because it is like mosque=



Turn 65. Interviewer: Okay before we talk about that can you explain Greenhaven? What type of space is Greenhaven?

Turn 66. Ayesha: Greenhaven is a residential area it's a community it is perceived as quite safe in my opinion I think it is a safe area it's not a township uhm so there's no flats and and and any what type of word can I use it's not like *ghetto* it's not or stuff like that it's a community it's a close-knit community there would be lots of Muslims, Christians, Indians all staying next to each other uhm uh mainly coloured-dominated area uhm there's schools there's shops uhm ya but it's a safe area it's a generally safe area

Turn 67. Interviewer: And it's a area you grew up here and you still stay here?-

Turn 68. Ayesha: = Yes I wouldn't move until I die (laughs) or I get married (laughs)

Turn 69. Interviewee: Or you get married (laughs) what happened?

When Ayesha is asked to speak about Greenhaven she describes it as 'a generally safe area' in contrast to a 'township' or 'ghetto' (turn 66). These two terms can be used interchangeably, whereby they both refer to underdeveloped, segregated urban areas which are most often occupied by minority groups of people. However, the word 'township' is more commonly used in the South African context. Greenhaven is not considered as such (a township or ghetto) on the basis of it being a 'close-knit community' and being 'safe' (turn 66). She describes the area as, '... a residential area it's a community... it's a community it's a close-knit community' (turn 66). Where the term 'community' refers to a small or large social unit (of people) who have something in common such as identities, religious values and so forth ([www.dictionary.com/browse/community](http://www.dictionary.com/browse/community)), Greenhaven derives its meaning of being as such on the basis of different religious groups such as 'Muslims Christians and Indians all staying next to each other' (turn 66). Also, the neighbourhood consist of 'shops and schools' as well as also being a 'mainly coloured-dominated area'. Significantly, I begin

to see how a description of Greenhaven as being a community is derived from it inhabiting a group of people who have a racial identity of coloured in common. However, this racial commonality within the space is also reminiscent of the geographical segregation brought about by apartheid on the basis of race which is still articulated as lingering within the space at hand.

Furthermore, the idea of the space as being safe is articulated through linguistic cues such as 'it is perceived as quite safe in my opinion I think it is a safe area... uhm but ya it's a safe area it's a generally safe area' (turn 66). Although the verb, 'perceived', and the modal expression 'I think' shows that Ayesha does not state Greenhaven's safety in absolute terms, feelings of pride and belonging is further associated with the space as she states that she would not move out of the area 'until she dies' or 'until she gets married'<sup>22</sup> which indicates that she aspires to live in the space for a long time to come. She proceeds by going into detail with regard to what her street harassing event entailed:

### **7.3.2. Extract: 2**

Ayesha: ...it was on a Friday afternoon and you know in Greenhaven on a Friday afternoon it's quiet the roads are quiet because it is like mosque (turn 64)...Okay on this day it was on a Friday afternoon and because it was about close to one o' clock it was time for the Moslem men to go to mosque so the streets was very quiet the shops are close uhm because I stay opposite a boys school a Muslim boys

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<sup>22</sup>It is a commonly accepted practice that Muslim men and women only move out of their parents' home when they get married. While the practice is slowly changing, the majority of Muslim youth still remain at home until marriage.

high school it was quiet they weren't there= (turn70)... It's [school x] I stay directly opposite it was quiet I'm sure the boys already left for mosque... (Turn 72).

Ayesha states that the event of street harassment that she is subjected to occurs on a 'Friday afternoon' roughly 'close to one-o'-clock'. This period in terms of day of the week as well as time in Greenhaven is rendered significant through the fact that it is quiet in nature, 'it's quiet', 'the roads are quiet'... the streets are very quiet the shops are close' (turn 64, 70 and 72). This quietude nature of the space is primarily owed to the fact that (mostly) Muslim men attend Jumuah<sup>23</sup>. The attending of Mosque by Moslem men is further supported by her articulation of residing in close proximity to the same Muslim religious affiliated boys school spoken about previously by Jennifer. She states, 'because I stay opposite a boys Muslim high school it was quiet they weren't there ... it's [school x] I stay directly opposite it was quiet I'm sure the boys already left for mosque' (turn 70, 72). Hence, where most men go to mosque on a Friday, I infer that this particular space in Greenhaven is rendered quiet because an area most often inhabited by Muslim males, as brought about by the boys' school is empty as the boys already left for Mosque. What is significant about Ayesha's account is that she does not solely speak about the harassers in terms of their social actions pertaining to the harassment, but, however, she moves back and forth between speaking about them as well as about the physical, concrete space itself in terms of the built environment and other inanimate semiotics situated in space. She proceeds as follows:

### **7.3.3. Extract: 3**

Turn 72. Ayesha: and then uhm also Greenhaven where it's situated is in between Rylands which is like mainly Indian and next to it would be like Manenberg Primrose Park so that would be like sort of non-safe area suhm anyway so I came home from varsity and I was walking around the corner **very**

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<sup>23</sup>prayers each Friday from twelve thirty to two pm

close to the home it was here in Comet Road no not Comet Road what's this road Orion Road yes it was like very close to the house and then uhm I was walking home and around the corner there was this car with four guys and because uh uh the pavement is so close to the road or close to the corner it's very easily for you to actually be grabbed into a car there's really no space you know how short is that how narrow that space is and then uhm this guys uhm I'm sure they were on their way to Manenberg because you could see they weren't going to mosque or anything they were just driving around it was four men and then as I walked around the corner the one door opened the front door opened the passenger door opened and one of the guys said *oh girl come* or like *awe girl* or something of that effect and then when I saw the door open I ran I just ran up and went to the house as quick as I could with my bag and everything and then uhm there was another car behind that was approaching so of cause the guys now drove away because there was a car behind them but I feel like I was gonna be abducted that day so for me it's like like even though Greenhaven is perceived to be so safe a incident like that shouldn't really happen in Greenhaven

Turn 76. Ayesha: ... I blocked it out of my memory because I mean something so close to home its like you know just down the road

She begins her account by providing contextual information surrounding the event of 'street harassment, whereby she states that, 'uhm anyway so I came home from varsity and I was walking around the corner **very** close to the home it was here in Comet Road no not Comet Road what's this road Orion Road yes it was like **very** close to the house and then uhm I was walking home'. The adverb 'very' places emphasis on and renders the event of street harassment significant by the means in which it occurs within the time-frame of her body, from a physical-point-of-view as being situated in close-proximity to her 'house'. However, the word house it used interchangeably with the word, 'home'. Hence, we get insight into the physical proximity between human body and an inanimate object. She then begins her recollection of a distressing event.

She states that ‘around the corner there was this car with four guys’, the mentioning of a ‘car’ and ‘four guys’ show how the inanimate semiotic object in space, that being the car as well as the four guys situated therein is implicated within this particular event. However, she quickly moves to speaking about the built environment itself. She describes the infrastructure in terms of the road as being in close proximity to the pavement (sidewalk) or the corner in which her body was situated. The descriptions of the ‘narrow[ness]’ or lack of space between the road and pavement is seen as being conducive for the likelihood of herself being grabbed into the car. Hence, physical space is also drawn on in the account to show how it is also implicated in the event, in particular the anticipation of being ‘grabbed into a car’.

Importantly, in more established previously white areas, the proximity between pavements and roads are quite large, sometimes stretching three metres or more. Therefore, in a very real sense, the manner in which the neighbourhood is planned is a direct proportion to the type of people that the apartheid government envisioned would live there. Undoubtedly, the further the pavement is from the road, the safer the individual is. Ayesha moves back to a description of who the harassers are. She describes them as being ‘guys’, but later as ‘four men’. She also states ‘I’m sure they were on their way to Manenberg’, the adjective, ‘sure’, indicating her certainty, whereby this very certainty comes about as a result of ‘seeing they were not going to mosque... they were just driving around’. This is an important point which I will return to soon. Additionally, her reference to Manenberg, a township on the Cape Flats is discussed in further detail as well.

After giving her descriptions of the harassers in terms of their perceived ‘place of origin’ and identity, she moves back to the event. Ayesha starts reliving the event of street harassment through her articulation thereof. Here, her visual descriptions are given in an almost chronological account. She states ‘the one door opened the front door opened the passenger door opened...’. Insight is given into the phenomenological feelings of fear which

accompanies her visual recollection of the car doors as they opened ominously one by one. In this sense, the infrastructure as well as semiotics in space is perceived as being implicated in the event of street harassment as there are subjective meanings associated with the way inanimate objects look and function with regards to where they are and how the body is situated in proximity with it.

She further states that one of the guys said, 'oh come girl' or like 'awe girl'. Here, intertextuality plays a role, firstly, when she articulates what the 'one guy' said, she stylizes a South African 'coloured' accent with the words, 'oh come girl' and 'awe girl'. Also, the usage associated with the word, 'awe (ah-weh) is versatile in nature. However, it is generally used as a greeting. Significantly, this is a language variety most often used among a different practice of community, specifically gang members. Through intertextuality, then, she portrays the harasser(s) as being of a particular class because of the linguistic variety used. In this sense, the identity (coloured gangster type from Manenberg) and the language (Kaaps, gangster style) are foregrounded as evidence of her potential harm (cf Peck and Williams, 2018).

On seeing the door open she describes her fear 'I ran I just ran up and went to the house as quick as I could with my bag and everything'. Her embodiment of rapid body movements through her bodily practice in space is described through the words, 'as fast as I could' which gives insight into her fear. She is running away from danger (car, men) and toward safety (house) all under the fearful anticipation of possibility being abducted.

As opposed to public space as being the mere backdrop or context in which street harassment unfolds as is theorized in the sociolinguistics field, space is recounted as being implicated in the event of street harassment. With regards to the particular day and time, it being a Friday, nearing one-o'clock, the absence of the boys at the school renders the space quiet and

conducive for the entering of other bodies (potential harassers). Additionally, the built environment and other inanimate objects situated in space, such as the car doors, forms part of and is recounted as part and parcel of the harassment. Hence, the built environment and the mobile objects become invested with new meanings. For Ayesha, the close proximity between the pavement and road means that there is likelihood for her to be hauled into the car. The visibility of four male bodies in the car further compounded this thought. The opening of the car doors signifies the anticipation of the future possibility of abduction which called for action, specifically a move toward the space of safety, that being her home. The meanings which are invested into the concrete environment and the semiotics thereof are subjective and are influenced by the relationship between Ayesha, public space and her perceptions of Manenberg.

#### **7.3.4. Extract: 4**

Turn 80. Ayesha: Strangely enough it's not even the way I was dressed because I was wearing uhm jeans and I had on like a tunic a long top that was covering and because it was Friday and I'm Muslim I had a head-scarf on in respect of the time of the day that it was so I wasn't even dressed like trying to attract any guys or looking like I'm trying to appeal to any of them so I dunno what could have caused it I think it was just men's behaviour in general

When making an inquiry into finding out what Ayesha thought caused that particular form of harassment, she says, 'strangely enough it's not even the way I was dressed...' (turn 80). The words, 'strangely enough' allude to something that is surprising, but nevertheless true. I argue that this particular linguistic cue may come about as a result of Ayesha's preconceived notion that a women's dress code may serve to evoke harassing behaviour. She illustrates this point by making reference to her own body and the way it was stylized on that particular day,

stating that she wore 'jeans', and 'a tunic a long top that was covering'. The word 'covering' refers to covering parts of the body that is most often sexualized, in this case, buttocks. She further gives insight into her identity as being Muslim stating that she 'had a headscarf on in respect of the time of the day', thereby covering her hair. Ayesha therefore defends herself confidently stating that because of the way she is dressed at this particular time, she was not dressed in a manner in which she was, as she puts it, 'looking like I'm trying to attract any guys' (turn 80 ) and 'looking like I'm trying to appeal to any of them' (turn 80). Perhaps this perspective is partially drawn on because of her identity as Muslim and most often having to dress in a certain way. By referring to what she is wearing, she is enacting an identity of someone not complicit in what had happened due to the way her body is stylized. Furthermore, it appears as if she believes that this particular self-stylization communicates a particular message, specifically that of not wanting to attract or appeal to any guys. Moreover, this message which she believes is expressed through the semiotics of the body is read accordingly by the harassers in place, whereby she does not see her clothing as in anyway implicated in the event of street harassment. However, she owes the harassing event to have circulated on the basis of 'men's behaviour in general', thus potentially implicating that men from Manenberg would be inclined to exhibit these particular forms of behaviour.

The linguistic cues expressed by Ayesha is indicative of two beliefs, firstly, that particular semiotics of the body, in this case, a particular dress code may be rationalized as the cause for harassing behaviour by means of 'appealing to' or 'attracting guys'. This belief is congruent with Islamic dress code which advises that women should dress modestly. However, it is pertinent to point out that there have been a lot of studies which have proven that street harassment and other gender-based violence is the result of power and not attraction (cf. Tuerkheimer 1997). Secondly, she also believes that these types of behaviours are typical of all men, thus reflecting a common trait amongst men in general.



