Disrupting Gender-Related Violence Through Youth Work: A Feminist New Materialist Enquiry

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by

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Abstract

This thesis explores gender-related violence in youth work settings. Using a critical sociomaterial approach (Murris, 2020), the project investigated how gender-related violence affects young people, youth workers, and youth settings and how youth work disrupts gender-related violence as a form of primary educational prevention (Ellis and Thiara, 2014). The methodology used in this investigation was based on Critical Participatory Action Research (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014). It unfolded in three phases in four youth work settings. Phase 1 focused on identifying gender-related violence and planning youth work interventions to tackle gender-related violence. Phase 2 involved implementing practice changes. During phase 3, these changes were sustained and evaluated. The data collected included critical incidents of practice (Fook and Gardner 2007), in-depth interviews and observations (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014). The analysis comprises a Feminist New Materialist cartographic mapping of gender-related violence-youth work-assemblages. This draws from an ethological approach espoused by Fox and Alldred (2022) and Feely's (2020) assemblage analysis to identify and describe how the socio-material components of the gender-related violence-youth work-assemblage affect one another through processes of de/re/territorialisation (Fox and Alldred, 2022). The findings show that gender-related violence has emotional, material, and social affects that regulate (territorialise) young people, youth workers, youth workplaces, and youth work things. The thesis also demonstrates how youth work that is founded on norm-critical, feminist, and queer pedagogy disrupts gender-related violence by producing opportunities for resistance and change. This thesis, therefore, builds on the GAP WORK Project (Alldred, David *et al.,* 2014, Cooper-Levitan and Alldred, 2022) by demonstrating how youth workers put feminist, queer, and norm-critical praxis into practice. The significance of the vitality of the non-human as part of this critical praxis is illuminated. This is significant for youth work as it challenges the humanist foundations of both research and practice.

Chapter 1: Setting the Scene

Introduction

In this chapter I outline the rationale for this study that explores how norm-critical, feminist, and queer-inspired youth work can disrupt gender-related violence affecting young people, youth workers, and youth settings. This study took place in the United Kingdom from 2014 to 2019 within a policy context of increasing neo-liberalism exemplified by policies such as Austerity and the Big Society that changed the nature of youth work delivery in the UK (Davies, 2018). This chapter starts by describing the contexts that influenced the research design. I outline the research themes and research questions. I describe the activist and transdisciplinary nature of the study, locating it within the study of norm-critical, feminist/queer youth work and the study of gender-related violence (see Alldred, 2023; Alldred and Bilglia, 2015; Alldred, David *et al.,* 2014; Fox and Alldred, 2022) I conclude by outlining the structure of the thesis.

The social, cultural, political, and economic conditions of this thesis

This study was completed during an intense period of global social change and it is fair to say that life has changed fundamentally since the first discussions on research design started in 2014. At this time, David Cameron and Nick Clegg were ending their tenure as heads of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government with their flagship policy of Austerity, which fundamentally changed the nature of Youth and Community Work practice in the UK (Davies 2018). Since this time, we have had numerous changes in Prime Ministers, numerous general elections and the impacts of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic, alongside the emergence of the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo movements and an increasing sense of polarisation concerning the so-called Culture Wars (Duffy *et al.,* 2021). The last chapter of this thesis was written as a new Labour government had been elected. This thesis is not immune to these massive shifts in context, and the study presented here provides a snapshot into how anti-oppressive youth work practice - drawing from radical, critical,

feminist, and queer praxes in the UK - developed a response to gender-related violence as a result of some, but not all of, these events.

Autobiographical statement

Social Justice has been important to me from an early age. Born in South Africa during the height of Apartheid to a family who were White allies in the Black liberation struggle motivated me to form a critical consciousness from an early age. By my teenage years, I had been active in numerous social justice campaigns and liberation movements. This includes the LGBT+ communities that I publicly joined at the age of fourteen and, in particular, the fight to repeal Section 28, the legislation introduced by the Thatcher government that prevented public servants 'from promoting' homosexuality. One of the primary motivations for researching this topic is my experiences growing up as a young LGBT+ Jew, mainly in the UK but also for short periods in Israel. I often felt a sense of isolation and experienced direct oppression both at school and from community institutions because of my sexuality. Interestingly, the one place where I felt safe was at my youth group, in which people were more open to accepting and discussing sexual and gender diversity. Despite this, I often experienced direct and more subtle micro-aggressive forms of oppression (Sue, 2010) from both my peers and the youth leaders. This was based on normalising heterosexist gender norms within the youth group's organisational structures and everyday happenings (Batsleer, 2015). My youth workers were well-meaning but ignorant of how sexist and gendered norms translated into forms of oppression within their practice.

These experiences led me to train as a professional youth and community worker, where my practice focuses on tackling oppression and discrimination in various intersecting forms through building inclusive communities. My interest in understanding the impact of youth work practice on the lives of young people led me to complete the MA Youth & Community Work course at Brunel University London in 2010. I then worked as a community-based activist youth worker developing projects on gender and LGBT+ inclusion, notably in faith settings and faith schools.

In my experience, I have continued to witness countless instances of oppressive practice - often from well-meaning practitioners - regarding gender and sexuality related to abuse, bullying, harassment, and violence (in various forms) amongst the volunteers, staff, and young people I have worked with. I learnt that as an emerging profession (Kemmis, 2009) and precarious educational profession (Bradford and Cullen, 2018), youth workers lack the resources and support necessary to address the causes of this and to act on this issue. In particular, the organisations I work with were often gender and sexuality naïve, with little understanding of how issues of gender and sexuality-based oppression and discrimination affected them and those they worked with. These experiences laid the foundations for this study. I was interested in exploring how practitioners and organisations can be supported to improve their understanding of how gendered norms and assumptions affect young people and youth workers.

Scholarship on gendered violence, young people, and youth practitioners

The primary academic influence for this study was the European Union co-funded GAP WORK Project in which I was privileged to be part of the research team from 2013 to 2015. The project aimed to design and evaluate training for youth practitioners on tackling gender-related violence with and amongst young people (Alldred, 2023). Although the meeting of training outcomes was achieved, the evaluation did not demonstrate how the learning could be applied beyond the training workshop (Alldred, David *et al.,* 2014; Levitan and Alldred, 2022). Further research was needed on how the trainees' knowledge transferred into their practice settings and conditions that helped and constrained the reproduction of norm-critical, feminist, and queer pedagogical practices that were initiated by the GAP WORK Project practitioners (Levitan and Alldred, 2022). The GAP WORK Project final report (Alldred, David *et al.*, 2014) highlighted the high levels of anxiety that participants felt about the role that new managerial audit cultures in youth work (de St Croix 2018) might have in attempts to embed their learning in the practices in their settings (Alldred and David *et al.*, 2014:90). Therefore, this project influenced my study as I was interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the ways the norm critical GAP WORK Project practices affected youth work praxis beyond the training itself.

Another influence for this study is the increased academic interest in violence as an emerging field of sociology. Scholars such as Jeff Hearn (2012, 2013), Sylvia Walby (2013), Larry Ray (2018), and, more recently, Fox and Alldred (2022) have written on theorising violence as an organising social phenomenon with power inequity at its core rather than by-product of other factors such as the "deviant mind" or economic disadvantage as often found in some criminological analyses. As a result of this increased sociological interest, there has been an increased scholarship in the subfield of gender violence research (Skinner *et al.*, 2013; Gill *et al.*, 2012).

As part of this, there is a growing literature that addresses theories and forms of gender-related violence (see Fox and Alldred, 2022) amongst young people (Barter, 2009; Sundaram, 2013; Fox and Alldred, 2022; Ringrose and Rawlings, 2015; Heslop *et al.,* 2021). In addition, there is a long-standing body of educational empirical literature on young people and various forms of gendered violence and homophobic and heterosexist bullying (for example, Rivers and Duncan, 2013; Renold and Timperley, 2021). However, there is little research into how youth work praxis disrupts gender-related violence in young people's lives. Where research exists, it focuses on formal education settings - for example, the No Outsiders Project (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009) - and little research exists about informal and non-formal learning settings such as community settings.

Where research on educational interventions does exist, it could be argued that these studies give a partial insight into the role that youth work praxis plays in disrupting gender-related violence in youth work contexts. For example, Batsleer's (2012, 2015) scholarship on developing feminist youth work praxis explains how youth work can address gender inequality for young women and LGBT+ people. Still, it does not explicitly address gender-related violence as a topic. Seal and Harris's (2016) work gives essential insight into how the development of youth work ethnopraxis (Seal and Harris, 2016) can respond to youth violence. However, the focus here is on general youth violence rather than gender-related violence. Fox and Alldred (2022), Alldred (2023), and Cooper-Levitan and Alldred (2022) have also contributed recently to this field, and this thesis is a direct continuation of their scholarship. Their contribution

focuses on training for youth practitioners rather than youth work as a specific field of practice.

Finally, this thesis is on the paradigmatic shift in social research from post-structuralism (St-Pierre, 2000) to the critical socio-material (Murris, 2020, Fox and Alldred, 2016). Critical Sociomaterialism is a broad family of approaches united by a commitment to a flat, relational ontology where more than humans are assigned ontological status to varying degrees (Nicolini, 2012). As a result of this shift, there have been several studies that explore some of the forms of gender-related Violence from a Feminist New Materialist vantage point. For example, Ringrose *et al.* (2020), Ringrose *et al.* (2020) and Renold and Ringrose (2018) look at how intra-actions of human and non-human materials produce more inclusive relationships and sex education that puts feminist theorising centre stage. Therefore, this thesis contributes to this critical socio-material family, specifically from the perspective of Feminist New Materialism (Fox and Alldred 2014).

Introducing the enquiry

This study adopts Alldred's (2023) conceptualisation of gender-related violence. This starts with a gendered power analysis of violence that brings together second-wave feminist conceptualisation foregrounded in the notion of gender-based violence, Judith Butler's (1990) queer theory and elements of critical masculinities (Messerschmidt, 2012). Here the violence is seen as produced by intersectional normativity (Alldred, David *et al.,* 2014). Alldred (2023) adopts a comprehensive conceptualisation of violence, including all behaviour and language. I argue that adding gendered structural violence to this existing conceptualisation further extends the comprehensiveness of the definition. Another and more recent feature of Alldred's (2023) conceptualisation of gender-related violence is framed within Feminist New Materialism. In this further extended conceptualisation, gender-related violence can be analysed as a sociomaterial-assemblage that produces specific micro-political dynamics. This translates into the following research questions:

1. How do the socio-material components of gender-related violence affect youth work, young people, and youth workers?
2. How does norm-critical, feminist, and queer youth work disrupt gender-related violence affecting youth work, young people, and youth workers?