When Ayesha begins to speak about Greenhaven, she does not, from the outset, map the space in terms of its spatial proximity to other spaces in the surrounding areas. However, she solely speaks about Greenhaven in terms of it being a ‘safe, close-knit community’ on the basis that it is not a township or a ghetto. Significantly, however, when she begins to embark on speaking about her personal account of experience with regards to street harassment, she firstly gives insight into Greenhaven’s spatial proximity with Rylands, Primrose Park and Manenberg which she describes as being ‘your sort-of non-safe areas’(turn 72). The reason as to why Ayesha decides to speak about where Greenhaven is situated in terms of its spatial proximity to other areas in the surrounding space is done to later justify her strong belief that the harassers who are implicated in the event of street harassment are in some or other way associated to Manenberg. This is clear in the statement, ‘...I’m sure they were on their way to Manenberg...’. It is not difficult to understand why, out of the three areas in which Greenhaven is described as being in close-proximity to, that she chooses to lay the claim that they were on their way to Manenberg. Notably, the neighbourhood of Manenberg is renowned in Cape Town for being dangerous and crime-ridden (Stroud and Jegels, 2015).

Surprising, however, she does not overtly state that her assumption is derived from the fact that Greenhaven is situated close to Manenberg as evidenced by her unsolicited spatial mapping, but rather their loitering during mosque time, ‘you could see they weren’t going to mosque or anything they were just driving around’. Since the men were not attending mosque, which speaks to the moral character, I am juxtaposed with a different kind of person, specifically one who is ‘just driving around’ which can be seen as loitering/ scouting around for trouble. Earlier descriptions of Greenhaven in terms of being safe and a close-knit community builds on the idea of Greenhaven as being a space of purity in which a particular social order with regard to space is maintained and achieved amongst its residents. However, the social disorder (feelings of being abducted) which disrupts the idea of Greenhaven as

being 'safe' comes about by the 'other' - people who do not form part of the space, people who are from Manenberg or perhaps even people who do not form part of a particular religious group i.e. non-Muslim.

Before Ayesha speaks about the event of her street harassment she states that she had 'blocked' [the event] out of [her] memory' (turn 76) as a means of not wanting to think about it. When considering why she sought to block this particular memory from her mind, I argue that this particular event of street harassment itself is rendered significant on the basis of it occurring, from a physical, concrete perspective, close-to her home and in her area of Greenhaven. It is this very same space which Ayesha earlier in the interview articulates as being safe and a close-knit community. However, the event of street harassment, specifically the possibility of being abducted in this very same space had disrupted the social order expected. Simultaneously, the event disrupts her sense of safety and she is no longer an inhabitant of a body which is always at ease and comfortable in space. Hence, figured worlds pertaining to space constructs some spaces as good and other spaces as bad, whereby judgements of Greenhaven are based on its relation to other spaces, but how the social order confidently used to construct Greenhaven is also simultaneously deconstructed to show that the possibility of crime is not restricted to some spaces only. The idea that space is not construed as fixed and static, but rather socially and discursively constructed (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2006) comes across strongly in her sentiments.

The account of personal experience by both Ayesha and Jennifer transcends an understanding of space as being fixed and static. Although both participants reside in Greenhaven and experience street harassment in almost the entirely same vicinity, their experiences, however, take different forms. For Jennifer, the presence of the boys at a Muslim Boys school situated in the area allows her to experience harassment based on the breaching of civil-inattention by them. However, in the case of Ayesha, it is the very absence of these same boys that allow

the entry of other bodies in space which give rise to a completely different form of street harassment - the possibility of an anticipated abduction. Hence, although Greenhaven is seen, from the outset, as one singular area and space, it is experienced differently by the residents. Additionally, where both participants speak about Greenhaven in terms of it maintaining a social order, a sense of pride and belonging emerge. Also, the very mobility of space deconstructs the idea of Greenhaven as being entirely safe and socially-ordered in nature, whereby this deconstruction is reflected through the ways in which Greenhaven is seen as a space of belonging, but also as a space of alienation.

#### **7.4. Summary of chapter**

This chapter gives insight into the agency that one participant, namely Thandi, has in combatting street harassing events. However, this comes primarily as a result of which spaces the participant finds herself in. Hence, being in genuinely public space, disallows her from countering the events in relation to more semi-public spaces in which she appears more agentic and empowered. This latter effect may be the result of some semblance of social order maintained in semi-public space such as a university space.

The final two accounts given by Jennifer and Ayesha allow me to uncover the way in which two different forms of street harassment can occur in a single space. This is brought about by the mobility of space, specifically how spaces change throughout the various times of the day in direct relation to each participant's perception of possible harm to their person. In this way, space is in no way static and interchangeable, whereby the movements of different bodies traversing in and through Greenhaven allow for very different forms of street harassing events to occur.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **DISCUSSION: TOWARD A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF STREET HARASSMENT**

#### **8.0. Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of the analysis in relation to the questions that this research seeks to answer. Although this study is able to successfully answer all the research questions, due to the complexity of the analysis, some questions are applicable to some accounts given, but not to others. Also, where some questions cannot be discussed in isolation, it is also necessary to refer to other questions because of the interconnectedness between them.

#### **8.1. Deconstructing the idea of street harassment**

This study adopts the term, street harassment. It agrees that the label has sustenance on the basis of the word “street” making reference to the public nature of the phenomenon, whereby “harassment” refers to the negative psychological impact it has on recipients. However, I wanted to know how participants define street harassment in the South African context. Notably, I find that participants did not readily identify with this label. For example, Ji-Yoo only knows what I wish to discuss once I draw on the common features which make up the event. Hence, this compliments Tuerkheimer’s (1997) assertion that women instinctively know what they are subject to in public spaces. However, they are not too certain what their experiences can be termed. Moreover, the fact that street harassment most often affects the disempowered gender (women), it does indeed, as West (1987) state, account for the harm lacking a name, a history and a linguistic reality.

I delved into this study with current academic knowledge pertaining to street harassment. Hence, that the events thereof affect women primarily because of their gender, whereby it is enacted by someone outside of the gendered group (males) and that the remarks are most often sexualized. Furthermore, the 'harms' resulting from street harassment are solely experienced by women, but are invisible to the wider male culture. However, I find that having participants define street harassment in the South African context, the particular dominant discourse associated with the event is continually deconstructed. This is significant, because it allows this study to be inclusive of what is considered an event of street harassment, whereby in the absence of doing so, some experiences may go unnoticed in the endeavour of trying to 'fit' personal experiences into a neatly, fixed idea of what the phenomenon entails.

The participants' accounts therefore reveal that in the South African context, intra-gendered forms of street harassment prevail. In this sense, the event is shifted from that which is solely gendered, thereby solidifying the genders (male and female) as two, binary opposites. Furthermore, I also find that participants are not solely harassed because of their gender as female, but because of gender and its intersection with other social categories of classification that becomes more salient and 'oppressed' in relation to gender. These points become clear through the unfolding of this chapter.

## **8.2. A woman and a multitude of other identities**

When considering the question, "how do participants position themselves within the event of street harassment?" I find that the participants either position themselves in ways that allow me to see why they have been subjected to harassment. However, this positioning also gives insight into which identities the participants hope would be visible in their street harassing

event and would therefore in their opinion prevent them from being harassed. As noted earlier, here I begin to see how gender is not a primary cause for harassing behaviour. Importantly, the way in which the participants position themselves in the event of street harassment is based on which bodies they come into contact with as well as in which spaces the harassing events unfold.

This brings us to the next question, namely: “How do the experiences of street harassment differ between participants as a result of gender and its intersection with other social categories of classification?” Hence, as opposed to a sole focus on gender, some participants are harassed because of their race (Taylor and Thandi), their perceived ethnicity (Ji-Yoo) and their religion (Jennifer). Also, in relation to these, the accounts given by the participants also show how the very tangible, physical aspects of their bodies become ‘sites’ of harassment. For example, the invisibility of the stylization of the body which index an occupational identity (Ayesha) and the invisibility of marital status which is indexed through a pregnant body and the symbolic semiotics attached to it (Jennifer) as well as the visibility of body parts which are sexualized (Zinzi, Taylor- her seven-year-old niece) and the visibility and subsequent mocking of the shape and size of the African female form (Thandi).

Importantly, what allows some identities to become more salient and ‘oppressed’ depends largely on where the body of the harassed is situated in the material world. However an in-depth discussion relating to the above intersection of identities and the differing experiences this inflicts upon women is held in relation to the question, namely “How are (public) spaces perceived as being conducive for the unfolding of street harassment, more specifically, how are discourses of place and/ or the semiotics specific to place drawn on and spoken about in the participants accounts and how does street harassment unfold across time and place?”

What is important to note in relation to the latter question is that in the sociolinguistic field, space is theorized as being conducive for street harassing events because of it being public and rather disorderly in relation to the more 'orderly' semi-public spaces. Also, public spaces are seen as males-realms, whereby the actions of males (in terms of their enactment of street harassment) are viewed as context specific. In this sense, public spaces are seen as largely static and interchangeable and all-in-all, fertile, conducive ground for the inevitability of street harassment. However, the accounts reveal that other categories of social classification in relation to gender become more salient, whereby this depends largely on where in the material world the female body is situated during the time of the street harassing event. Hence, public spaces are perceived as being conducive for street harassment, albeit in very different ways. Importantly, given the accounts that this chapter revisits, these perceptions are plausibly valid. Hence, this study shifts the idea of space as static in relation for a theorization which views it as alive, dynamic and mobile. In this sense, space plays an integral part of the events of street harassment and informs its unfolding in different ways.

### **8.3. Gender and race**

It is important to begin the analysis chapters with a focus on the accounts given by Taylor and Thandi. This does not mean that their street harassing events are more important in relation to the accounts given by the other participants. Instead, it allows me to pay attention to how street harassment unfolds in the South African (post-apartheid) context.

Taylor and Thandi's accounts reveal that women do not solely experience street harassment because of their gender. However, a focus on intersectionality shows how this phenomenon is informed by the gender of the participants and its intersection with their racial identity of white and black respectively.

It is no surprise that street harassment is informed by race, because it remains a pertinent issue in the local context due to the legacy of apartheid. The post-structuralist theorization of identities refutes essentialist notions which view it as fixed and inborn (Weber and Horn, 2010) and race is one such example of an identity marker pertaining to this. Posel highlights the “bioculturalist” (Gilroy, 2000 in Posel, 2010:1) understanding of race in the apartheid era. She states that race was determined on the basis of readings of sociocultural and bodily differences where “bodies became signifiers of status, power and worth in a hierarchy that privileged whiteness (as both a biological and social condition as its apex)” (2001: 64). In this sense, race was narrowly confined to particular bodily features, but it was also based broadly on every aspect of an individual’s life. This ranged from, to name a few, food choices, the company kept and even the size of genitals. Another aspect concerned the essentialist notion of race. In this sense, all race groups are seen as distinctly different from each other. This version of race is testament to what Thompson (2006) highlights. He states that when we speak of race as being independent of biology, but instead a social construction, we tend to view this in a positive sense. However, the very real social constructedness of race, that being its bioculturalist version is testament to its devastating effects.

Returning to Taylor and Thandi’s street harassing accounts, I find that the participants are harassed primarily because of their ‘race’, whereby the remarks made by the harassers represent “dominant [discourses]” (Lykke, 2010) which materialize in those particular communicative events and contexts. Hence, four decades post-apartheid, Taylor’s white body is associated with and is a constant reminder of the apartheid regime by young coloured boys. Surprisingly, the account given by Taylor is a recollection of a childhood memory occurring between her and these boys. Hence, the bodies of the harassed and the harassers are termed “born free” bodies in the South African context. Specifically, they are what Mattes defines as “the youth who enter the electorate with no working memory of apartheid” (2012: 133).



Taylor's experience is also a representation of the oppression of those classified as white. Most often, when thinking about apartheid we remember and view it as the oppression of black and coloured people, and rightly so. However, in a post-apartheid context, the subsequent redressing of the imbalances of the past may also do well when including the experiences of white participants. Taylor's account, for instance, deconstructs a view of white people as empowered and not affected by discourses pertaining to race. Clearly, in a post-apartheid context, her street harassing event show the way in which her body comes to be marginalized not just as a female, but because of her gender and its intersection with her race, that being a white female in a post-apartheid context.

In the case of Taylor, her racial identity as white becomes salient and visible primarily because her body is situated and resides in Bellville, currently a coloured-dominant area. It is important to note that Bellville was a historically whites-only space, however the abundance of coloured and black bodies have allowed this once-dominant discourse of space to have been forgotten. In a post-apartheid context, then, Taylor's white body comes to be excluded from the space at hand.

Thandi (and Buhle's) harassing events are also informed by their gender and its intersection with their race. Their race becomes salient and visible based primarily on who is involved in the communicative event, namely the harassed, Thandi and Buhle, two black women and the harassers, two white women as well as where the harassing event occurred, Big Bay. The fact that both harassers and harassed are women is a step forward in deconstructing the view of street harassment as fostering systems of gender as being viewed as two binary opposites (male and female). In this case, inequality does not solely occur within inter-gendered interactions, but is also found in intra-gendered ones. This compliments Butler's (1990) views pertaining to her critique of the Structuralist feminist theorization of the category of "women" who have assumed that a universal identity can be understood through it and that

their oppression has a commonality. The opposite is true, because the account shows how the white women hold more discursive power because of their racial identity, whereby Thandi (and Buhle) bodies' come to be marginalized because of theirs.

In the account given, the ways in which Thandi (and Buhle's) bodies matter become evident, whereby this mattering is largely based on negative discourses pertaining to the black female body. In Thandi's view, these dominant discourses construct the black female body as that of being sex workers (prostitution) and reliant on males for financial and mobile support. In this sense, their presence in the prestigious, once historically whites-only space of Big Bay is deemed as coming as a result of someone else, a sugar daddy or boyfriend. The situation is much the same in the Western context as hooks (1981) state that African American women are most often believed to be sex workers and promiscuous. Here, it is evident that black women are constructed as being able to only having relationships with men due to the 'perks' they can achieve from it. The elite markers such as black women being educated and financially independent are constructed as 'out of reach' for Thandi and Buhle. Hence, there is a significant layering on of racial bias, in which their presence in Big Bay is deemed largely as economically, morally and socially incorrect.

Notably, Thandi's account does not explicitly make evident that the space at hand is an integral part of this form of harassment. However, the clear "policing" (Steyn and foster 2008) and regulation of the body as brought about by the overt curiosity on the part of the white women with regard to why Thandi and Buhle are in the space as well as wanting to know when they will be returning home show that four decades post-apartheid, the once dominant discourse of Big Bay as being a whites-only space still seems to hold power in the minds of the white couple. This idea of not belonging (in the space) therefore results in continued segregative practices long after apartheid has ended. Hence, even though apartheid signage has been removed from the linguistic landscape, we see how these very apartheid

discourses, specifically the Group Areas Act of 1950 have become handed-down discourses which have materialized and are (re)produced through the bodies and their accompanying remarks by the white couple. Clearly, this is reminiscent of the ways in which black men, for example, were stopped by white police when they were working in whites-only spaces, whereby they had to provide a 'dompas' literally known as a 'dumb pass'. In a post-apartheid context, Thandi and Buhle are not asked to produce a dompas, but an explanation for their presence there, which is something that is not required of them to do. Notably, one can only imagine the humiliation felt on the part of the participants in having to be interrogated in a standard, English variety, which is a language other than their own and then, furthermore, having to make sense of and translate this language. Clearly, the ones doing the questioning and interrogating hold more discursive power.

Thandi (and Buhle), however, seek to reclaim discursive power, whereby they seek to produce a counter discourse of the black female body. Hence, I find that the participants do not simply accept these dominant or handed-down discourses, but are engaged in establishing "discursive sites of resistance" in which they "participate in the negotiation of meaning" (Lykke, 2010:34). Therefore, where the discourse pertaining to the category of black as intersected or relating with negative discourses and is used and viewed as natural in the minds of the white couple, Thandi (and Buhle), however, seek to rework these categories by showing that the identity of black can also be intersected with other markers related to being educated, able to be in prestigious spaces in terms of both residence and dining and as well as being able to own expensive, material things. This is done through answering back and even using a more standard variety, further aiming to show that black can also be a intersected with middle-class which is indexed through language. This compliments Lykke assertion that counter discourses of sociocultural categories also link certain categories together. Hence, the relation between these also becomes part and parcel in the process of resignification.

Regardless of the fact that Thandi and Buhle produce this counter discourse, it is, however, still seen as plausibly largely invisible in the eyes of the white couple, whereby for Thandi, street harassment is clearly a form of what she calls 'racism on fleek'. This linguistic marker indexes her youthfulness and also shows the ways in which she speaks about a serious issue in a humorous manner. However, at having her counter discourse dismissed, it is no surprise that she rolls the /r/ at the end of this particular account. In this sense, she enacts an identity of someone who is political conscious, whereby in the interview process she seeks to show that she is aware of her marginalization even though it is brought across rather subtly. This rolling of the /r/ is her way of reasserting and reclaiming power which shows that she is proud of her racial identity. However, this very pride and political consciousness is built upon a marginalized discourse which materializes in her and Buhle's encounter with the white women.

Taylor and Thandi's account comes to show the way in which street harassment is informed by their racial identities as black and white respectively and had become visible because of the spaces they find themselves in. Hence, in a post- apartheid context, the participants are still haunted by the legacies of the apartheid past, because even years after its abolishment, the participants still speak about themselves as well as are positioned through the lens of apartheid discourses (cf Bock and Stroud, 2018).

For the participants who shared more than one street harassing event, I find that their experiences are largely different. This is because, as previously mentioned, some identity markers are more salient and oppressed in some spaces in relation to others. For example, when Taylor is in Cape Town CBD, she is harassed by a homeless man (beggar). The harassment occurs whilst she is with her boyfriend whose racial group of coloured differs in relation to hers. Here I find that where many scholars state that women are not affected by

street harassment when they are accompanied by men (Tuerkheimer 1997) in this case, the opposite is true.

Taylor's boyfriend seeks to remedy and counter this through violence which complements the many arguments which view men as having more discursive power in public spaces and that men are more agentic and/ or violent and so forth (Halsey and Young, 2000). Taylor's inability to counter the event comes as a result of not feeling motivated to defend her race or gender. This show the means by which certain discourses related to the fostering of these systems have become so solidified overtime that the dismantling thereof is virtually impossible. Notably, this particular account resembles the mixed marriages act of 1949 which prohibited marriage or sexual relations between white people and those of other racial groups ([www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/prohibition-mixed-marriages-act-commences](http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/prohibition-mixed-marriages-act-commences)). Here, again it is evident that the apartheid laws are reproduced in the interaction.

Significantly, street harassment does not just incorporate race, but also ties in issues of class, whereby the actions of the beggar may be testament to his frustration at his position in life. This compliments Laniya's arguments which state that people (specifically beggars) choose to harass women who are wealthy and of middle-class stature (although this may be perceived) because of their class (Laniya 1994, in Thompson 1995). In this sense, they may be grasping at the only strand of power they have left (in public spaces) which is their manliness. However, the motivation for the harasser's virulent comments cannot be confirmed without further studies which incorporate more stakeholders, such as the harassers themselves.

#### **8.4. Gender and ethnicity: Female Transnational bodies and local place**

In the account given by Ji-yoo, she is harassed in the South African context not solely as a female, but because of her gender and its intersection with her perceived nationality of Chinese. Ji-yoo's account is an important one as it provides a particular understanding of how transnational female bodies move through local space and try to find a home therein, specifically a South Korean woman studying in the local context of Cape Town. However, through street harassing events, this endeavour is dismissed through her having her body, in terms of its very physicality, alienated from the space at hand, that being Cape Town CBD. One can only imagine the multitude of this alienation, whereby the non-sensical banter spewed on the part of the beggars does not only give rise to and make evident her perceived ethnicity, but the fact that the beggars step out of their expected 'role' in public which includes begging for money or food simply to mock her shows the saliency of her perceived ethnicity in space. This alienation is further reinforced by means of non-sensical banter. This is not meant to accommodate or actually communicate with her as in the case of a lingua-franca, but it operates at further excluding her and results in her alienation from the space at hand. Significantly, her account builds on a discourse reminiscent of the many xenophobic attacks which have taken place in South African. Hence, understanding Xenophobia from a gendered perspective would be interesting.

#### **8.5. Gender and occupational identity: The lawyer and her 'robed' body**

When revisiting the account by Ayesha, I find that she believes that civil inattention should be maintained on the basis of her occupational identity as lawyer which is reinforced through the stylization of the body when traversing the busy streets of Cape Town CBD engaged in her day-to-day duties. Notably, it is these very descriptions of the way her body is stylized

which is built upon dominant discourses which allow women to feel complicit in their harassing events on the basis of how they choose to stylize their bodies. This is testament to the false believe that women can avoid rape, for example, by modifying the way they dress.

For Ayesha, street harassment occurs because her occupational identity is not credited by the harassers (criminals) in the police vans and had therefore become less visible in relation to the more 'oppressive' identities which she exhibits. Notably, her occupational identity as lawyer as intersected with her gender as female, race as coloured and physicality of 'looking young' is seen as resources which is drawn upon to enact unsolicited behaviour on the part of harassers.

This study argues that this phenomenon is informed by the apartheid era. Non-white women were not granted the privilege of a tertiary education when applying for jobs as teachers or nurses. For obvious reason, allowing coloured and black people to study law was counter-intuitive when considering the apartheid government's objective of solidifying the wage gap and class status between the race groups. Moreover, the fact that Ayesha's harassers are criminals awaiting trial is appalling considering that she is a lawyer and that they should have been wary of the power that her occupation yields. This is not the case, however, as they appear nonchalant.

With regard to Ayesha's account concerning the way in which her occupational identity had gone invisible, I find that she does not hint at the public space of Cape Town CBD as being in any way conducive for its unfolding. However, the sociolinguistic theorization of space as public (and disorderly) holds validity in relation to her account. It will never be known why the criminals made remarks at Ayesha. However, one can infer that they capitalized on the public nature of the space which consists of less order in relation to more semi-public spaces. Indeed, an event like this would never occur between lawyer and criminals in the proceeding

of a court case. All in all, for Ayesha, it is the fact that the semiotics of her body, in this case its stylization that had gone invisible and is therefore believed to have resulted in the harassers drawing on her more oppressed identities (young, coloured, female) to enact harassment.

### **8.6. Religion, a pregnant belly, a symbolic ring and feeling like a whale**

In the case of Jennifer, like Ayesha, she also wants civil inattention to be maintained on the basis of how her body is stylized such as dressing discreetly, but additionally because of her body's physicality. This ranges from looking old, being fat and pregnant and the semiotics thereof, such as wearing a wedding and/ or engagement ring. The bodily description offered by Ayesha is also built upon discourses of women being complicit in harassing events as well as additional ones. Here, I see how her views regarding aesthetic beauty and fertility (slender, single, young) are seen as primary factors which result in street harassment or flirting. However, the 'inappropriate other' in terms of physicality, that being pregnant, overweight and married should be spared from it. However, for Jennifer, street harassment occurs and is enacted by the young boys because of her other identities which she believes are more visible, namely, her gender as female and its intersection with her religious affiliation as Christian which she states become self-evident because she is wearing something sleeveless.

Briefly, religious identity is defined as "an ascriptive attribute inherited by our parents and family, whereby, for most people, it remains as part of their heritage (Schilbrack, 2012). Like other identities, religion is also socially constructed. Hence, Jennifer believes that the boys should act 'accordingly' because of their faith as well as in accordance to the space within which the events take place, that being outside a Muslim Boys' school. However, the counter



discourse produced on behalf of the boys operates in stark contrast to the dominant discourse she has pertaining to their religion and comes to inform her street harassing event.

Jennifer's account, surprisingly, compliments the many arguments made in the feminist discipline that women are interchangeable and that regardless of how they look from a physical point of view as well as their marital status, they will still be subjected to civil-inattention based on what is considered their primary, oppressive identity marker- their gender.

When comparing the street harassing accounts of Ayesha and Taylor which occurred in the exact same space, that being Greenhaven, I find that they experience two very different forms of street harassment due to the way the space is organized at two different time periods. For Jennifer, the presence of the Muslim boys at their respective boys school allows for her particular form of street harassment to occur. However, with regard to Ayesha, on the other hand, the secluded nature of the space (the boys not being around) is what she believes allows for her street harassing event, as other bodies (harassers) are now able to enter the space at hand.

Furthermore, Ayesha draws on other tangible aspects such as the infrastructure namely the close proximity between the road and the pavement and the sometimes situated and/ or moving semiotic, that being the car. Hence, the opening of its doors is described as being a significant factor in her would-be abduction. Hence, as opposed to dominant discourses of place as being conducive for street harassment, the participant credits the situated semiotic artefacts and infrastructure as also playing a pertinent role in allowing for the conduciveness of unwanted advances.

## 8.7. Mocked and sexualized bodies

In the case of Zinzi and later accounts given by Thandi, it is evident that the very physicality and visibility of the body also becomes resources in allowing the female form to become 'sites' of harassment. The accounts are geared more toward the physicality of the body itself as allowing for the conduciveness of street harassment, whereby space is not overtly echoed as being an integral part of the events.