The overall research design was drawn from Critical Participatory Action Research (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014) and Feminist New Materialism (Fox and Alldred, 2016). The process unfolded in three stages and involved practitioners as well as, to a lesser extent, young people. Phase one of the project involved identifying how gender-related violence affects young people, youth workers, and their workplaces. Phase two implemented practice changes. Phase three explored sustaining and evaluating these changes. A large amount of qualitative, visual, and creative data was collected as part of the process. This included interviews, observations, and practice artefacts like youth work resources. The data was analysed using a Feminist New Materialist framework that maps complex sociomaterial-assemblages (Fox and Alldred, 2022).

Significance of this enquiry

This thesis has a three-fold significance. Firstly, it contributes to the emerging literature on gender-related violence in young people's lives. Specifically, it demonstrates how the knowledge of the GAP WORK Project Training transferred into youth work settings to help produce norm-critical, feminist, and queer youth work praxis that disrupts gender-related violence (Levitan and Alldred, 2022). The findings also demonstrate how gender-related violence as a social material phenomenon (Fox and Alldred, 2022) plugs into youth work and affects young people, youth workers, and youth settings, thereby adding new understanding to the study of gender-related violence in youth contexts. This thesis also troubles the humanist hegemony within Youth Work Studies by demonstrating how the non-human plays a vital role in youth work praxis. Specifically, buildings and youth work resources play an affective role in the analysed assemblages. This has methodological and theoretical implications for youth work research that suggest that youth work praxis should take Critical Posthumanism seriously (Pisani, 2023).

Thesis Structure

This introductory chapter introduces the contexts of this thesis and outlines the framework for the empirical chapters. The next chapter reviews the theoretical, empirical, and methodological literature that explains gender-related violence and the role that youth work plays in disrupting it. Chapter three outlines the methodological approach of this study. Chatper four outlines the participatory action research process. Chapter five details the data analysis of the study. Chapter six concludes with a summary of the learning, the significance of the research, its limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Disrupting gender-related violence through youth work

Introduction

Over the last two decades, there has been an increased focus on interventions to tackle the harmful and destructive impacts of the forms of gender-related violence affecting young people (Alldred and Biglia, 2015). Despite an increase in this academic interest and the documentation of a plethora of primary and secondary prevention interventions (Ellis and Thiara, 2014), gender-related violence is still an insidious and destructive force in young people's lives (see McCarry and Lombard, 2016; Stonewall, 2017; McNulty and Birney, 2024). This has led some feminists of a variety of orientations, alongside pro-feminists and LGBT+/Queer activist scholars, to respond to this challenge with energy and creativity.

It could be argued that youth work can be vital in disrupting all violence (Seal and Harris, 2016) and gender-related violence (Levitan and Alldred, 2022). This is because the activities, pedagogies, and relationships that constitute youth work practice can, with the right telos (or purpose), foster a productive environment where young people and youth workers can develop their critical praxis to disrupt the normativity that underpins gender-related violence infecting their lives and our society. Therefore, this chapter aims to summarise and critically appraise the literature on this theme with a specific focus on understanding what gender-related violence is, why youth work should address it, and how youth work can disrupt gender-related violence in the lives of youth workers and young people.

The first step in this review is to define what is meant by gender-related violence. I argue for a comprehensive conceptualisation foregrounded in the gendered analysis of violence, particularly intersectional power inequalities and as a complex sociomaterial-assemblage as argued by Feminist New Materialism (Fox and Alldred, 2022; Alldred, 2023). Next, I then identify the scope, forms, and explanations for gender-related violence affecting young people and its on young people's lives in the UK. Acknowledging the contested field of youth work in the UK, I argue that youth work praxis is relevant in

disrupting gender-related violence. This is because youth work praxis is anti-oppressive and addresses the normative elements of gender-related violence through its critical, radical, feminist, and queer foundations that are foregrounded in critical pedagogy (Seal and Frost, 2014). I end this chapter by noting a gap in the literature that opens space to investigate gender-related violence and youth work through the lens of Feminist New Materialism (Fox and Alldred, 2016). This provides the foundations for the methodological and empirical chapters that follow.

What is gender-related violence?

Gendering violence

As a starting point in conceptualising gender-related violence, it is necessary to examine the relationship between gender and violence, as this is contested in the sociology of violence literature (Walby, 2013). There is a significant difference between those who bracket the concept of gender in violence research such as Felson (2002), and those who advocate for a critical, power-focused conceptualisation of gender with violence - albeit from differing philosophical foundations (for example, Dworkin, 1976; Crenshaw, 1988; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Fox and Alldred, 2022).

Early scholarship on the phenomenon of violence mostly ignored gender altogether (Walby, 2013). For example, Weber (2004) focused on violence as an emergent phenomenon from political power. In this view, only the state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, and this dictates what is acceptable and what is not through legal definition as well as governance (through the police force, for example). Marx and Engels (1975) and Gramsci focused on violence as emergent from the political economy and bourgeoise culture. They argued that the capitalist class uses economic and cultural violence to suppress and subordinate the working class. On the individual and group level of analysis, Girard (1972) argued that violence is the by-product of the enforcement of group identity through attacking those outside the group. In this sense, violence is reproduced in cycles as a social process to sustain social orders and structures. In these conceptualisations, the role of gendered power dynamics has been invisible.

It was with Foucault's (1988) theorising, as well as Elias's (1939) relational sociology, that interpersonal violence was recognised as a point of focus in the analysis of violence (Ray, 2018). Elias (1939) noted that one of the purposes of the civilising project is to limit the use of non-legitimate forms of violence. Elias (1939) argued that, through modernising processes, violence has moved from the visible public sphere to an invisible private sphere. Foucault (1988) argued that violence can be considered a technology of power. This led to an 'unveiling' of new forms of violence that included domestic and hate-based violence, where gender and other features of identity were put at the forefront of an analysis of violence. (Ray, 2018).

Feminist scholars advocate for a power-focused analysis of violence that focuses on the structural relationship between violence, gender, and sex. For example, radical feminist scholars such as Brownmiller (1975), Russell (1975), and Dworkin (1975) put gender firmly at the centre of a structural analysis of violence. The main contribution of these scholars was to show how gender roles maintain a predetermined social structure in which women are subjugated by unequal political, social, and economic relations that privilege the male sex through a system of patriarchy (Walby, 1989).

Brownmiller (1975) notes that sexual violence is used as a political tool of patriarchy and is designed to reinforce women's social, economic, and political subordination to men. Dworkin (1975) provided more insight into how patriarchal social structures allow the perpetration of gender-based sexual violence with lasting and devastating effects on women and girls. In the academic field, Sex Difference scholars (such as Archer, 2009) offered an analysis of gendered violence that argued for a basis in biological and psychological sex differences (Archer, 2009). This led feminist activists to argue for the need for legal, political, and social reform to end gender-based violence (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). The collective use of the term gender-based violence focuses analysis on a power-centred and gendered analysis of violence (Fox and Alldred, 2022). From this starting point, the term gender-related violence was coined by El-Bushra and Lopez (1993). It was also framed around the power inequalities in a patriarchal society (Fox and Alldred, 2022).

It is essential to recognise that second-wave feminist scholars based their analysis on ontological realism, known as gender essentialism, which fixes gender to the sexed body (Witt, 2010). In addition, most 'second wave' feminists defined the experience of 'gender' and being a 'woman' as homogenous, which nonessentialist feminists - who built their analysis on a broad social constructionist ontology of gender - found problematic (Graff, 2016). This essentialist starting point was challenged by the family of social constructionist scholars, who argued for an idealistic ontology of gender as the basis for the study of gendered violence.

From this disruption of the homogenous construction of 'women' in second-wave feminism comes an analysis that explores the multifaceted ways gender interacts with other identities and experiences. For example, Womanists such as Audre Lorde (2012) argued for a movement away from a homogenous ontology of gender, with more consideration given to the experience of being both black and female, while accepting that the effects of the material subordination of women are at the core of definitions of gender.

Intersectional feminists, such as Hooks (2000); Crenshaw (1988); Collins and Blige (2022), are critical of the lack of understanding of the differences between women's lived experiences. Intersectional feminists argue that there are multiple experiences of women's oppression within patriarchy and that patriarchy intersects with other systems of oppression - such as heterosexism, white supremacy, and colonialism (Spivak, 1996) - that subjugate different women in diverse ways in time and space. Intersectional feminists aim to acknowledge differences and create allyship and solidarity (Collins, 2017), often through the enactment of 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak,1996). When applying an intersectional approach to gender-related violence, it is argued that not only might violence affect women differently but that different forms of violence will affect women differently (i.e. some might prioritise racism over gender-based violence) - and this cannot be presumed because the intersections are not additive. Other intersectional voices came from Indigenous women (Simpson, 2014) and working-class women (Brah and Phoenix, 2004), who explored these intersections regarding structural dynamics such as post-colonialism and socioeconomic position.

A new wave of feminist scholars, such as Connell (2009) and Butler (1990), provided a comprehensive critique of the idea that sex is fixed and the anchor for gender, and instead argued for the exploration of the relational construction of 'intelligible' forms of gender - including masculinities, femininities, and queer performances. For example, both Connell (2020) and Kimmel *et al.* (2008) argue that gender violence is a key component of the performance of masculinities. Judith Butler (1990) noted that gender is not an innate quality but a set of discursive and cultural practices that are enacted on the body to maintain the domination of heterosexuality. The repetitive enactment of gender via performance gives social meaning to biological sex (Butler, 1990). Therefore, sex is a socially constructed concept that is maintained through the discursive performance of gender to reinforce heterosexual social relations.

This nonessentialist critical ontology of gender is built on by the new wave of feminist scholars and activists who question the privileged position of the ontological humanism of previous waves of feminist praxis (Haraway, 2013; Fox and Alldred, 2016). Ecofeminists (for example, Mies and Shiva, 1993) argue that it is essential to acknowledge the effects of patriarchal domination on the natural environment and how this is interconnected with intersectional violence and domination. Feminist New Materialism (Fox and Alldred, 2014) also builds on this post-humanist ontological stance, arguing for an approach that extends ontological status to the more-than-human and a flat ontological reconceptualisation of intersectionality (Fox and Alldred, 2022).