Thandi's account is reminiscent of the way in which the black female body has been oppressed. For example, both locally and globally, the black female body has been and still is considered as unusual and different on the basis of its large shape and size. Hence, even within Thandi's account, she describes her own body in terms of her breast and her friends' buttocks as large and resulting in harassment. Worryingly, this is reminiscent of the situation concerning Saartjie Baartman whose body was exhibited as a freak show because of the very size of her buttocks (Holmes, 2016). With regard to Thandi's account, her body's shape does not allow for sexualized remarks of sorts, but instead is seen as something which is humorous in nature. The fact that her body is deemed as humorous by white boys is a reminder of the relationship between white (men) and black women. This compliments Davis' (1988) view which argues that the harassment of African American women (in the American context) evokes a history of disrespect, degradation and inhumane sexual mistreatment to which black women have been subjected to in the slave era by white men.

Returning to Thandi, her account portrays her as being, in a sense, proud of her body. However, this pride is built upon the many strides taken by public figures (Kim Kardashian to name a few) who through pictures of their voluptuous bodies rebel against societal norms of beauty (skinny) which excludes the full figured, curvy women. However, I also argue that perhaps this pride may be taken as genuine regarding how males belonging to the black racial

group view the black female body. For example, McFadden (1992) notes that “size has always been a factor and numerous African novels applaud the contours and sensuality of a large, well-formed African female form” (McFadden 1992: 172, in Mashiri 2000).

### **8.8. Witnessing the horror**

Zinzi’s account of street harassment is somewhat different as she is not primarily positioned as the victim, but is instead someone who witnesses an event which took place in a taxi. Specifically, she overhears remarks made in the absence of a woman who left the taxi in which her legs and voice (possibly in terms of pinch, intonation and tone) is drawn on as a resource to sexualize her body. This causes Zinzi harrowing phenomenological distress which I discuss later.

Thandi, on the other hand, witnesses her friend whom she is accompanied by being harassed on a taxi, whereby not responding to the harassers so-called compliments result in would-be abuse. This compliments the views held that when women are harassed, they are caught between responding or not. The latter allows them to play into their expected role performance in the communicative event. The former, however, allows them to step out of the gendered duty, whereby putting themselves at risk for potential forms of heavier abuse. Both, of course, results in feelings of oppression or what Tuerkheimer terms “spirit murder” (Tuerkheimer 1997: 320).

The analysis shows how the female body (in terms of its physicality or its stylizing) as spoken about and understood by both the participants and harassers comes to inform the street harassing event and how bodies come to matter. This is in line with the sexual objectification of bodies (Thandi, Zinzi), but also how participants begin to self-objectify and

talk about their own bodies (Ayesha, Jennifer, Thandi, Zinzi). As I have earlier noted, central to sexual objectification is that bodies exist within social and cultural contexts, whereby they are also constructed through sociocultural practices and discourses. A salient characteristic of all forms of sexual objectification is that bodies are depicted as sexual objects. Hence, the experience of being treated as a mere collection of body parts which is valued for its use by males (Fredrickson and Robert, 1997: 8, in Fairchild and Rudman, 2008) is something that is considered as a uniquely gendered experience. However, as the analysis show, this experience differs because of the intersection of identities.

### **8.9. Educating the little girl**

Returning to Taylor, I find that she recounts an alarming event in which she witnesses her seven year old niece and her vulnerability to rape by a small (homeless) boy based on her good-looking appearance. Where we would expect children to learn about sexual violence in safe spaces such as school settings or in their home (these spaces are not always safe, but represent an ideal figured world and/or dominant discourse), Taylor's niece, however, learns about rape at the same time in which her own body is vulnerable to it. Here, Taylor cautions her niece to not leave home, thus also positing and complimenting the dominant discourse which construct home as a safe space (the female realm) and the outside, public space as dangerous ( the male realm) (Ahmed 2013). Hence, the seven-year old girl is not only being educated about the 'worth' of her body in outside spaces, but she is also learning that outside spaces are not spaces where women can interact freely.

The accounts which highlight the witnessing of street harassing events, allow me to see how the relationship between the witness and primary targets shape its outcome. Hence, the account given by Zinzi shows how feelings of trauma unfortunately transcend those directly

involved in it. In this sense, there is a 'knock-on-effect' of sorts which puts a spotlight on how pervasive street harassment (and its accompanying damage) is. All in all, a clear idea is created of the enormous amount of work that still needs to be invested into eradicating this form of power from all spheres of life.

In the case of Taylor, the family tie between her and her niece and the friendship tie between Thandi and Buhle contributes positively as they are able to act as sources of protection. Notably, this is the first time Taylor counters an event of street harassment in which it deconstructs the view of men as being a woman's source of protection in public spaces, that which is termed the "male protection racket" (Bowman, 1993: 41). This is also clearly evident in the case of Thandi whereby, at seeking protection from men, in this case, Nigerian men and police officers, this is not possible. Instead she and her friend are advised to leave the space at hand thereby complimenting the idea of space and its boundaries (male and female realms).

What is also significant is that different spaces allow for different agentive affordances. Hence, Thandi, for example, notes that in public spaces she does not counter events of street harassment for fear of being subjected to heavier abuse. However, in the more semi-public, civilized space (UWC), she feels more empowered to do so because of the moral order which is perceived as being socially constituted and which she believes she contributes to through taking action. For Jennifer, she is appalled not only because she is harassed by Muslim, High School boys, but because the school is religiously affiliated to Islam, with the harassing events occurring close to the school property. Hence, Jennifer believes that the space should inhabit a particular social order. However, this order is resisted. As Amin (2015) states with regard to public spaces, there is always a body-space performance at hand. Hence, some performances are afforded by space, whereas performances may also go against what the space affords.

What is important to note is that although space is implicated in the events of street harassment, it is, however, implicated in different ways. In this sense, it should be reiterated that the study transcends a view of space as static and interchangeably, but instead compliments what Jaworski and Thurlow (2006) argue as that which is discursively constructed which “shifts absolutist notions of space towards more communicative and discursive conceptualizations” (see Harvey, 1989, 2006; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey and Jess 1998, in Jaworski and Thurlow, 2006:6). In this sense, the way space is spoken about and experienced depends largely on the multitude of identities which individuals inhabit.

When considering “Which phenomenological feelings are attached to the events of street harassment and what causes these, more specifically: How bodily practices, the semiotics of the body and feelings experienced through the body expressed through language?” Earlier accounts given will be elaborated on as it finds expression here.

Firstly, returning to Taylor, she adopts the apartheid thought surrounding race. Where race was determined by bodily features, Taylor also seeks to undertake the bodily practice of (re)shaping the physicality of her body as a means of ‘fitting it’ and being accepted as something other than white in the now predominantly coloured space of Bellville. This is in line with the assertion that “the body is far from stable, shifting across time and space as speakers construct new investments in the semiotics of physicality” (Bucholtz and Hall, 2016: 182). This ‘mobile’ perspective of race through the bodily practice undertaken by Taylor show the way in which it is a social construction. However, this very social constructionist view proves to have detrimental effects, because the aspired identity that Taylor seeks to enact does not permeate her skinscape. She is identified as white with the accompanying negative discourses attached to it which causes deep feelings of shame which is experienced in her body and expressed though language in the interview event.

When paying attention to this feeling (shame) experienced by Taylor, Ahmed notes that “shame can be described as how the Self feels about the self, a self-feeling that is felt by and on the body” (2013: 103). She further states, shame is described as feelings of exposure – another sees what I have done that is bad and hence shameful – but it also involves an attempt to hide, a hiding that requires that the subject turn away from the other and toward itself (Ahmed, 2013: 103). It is argued that to be witnessed in one’s failure is to be ashamed: to have one’s shame witnessed is even more shaming. The bind of shame is that it is intensified by being seen by others as shame. In experiences of shame, the ‘bad feeling’ is attributed to oneself, rather than to an object or other. In shame, the subject’s movement back into itself is a simultaneous turning away from itself. Hence, in this sense, the body turns against itself. The idea of a body turning against itself is telling in Taylor’s account. Due to the shame she feels allows her to turn against herself to the extent that she seeks to entirely (re)shape her physicality through the bodily practice of changing her accent, her hairstyle and her dress code.

Returning to Ayesha’s account of her anticipated abduction in Greenhaven, she experiences a significant amount of fear in her body which is expressed through language. Rachman, defines fear as “an emotional reaction to a threat that is identifiable” (Rachman, 1998; 2-3, in Ahmed 2016). This ‘threat’ may come in the form of an object, person or even place. Fear’s relation to a threat is argued to have an important temporal dimension. In this sense, the unpleasant feelings of fear relates to the future, whereby it involves an anticipation of hurt and injury, as Ahmed states, “... the object that we fear is not simply before us, or in front of us, but impresses upon us in the present as an anticipated pain in the future” (2014: 65). The fear which is felt by Ayesha involves taking action as a means of moving away from the space at hand. I argue that Ayesha feels fear due to the many dominant discourses which construct secluded spaces as inherently dangerous for females to be in alone. Returning to the

way in which she had based her anticipated abduction on the concrete physical space (the proximity between pavement and car and the car doors opening) comes to show the ways in which spaces and the semiotics therein come to have different subjective meanings for people based on who they are (Stroud and Jegels 2013).

Returning to the account given by Zinzi in which she witnesses an event of street harassment which she is not directly implicated in, it is evident that this causes her great distress. Hence, Zinzi believes that because she is a female she would inevitably be subjected to similar remarks once she also leaves the taxi. This account allows for a documentation of the experiences of women who witness street harassing events in which they are not primarily subject to. This is in line with the rare study conducted in the social psychology discipline which terms this form of harassment “bystander sexual harassment”. Hence, women may experience emotions on the part of the targeted individual because of their in-group membership (female) which will subsequently allow them to feel a certain way (angry, scared) toward the out-group (men) (Chaudoir and Quinn, 2010).

Returning to the account given by Thandi in which she witnessed her friend being harassed, because she did not respond to the so-called compliments given by the harasser, I find that the fear her friend experiences causes her to urinate in public. This puts the spotlight on how this harassing event allows her body, from a physical point of view, to become infantilized as uncontrollable as urination is often ascribed to babies and toddlers. It is at this point that Thandi deconstructs the view of women as passive and non-assertive, whereby she takes steps in wanting to engage in violence (something viewed as typical of men).

Jennifer recounts an event of being harassed by an old man as something that disgusts her. The feeling of disgust felt by an individual is usually attributed unto another person or object, whereby, the proximity in relation to that which is seen as ‘disgusting’ allows the body, then,



to inhabit the feeling of disgust. Ahmed notes that disgust is dependent upon contact between bodies or bodies and objects. These feelings involve a relationship between touch and proximity, whereby this particular contact is felt as that which is an intensification of unpleasantness. Hence, as she states, it is not necessarily "...the body (or object) apart from the body that has the quality of being offensive, but the proximity of the body (or object) to the body that is felt as offensive" (2016: 85). As a result, when disgust *takes over* the body it also takes over the body (object) in relation to the disgusted body that had given rise to these feelings in the first place. It is therefore through the sensuous proximity that the object is felt to be offensive that it *sickens* and takes over the body. Here, we see how different emotions which are expressed on the part of the participant come as a result of who is doing the harassing. In other words, it depends largely on which bodies come into contact with each other.

### **8.10. Phenomenological aspects and language**

Paying attention to phenomenological feelings of emotions within the accounts given by the participants allows me to see how certain feelings are governed by broader structures of power. Hence, particular emotions arise primarily through where the body moves, how it is interperlated and by whom.

Significantly, I find that the participants who are most agentic in the recounting of their experiences of street harassment also display less emotive language. Contrastingly, those that feel that they were oppressed and immobile tend to use more emotive language. Hence, the only participant who does not use any emotive language is Thandi, whereby all the others do.

Next I consider the question, namely “what does the unfolding of street harassment as made evident through the personal accounts reveal about larger issues regarding identities, space, power, mobility and women in a post-apartheid context?”. It is clear that by documenting street harassment through the lens of linguistic landscapes and skinscapes, the significance of drawing on the body, space, emotion and all other intersecting facets of identity produces a multidimensional view of women as they traverse through streets of Cape Town. Clearly, space is socially and discursively constructed, but moreover it is approached and experienced differently depending on the very many intersections of women’s identities. Significantly, the legacy of apartheid allows this study to also view the event through the durability of apartheid’s effects, wherein the phenomenon of street harassment is one such event that reproduces the apartheid discourse.

### **8.11. Summary of chapter**

The accounts of the participants show how dominant discourses attached to street harassment are continually deconstructed when attending to their everyday, lived experiences. In this sense, street harassment is not solely a gendered experience, but is spoken about and understood differently on the basis of gender and its intersection with other categories of social classification such as race, class, religion, age and occupational identity. This is made evident by how participants position themselves within their respective harassing events. Furthermore, a phenomenological understanding of street harassment puts a spotlight on how street harassment gives rise to particular feelings felt through the body and expressed through language, but also, how the very physical body becomes a site of harassment. Importantly, it is also this very physicality that is drawn upon to counter or prevent street harassment through particular bodily practices.

Furthermore, where public space is viewed as a static backdrop in which the events of street harassment inevitably occur, this study also deconstructs this misconception. Hence, the various spaces discussed come to inform events thereof, albeit in different ways for the participants.

## **Chapter 9**

# **CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR STREET HARASSMENT**

### **9.0. Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss concluding remarks with regard to the study as well as future research recommendations for scholars wanting to undertake a study which documents street harassment in the South African context.

### **9.1. Concluding Remarks**

For centuries, street harassment has become so embedded in everyday public life that it has become invisible and virtually a normal way pertaining to how women move through and experience public space. However, the traumatic experiences that accompany the event of street harassment and the many painful endeavours women embark upon as a means of preventing themselves from falling victim to it, prove that the time was ripe ages ago to put the spotlight on an issue that had for so long been dismissed as not worthy of scholarly attention.

This study not only allows for a more inclusive approach to understanding street harassment in the South African context as well as what counts as an event thereof, but it also allows for inclusiveness regarding what is considered as forms of public policy concerns. When I speak about being inclusive about what counts as an issue of public policy concern, I am aware that most often the female body is seen as being vulnerable to domestic violence and rape and rightfully so. However, this discourse is built upon so as to show that street harassment is yet another way in which women are marginalized globally.

This study allows me to make a momentous stride. Hence, as opposed to viewing street harassment as a mere gendered interaction, (which of course it still is, because the locus of a woman's oppression will always be her gender) I have moved even further from this narrow understanding so as to show that gender and its intersection with other social categories of classification allows street harassment to be experienced in different ways. Hence, this is not solely a woman's issue, but taking into consideration the intra-gendered aspects as well as the intertwining of issues related to race, ethnicity, class and religion, it is evident how street harassment is indeed pervasive in the lives of its recipients which causes detrimental effects for society as a whole.

Furthermore, deconstructing the fixed, interchangeable notion of space allows this study to uncover how different public spaces come to inform street harassment albeit in different ways. Hence, the vision of a post-apartheid democratic South Africa is replaced with a view of South Africa as inhabiting spaces which are stained by the durable, long-lasting effects of apartheid which have become solidified ever so strongly even through events of street harassment. In this sense, then, this study does not solely see public and private spaces as divides between male and female realms, it sees it as divides which go beyond gender.

## **9.2. Future directions for research on street harassment**

If the above conclusion is what is drawn from the study at hand, then I believe that more work can be done. There are no hard and fast rules which can be put in place to eradicate street harassment, but by including this phenomenon in academic conversations, we can create more awareness on this issue. What, then, does this mean for the future study of street harassment specifically in the sociolinguistics and Linguistic Landscape field? I urge more scholars to pay attention to not only what street remarks mean in terms of their content and

structure, but to how they are experienced when it ‘pierces’ the bodies of females. This means being inclusive of phenomenological approaches, whereby providing women with platforms to recount street harassing events allows us to move forward from not solely scientizing a social phenomenon, but to also be in service to those who help us conduct research on these phenomena by paying attention to and crediting their feelings. Also, if public spaces and the displayed language therein are made up of human action, interaction and emotion, then the LL field should continue to move in directions which unveil the feelings in space. Furthermore, where the findings of this study shift the view of street harassment to one that includes intra-gendered forms thereof, then we need to begin to ask more questions surrounding this. Lastly, this study’s aim was in no way an attempt to ‘attack’ men or harassers (be they male or female). Hence, it would be significant to be even more inclusive of this phenomenon by including the accounts of those who take the position of harasser. In this way, we can further build upon the discourses which have already, thus far, provided answers as to why men (or women) harass. All in all, this study also encourages its undertaking thereof, not just in the sociolinguistic and LL field, but believes it should come to the fore across all disciplines. The time is now!







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## APPENDICES A

### Interview (open-ended) questions:

1. How would you define the term street harassment?
2. Have you ever been a victim of street harassment?
3. In which spaces have you been a victim?
4. Can you briefly tell me about the space?
5. What did your street harassing event entail? What was said by the perpetrator? What was your response?
6. How did you feel in those street harassing moments?
7. Why did you feel the way you felt?
8. Were there any witnesses and if so what did they do?
9. What do you think made the space conducive for the street harassing event?

## Appendices B

### Key Legend for transcripts:

(.) - Short pauses

(...) - pauses longer than 2 seconds

**Bold**- placing emphasis on certain words

**CAPS** -shouting/ rising intonation

**CAPS** - rising intonation and emphasis

== - Over-lapping speech/ i.e. latching

[Square brackets containing words] -English translation for non-English words

*(Italicized words in brackets)*- forms of non-verbal communication mentioned

### **Variety and font:**

Standard Afrikaans - Georgia

Kaaps -Calibri (body)

English -Times New Roman

Arabic -Bookman Old Style

Linguistic depictions of Asian people - Arial Narrow

white South African English (WSE) Accent - Arial Unicode MS



## Ayesha\*

Duration: 16:25

Turn 1. Interviewer: Okay so basically uhm my idea of street harassment or my definition of it will be different to yours okay uhm and obviously your definition of street harassment will be different to someone else's okay so my first question would then be in your opinion how would you explain this word street harassment?==

Turn 2. Ayesha : == Street harassment?==

Turn 3. Interviewer: hmmm==

Turn 4. Ayesha : In my own opinion?==

Turn 5. Interviewer: ==Hmmm in your own opinion (nods)==

Turn 6. Ayesha : ==Street harassment would be for me uuuhm can I give like a scenario?==

Turn 7. Interviewer: == Hmm Definitely==

Turn 8. Ayesha : ==Uhm if I'm walking somewhere and whether it's males or female passing comment or either the way I look or dress uhm either the way I look or what I'm wearing they can either say something negative or something positive but it's something where I didn't ask for them to speak to me they just feel that they can just speak to me and say something so that would be (.) like harassment

Turn 9. Interviewer: Harassment okay (...) uhm okay so now that you've actually defined in your opinion what is street harassment my question would then be have you ever been at the receiving end of street harassment?

Turn 10. Ayesha : Yes==

Turn 11. Interviewer:== okay==

Turn 12. Ayesha :== All the time==

Turn 13. Interviewer: Okay so before we get into that before we discuss that very interesting topic that we spoke about last week uhm I'd firstly like to know in which space you know in which area were you at the receiving end of street harassment?

Turn 14. Ayesha : Uhm most of the time it would be like now where I work in Town In Cape Town CBD uhm it will be on my way to court on my way somewhere to drop documents or whenever then I would like always get comments from someone==

Turn 14. Interviewer: ==Okay ==

Turn 16. Ayesha :== So that would be uhm it's most of the time it's not negative but it's things that I don't feel that is appropriate sometimes for people to say to me==

Turn 17. Interviewer: Before we actually get into that discussion (.) uhm can you please take some time to talk about what type of space the CBD is (.) if you had to explain what the CBD is to somebody whose never been in Cape Town before how would you describe what goes on in that place (.) you know what type of space is Cape Town?

Turn 18. Ayesha : It's uhm city life (.) concrete build -up areas uhm because it's during the day it is uhm quite busy public area uhm it's not a certain area or like in a alley or things like that it's open there's many people walking around everyone's free doing their own thing uhm doing whatever they need that needs to be done whether they working or whether they tourists or whatever that==

Turn 19. Interviewer: == Okay so that's like the CBD Cape Town?==

Turn 20. Ayesha : == that's the CBD the working area of Cape Town==

Turn 21. Interviewer: and you obviously pass through that area when you go to work and your occupation would be you know a lawyer a advocate something like that?==

Turn 22. Ayesha : Yes==

Turn 23. Ayesha : Okay so now let's get into what happened (.) okay so what happened? What was that experience that you hold with you (.) that you would always remember (.) what happened? Uhm what was said?

Turn 24. Ayesha : Okay so when I go to court I have to dress in a certain way (.) so I would wear the cloak the black cloak what I would call robed (.) so if you robed you would wear

your black cloak (.) your bib uh you can either wear pants or skirt I would usually wear skirt most of the time you can't really see what you wearing underneath because of the cloak that's so long uhm everyone can see that you are going to court that you're dressed as a lawyer but then people would still pass comments and say things like oh you look like a flower today or if there's criminals being escorted to court they would be like you know screaming out of out of the vans like oh awe girl and uhm oh salaam girl and things like that I wouldn't obviously say anything back but they would like disrespect me by thinking that they can just speak to me in a certain way

Turn 25. Interviewer: So you mentioned that they would say Salaam girl==

Turn 26. Ayesha : ==*Salaam girl* Awe girl and not like like like good morning or anything that I would actually respond back to (.) but I feel like the way that they speak to me shouldn't be in that sense especially when I'm like dressed in a certain way in my **work** clothes going to court and I feel that if it was perhaps maybe a man walking down the street wearing the same because we all wear the same because both men and women both have to be robed they wouldn't be treating uh the guy the same way but they feel that they can like speak to me like that==

Turn 27. Interviewer: You mentioned something the last time of if it was a white ' woman wearing a cloak==

Turn 28 Ayesha :== Yes if it was a white ' women they they probably would not say anything but because I'm coloured and I'm female and I look young they feel they can just say something ==

Turn 29. Interviewer: And why wouldn't they say something to the white ' woman in your opinion?

Turn 30. Ayesha : ==Why would they?==

Turn 31 Interviewer: Why wouldn't they? Do you think

Turn 32. Ayesha : I just think that they more intimidated by a white ' by a white ' person and and uhm and ya they more intimidated by them it's just like the whole white ' class thing so they wouldn't just approach a white ' woman immediately the way they would approach me I wouldn't be asking for the attention but they would see me and they would say certain things like that or even if I'm not robed and I'm going to the magistrate court because it's not

necessary to wear robes then I would be in the court and they would say the exact same things even though they can see I'm dressed there for a purpose not wearing casual wear so you can't just come to me and ask me for my number and such because that is not the purpose why I'm there but they would still come to me and ask me certain things like that

Turn 33. Interviewer: Okay so you kind of gave me a bit of detail as to why you think what caused you know that particular street harassment but can you just briefly again tell me what do you think what caused it?

Turn 34. Ayesha : like what caused?==

Turn 35. Interviewer: What caused them or what caused you to be a victim of street harassment on that particular day what caused it?

Turn 36. Ayesha : Well because I'm female==

Turn 37. Interviewer: Female==

Turn 38. Ayesha : Because I'm female because I'm coloured and because I look young so I'm more approachable

Turn 39. Interviewer: Was there anything in the physical space that you think caused it something in the physical space that told them it's okay for me to do this

Turn 40. Ayesha : Like the area the space?

Turn 41. Interviewer: Ya like the physical space==

Turn 42. Ayesha :== Maybe because it's sort of like male- dominated (.) so you wouldn't find like a lot of women going to court it would mostly be the men

Turn 43. Interviewer: Okay so you feel it's because it's a male-dominated space you also said that you never said anything back to them was there any other people aware of what was happening==

Turn 44. Ayesha : Yes==

Turn 45. Interviewer: ==So what was their reaction to it?

Turn 46. Ayesha : ==NOTHING they would not say anything ok this is now in the magistrate court but like in in the streets that I walk in or go to the high court there would be like other

people walking around but they wouldn't say anything they would not like even they would pretend that they would not even hear this being said to me

Turn 47. Interviewer: okay and your reaction was obviously you ignoring it==

Turn 48. Ayesha : I'm ignoring it==

Turn 49. Interviewer: == That's your reaction to it okay have you always been if you think back to your you know you've been working at the high court now for how long?

Turn 50. Ayesha : for 4 years

Turn 51. Interviewer: for 4 years if you think back 4 years back maybe or 3 years back or 2 years back have you always been at the receiving end of street harassment in Cape Town?

Turn 52. Ayesha : Yes==

Turn 53. Interviewer:== Yes okay==

Turn 54. Ayesha :== because I would never make comments to people and I would never just approach==

Turn 55. Interviewer: == So this is an on-going thing?==

Turn 56. Ayesha : == It's an on-going thing==

Turn 57. Interviewer: == So which times of the day does this happen because I mean if you work in Town you up and down in Town whole day to get lunch or whatever==

Turn 58. Ayesha : In the mornings early mornings because court starts at 10' o'clock so I'm usually like going to court like quarter to ten (.) 10 to 10 round about that times and if I have to do other things in Town like deliver documents or go fetch documents or so forth or just go to court for whatever reason then it would be like during the day==

Turn 59. Interviewer: So it's just during the say that this happens?==

Turn 60. Ayesha :== During the day==

Turn 61. Interviewer: uh ya (.) so you mentioned that it would happen during the day uhm at certain at that particular time which is in the morning and that you've always been a victim of street harassment

Turn 62. Ayesha : I've always been a victim==

Turn 63. Interviewer: Is there any other spaces that you can say okay well I've been a victim of street harassment?