Despite the philosophical differences on the themes of gender essentialism/nonessentialism and the ontological status of more-than-human materiality, feminist scholars agree that a power-centred analysis of gender must be placed at the core of any analysis of violence (Fox and Alldred, 2022). As such, any conceptualisation of gender-related violence must, in the words of Alldred, David *et al.* (2014:6):

"…fully recognise the intersectionality and the differential impact power structures have on multiple, socio-historically positioned individuals."

It is from this diversity of starting points on the nature of gender that scholars turn their attention to the naming and framing of gender-related violence.

The scope and forms of gender-related violence

Alongside the debate in the literature about the connection between gender and violence, there are diverse positions on the extent and scope of gendered violence (Fox and Alldred, 2022). This is highlighted by Stanko (2003:2), who notes that:

“Despite an assumed, almost self-evident core, violence as a term is ambiguous and its usage moulded by different people as well as by different social scientists to include a whole range of events, feelings, and harms.”.

Accepting this diversity as the starting point, it has been noted that there are two conceptualisations of violence, each having a different understanding of the scope and usage of power in violent acts. The first conceptualisation is the Minimalist Conception of Violence (Buffachi, 2005). The Minimalist Conception of Violence limits the scope of violence to the direct and intentional use of physical force that causes physical suffering and harm (Buffachi, 2005). Violence in this form is between two people, a victim and a perpetrator of violence (Ray, 2018) who uses their physical power to cause bodily harm. Forms of suffering and damage that do not share this sense of severity or physicality are described in a variety of other ways in the literature - for example, as psychological or physical aggression, bullying, microaggression, or abuse but not as ‘violence’ (Jackman, 2002).

Feminist Violence scholars who deploy this minimalist ontology often focus on single instances of gender-based violence that cause suffering based on sex and/or gender that results in physical harm (see Campbell, 2007). This is also usually described as violence from male perpetrators towards female victims. Forms that comprise this minimalist conceptualisation of gendered violence include sexual assault, rape, and hitting/battery. The Minimalist Conception of Violence individualises and reduces power to men’s use of physical force against women and girls (Ray, 2018; Graff, 2016). For example, in the academic field, some Sex Difference scholars offer an essentialist and reductive analysis of gendered violence where biological and psychological sex differences (Archer, 2009) are deemed to be the cause of gendered violence.

Some scholars, such as Jackman (2002), find the Minimalist Conception of Violence limiting as the analysis assumes that violence can be confined to a single incidence of ‘extreme’ physical force, and that the purpose of such an incident is the intent to cause extreme bodily harm. It could be argued that reducing violence to physical force is an oversimplification and underestimates the intentional properties or subtle/indirect harms - for example, microaggressions (Sue, 2010), including gendered microaggressions (Johnson and Johnson, 2019). It has been noted that microaggressions can still cause significant harm - in particular, psychological harm (Sue, 2010).

Jackman (2002) is altogether critical of the view that all violence is directly intentional and focused on a single time-bound event. The argument here is that the outcome of a violent act defines the event as violent, whatever the reason behind it. Therefore, the effects of violence become important in naming an act ‘violent.’ This is important as it allows for expressive forms of violence - for example, violence that occurs reactively as the result of ‘stress’ (Hearn, 1998) or shame and rage (Ray ,2018) - to be viewed as violent alongside intentional acts of violence - which have a direct patriarchal power goal behind the action. This has been particularly important in the study of violence from pro-feminist scholars who explore men’s role in the perpetration of gender-based violence through concepts such as toxic masculinity (Harrington, 2021) and patriarchal terrorism (Johnson, 2017). This is a convincing argument against oversimplifications found in narrowing and minimalising the scope of violence as it acknowledges the complexities and nuances in naming a violent event (Fox and Alldred, 2022).

Intersectional and queer feminists are also concerned with the implications of narrowing the definition of gendered violence. For example, Hooks (2004) highlights the traumatic effects of patriarchy on the development of masculinity. In Hooks’s view, unpacking the impacts of patriarchal violence on men helps to give insight into how patriarchy affects men’s relationships with women, girls, and children through the deployment of complex cycles of violence (Hooks, 2004). This is an important intervention as it suggests that the narrowing of the conceptualisation of gendered violence to violence against women and girls may underestimate the processual complexities of the phenomena.

Moreover, feminist scholars such as Kelly (1987) question the assumption that acts of aggression and violence can be ranked in order of severity. For Kelly (1987), this is an oversimplification that privileges certain forms of violence over others and focuses on the subjective position of the perpetrator - a critique that masculinities studies scholar Jeff Hearn (1998) also highlights. Kelly (1987) and Hearn (1998) are critical of this tendency to privilege the perpetrator's position as it takes agency away from the victim in naming the violence that they experience. Hearn (1998) also cautions that reductionist rationalising, in particular, the attempt to label perpetrators as 'mentally unstable', can allow violent offenders an excuse for their violent actions, which detracts from the complex relationship between violence and patriarchal power. In defining violence as only intentional, harmful physical force, the focus is on the experience of actors who perpetrate the act rather than those who experience or witness it. This leads to a disempowering situation for those who have lived experience of the various forms of violence (Alldred, David *et al.* 2014; Bufacchi, 2005; Bufacchi and Gilson, 2016).

Bufacchi and Gilson (2016) also highlight the conceptual limitations of using the Minimalist Conception of Violence by noting that limiting the Minimalist Conception of Violence's focus on confined incidents of physical violence misses the ongoing effects that an act of physical violence can have after the initial act. Using the phenomenological notion of the 'Ripples of Violence,' Bufacchi and Gilson (2016:112) argue that an act of violence may have embodied, lived, psychological, or spiritual effects that can last a lifetime. This position extends the initial act of violence beyond the temporal confines of one violent physical interaction.

To illustrate this point, Jackman (2002) and Stanko (2006) use the notion of verbal bullying amongst children as an example to show that it is an oversimplification to limit the definition of violence to a one-time bound physical act. Within the Minimalist Conception of Violence, verbal bullying may be defined as aggression rather than an act of violence. However, the effect of bullying can result in self-harm or suicide (Wolke and Lereya, 2015). This includes bullying based on identity including gender, sex, or sexuality (Tippett *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, the psychological harm done in one incident of sexist

and gendered bullying may lead to self-directed violence occurring as a result, which demonstrates the limitation of the Minimalist Conception of Violence with its focus on the interpersonal, time-bound, and physical.

Moreover, there is an assumption within the Minimalist Conception of Violence that there are acceptable and unacceptable forms of violence (Ray, 2018; Jackman, 2002). The law dictates who can perform certain acts of violence and who cannot, and popular culture sanctions what is acceptable and what is not (Ray, 2018). For example, interpersonal, intentional, and harmful acts of violence such as murder and rape are deemed unacceptable forms of violence under the rule of law. On the other hand, boxing, and sports in general, is seen as part of the 'Civilizing Process' (Elias, 1939) and deemed acceptable even though it may lead to death or serious physical injury. The reason that sport is legitimised as 'good' violence is the assumption that it allows for an 'expressive' form of violence to be released that can be controlled through the 'rules of the game' (Ray, 2018). However, it is clear that the violence that is learnt through the 'rules of the game' can easily be used to cause harm in unsanctioned forms of violence, such as gendered street violence and violence against women and girls in domestic settings (Dobash and Dobash, 1992).

Felson (2009) notes that the idea of instrumentality needs to be given more consideration when explaining the expressive motivation for violence. Although he rejects the notion that violence is gendered, Felson argues that all violence is instrumental, including violence that has the purpose of 'thrill,' where the instrumental goal is pleasure, which is important to consider in an analysis of gendered violence. The suggestion here is that some forms of violence mask themselves as expressive when, in fact, they are instrumental, for example, in gaining a sense of pleasure in the pain of others (Felson, 2009). This demonstrates that the distinction between expressive and instrumental violence that underpins the Minimalist Conception of Violence is a false dichotomy, and there may be more in common between the two forms that are often recognised (Ray, 2018). The implication of this about gendered violence is that it is important to take the motivation (expressive, instrumental, or both) behind the act of gendered violence seriously in defining the scope of violence.

Therefore, it could be argued that all gendered violence has a telos (or purpose).

Finally, for many scholars, the use of the Minimalist Conception of Violence to anchor an analysis of gendered violence fails to give adequate attention to capitalist structural violence that is deployed to maintain unequal power relations. This is picked up by feminist scholars, such as Judith Butler (2013), who use Foucault's notion of power. Therefore, what is needed for the more complex and comprehensive conceptualisation of violence that includes a gendered motivation is a complex understanding of the role of power.

Proponents of the Comprehensive Conceptualisation of Violence provide this conceptual extension of violence, which is defined as:

"Anything avoidable that impedes human realisation violates the rights and integrity of the person and is often judged in terms of outcomes rather than intentions" (Ray, 2018: 9).

Important in this extended conceptualisation of violence is the recognition that violence can be physical and can also be defined by ongoing psychological and emotional violations (Audi, 1971). This means that acts that harm a person's psychological integrity, such as gendered bullying (Olweus, 2010) and micro-aggressions (Sue, 2010), are deemed acts of violence. The Comprehensive Conceptualisation of Violence also acknowledges the importance of both intentional and expressive motivations for gender-based violence (Ray, 2018).

An example of this comprehensive conceptualisation of gendered violence can be found in Stark's (2007) conceptualisation of Coercive Control in the practice of domestic violence. Coercive Control focuses on perpetrator behaviour that aims to isolate and control a victim in ways that are psychological, physical, and economic. Examples of this include limiting a victim's social interaction with family and friends, controlling a victim's access to her income, verbal abuse (such as slut- and fat-shaming), monitoring day-to-day activity (e.g. internet/email use), and threats of violence, retribution, and humiliation (e.g. the making and distributing of revenge porn). Key to this is the emphasis on the gendered nature of violence in an extensive form that moves beyond physical harm alone with a complex intent/motivation behind it.