Turn 64. Ayesha : There was this one incident after our talk I did think about it here in Greenhaven I was coming home from varsity one day I blocked it out because I didn't want to think about it I brought back the memories it was on a Friday afternoon and you know in Greenhaven on a Friday afternoon it's quiet the roads are quiet because it is like mosque==

Turn 65. Interviewer: Okay before we talk about that can you explain Greenhaven? What type of space is Greenhaven

Turn 66. Ayesha : Greenhaven is a residential area it's a community it is perceived as quite safe in my opinion I think it is a safe area it's not a township uhm so there's no flats and and any what type of word can I use it's not like *ghetto* it's not or stuff like that it's a community it's a close-knit community there would be lots of Muslims, Christians, Indians all staying next to each other uhm uh mainly coloured- dominated area uhm there's schools there's shops uhm ya but it's a safe area it's a generally safe area

Turn 67. Interviewer: And it's a area you grew up here and you still stay here?-

Turn 68. Ayesha:== Yes I wouldn't move until I die (laughs) or I get married (laughs)

Turn 69. Ayesha : Or you get married (laughs) what happened?

Turn 70. Interviewer: Okay on this day it was on a Friday afternoon and because it was about close to one o' clock it was time for the Moslem men to go to mosque so the streets was very quiet the shops are close uhm because I stay opposite a boys school a Muslim boys high school it was quiet they weren't there==

Turn 71. Interviewer: What's the name of the high school?

Turn 72. Ayesha : It's [school X] I stay directly opposite it was quiet I'm sure the boys already left for mosque and then uhm also Greenhaven where it's situated is in between Rylands which is like mainly Indian and next to it would be like Manenberg Primrose Park so that would be like sort of non-safe areas uhm anyway so I came home from varsity and I was walking around the corner **very** close to the home it was here in Comet Road no not Comet Road what's this road Orion Road yes it was like very close to the house and then uhm I was

walking home and around the corner there was this car with four guys and because uh uh the pavement is so close to the road or close to the corner it's very easily for you to actually be grabbed into a car there's really no space you know how short is the that how narrow that space is and then uhm this guys uhm I'm sure they were on their way to Manenberg because you could see they weren't going to mosque or anything they were just driving around it was four men and then as I walked around the corner the one door opened the front door opened the passenger door opened and one of the guys said oh girl come or like awe girl or something of that effect and then when I saw the door open I ran I just ran up and went to the house as quick as I could with my bag and everything and then uhm there was another car behind that was approaching so of cause the guys now drove away because there was a car behind them but I feel like I was gonna be abducted that day so for me it's like like even though Greenhaven is perceived to be so safe a incident like that shouldn't really happen in Greenhaven

Turn 73. Interviewer: Wow I can only imagine==

Turn 74. Ayesha : It was like 2005 it was my first year on Varsity==

Turn 75. Interview: == Wow I can only imagine how traumatising it was==

Turn 76. Ayesha :== Yes I blocked it out of my memory because I mean something so close to home it's like you know just down the road ==

Turn 77. Interviewer:== Home is supposed to be a safe space and it happened to outside almost like directly outside your doorstep==

Turn 78. Ayesha:== Yes I felt like I was really going to be abducted==

Turn 79. Interviewer: Then I actually want to repeat my question then ... what do you think what caused that form of harassment just there==

Turn 80. Interviewer:: Strangely enough it's not even the way I was dressed because I was wearing uhm jeans and I had on like a tunic a long top that was covering and because it was Friday and I'm Muslim I had a head-scarf on in respect of the time of the day that it was so I wasn't even dressed like trying to attract any guys or looking like I'm trying to appeal to any of them so I dunno what could have caused it I think it was just men's behaviour in general

Turn 81. Interviewer: Wow and the physical space?==

Turn 82. Ayesha : The physical space it was I know it was quiet there wasn't anybody around uhm the road was quiet only the only time that there was someone was when the the one car approached you know because it was a T-Junction so the car nearly took turn so they were waiting for me to jump in or try to pull me in so they couldn't really go anywhere they had to turn it was just around this corner here so of cause when this other car approached they just drove away so ya uhm the area the space it wasn't a field it was not

Turn 83. Interviewer: You know what's also interesting is that you said the pavement that's what caused it==

Turn 84. Ayesha : The pavement is so close to the street==

Turn 85. Interviewer: Wow and it's just here around the corner? ==

Turn 86. Ayesha : It's just here on the corner==

Turn 87. Interviewer: On the corner as you turn in?==

Turn 88. Ayesha : On the corner as you turn in into your house==

Turn 89. Ayesha : So the cars have to stop at the T-Junction and because they stopped at the T-Junction I came around the corner the car door was like almost on the pavement because they could like literally just pull me into the car

Turn 90. Interviewer: And this was only one event that happened? You can't think of anything else in Greenhaven?

Turn 91. Ayesha : Okay uhm because I never really use to walk around in Greenhaven I would just like go to school primary school high school and back so there wasn't really and go to the shops but there wasn't really anything in particular that I can remember except now for that one day and I think it's just because the whole area was quiet and saw an opportunity and saw one girl walking alone and they thought nobody would see and luckily there was another car that was approaching from behind them the guy the the car behind the guy the driver of that car didn't really see anything because they were so quick and I just ran I didn't even you know think about it when I saw the car door open and they said like Salaam girl awe girl or something about girl I just ran because I kind of figured what was going to happen==

Turn 92. Interviewer: Ya the car door opened and you immediately got that==



Turn 93. Ayesha : ==GOT THAT FRIGHT and then my uhm my first reaction was just run

Turn 94. Interviewer: okay Uhm I think that's really interesting and ya that's ==

Turn 95. Ayesha : I blocked it for so many years==

Turn 96. Interviewer:== You blocked it for so many years==

Turn 97. Ayesha : Yes I mean that was in 2005 my first year at varsity and because I don't really walk in the area I got a lift from my uncle who passes UWC every day and he stays in Comet Road wo because he had to go to mosque he couldn't drop me at the front of the house so he dropped me off at his house which is in Comet Road and I walked into Greenhaven from Surrey Estate a short distance and something like that could happen

Turn 98. Interviewer: Wow that's that's interesting and I'm so glad you could share that with me because as I said there is a sense of shame in speaking about it we don't want to speak about it ==

Turn 99. Ayesha : Ya especially you just kinda block it from your memory and you do you do kinda you don't wanna think about it but you also learn from just watch your surroundings even though it doesn't matter which area you in it doesn't necessarily mean that you have to be in a bad area for something like that to happen it can happen anywhere so you just have to be uhm more cautious and to take note of about your surroundings

Turn 100. Interviewer: I like that you said it can happen in any area because we think that it can only happen in certain spaces there's a certain perception about certain spaces and when it happens to us in a space that we think is safe we so shocked when it happens

### **Jennifer\***

Duration: 10:58

Turn 1. Interviewer: okay so basically everyone definition of the word street harassment is different okay so what is your understanding of the word street harassment

Turn 2. Jennifer: I think street harassment will be when somebody defies you as a human being like maybe while you walking in the road this people this people or person is just sort of belittling you

Turn 3. Interviewer: hm

Turn 4. Jennifer: and they invading your space and it makes you feel very uncomfortable

Turn 5. Interviewer: and have you ever been a victim of street harassment?

Turn 6. Jennifer: I have been a victim but I don't think it was that extreme

Turn 7. Interviewer: Okay before we talk about your experience of being a victim and what happened can you briefly state uhm in what space in which area were you a victim of street harassment?

Turn 8. Jennifer: There is a couple of spaces but I will stick with the space where we in now in the area of Greenhaven

Turn 9. Interviewer: Okay and before we speak about what happened can you briefly explain if you had to tell someone who wasn't in Greenhaven what Greenhaven is about how would you what is Greenhaven all about tell us a bit about the space if you had to explain what Greenhaven is to someone whose never been here what would you tell me about the space what type of space is Greenhaven?

Turn 10. Jennifer: Well for me Greenhaven is a very I would say it's a good it's a very friendly suburb it's not like other suburbs or areas on the Cape Flats it's much more I won't say it's upper-class but (.) it's much more modernized than other areas it's not so much flats they actually come and pick up the dirt every single week it's quite fairly clean==

Turn 11. Interviewer: == and you've been living here==

Turn 12. Jennifer: and people does know each other==

Turn 13. Interviewer: and you've been living in Greenhaven now for how long?

Turn 14. Jennifer: (Laughs) OH MY GOSH I probably lived here for like thirty not thirty years less than thirty years twenty-five years

Turn 15. Interviewer: okay and uhm so how would you say how would you how do you feel towards Greenhaven

Turn 16. Jennifer: (Laughs) For me Greenhaven's home I would like to have my own house here besides my parent's house of cause my own house not in this part of Greenhaven I mean the front part that's like more the upper-class

Turn 17. Interviewer: Okay

Turn 18. Jennifer: where there's green that's the whole green part of Greenhaven with all the trees

Turn 19. Interviewer: Okay so now that you've spoken about what type of space Greenhaven is uhm can you briefly tell me uhm about this experience of street harassment that you had this memorable experience that has stuck with you till now what exactly happened on that particular day first of all what day was this and what time did it happen

Turn 20. Jennifer: It was on a week day and it was early morning on my way to work

Turn 21. Interviewer: Okay and what happened?

Turn 22. Jennifer : there was also instances before this but at this occasion I was just like maybe a few months married or I think I was engaged or married and there was another instance after that when I was pregnant so as you know this [School X] [School X] school

Turn 23. Interviewer: hmm (nods)

Turn 24. Jennifer: so what happened==

Turn 25. Interviewer: Can you tell me abit about [School X] the school

Turn 26. Jennifer: Okay it's a Muslim Muslim boy's school which is supposed to be a very private school uhm and how can I say I'm not sure about the English word but they supposed to be saalig but as a woman I felt very degraded for YOUNG boys cat-calling me that time I wasn't so fat (laughs) I was much more thinner and I'm not even dressed as you can see I'm not a person that dress (.) sexually or whatever sleeve-less stuff I mean it was Winter or whatever time but I was dressed discreetly and they were degrading me I HAD A RING ON MY FINGER and I was so embarrassed because I'm such a old woman that time I was in my twenties and here's YOUNG kids flirting with me and going on and [Person X] was actually a witness to this and he shouted at them once

Turn 27. Interviewer: Okay so you saying there was okay so first of all I'm glad you mentioned that there was a witness because my next question was gonna be was there anybody who witnessed it but before we get to that uhhm you mentioned that obviously these boys were cat-calling you and what did they say when they cat-called you?

Turn 28. Jennifer: They were whistling and going on and sometimes I use to get so angry especially when I'm on my period then I will actually swear at them and I'm hoping where's their principle or their teacher walking around

Turn 29. Interviewer: Okay==

Turn 30. Jennifer: I mean a person is a grown woman to be annoyed like that and to be degraded like that

Turn 31. Interviewer: Okay so moving on from that you mentioned that there was a witness and first of all you mentioned that your reaction to it there are certain times when you said that you had that you had your period and you would swear at them so there are certain times when you would actually respond to them

Turn 32. Jennifer : I never felt flattered at all because even once a BOY I mean this boy is probably grade eight and he wants to come up to me

Turn 33. Interviewer: uh okay

Turn 34. Jennifer : It was it was really disgusting I never felt flatted at all

Turn 35. Interviewer: Because of the age of this people and==

Turn 36. Jennifer : == because of the age and I'm a woman I looked a bit young that time but I mean come on now

Turn 37. Interviewer: Okay my second question my next question would be uhm you mentioned that obviously there was a witness what did this witness who was this witness?

Turn 38. Jennifer: This witness was [Person X] ==

Turn 39. Interviewer: == okay==

Turn 40. Jennifer: == at that time this is now a bit wards but I was also walking past them in the morning and [Person X] was coming over the field... but I saw the harassment also I

dunno if they were asking shouting at [Person X] for money or whatever but they were first harassing me and then they were harassing [Person X] also a grown man at that time he was probably twenty-one

Turn 41. Interviewer: and what was his reaction to it?