Another element of the Comprehensive Conceptualisation of Violence has foundations in the work of Galtung (1969) and Žižek (2008). Both argue that violence is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon and that the task is to understand the relationships between various levels of violence. Galtung (1963:173) argues that a distinction can be made between direct violence and personal violence; what Žižek (2008) terms 'subjective violence' and 'structural violence'. Direct/Subjective violence occurs at an interpersonal level and involves the *in situ* experience of an instance of violent interaction, which can sometimes seem irrational to an observer (Žižek, 2008). Structural/Objective violence cannot often be seen but is inherent within the socio-economic and political system (Žižek, 2008).

Forms of gender-based violence within this more nuanced version of structural violence may include public sector cuts (Cooper and Whyte, 2017) that affect marginalised groups disproportionally (Durbin *et al.,* 2017) alongside violence that maintains complex intersections of social inequalities such as sexism, LGBT-phobia, and racism (Crenshaw, 1988; Walby, 2013). In this sense, structural violence is the means to maintaining the multiple structures of oppression that produce subjective experiences (Collins, 2017) through everyday social practices (Hearn, 2013). Returning to the theme of positional vantage point in the naming of violence, Collins (2017) argues that some positions are privileged in the naming of violence, and others are not. This is exemplified by Crenshaw (1994), who argues for the privileging of black women's voices in the exploration of violence against women and other third-wave scholars who extend intersections to race and sexuality. Therefore, proponents of the comprehensive conceptualisation of violence have started to move towards a nuanced and complex understanding of gendered violence.

As well as a social and material element, the comprehensive conceptualisation of violence includes a cultural component in its formulation of the comprehensive conceptualisation of violence. Gultang (1990) argues that the violations via cultural means must be considered acts of violence as the effects of these violations reinforce and maintain structural oppression. Although Gultang (1990) did not produce a gendered analysis of cultural violence, the notion of symbolic violence is violence that is made through the maintenance of

cultural norms through symbols and language. In this view, symbolic violence is enacted through cultural and linguistic practices that become everyday 'common sense.' For example, Bourdieu (2000) shows how masculine domination is woven into the symbols and tapestry of culture and society. This symbolic and discursive violence is often directed towards those with identities that are deemed as 'threatening' to the established social norms (Butler 2004). Nancy Fraser (2020) also adopts a practice-orientated analysis, in which it is noted that cultural domination is maintained by social practice, and this opens sites for resistance. Therefore, the comprehensive conceptualisation of violence extends the scope of violence to include cultural, symbolic, and discursive violence in everyday social practices as well as resistance to violation.

Conceptualising gender-related violence

Taking a comprehensive conceptualisation and a gendered analysis of violence as a starting point, Alldred (2023) notes that gender-related violence can be defined as any "sexist, sexualising, homophobic, transphobic language and behaviour" (2023:479). This conceptualisation puts normativity at the centre of gendered violence and brings together feminism, pro feminism, LGBT+ liberation movements, and queer theory under one banner (Alldred, 2023). A limitation is that this conceptualisation does not take into consideration structural violence such as public sector cuts. Adding this to the definition can give an even more comprehensive conceptualisation that can be used as an anchor for exploration.

How can gender-related violence in young people's lives be explained and understood?

Biopsychosocial explanations

One way to explain gender-related violence in young people's lives is to combine a minimalist conceptualisation of violence with gender and essentialist notions of childhood and adolescence. For example, sex difference scholars (such as Campbell, 2013) argue that there are differentiated and innate 'male' and 'female' behaviours and tendencies that cause violence in children and

adolescents. Specifically, they attempt to demonstrate the role that biopsychosocial sex/gender differences play in childhood aggression and violence (including bullying). These perspectives differentiate between aggressive and violent behaviour (Campbell, 2015), with violence falling within the narrow ontological conceptualisation of the Minimalist Conception of Violence. Sex difference scholars argue for causal ontological relationships between adolescence as a developmental stage of human development, sex, and gender, and physical violence. Often these perspectives are combined to try to produce a unified essentialist analysis in the form of a biopsychosocial theoretical approach in explaining gender-related violence affecting young people.

Sex difference scholars note that aggressive and violent behaviour occurs in children in the first twenty four months of life (Aime *et al.,* 2018) with the purpose of affective expression. Most children grow out of this innate form of aggression as they develop other tools to express themselves, such as language (Aime *et at.,* 2018). In this view, adolescence, with its defining feature of puberty, is seen as a life stage prone to innate aggressive and violent behaviour that causes social harms. This is articulated by Campbell (2013:3) who notes that:

"For both sexes, the teenage years signal entry into the mating arena and a concomitant increase in aggression that is visible in criminal statistics."

Another example of an explanation that draws from a narrow essentialist explanation of gendered violence is Sexual Selection Theory. This approach explains why adolescence is marked as a period of aggression and violence (Archer, 2009). In this view, the purpose of male aggression and physical violence is biological with the goal of competition for resources, including mates for the purpose of reproduction. Campbell (2013:83) notes that an evolutionary perspective can also be applied in attempts to understand female aggression:

"Recent developments within evolutionary biology have queried the simplicity of the traditional view of sexual selection which highlights intense male (but not

female) competition for mates…. rates of female competition are higher in species (like our own) with diminished sexual dimorphism."

Moreover, there is an ongoing debate as to the role heightened testosterone levels play in violence and aggression in young males and females (Archer, 2006). However, the link is tenuous and cannot be seen in isolation from environmental and cognitive factors (Archer, 2006).

In relation to young girls, Campbell (2013:90) links girls earlier sexual maturity than boys to an increase in aggressive behaviour:

"Girls who reach menarche early are more likely to be involved in delinquent and aggressive behaviour, and this is especially true for maltreated girls and those living in disadvantaged areas."

Not all sex difference scholars adopt the Minimalist Conception of Violence when attempting to explain gendered violence as it effects young people. Both Campbell (2013) and Wilson and Daly (1985) assert that female aggression is rarely the extreme physical violence as framed by the Minimalist Conception of Violence, but more expressive forms of aggression such as relational aggression. Far from being passive and non-competitive, this approach produces theories that argue that girls compete for resources such as 'quality' male partners for reproductive purposes (Campbell, 2013:7). However, this perspective argues boys are more willing to take risks like acting violently than young girls. This is articulated by Campbell (2013:4) who notes that: "As the dangerousness of the aggressive act increases so does the magnitude of sex difference."

Important in this explanation is the notion that all aggressive and violent behaviour is based on the aggressor undertaking a "cost benefit" analysis. For young men, "the benefits will be the successful reproduction and the costs those resulting from injury" (Archer 2009:251). Campbell (2013) takes the argument further to show that young girls also use cost-benefit analysis in deploying several types of aggression, often opting for forms of aggression that do not result in physical injury as this undermines the evolutionary role of the female in child-rearing and protection. This is articulated by Campbell (2013:3) who notes that:

“A woman’s reproductive success may be dependent on the avoidance of risky behaviour, including aggression.”

Therefore, the forms of violence highlighted by the Minimalist Conception of Violence are often avoided by young girls and used instrumentally by young boys for the purpose of reproduction.

Emotional stressors are also highlighted as causes (Archer, 2006; Campbell, 2013). The assumption here is that men get angry and respond with rage and attack; whereas women - rather than becoming angry - become fearful and direct their aggression in other ways (Campbell, 2013), including internally (this is one of the explanations given for greater depression and self-harm historically among women). Sex difference in brain biology in the amygdala is cited by Campbell (2013:5-7) as sociobiological evidence for this, whilst Frick and Ray (2015) focus on personality traits such as low empathy and low guilt. An inability to regulate emotions such as anger and rage as often cited as reasons for gender difference in adolescent aggression and violence.

Sociological functionalism and conflict theory also draw on gender essentialism in their analysis. For example, Wilson and Daly (1985) argue that young males are overrepresented in violent crime statistics. In doing this, they coined the phrase “Young Male Syndrome”, which links risk taking and aggressive behaviour to competing for sexual partners alongside social deprivation as the cause for violent crime. Wilson and Daly (1985) and Campbell (2013) argue that male violence and female aggression is triggered by social stress which echoes with Agnew’s (2017) General Strain Theory and, most notably, by experiences of poverty. In both cases, Durkheim’s notion of ‘Anomie’ (in Deflem, 2017) where violence results in the breakdown of social bonds is also implicit. This is highlighted by Campbell (2013:3) who notes that:
“Young women in these neighbourhoods compete for access to men who can supply lavish (if short-lived) resources and whose consumer lifestyle contrasts markedly with the hand and mouth existence of the unemployed.”

There are several limitations to consider with these interpretations. Campbell (2013) notes that these explanations on their own are insufficient in explaining adolescent aggression and violence. This is because the social and cultural lives of

adolescents, that also influence behaviour, are often underdeveloped in the analysis. Therefore, interaction with family, peers, and wider society also plays a crucial role in understanding gendered violence in young people's lives (Heise, 1998). Moreover, biopsychosocial perspectives oversimplify the concept of violence by creating a difference between aggression and violence in its minimal form. Moreover, there is often an underdeveloped attempt at linking causal factors together into a compressive and unified analysis. Some of these issues are addressed through social interactionist explanations.

Interactionist explanations

Interactionists focus on the role social interaction plays in the construction of gendered violence in the lives of young people. In doing this, they often use essentialism as their foundation for analysis. For example, parenting styles and influences are highlighted as an explanation by scholars with a psychoanalytical focus (Hearn, 1998). Here the focus is on relationships with their parents. In this view, boys' violence is seen as the result of unhealthy attachment to the mother which leads to intrapsychic conflict which presents as aggression and violence in males and the assumed inability to 'protect' oneself in young girls (Hearn, 1998:21). This perspective is intrinsically misogynistic and leads to victim blaming girls (Hearn, 1998). This has led some feminists to focus on violence and aggression being the result of the effects of the traumatic separation of young boys from the mother and developing an ego that is reliant on identification with the father's dominance within the household (Hooks, 2004).

The notion of 'temperament' is important in understanding levels of aggression and violence amongst young males (Aime *et al.*, 2018). 'Weak' temperament amongst boys is seen as the cause of aggression and violence. This is noted by Olweus's assertion in relation to bullying behaviour where:

> *"A weak temperament in a boy or a young man results in his mother's overprotective behaviour and, to a certain extent, his infantilization. At the same time, the boy's temperament also results in negative appraisal from his father, and later contributes to the inability of father and son to find some common ground upon which to build or maintain their relationship.*

> *Ultimately, the lack of identification a boy or young man feels towards his father will reinforce the bond he has with his mother, and, according to Olweus, may result in him experiencing difficulties in asserting himself in 'traditionally boyish or masculine ways'" (Olweus, 1993, in Rivers and Cowie, 2006:23)*

Psychoanalytical perspectives tend to assume that children and young people's aggression can be reduced to the parent-child relationship. Campbell (1993) notes that while useful in understanding boys' and girls' aggression and violence, it does not provide an account of how violence and aggression is learnt and enacted differently by boys and girls, and underestimates the role that wider social and cultural processes play in violence as a learnt behaviour.

This is picked up by social learning theory (Bandura, 1999) which is influenced by social constructivism. This theory argues that gender norms and roles are culturally transmitted through to children and young people though interaction within the family. The focus here is on the how the socialisation of boys and girls leads to gender differences in the performance of aggression and violence. Campbell (2013) demonstrates this by describing how girls are socialised into a gender identity that values an expressive performance of aggression, whereas physical violence is seen as a resource and entitlement for young boys. In this sense, gender is learnt through social interaction (including within the family). Boys learn to be boys by differentiating themselves from girls and their mothers. Girls develop a stronger bond with mothers and other female family members to learn what it means to 'be a girl' (Campbell, 2013).

This differentiation enables children and young people to develop a gender identity which become normalised and 'naturalised' through cultural reinforcement within the family (Campbell, 2013). In this view, heterosexuality is linked with the 'proper' performance of gender. Functionalists also suggest this - arguing that one foundation of society is the maintenance of the heterosexual family unit, where males focus on instrumental roles and females focus expressive roles. The internalisation of sex roles is viewed by functionalists as a

fundamental part of the society's architecture. The assumption is that aggression and violence decrease with maturation as young people learn emotional regulation and find a place within the system (Olweus, 1978).

Lombard (2016) has noted that social learning theory limits the role that social interaction outside the family has on the development of aggression and violence in adolescents (Rivers, 2013).

Cognitive behavioural theorists and subcultural theorists notice this and focus on peer group interaction (Vogel and Keith, 2015) and the way culture enables the construction of gender schema (Bem, 1981) - where violence is enshrined as a desired masculine behaviour. For example, there is growing body of research that shows how violent video games and films help construct violent masculine schemas (Anderson and Bushman, 2001).

Interactionist explanations are helpful as they give detail on how gendered violence in young people's lives is constructed through interpersonal relations and meso-level processes. However, they do not always account for the role that deeply embedded structural inequalities supervene the social construction of violent masculinities.

Second wave feminist explanations

Focusing on the material effects of oppression is the priority of scholars such as Radford and Stanko (1994), who note that young men's violence often takes the form of sexual violence - including sexual harassment and psychological forms of violence - and is directed towards young women by young men to maintain heteropatriarchal systems of oppression (Dworkin, 1976). This leads to an analysis of gendered violence that is located within patriarchal systems of gender inequality.

Feminists influenced by the second wave have also produced socio-cultural explanations for gendered violence - for example, the idea of patriarchal terrorism (Johnson, 2017). This idea claims that young boys' attitudes and behaviours are instrumentally violent to maintain systemic patriarchal cultures through men's control of women (Prospero, 2007). Interactionist advocates for the notion of patriarchal terrorism (Johnson, 2017) note that young boys need

to be acculturated into these methods of control via exposure and the normalisation of violence against women. A part of this acculturation involves the development of misogynistic attitudes and values. Building on Akers's (2015) social learning theory of deviance, those who explain gender violence through the lens of patriarchal terrorism focus on how interpersonal relationships and institutions construct young violent masculinities (Prospero, 2007). For example, research by Barter (2009) showed that intimate partner violence - where young boys perpetrate the violence - is endemic in young people's romantic relationships. Stanley *et al.* (2018) have noted the impact of pornography on young people's experiences of relationships with both genders, noting the adverse effects of this form of media in negotiating safer sexual relations.

The strength of this approach is that it starts to show how gendered systemic inequalities frame the behaviours and attitudes of young boys. Saying this, it could be argued that the essentialising of the concept of violence as mainly a 'male problem' in concepts such as patriarchal terrorism (Johnson, 2017) can only provide a partial and incomplete analysis of gendered violence. The challenge for scholars who focus on patriarchal terrorism (Johnson, 2017) is that their analysis assumes a supervenient relationship of patriarchy with individual behaviour and attitudes. Heise (1998) has argued that the privileging of patriarchy leads to an underdeveloped analysis of the cultural and individual causal factors of gendered violence. For example, patriarchal terrorism negates the role that more subtle and symbolic forms of gendered violence play in the enactment of patriarchal violence. It also under-recognises the effects of factors on the individual level - for example, the impact of substance abuse amongst perpetrators and victims (Heise, 1998). The essentialising of gender and adolescence is problematic as it assumes that behaviours and attitudes are fixed and universal. This has been troubled by third-wave feminists (for example, Butler, 2004) who highlight the complex processes of social construction that produce nuanced practices of gendered violence.

The Feminist Integrated Ecological Framework

Some of the challenges for second-wave feminist scholarship described above are addressed by Heise's (1998) feminist integrated ecological framework. The primary purpose of the framework is to relate individual and contextual factors and overcome reductionism whilst keeping the power analysis of second-wave feminist theorising (Heise, 1998). The task of the Feminist Integrated Ecological Framework is to explain the causal relationships between these various levels of analysis. Heise (1998) designed the Feminist Integrated Ecological Framework as a meta-analysis tool that seeks to link disparate research findings on the nature of gender-based violence. It has since been used as a methodological tool (see Finigan-Carr *et al.,* 2018). The framework starts from the position that there are four embedded levels of analysis. The ontogenetic (or individual) level focuses on factors such as biological pathologies or the impact of trauma or substance abuse in the perpetration of gendered violence. It then explores how the ontogenic level is caused and influenced by factors at the micro (or interpersonal level), alongside factors in the ecosystems, such as the role of poverty in causing factors at both the ontogenic and micro levels. Finally, factors from the macrosystem - such as patriarchal behaviours and attitudes - supervene the other levels, thus infusing a power-centred feminist analysis within the framework.

An application of this approach to gendered violence affecting young people is provided by Conroy (2013), who uses the framework to explain the relationship between developmental factors of sexual violence perpetration - for example, stress response - with the impact of adolescent peer pressure alongside feminist analysis that focuses on heterosexist norms. The study also adds the ideas of gender and sexuality policing, which can be seen as macrosystemic factors. The strength of the Feminist Integrated Ecological Framework is that it enables a comprehensive analysis that can be translated into workable interventions (Heise, 1998). However, there are limitations as it does not adequately account for how each level relates, which means it can be descriptive. This means that factors at one level might be given more attention than those at another.

Critical, Intersectional, and post-structural explanations

Intersectional, critical, and post-structural explanations disrupt the essentialism of the explanations appraised so far. Intersectional scholars of gendered violence affecting young people explore the intersections of gender and age oppression (Lombard, 2016) alongside other intersections - such as race and sexuality - to explain young people's experiences of gendered violence. For example, O'Brien (2016) provides an account of how intersections of socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, race, and geographical location construct young people's experiences of both domestic violence and form the barriers to accessing service provision. Whilst this approach to intersectional analysis helps show how matrices of oppression (Collins, 2017) intersect, it is limited by the reliance on gender essentialism that fixes gender to the sexed body as the starting point of analysis.

The field of critical gender studies provides an alternative intersectional explanation. Scholars such as Connell (2009) demonstrate that masculinity and femininity are socially constructed in relation to one another. The importance of this approach is that it argues that different forms of masculinity and femininity are produced through social practice and that gendered and heterosexist violence is part of the productive process (Connell, 2009; Messerschmidt, 2019; Hearn, 1998). An example of this scholarship - produced by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) - is where violence is normalised in the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity as a social practice. Importantly, heterosexuality is maintained as normative, where any deviation from the heterosexual norm is policed with violence (Connell, 2009; Messerschmidt, 2012).
This is noted by Lombard (2016) who states that:

"Femininity and non-hegemonic masculinities are defined as weak, and violence and aggression are normalised and prioritised as key elements of hegemonic masculinity" (p.2)

Critical gender studies scholars have turned their gaze towards violence directed towards the feminine, regardless of the sex of the victim of the violence. This phenomenon has been coined as femme-phobia and is part of the violent regulation of hegemonic masculinity (Hoskin *et al.,* 2024).

Moreover, Messerschmidt (2012) argues that the violence of girls can be explained as 'doing' a form of 'bad girl' femininity that also reproduces the heterosexual order. The view that violence is an essential component in the social construction of dominant forms of masculinity and femininity is helpful as it maps how a comprehensive conceptualisation of gender violence is normalised and performed to maintain material inequalities of hetero-patriarchy, with the mediating influence of other social and cultural processes.

The argument of critical gender studies scholars is crucial as it grounds the analysis in a non-reductive conceptualisation of gender. Violence, in this sense, is essential in the production of dominant forms of masculinity and femininity rather than being necessary to the male and female biological psyche. This is demonstrated well by Mac an Ghaill's (1994) description of how the discursive practice of masculinisation takes place within broader school practices - which then reproduce heterosexual and patriarchal material oppressions alongside racial oppression (Back, 2004). Another example comes from Sundaram (2013), who demonstrates how young people's conceptualisations of acceptable and unacceptable forms of violence are produced through gender norms. Lombard (2016), adopting a similar approach, notes that violence is constructed through complexity - the complex interplay between spatial-temporal dynamics and gendered inequalities. The limitation of some of these critical approaches is found in the assumption that masculinity and femininity are enacted on the 'natural' sexed male and female body, which oversimplifies the performative nature of gender (Butler, 1996).

Butler (2013) focuses on the analysis of violence through the lens of precarity. This perspective starts with a nonessentialist conceptualisation of gender. For example, Butler (1990) and Halberstam (1998) demonstrate how the social construction of the sexed body leads to specific gender performances beyond the sexed body. Butler (2004) used a comprehensive conceptualisation of violence to demonstrate that some gender performances are more precarious than others and prone to violent reactions. For example, the gender performances of transgendered and gender-diverse young people are often met with violence in the broadest sense, as shown by the UK homicide and hate crime figures. This is noted by Carerra-Fernandez *et al.* (2018), who show

that those who transgress gender norms in Spanish school settings experience bullying. Microaggression studies (Sue, 2010) also demonstrate how symbolic violence and psychological violence combine to affect those who transgress gender norms based on the sexed body (Nadal *et al.,* 2016).