Turn 42. Jennifer: He was also (laughs) he was also he also swore at them from across the field there and then we went to meet each other along the way but I can't even remember what year was that

Turn 43. Interviewer: okay so basically you say that you you you got harassed by these boys at [School X]==

Turn 44. Jennifer: Cat-calling==

Turn 45. Interviewer: == Cat-calling==

Turn 46. Jennifer: == that's what everyone calls it==

Turn 47. Interviewer: ==Have you experienced any type of harassment earlier on or later on in Greenhaven

Turn 48. Jennifer: by that same people that same children in other words or teenagers the same harassment at this time... I'm already showing in my pregnancy maybe six or seven months and I mean I feel like a whale and I look like a whale and they still doing the same thing... with the ring on the finger and obviously pregnancy hormones is much more higher than==

Turn 49. Interviewer: == and the fact that you were pregnant they could see that you were pregnant and they still cat-called you==

Turn 50. Jennifer: ==and they still cat-called==

Turn 51. Interviewer: So it's an on-going thing it always happens with [School X] boys==

Turn 52. Jennifer: == whenever there's a girl or woman or whatever walking past the only time they shut their mouths is when my husband was with and the grown woman that I was the grown woman that I am even when I walk past there I still get fears please do not cat call me while I'm walking with my child or with my husband

Turn 53. Interviewer: oh okay so earlier on earlier on uhm youu mentioned now that you were obviously by [School X] the children at [School X] was there any instances before that that you got cat-called so basically my question what I'm trying to establish is... what has is this always been happening in Greenhaven or is it now happening is it only something that's been happening recently or at the time that it happened or was it always been an on-going thing for you growing up in Greenhaven

Turn 54. Jennifer: When I was a teenager (laughs) they also did it I went to Garlandale but that was many many years ago but I notice even generations come and generation go of these [School X] they supposed to be so holy but how can they treat a woman like that and their teachers are never around because once I also had I told my mother about this that I'm gonna go report them

Turn 55. Interviewer: hmmm okay so you mentioned that so basically it is an on-going thing because it happened in your teenage years then it happened when you were a married woman and then it happened when you were pregnant and it always happened you say with [School X] boys==

Turn 56. Jennifer :== yes==

Turn 57. Interviewer: was there any other instances in Greenhaven where it happened by maybe someone other than a [School X] boy

Turn 59. Jennifer: (laughs) there was something... it was so really disgusting it was a old man

Turn 60. Interviewer: uh and what did this old man say ==

Turn 61. Jennifer : when old people greet yes I greet but if old men flirts with you ooh girl jy lyk lekker [ooh girl you look good] it makes me feel disgusting and then they still turning around

Turn 62. Interviewer: and where did this happen of girl jy lyk lekker [girl you look good]

Turn 63. Jennifer : this was also on my way to that side (makes hand-gestures) I dunno what the name of the road is but it's somewhere where I'm walking also to work

Turn 64. Interviewer: okay so it's over there by the park I think==

Turn 65. Jennifer: == and it's a old man man much older than my father

Turn 66. Interviewer: ==okay... okay first okay then now my question would be what do you think what in the physical space cause the instances of harassment to occur what was it about the space itself that caused them to cat-call you or cause them to harass you

Turn 67. Jennifer: I think cause they all boys and now they seeing a female it's like they getting all excited there's a female there and plus they supposed to be all holy and they use to seeing woman covered up==

Turn 68. Interviewer: ==hmm==

Turn 69. Jennifer : == now if a Christian woman... she's just having a little open-sleeve or whatever they feel oh let me also show of by my friends I can get this girl and in the meantime it's not even a girl it's a twenty-four year old or whatever old woman

Turn 70. Interviewer: == and the thing is you mentioned that because they just boys all together and they Muslim boys that's one of the reasons but what else in the physical space you know the space itself what do you think what maybe caused them to use the space as... as.... Basically what made the space tell them indirectly oh it's okay for me to harass this woman

Turn 71. Jennifer: first because they saw the woman walking alone now they think oh this woman or this girl is vulnerable there's nobody to protect her let's intimidate her now she looks like she's in a rush or whatever now here's my chance

Turn 72. Interviewer: == and this obviously happened during the day time==

Turn 73. Jennifer: == it happened during the day time ==

Turn 74. Interviewer: uhhm how did you feel in those moments you said that you felt very degraded

Turn 75. Jennifer: I felt (laughs) I felt so humiliated degraded all the words are negative there's not even once where I felt flattery because it's still okay if a child would say or teenager or a little boy would complement you and say oh you look nice today but don't go on and on and be degrading because then you defeating the purpose of actually complimenting somebody

**Ji-Yoo\***

Duration: 06:33

Turn1. Interviewer: How would you define the word street harassment if you had to just define it in your own words how would you define it

Turn2. Ji-Yoo: Like Cape Town

Turn 3. Interviewer: uhm ya like what would you understand by the word street harassment cat-calling all those things

Turn 4. Interviewee: Cat-calling what is that

Turn 5. Ji-Yoo: like when a woman is walking down the road and a guy would like make comments to her like hey sexy hey beautiful you know and there's a term we used it's called street harassment so how would you define that term

Turn 6. Ji-Yoo: I dunno I really don't like that because uh when I was in Mitching I I wear the short uhm skirts and then uhm (...) and then (...) some of them like black men (*lowers voice*) they they they like looked from up and down and then after that I don't wear a skirt

Turn7. Interviewer: You don't wear a skirt anymore==

Turn 8. Ji-Yoo: ==no==

Turn 9. Interviewer: okay so what was what did these guys tell you

Turn 10. Ji-Yoo: Like hey sexy like those thing and I I really hate that

Turn 11. Interviewer: and were there any witnesses like who saw which saw that happening

Turn 12. Ji-Yoo: ya many times

Turn 13. Interviewer: and what did they do

Turn 14. Ji-Yoo: sometimes they following and sometimes they like whist whistling

Turn 15. Interviewer: okay and how do you feel when these things are happening to you

Turn 16. Ji-Yoo: Angry sometimes and very I don't know how to say but it's very not not nice



Turn 17. Interviewer: and have you had any experiences in how long have you been living in Cape Town now

Turn 18. Ji-Yoo: 6 years

Turn 19. Interviewer: and what has your experience been like I mean what is your nationality you're your ==

Turn 20. Ji-Yoo: South Korean

Turn 21. Interviewer: As a South Korean woman what has your experience been like in Cape Town [...] where you are obviously confronted by men on a daily basis

Turn 22. Ji-Yoo: I don't know it's quite similar

Turn 23. Interviewer: In what ways is it similar and in what spaces are these things happening to you

Turn 25. Ji-Yoo: In Town

Turn 26. Interviewer: In Town Town CBD

Turn 27. Ji-Yoo: Yes

Turn 29. Interviewer: and how do you feel as a South Korean woman when you are in Town

Turn 30. Ji-Yoo: (...)

Turn 30. Interviewer: It's fine you don't have to speak in a certain way just speak it's fine

Turn 31. Ji-Yoo: I don't know (*laughs*)

Turn 32. Interviewer: So when you walking in Town how do you feel

Turn 33. Ji-Yoo: hmmm you know I've been to (...) what is that called? When uhm when you doing the Visa thing?

Turn 34. Interviewer: hmm ya

Turn 35. Ji-Yoo: What is that called?

Turn 36. Interviewer: Is it visa applications

Turn 37. Ji-Yoo: Home affair

Turn 38. Interviewer: Home Affairs ya

Turn 39. Ji-Yoo: ya there's a lot of uhm beggars==

Turn 40. Interviewer: == hmm

Turn 41. Ji-Yoo: They they just following every time and then sometimes they run to me so I was very scary

Turn 42. Interviewer: and what did they say when they ran to you

Turn 43. Ji-Yoo: Just begging for the money and then sometimes they like I'm because I'm Asian so they they like they saying like ching chong chong or something

Turn 44. Interviewer: Oh my word

Turn 45. Ji-Yoo: ya but I'm not Chinese I'm Korean so it's totally different but I I understand because like many people knows like that many Asians are coming from China because they only know China I don't know maybe

Turn 46. Interviewer: So they'll make those like gestures because they think that you're Chinese

Turn 47. Ji-Yoo: ya

Turn 48. Interviewer: Oh okay and what other instances have you had of cat-calling in Town because I'm sure you've had so many as a woman I'm sure you've had so many experiences

Turn 49. Ji-Yoo: hmmm no I'm not like a I'm not a club person so I don't know

Turn 50. Interviewer: and have you ever witnessed something happening to another woman

Turn 51. Ji-Yoo: hmmm I don't know

Turn 52. Interviewer: You don't know okay so you've been living here you say you've been living here for six years now

Turn 53. Ji-Yoo: hmmm

Turn 54. Interviewer: and which other spaces do you uhm where do you live at this point in time

Turn 55. Ji-Yoo: In Kenridge

Turn 56. Interviewer: In Kenridge and how do you feel uhm in that space

Turn 57. Ji-Yoo: It's very safe

Turn 59. Interviewer: It's very safe and you don't find of==

Turn 60. Ji-Yoo: ==no===

Turn 61. Interviewer: ==so only in uhm Town==

Turn 62. Ji-Yoo: == In Town

Turn 63. Interviewer: so does this only happen with beggars

Turn 64. Ji-Yoo: ya and black black people sometimes (*lowers voice*)

Turn 65. Interviewer: and what does this black what does these black people tell you

Turn 66. Ji-Yoo: it's the same like they whistling even I'm driving if I If uhm the window is down they if I'm driving and passing from them passing by them then they just say something like

Turn 67. Interviewer: Can you remember what was said

Turn 68. Ji-Yoo: sometimes like ching chong chong or china or like hey or like kissing you know kissing sounds

Turn 69. Interviewer: and what do you think what is it about that space that made them say okay it's fine for me to to cat-call her

Turn 70. Ji-Yoo: what do you mean by that

Turn 71. Interviewer: Like what would uhm like what makes that space uhm suitable for them to do these things to you or what makes you a suitable candidate for them to cat-call you

Turn 72. Ji-Yoo: Like if there's no people and if they are with their friends

Turn 73. Interviewer: They'll do these things to you

Turn 74. Ji-Yoo: what time and which times of the day will these things be happening to you

Turn 75. Interviewer: During night like whole day

Turn 76. Interviewer: Whole day =

Turn 77. Ji-Yoo: ya even like in the morning when I'm driving to school sometimes they'll do that

Turn 78. Interviewer: So it's always whistling and always making reference to your nationality

Turn 79. Ji-Yoo: yes yes

Turn 80. Interviewer: and how do you feel in those moments

Turn 81. Ji-Yoo: Like at first I was like very angry and I wanted to like I want to say back like those things but now I just ignore it

### **Taylor\***

Duration: 09:56

Turn 1. Taylor: I would define street harassment as you being in a particular space and someone actually harassing you constantly where to the point you feel uncomfortable or you feel uhm not part of that space like you are not welcome

Turn 2. Interviewer: And have you ever you know ever experienced any forms of street harassment?

Turn 3. Taylor: Yes I have

Turn 4. Interviewer: So before we get into your experiences in what spaces are like are like prevalent for you

Turn 5. Taylor: In terms of harassment==

Turn 6. Interviewer: ==hmmm

Turn 7. Taylor: I'm quite an active person so when I do jog in the mornings or the evenings outside on the street I get harassed quite often==

Turn 8. Interviewer: Which streets are these==

Turn 9. Taylor: hmm Bellville where I reside in also when I am running in a other space that I'm not usually use to and I come across people that are there

Turn 10. Interviewer: and if you before we get into your experiences how do you feel when you move through Bellville

Turn 11. Taylor: well... it's quite... it's quite difficult to say because uhm if I'm not driving I don't feel anything when I'm driving but when I do walk or run in my area uhm there are certain phases that I go through like in my area I feel quite comfortable so there's like minimal of me feeling uhm like I'm going to be harassed but the further I go from where I where I stay uhm the chances of me feeling that uncomfortable uhm presence it increases

Turn 12. Interviewer: Okay so let's get let's get to what happened to you what events or what occurrences stand out for you and what happened

Turn 13. Taylor: Uhm well it dates back to when I was very young uhm growing up as a white ' person in a coloured area you sort of already feel uncomfortable because you don't look like everybody else and uhm you sort of have to try really hard to fit in so you end up changing your accent or you end up changing the way you dress or the way you speak to people and you sort of uhm you don't know what's acceptable and not at such a young age so you sort of just accept anybody's uhm reaction to you so they would always call me *white 'y white ' girl* or use derogatory terms pertaining to my skin colour uhm ya==

Turn 14. Interviewer: What type of derogatory terms I know that it's maybe embarrassing to say things but I mean ya==

Turn 15. Taylor: ==Boer was one of them that stuck for a really long time I remember when I started running in my area uhm I got called a white ' vark [pig] uhm by a group of young boys who was playing in the road and I also got called uhm what's that guy Hendrik Verwoerd's daughter==

Turn 16. Interviewer: ==Oh my word==

Turn 17. Taylor:== ya and uhm be careful because apartheid uhm because I will bring back apartheid that sort of notion ya uhm

Turn 18 Interviewer: So your street harassment it was more of it wasn't like you a woman and I'm gonna comment or cat-call you it was more like based on race

Turn 20. Taylor: Yes it was based on race but it depends also on the space when I'm in the Bellville area it's more of a race thing and when I was working in Town uhm Cape Town usually around Adderley street then it was more of me being a woman being a female woman walking alone uhm==

Turn 21. Interviewer: and what would be said in those spaces as opposed to Bellville

Turn 22. Taylor: What would==

Turn 23. Interviewer: What would be said by the harasser

Turn 24. Interviewer: oh==

Turn 25. Interviewer: The harasser sorry==

Turn 26. Taylor: ==you look sexy or and why why are you showing your legs and your legs look nice uhm ya it was very very much like me being a woman dressed in a certain way having my hair done a certain way uhm ya