Butler's (2013) assertion that direct and symbolic violence can be directed towards those who transgress gender norms is a beneficial way of showing how a fluid and non-deterministic notion of gender can be combined with a comprehensive conceptualisation of violence that does not fall into deterministic victim/perpetrator logics. It is in this notion that gendered violence that affects young people can be analysed without resorting to essentialism and arbitrary narrow definitions of gender, while acknowledging both discursive and material elements of gendered violence. Therefore, in this view, violence may be used to maintain power - in a Foucauldian sense - and is often enacted as everyday happenings, such as the practices in the home or performances of professionalism (Hearn, 1998). The challenge of this post-structural explanation is that it still assumes a supervenient relationship between the discursive and material, where the discursive overlays the material. This is addressed by the new wave of feminist scholars focusing on a flat ontology of gender-related violence (Fox and Alldred, 2022).

Sociomaterial enquiries

Sociomaterialism starts from the position that social reality is produced through complex interactions between material and discursive practices (Barad, 2003). Feminist New Materialism adapts Barad's agential realism (Barad, 2003). As understood by Deleuze, agential realism is fused with a Spinozian monist flat ontological stance (in Fox and Alldred, 2023). Here, the focus is ontological emergence rather than causality or supervenience (Schatzki, 2016). For example, Fox and Alldred (2016) show how young men's sexualities are produced through an analysis that "shifts the focus away from bodies and individuals, toward the affective flows within assemblages of bodies, things, ideas, and social institutions." (Allred and Fox, 2016:6). Other studies explore young people's 'phematerialist' sexual violence activism (Renold and Timperley, 2023) and education practice (Ringrose *et al.*, 2020).

Another example of scholarship from this stance in the theme of gender-related violence is the notion of “affective violence” (Hook and Wolfe, 2018). Drawing from Barad’s agential realism and Butler’s notion of “renormalisation” (Hook and Wolfe, 2018:4), the focus is on how heteropatriarchal material-discursive forces affect the body (Hook and Woolf, 2018:4). In this view, affective violence attaches itself to everyday practices where it:

“*…renormalises regulatory patriarchy, not as exterior force of repression, but as a phenomenon of non-linguistic affective violence produced within everyday modes of living where ‘things’ are already always in hierarchical relation. This rethinking of ‘force’ is a purposeful shift away from the binary interplay of autonomous beings in conflict of power and resistance*” (Wolfe and Hook, 2018:2-3).

Here, affect is conceptualised not only as individualised emotion but as:

“*eternal objects that are real but not actual…Affect is the somatic shadow of another entity on the body where the body is affected; it is scarred, shaped, or marked (consciously or unconsciously). Bodies respond differently to his marking as they interact; emotion is expressed as this marking. Emotion is a situational (conscious or unconscious) response to others based on contextual histories as an improvised, stylised, appropriate, social response to affect (for example, boys don’t cry)….Intra-actions that produce affects are not predominantly linguistic of symbolic but determined by receptivity of encountering bodies that beckons particular material responses. The opening up to affirmative movement illustrates how boundaries of categories shift and move.*” (Wolfe and Hook, 2018: 3).

Fox and Alldred (2022) apply this approach to conceptualise gender-related violence as a sociomaterial-assemblage with local affect economies (Fox and Alldred, 2016). The focus on affect and micropolitics is helpful as it shows how power circulates in social ‘events’ without falling into the trap of ontological causality and supervenience.

New Materialism, with its flat ontological focus, offers a unique opportunity for exploring the complex entanglements that produce gender-related violence in the form of assemblages. This is because an analysis can be applied at any scale alongside an analysis that breaks down dualisms such as agency/structure, culture/nature, and victim/perpetrator (Fox and Alldred, 2022).

The argument to anchor a conceptualisation of gender-related violence as assemblage offers the opportunity for a more nuanced and complete understanding of gender-related violence that brings together numerous and diverse strands of thought.

How can youth work disrupt Gender gender-related violence?

What is youth work?

To adequately answer this question, it is necessary to acknowledge that youth work is a contested field of practice, praxis, and research (Grace and Taylor, 2017; Seal, 2016; Jeffs and Smith, 2010; Cooper, 2018; Pisani, 2023; Davies, 2010; Seal, 2016). Cooper (2018) recognises that youth work definitions shift within local and global, social, political, and economic contexts that manifest as policy. This includes shifting sociological conceptualisations of youth (Bradford, 2012). There is, therefore, a continuous debate about the boundaries of the definition of youth work, its practices, and its praxis (Batsleer and Davies, 2010; Davies, 1999; Davies, 2018; Pisani, 2023; Seal, 2016). Even though youth work can be considered a border pedagogy -pedagogy that takes place in many occupational and geographical settings (Coburn, 2010) - it is essential to note that not all work with young people can be considered youth work (Batsleer and Davies, 2010). There is a lively debate in the field as to where the boundaries and borders rest (see Davies, 1999; Davies, 2018). To unpick the conceptual complexity and boundaries of youth work, it is therefore necessary to critically appraise its practice and praxis as it develops as a professional discourse that arises from specific historical, political, and economic conditions (Batsleer and Davies, 2010). These construct youth work as both a pedagogical and welfare practice, albeit with different emphases depending on context (Jeffs and Smith, 2010; Cooper, 2018). Professional discourses give rise to specific practice traditions of youth work (Cooper, 2012).

Davies (1999) describes how the early foundations of youth work are found in Victorian liberalism and are aligned with developmental psychology and sociological functionalism (Cooper, 2018), which constructed youth work as an enabler of adolescent character development (Davies, 1999). In this sense,

youth work aims to integrate young people - particularly working-class young people - into society (Davies. 1999). This gave rise to organisations such as the Scouts, whose activities were designed to enable (a sometimes militarised) citizenship, healthy living, and conformity (Cooper, 2018). Voluntary youth workers in this view were seen as role models for becoming good citizens (Cooper, 2018), and youth work is set in the voluntary sector with no state support (Davies, 1999). Challenges to this form of youth work arise in the post war era and a shift in perspective to acknowledge the human rights of young people and children as documented in the Universal Declaration of Human rights (1948) alongside the change from voluntarism to the social democratic post war settlement that gave rise to the welfare state (Davies, 1999).

Bradford and Cullen (2014) document the development of youth work through the post-war welfare settlement that shifted youth work as a driver of young people's empowerment (Cooper, 2012) through Community Development (Butters and Newell, 1978) and institutional reform (Butters and Newell, 1978) that developed what Bradford and Cullen (2014) call a 'romantic humanist tradition'. Here, the interpretivist and social democratic purposes of youth work were developed, focusing on participation and association and locating work with young people in their communities. This is often aligned with humanist psychology (Seal and Frost, 2014), which focuses on the holistic development of young people (Cooper, 2012). Notably, youth work was no longer confined to the voluntary domain but extended as part of the state. Finally, youth work became professionalised at this point (Davies, 1999). One critique of this youth work tradition is that it does not adequately deal with social power relations and at times runs the risk of youth work reproducing power inequalities (Jeffs and Smith, 1990).

Batsleer (2021) shows how youth work in its romantic humanist form was built on by social movements such as the feminist and black liberation movements that gave rise to the anti-oppressive youth work tradition. This tradition has its roots in humanist critical pedagogical praxis (Seal and Frost, 2014; Cooper *et al.,* 2015) with its foundations heavily embedded in the scholarship of critical educationalists such as Paulo Freire (1996) and Bell Hooks (1996). The focus here is on a critical materialist ontology of youth work (Seal, 2016). Anti-

oppressive youth work continued to see the peer group and the community as the location for learning and challenging oppressive authority (Seal, 2016; Batsleer, 2021). Practitioners in this tradition are critical of romantic humanism's uncritical adoption of the concept of community and adopt a more critical view of youth in community structures (Belton, 2009). In this sense, the pedagogical purpose of youth work is to create opportunities for learning from discontent (Batsleer, 2021) and enable a youth work praxis of hope (Seal, 2016). This requires youth workers to engage in critical reflection to understand power dynamics in their practice (Fook and Gardner, 2007).

A key feature of this anti-oppressive and radical praxis is the rise of separate youth workspaces for oppressed groups such as women and LGBT+ people (Batsleer, 2021). In these 'defensive spaces' (Batsleer, 2021), youth workers and young people can grow without infringements from heterosexist patriarchal systems of impression. Anti-oppressive youth work is complemented by those who deploy a radical and Marxist vision of youth work that is critical of capitalist social structures (Belton 2009; Belton, 2010;l de St Croix, 2016). The pedagogical focus is also to develop critical consciousness (Seal, 2016). The challenge for the anti-oppressive and radical traditions is that they can lack philosophical coherence (Seal, 2016). Seal (2016) has argued for a critical realist approach to theorising youth work. When aligned with a critical realist point of view, practitioners focus on developing essential consciousness amongst young people, powered by a pedagogy of hope (Seal, 2016).

Bradford and Cullen (2014), de St Croix (2016), McGimpsey (2012), Davies (2018), and Batsleer (2021) argue that the current policy regime that is founded on neo-liberalism has challenged the social democratic and critical pedagogical traditions of youth work fundamentally, giving rise to a youth work practice infected with ideological perspectives at odds with its core purpose (Taylor *et al.,* 2018). The impact of Neo Liberalism includes a deconstruction of youth work services and a reassembling of them in line with neo liberal orthodoxy, often combined with a sociological functionalism (Bradford and Cullen, 2015; McGimpsey, 2012; Davies, 2018). Permeating this approach are the economic and social conditions of austerity (Davies, 2018) and the prevalence of new managerialist organisational practices (de St Croix, 2018) that have challenged

the principles underpinning the interpretivist, social democratic, and anti-oppressive traditions of youth work (Batsleer, 2021).

Youth work practices based on neo-liberalism and functionalism are heavily critiqued as moving youth work away from its roots to the point that it can no longer be called youth work at all (de St Croix, 2016). This critique has led to push back from the critical/radical and feminist traditions of youth work, who see the purpose of youth work as freeing young people of the effects of neoliberal functionalism (Taylor *et al.*, 2018; de St Croix, 2016; Batsleer, 2021). This includes a resurgence of radical approaches (de St Croix, 2016) and an attempt to reconceptualise youth work as critical social pedagogy (Hatton, 2018). In this conceptualisation, youth work relies on phronesis - or practical judgment (Ord, 2017; Belton, 2009) - to help it navigate an ethical way through its various tensions, such as those between individualism (autonomy) and communitarianism (Seal and Frost, 2014), and pragmatism and idealism (Seal and Frost, 2014). Key to this is reflective practice and continuous learning (Trefla, 2018).

Pisani (2023) argues that youth work practice and praxis must free itself from the confines of humanism and embrace the 'post-human condition'. This means that youth work praxis might be extended beyond its humanist roots and address the enmeshment of neoliberal capitalism, with the oppression of young people alongside post-human concerns such as climate breakdown. This involves a movement towards a sociological analysis founded in New Materialism that grants ontological status to the more-than-human in the production of youth work praxis (Pisani, 2023). In this view:

"a critical posthuman approach to youth work might also challenge the dominant paradigm that youth work remains primarily concerned with people. A critical posthuman approach to youth work requires a radical repositioning of youth. This decentring simultaneously expands ethical accountability beyond the human and individualist autonomy, creating assemblages of human and non-human others" (Pisani 2023: 711).

This is a welcome addition to the conceptual terrain as it allows for a more nuanced conceptualisation of youth work that sees praxis as a complex

assemblage of human and non-human materiality. This extends the youth's work relational praxis (Pisani 2023).

Therefore, youth work is a complex creature full of tensions, dilemmas, and theoretical and philosophical conflicts (Seal and Frost, 2014; Cooper, 2018). This has led some, such as Seal (2016), to argue that attempting a universalist definition of youth work is undesirable. Despite this, Seal and Harris (2016) have described standard features that help boundary youth work as an informal form of critical and social pedagogy. They note that youth work is:

"*an active, experiential, and associative process and values the small group as a resource for development and learning as well as an aspect of citizenship with many potential (and potentially conflicting contributions to political democracy youth work in the UK retains a desire, in theory, to draw on the strength of group collaboration to facilitate critical inquiry. UK youth work still stresses the importance of remaining voluntary/ free: young people are engaged based on informed choice and consent ….. This principle underpins the democratic nature of the curriculum, although there have been strong debates as to the suitability of the concept of curriculum in a youth work context*" (Seal and Harris 2016:78).

This broad critical conceptualisation of youth work delineates youth work as a form of critical pedagogical practice, along with other types of work with young people, such as formal teaching, social work, occupational therapy, and what Alldred, David *et al.* (2014) and Cooper-Levitan and Alldred (2022) term 'youth practice'. Youth practitioners may borrow from youth work practice but do not sign up to the philosophies and values of youth work as documented in the work of Banks (1999), Jeffs and Smith (2010), Batsleer and Davies (2010), Young (1999) Seal and Frost (2014) and Cooper (2018). This conceptualisation also views youth work as a site of struggle against functionalist-neoliberal conceptualisations of youth work (Batsleer, 2021). It could even be argued that a primary purpose of critical, social pedagogical youth work praxis is to change neo-liberal realist practices that are unjust and harmful to young people (Kemmis, 2022). When applying a sociomaterial lens to youth work, it could be argued that it is a socialmaterial relational process rather than based just on the rational judgement of professionals (Fenwick, 2016; Pisani, 2023). This argument calls for youth work to be reconceptualised as part of a post-human project where

human and non-human intra-act to produce an affect economy (Fox and Alldred, 2016).

Why is it important for youth work to disrupt gender-related violence in the UK?

There is little empirical research into gender-related violence in the UK in general. Sadhu *et al.* (2023) researched South Asian women's experiences of gender-related violence, and Cooper-Levitan and Alldred (2022) documented how youth practitioners could translate training on gender-related violence into action. Even though this included some youth workers, the focus was not specifically on youth work practice but on general work with young people. In the GAP WORK Training study (David, Alldred *et al.,* 2014), resources were created to enable practitioners to implement the training (Cooper-Levitan and Alldred, 2022). They also concluded that more research was needed into how a critical praxis could be developed in the professional contexts of the participants on the GAP WORK Project, including youth workers (Cooper-Levitan and Alldred, 2022).

Despite the lack of research into the specific role that youth work plays in tackling gender-related violence, gender-related violence continues to present itself in the lives of young people and youth workers. It is also clear in The National Youth Agency's occupational standards that a core purpose of youth work is to:

"*Actively demonstrate commitment to inclusion, equity and young people's interests and health*" (National Youth Agency Occupational Standards 2020:8).

The impact of gender-related violence on young people's lives in the UK and the lives of those who support them is documented widely, and challenges youth work to live up to these values. For example, the ONS (2019) noted that women aged 16-34 were more likely to experience forms of gender-related violence than women aged 35 and over. The ONS (2019) also reports that 13,787 young girls accessed Childline telephone and online counselling services for trauma relating to sexual abuse. Ofsted (2021) noted that 90% of girls in schools have experienced sexualised behaviour and 92% have experienced sexual harassment.

Women teachers also reported experiencing and witnessing a high prevalence of harassment from both pupils and colleagues, pointing to forms of cultural and symbolic violence being endemic in the school system. A poll from the NASUWT Union recorded that 70% of women teachers in Scotland experienced misogynistic school cultures, including inspired sexist bullying from young boys and misogynistic harassment from adult colleagues (NASUWT, 2023). Although not quantified in the same way as these reports, Cooper-Levitan and Alldred (2022) note that youth practitioners participating in the GAP WORK Project reported an elevated level of gender-related violence.

The recent focus on historic accounts of childhood sexual abuse - for example, the Jimmy Savile scandal - highlights the cultural embedment of violence against women and girls in the UK (Jay, 2014). In addition to this, numerous reports have highlighted the institutional failures of support for young girls in cases such as the Rotherham child sexual exploitation scandal (Jay, 2014). As part of this, professionals were responsible for not acting early enough to prevent harm. It could be argued that this is an example of structural violence.

The Stonewall School report (2017) notes that 45% of transgender young people experience bullying, and 53% of non-gender-binary-identified young people. The report also notes that 35% of bisexual students have experienced forms of bullying related to their sexual orientation. It has also been recorded that young LGBT+ people from ethnic minority and faith communities are more likely to experience forms of gender-related violence. It has been noted that violence between young men often has a machoistic heterosexist purpose (Rivers, 2010). This is again highlighted by the Stonewall schools report which notes that a substantial proportion of young people experience LGBT+ bullying as they are perceived by their peers to be non-heterosexual or not cisgendered which is often not the case. There is also a growing body of research illuminating the impact of public sector cuts on services that support victims of gender-based violence (for example, Durbin *et al.*, 2017). This again suggests a structural impact of gender-related violence against women and young girls, as well as LGBT+ individuals and young people.

Seal and Harris (2016:25) also make a strong case for the youth worker's role in responding to violence. They argue that youth work "offers young people a

developmental pathway to experience alternatives to violence. Everything from work with parents, early intervention in schools and youth work settings, even casual conversations between pairs, could feasibly be argued as contributions to the personal social development of young people and thereby mitigate the risk of involvement in crime or violence." Therefore, youth work can be seen as educational primary prevention of gender-related violence, which moves away from a deficit model (Ellis and Thiara, 2014).

Disrupting gender-related violence through youth work

Despite the scarcity of studies addressing gender-related violence and youth work, insight can be gained from the wider educational studies and youth work literature. This comes mostly from critical and feminist youth work scholars and Phematerialist education scholars alongside practitioners and activists.

The role of youth work in responding to violence was researched by Seal and Harris (2016). They offer insight as to how youth work enables desistance amongst young people and argue that all forms of violence can be addressed by youth work and that it is ethical, relational, and critically reflexive. Drawing from critical theory, psychosocial criminology, and existential philosophy, they argue that youth work responses occur at four levels. At the personal level, conversations take precedence in the learning process, and the role of the youth worker is to model non-violence. At the community level, youth workers engage in Ethnopraxis to help communities identify and respond to violence. At the structural level, youth workers address symbolic and structural violence in young people's lives. This includes deploying organisational processes that move from surveillance to sousveillance, the process of resisting state surveillance activities (Seal and Harris, 2016). Finally, at the existential level, youth workers help young people to navigate the meaning of their past experiences and to free themselves from shame and guilt relating to violence and crime.

This comprehensive analysis helps demonstrate how youth work enables young people to move away from violence as they grow and develop, thanks to its distinctive features. Seal and Harris's (2016) limitations are that they base their

analysis on a humanist philosophy of youth work rather than the posthuman praxis espoused by Pisani (2023). Therefore, there is a lack of analysis of the vital role of non-human materiality in youth work responses to violence.

The No Outsiders research project (Depalma, 2011) and Sundaram's (2013) scholarship addressed the effects of gender normativity and heteronormativity in a school context and argue for a feminist pedagogical disrupting of the norms that underpin gendered violence. Firmin (2014) argued for the importance of gender proofing anti-violence work in the policy-making process with young people. This gives priority to young people's gendered lived experiences, particularly young women, in the policy-making process. This study is essential in highlighting the need to build gendered analysis and ethos of participation into work with young people on violence. Although helpful in providing a gendered and critical analysis that is closer to the definition of gender-related violence advocated for here, these scholars are not specifically writing about youth work, but rather formal and community education.

Alldred and David (2007) document how youth work benefits young people by focusing on young people's sexual agency when delivering sex and relationship education. This is helpful because it offers direct evidence of how youth work operates when addressing issues akin to gender-related violence. Batsleer (2015) maps how feminist theory can be used in youth work to disrupt gender normativity and heterosexism (Batsleer, 2012). This is achieved by producing youth work that addresses the effects of heterosexist capitalist patriarchy (Batsleer, 2021). This is achieved by deploying feminist pedagogy as the focus of youth work (Batsleer, 2018). For example, Batsleer (2018) highlights how gender audits can help practitioners see equal relationships between boys and girls when deploying resources in a youth work context (Batsleer, 2018). Troubling sexist gender relations is another priority of feminist youth work (Batsleer, 2018). In this, young people of different genders are encouraged to reflect on gender norms and roles critically and construct different, more liberated identities free from the influence of neoliberal capitalism (Batsleer, 2018). Therefore, the feminist youth work approach creates space that is free from heteronormativity and sexism.

Batsleer (2018:16) notes that:

"shared spaces for boys and girls come at the cost of intensifying the pressure to conform to fairly conservative heterosexual norms which silence same-sex desire and make masculinity active and femininity attractive, nurturing, and attentive."