Turn 27. Interviewer: And how did you feel like you mentioned Bellville was more of a race thing how did you feel in those moments

Turn 28. Taylor: Uncomfortable definitely I felt actually like I didn't want to be part of the race because I like knowing what white ' people did back in the day and knowing that I possibly will never do that uhm and then I'm also being labelled into this category it made me feel unwanted I did not belong to any group because I cannot be in this space uhm because I was not welcome in this space so ya

Turn 29. Interviewer: What do you think we know that in Bellville they used your skin colour as a resource to to say certain things to you what do you think what was it about that space itself also do you think it was because it was a coloured-dominated space==

Turn 30. Taylor: ==I think so yes==

Turn 31. Interviewer:== okay==

Turn 32. Taylor: I think it's mainly because uhm and it's not the type of coloureds that are well off so you get your hardworking middle-class people going to work working hard walking to work taking public transport and then you get this white ' girl that just thinks she can come in here and do the things that they do so it's sort of like uh it's a class barrier as well so uhm they not use to seeing even when I go to the Spar they not use to seeing such a white ' person in their Spar because there's mainly coloureds you know ya

Turn 33. Interviewer: and my last question would then be in what times of the day would this happen to you

Turn 34. Taylor: In the morning when I'm running uhm from what I can==

Turn 35. Interviewer:== Is this recently now as well

Turn 36. Taylor: Yes this is this is recently==

Turn 37. Interviewer: ==So this has been going on for a long time and nothing has changed

Turn 38. Taylor: nothing has cha I think the only thing that have changed that has changed is uhm if I should be harassed it would be the groups of men that are harassing me so what has changed was I was use to small children just like spitting words and whatever uhm but as the older I get and also the spaces that you go through I find like construction [workers] men==

Turn 39. Interviewer:== definitely==

Turn 40. Taylor:== they always harass me and uhm even the homeless they harass me as well uhm so I think the groups that inflict this harassment changed

Turn 41. Interviewer: Are there any witnesses when this happens to you

Turn 42. Taylor: yaaa there was a couple==

Turn 43. Interviewer: == and what do they do about it ==

Turn 44. Taylor: == well there there's nothing really that you can do because you don't wanna start a fight uhm but this one time this guy harassed me uhm I was in Town and I was walking with my boyfriend and my boyfriend just happens to be coloured and really dark-

skinned and uhm this old homeless man he said uhm... your boyfriend's just with you for your money==

Turn 45. Interviewer== Oh my word==

Turn 46. Taylor:== white ' people always have money and my boyfriend just turned around and he got so upset he wanted to hit him and I just said you know it's not worthit just leave it and walk on and as we were walking on I could still hear him you know like calling names and all that things so that's not very pleasant (intonation drops)

Turn 47. Interviewer: and you what do you say in those instances even prior to that what would your response be to those types of remarks whether white ' whatever hi sexy what is your remarks to those things

Turn 48. Interviewer: Well firstly uh firstly you know when you young I just when you young you so naïve and ignorant you you wanna stand up for yourself and defend yourself uhm throughout the years I learnt that it's pointless because nothing gets done and the more you defend yourself and you defend your gender and your race people are just gonna come back at you so I use to stand up and swear at them or just turn around and show that you know I'm not this weak person that they can just prey on uhm but now I uhm just actually ignore it I look the other way I have to walk the other way because even if I'm running in the area and somebody comments something about my physical being me being a female or me being sexy or good looking I actually feel threatened to the point that I'm going to I might get raped or they might do something because I'm weaker than them or they outnumber me so ya so jogging with my pepper spray or knife is==

Turn 49. Interviewer: wow==

Turn 50. Taylor:== ya==

Turn 51. Interviewer: == are there any other occurances you'd like to speak about

Turn 52. Taylor: hmmm uhm well it's not particularly to well I was with my niece and she's light of complexion just like me uhm just that her father is uhm coloured and she was uhm she's my sister's my sister's child and we were we were walking one day in her area and she stays close to Town and this small boy told her that she is so good looking that he will rape her==



Turn 53. Interviewer:== wow oh my word==

Turn 54. Taylor: == and she is 7 years old she didn't know what it means and she asked me and when I heard that I absolutely I stopped and I wanted to kill him (laughs) but I told him that does he even know what it means what that word means and he said yes he does because she's so good looking and she can't wait he can't wait until she's bigger

Turn 55. Interviewer: Oh my word

Turn 56. Taylor: Ya I I was taken aback and from that moment I told my niece to not go out of the house (laughs) because if there are people walking around like that then obviously it's going to be negative so ya

### **Thandi\***

Duration: 10:38

Turn 1. Interviewer: Okay now how would you define the word street harassment?

Turn 2. Thandi : street harassment uhm it depends (...) be more specific

Turn 3. Interviewer: okay so when you walking down the road as a female and somebody says something to you I mean the term has been used street harassment so how would you define it

Turn 4. Thandi : okay this is how I I feel about street harassment this is how I find it I find it as you now knowing who I am and feeling that you have the right to say something about the way I'm dressed about the way I move about my body about anything that concerns me when you a total stranger to me and doing it in a very uhm insulting and intimidating way that's my definition of street harassment

Turn 5. Interviewer: and have you ever been a victim of street harassment

Turn 6. Thandi : yes many times many times I've been a victim

Turn 7. Interviewer: before uhm we like before we get into your experiences in which spaces do you find that you always a victim of street harassment

Turn 8. Thandi : In most spaces like when I'm in TOWN I will get something like that across all races I I can get something like that from a coloured man from a black man you know

white ' man not not really but there are some white ' rude white ' boys you know who would say something for instance for instance this is also street harassment something that happened just two days ago my friend and I I was I was I was at Big Bay you know we had dinner and there was my friend from Johannesburg and then as we exit the restaurant walking towards the car this white ' couple uh approaches us they like hey girls what are you doing here so late and we like no we were having dinner in this restaurant and the lady said oh so how are you shame how are you gonna get home and then we're like no we fine she's like are you taking a cab boyfriend you know sugar daddy something like thaaaaat or what whaaaaat are you taking home and then Bambi said oh no we driving and she say oh oh you driving your Mercedes Benz what boyfriend's car you know all those intimidating questions like I was looking at her like what who does this white ' women think they are asking us such such such questions she doesn't know us and why couldn't she have like kept quiet or couldn't she have asked oh you taking your car and accept that like does it mean a black person can't drive or something like that==

Turn 9. Interviewer:== And that was for you street harassment?==

Turn 10. Thandi : ==that that was harassment that was racism on **fleek on the street** and other times most prevalent types street harassments that I experienced with regards to me being a female number one as you can see I'm a very the way I'm built I'm tall I am well-built like I'm well-structured and I'm well-endowed especially by my chest and you'd find that people especially coloured and white ' people like when when it comes to white ' people it's always it's usually white ' high school boys who would say **something** you know like oh my gosh her boobs and stuff and they'd start laughing and most of my friends have like big bums I have big boobs and they have big bums and these people would look at their bums and they'd whistle they'd say all kinds of nonsense and this other time it happened here on campus and I was so shocked but it doesn't happen that much often here on campus but it happens==

Turn 11. Interviewer: ==and that's why you were shocked about it==

Turn 12. Thandi : yes but it happens and sometimes you also get it from girls not just from guys you get it from girls girls who you know they come across you and they laugh about

something and they'd be like look at that girl oh my gosh she's got big big boobs but that one group of girls who did that to us and stuff they were high you know they had smoked dagga and stuff so that is street harassment that according to me is street harassment==

Turn 13. Interviewer: == definitely==

Turn 14, Thandi : and that's how I have experienced it

Turn 15. Interviewer: and how do you feel uhm you mentioned that it's only white ' boys and coloured and black people from across you know

Turn 16. Thandi : Men women not so much but it's **grown** men grown men black and coloured it's **grown** men I'm telling you grown men

Turn 17. Interviewer: and how do you feel when this happens to you

Turn 18. Thandi : I'm very uh I'm very vocal about how I feel==

Turn 19. Thandi :== so what would you say==

Turn 20. Thandi :== I would clap back I would clap back I would tell them voetstek or something

Turn 21. Interviewer: So you don't keep quiet as opposed to people who usually keep quiet==

Turn 22. Thandi :== **OH HELL NO** I don't keep quiet I tell them I tell them you don't speak to me like that you know but in some spaces you feel so intimidated that you can't really say anything==

Turn 23. Thandi :== In what spaces are these

Turn 24. Thandi : like in in Town maybe on the streets in Town you know where I come from in the Township you know I go to the township a lot here in Cape Town as well you know you know in some in some spaces like that when when it's not your territory you see campus is my territory because I study here and I live here do you understand so when it happens here on campus like I put them I call them into order and I tell them you know what I'm gonna report your ass you know but when I'm in outside spaces where this is not my territory I'll first observe my surroundings so if I Clap-back at this person whose gonna have my back==

Turn 25. Interviewer : uhh I get you==

Turn 26. Thandi :== Do you understand and most of the time when I'm alone look I I call people into don't let anyone speak to me anyhow but if I see if I am intimidated I just keep quiet and I walk fast and I just you know leave the specific space because I don't know what will happen to me when I talk back

Turn 27. Interviewer: So you feel safe saying it on campus because you know nothings gonna happen to you but the moment you say it so somebody outside campus you don't know what their intentions are==

Turn 28. Thandi : == yes I don't know what their intentions are I mean here on campus uhm I could have the details of the student whatever that person is and there there's always people around here on campus and you know campus is a different environment to you know a township or outside there it's a different we're all students and we we have some kind of culture and some kind of civilisation and some kind of dignified understandings of you know harassments and stuff like that we are learned people but in out in outside spaces yoh you just don't know

Turn 29. Interviewer: ya definitely and what do you think what is it about those outside spaces that makes them target you and say well I'm gonna harass you so is there something in the space the physical space or is it just you

Turn 30. Thandi : Okay I I wouldn't personalize it and say it's me personally but I would say that people often harass people they don't know they they wouldn't you know people respect people they know they wouldn't really do it to people they they know for example I I grew up in a family where there were gangsters those people wouldn't rob me because they know and respect and love me the people in in in my community who I know are gangsters they won't do anything to me but they'd do something to a foreign person do you understand and I don't mean foreign as in nationality I mean this is not your territory we don't know you so we don't care about you so ya I think that's the difference between campus and I mean these outside spaces they do it because they don't know me and in their minds they don't they won't ever see me again there's very little chances of seeing me again and little chances of me tracing them you see so ya

Turn 31. Interviewer: Definitely so that's why they use the outside space==



two coloured men they told us to get on a taxi to where we are going because it's useless they they opening a case against them because they are rude they are like that I'll never forget that

### **Zinzi\***

Duration: 03: 24

Turn 1. Interviewer: How would you define the term street harassment?

Turn 2. Zinzi : uuh street harassment uuhm street harassment is if I'm walking in the road... okay if I'm walking in the road and someone just says something ... if I'm walking and then uuhm and then someone said something that I wouldn't approve of or even if he tries to touch me then that's how that's how even by the eye contact that's how that's how

Turn 3. Interviewer: and have you ever been a victim of street harassment?

Turn 4. Zinzi : street harassment uhuh aaah yes and no with how how men or guys will will look at you when you walk pass so I don't like that even though at that minute I will not address it I'll just walk pass and not say anything

Turn 5. Interviewer: and in what spaces have you always found yourself being harassed?

Turn 6. Zinzi : uuhm where uuuh... where there's a lotta people especially in the mall or in a taxi rank that's where they will always make comments...

Turn 7. Interviewer: which spaces are these?

### **Follow up interview with Zinzi\***

Turn 1. I was in a taxi rank it was on a Saturday and a man it's more like cabs... the cabs in town... the small taxis... we have those... so I stopped the taxi it was R5 where I stay so I stop the taxi to tell them where I'm going and in the taxi there were three or four guys guys with the driver and a lady and they were sitting at the back and I was sitting uh uh I sat in front so when the lady get off yoooooh that was that was uuuh (sigh) they were saying (begins laughing embarrassingly) I would love I would love to to to have sex with her because of how how she sounded when when she was talking and and and and and the skirt

she was wearing (makes a nonverbal gesture to show that the skirt was short) I was yoooooh I was fine when I got in the taxi but the minute they started saying those things I was uuuh I'd love to have sex with her and she she she she's like the real deal kinda thing and when they were saying this I was like I've never been so disgusted not in myself but men and how they are raised uuuh that was wrong

Turn 2. Interviewer: so even though it didn't happen to you you felt=

Turn 3. Zinzi : yes because I'm a woman and I didn't know what they were going to say about me when I when I have to get out of the taxi because when I get out of the taxi they still in the taxi and I would have felt disrespected as well just as she has been disrespected... they were talking to the taxi driver ooh did you hear that voice imagine we were in bed having sex and stuff... especially if you don't know the person and they said that that was like disrespect