Youth work that is Open Access can disrupt this because activities can be taken up by anyone of any gender, which troubles oppressive gender regimes within the youth work context. A final feature of feminist youth work practice is valuing difference - where young people are encouraged to think creatively about gender and sexuality (Batsleer, 2018). Underpinning feminist youth work is a reflexivity that draws on the radical tradition of youth work that seeks to destabilise neoliberal functionalism (Batsleer, 2021). As a part of this, youth workers build a community where role modelling is achieved through peer association alongside the youth worker relationship. Fundamental to all this is a youth work ethic of care prioritising relationships and people over performative measures (Batsleer, 2018).

The work of feminist youth work scholars, practitioners, and activists lays a fundamental foundation for the enquiry. This is because the main priority of youth work in this frame is to trouble normativity in all its forms and the economic, social, and political conditions that enable the oppressive effects of neoliberal functionalism. The limitation of this approach is that it draws heavily from feminist humanism. From a post-humanist perspective, it is necessary to empirically attune youth work to the complexities of human and non-human Intra-actions, which can add new insight into how youth work can disrupt gender-related violence. The challenge is that little empirical work has been produced from the post-human youth work praxis perspective.

Scholars from the field of educational studies have started to explore youth studies themes from the perspective of Feminist New Materialism. Several studies in this cohort give direct insight into disrupting gender-related violence through sociomaterial Intra-actions. Mendes *et al.* (2019) document the use of technology in combating gendered violence through a sociomaterial lens. Returning to the field of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), Ringrose *et al.,* (2020:259) used creative methodologies as part of an intra-activist research-assemblage to disrupt "humanist, male-dominated, phallocentric, penile centred

relationships and sex education" This deployed creative arts-based pedagogies to create Play-Doh vulvas and clitorises and diversifying Relationships and Sex Education in the process. This showed "how young people's understanding of genitalia can be reconstituted discursively, materially, and affectively" (Ringrose *et al.,* 2020:260). A second activist orientation here was to help girls navigate lived experience of receiving unsolicited 'dick pics' by enabling resistance to harassment in digital spaces (Ringrose *et al.,* 2020:260). Renold and Timperley (2023:1-2) also used creative methodologies to explore themes in Relationships and Sex Education. Working in a school setting, they developed "Crush Cards" (Renold and Timperley, 2023) to help young people navigate through complex gender-sexuality-assemblages." This work was purposefully LGBT+ inclusive (Renold and Timperley, 2023) The work of Phematerialist research collaborations (Ringrose *et al.,* 2020) is a valuable starting point in exploring how gender-related violence is affected and disrupted by youth work. Although they do not address the gender-related violence-assemblage and youth work directly, they offer helpful post-qualitative and innovative methodological and conceptual insights. Phematerialist scholars also give insight into resistance and transformation of the post human condition (Pisani, 2023), exemplified by themes such as gender-related violence. Locating the following empirical chapters in this emerging paradigm can enable youth work to engage with the sociomaterial complexities espoused by Phematerialist scholars.

Chapter Summary and questions for enquiry

This chapter has engaged with a wide range of the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical literature that gives insight into the role that youth work can play in disrupting gender-related violence located in the lives of youth workers and young people. In doing this, the need for a comprehensive conceptualisation of gender-related violence in the second, third, and post-humanist waves of feminism has been established. This chapter has also explored explanations, understandings, and impacts of gender-related violence, arguing for the utility of critical sociomateriality as a new way of thinking about gender-related violence. Specifically, I have advocated for a conceptualisation of gender-related violence

as complex sociomaterial-assemblages as espoused by Feminist New Materialist scholars (Fox and Alldred, 2022). Next, definitions of youth work have been explored, and I have argued for reconceptualisation of youth work as critical post-human praxis (Pisani, 2023) concerned with the post-human condition. Finally, this chapter has appraised how educational and youth work activities can disrupt gender-related violence. In doing this I have appraised critical, feminist, queer, and Phematerialist scholarship. This lays the foundations for an inquiry on how youth work is affected by and can affect gender-related violence through a Feminist New Materialist lens. This translates into the following questions for enquiry:

1. How do the sociomaterial components of gender-related violence affect youth work, young people, and youth workers?
2. How does norm critical, feminist, and queer youth work disrupt gender-related violence affecting youth work, young people, and youth workers?

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

Introduction

This chapter starts with a general discussion on methodology, method, ethics, and quality as relevant to my research questions. I do this by locating this study in the Critical (Kemmis and Carr, 1986) and Sociomaterial (Fenwick, 2016) research paradigms (Lather, 2006). I justify my choice of deploying a sociomaterial version of Critical Participatory Action Research (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014) as the process for data collection. The analysis procedure took place in two phases. The first phase explored what enabled and constrained youth practitioners to tackle gender-related violence. These were used in the second phase of the process that explored the research questions from a New Materialist-assemblage analysis perspective using concepts such as re/de/territorialization (Fox and Alldred, 2022). In addressing issues of ethics, validity, and quality, I specifically focus on the specific ethical concerns of participatory research as outlined by Banks and Brydon-Miller (2018) that determine the quality of a Critical Participatory Action Research process. This lays the foundations for the chapters that follow.

Critical Sociomaterialism and methodology

Ontology is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with the nature of the reality (Cohen *et al.,* 2002). Researchers who come from a realist ontological position contend that there is an observable reality that is independent from the observer (the researcher) (Letherby *et al.,* 2012). In this view there is a universal 'truth' that is not dependent on the context in which the phenomenon is being observed (Cohen *et al.,* 2002). Relativists disagree with realists by arguing that there is no independent 'truth out there' independent of the observer/researcher. This means that reality is constructed in multiple ways depending on social context, and experientially (Braun and Clarke, 2013). In this view, there is no universal truth but as many truths as there are researchers. Another ontological debate centres on the relationship between ontological components. Here there are three approaches: causality, supervenience, and emergence. Causal and

supervenient ontologies assume a hierarchical relationship between components, whereas emergence assumes a flat relationship (Schatzki, 2016).

There are also different understandings of what constitutes valid and ethical knowledge, and how it is produced and presented (Cohen *et al.,* 2002). This relates to the epistemological branch of philosophy (Cohen *et al.,* 2002). Epistemological stance is important as it determines what constitutes valid knowledge and influences the methods of data collection, analysis, and validation. If the researcher adopts a view that knowledge is universal and fixed, then and neutral observer position is adapted akin to the natural sciences (Cohen *et al.,* 2002:6). On the other hand, if the researcher adopts a position that truth is constructed through historical and social processes and is contextual in nature, this requires closer interaction with research participants and, as a result, reflexive consideration of the researcher's positionality as a tool in the production of knowledge. This in turn has implications about how ethical research is carried out.

Lather (2006) argues that there are several social research paradigms, each with their unique set of ontological, epistemological, and ethical tools that are deployed to produce knowledge of the social world. Positivists, start from a realist ontological and epistemological stance. They borrow from the natural sciences by using quantitative and mixed methods tools and process to predict relationships and outcomes (Lather, 2006). The positivist paradigm starts from the assumption that knowledge creation occurs through technical-rational scientific methods. It is objectivist and values causality in its ontological orientation (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2017). Theory and fact are separated and the role of research within this framework is to verify or falsify ‘truth’ through observation and standardized procedures and instrumentation (Cohen *et al.,* 2002). The researcher is neutral in this process and detached from the object of research. Positivists value quantitative over qualitative methods and statistical over textual data (Cohen et al., 2002). Interpretation plays no role in this form of research (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2017). Critiques of positivism centre around the notion that what is known cannot be separated from the knower, that all ‘facts’ are interpreted, consciously or unconsciously by the researcher. As such, positivism does not provide a holistic analysis of the complexity of social phenomenon, which includes

multiple forms of knowledge that is constructed in context alongside an analysis of how power relations influence the production of knowledge (Kincheloe, 2005).

Interpretivists mostly start from a relativist ontological stance and constructivist epistemological vantage point and use qualitative and ethnographic methods to understand and interpret the social world (Lather, 2006; Cohen, 2002). Interpretivists address the criticisms of positivism - notably the positivist focus on ontological objectivity and the universal truth of positivist knowledge claims (Cohen *et al.,* 2002). Interpretivist approaches are critical of positivism's claim that fact is independent from theory and advocate thick description of social phenomenon from a subjective and naturalist standpoint (Cohen *et al.,* 2002). An important aspect of interpretivist perspectives is that emphasis is placed on the construction of reality through historical, cultural, and discursive dynamics. As such, there can be multiple interpretations of any phenomenon (Cohen *et al.,* 2002). These perspectives focus on how context and social interaction construct what we know to be reality. Interpretivists are sceptical about using standard verification and standardisation to analyse social phenomenon. In this view, it is not possible, nor desirable to separate the researcher from the object of research (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2017). Interpretivism values qualitative, in-depth analysis of small numbers of cases. Validity and reliability are subject to the researcher acknowledging their role in the process through their reflexive positions (Cohen *et al.,* 2002). One critique of interpretive/naturalistic perspectives is that they do not adequately address the role that power dynamics - in particular, dynamics of race, class, sex, gender, sexuality, and disability - have in the research process.

Critical, poststructuralist, and postmodernist theorists - for example Critical constructivists (Kincheloe, 2005); Critical realists (Seal, 2016); Feminists (Lather, 2003); Post-Structuralists (St Pierre, 2000); Queer Theorists (Butler, 1996); and Post-Colonial theorists (Spivak, 1996) - have the epistemological goal of making visible power inequalities and affecting social transformation (Lather, 2006). Kincheloe (2005) has noted that critical research transcends disciplinary boundaries and do not always agree on the nature of reality or the dynamics of

knowledge production. Critical perspectives exist in various forms and can be placed on a continuum that includes critical realist (Archer, 2016) - where the goal is to uncover casual mechanisms - to contextualist/constructivist (Kincheloe *et al.,* 2015), and post structuralist/postmodernist (St Pierre, 2000) who focus on the social construction of reality to varying degrees (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2017). Critical perspectives tend to prefer qualitative and participatory approaches, although some feminist and critical realist studies may use mixed methods (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2017).

What threads through all these paradigms detailed so far is a commitment to humanistic enquiry - that is, commitment to a transcendental ontology based either on causality or supervenience (Schatzki, 2016). More recently, it has been argued that there has been a paradigm shift to from humanism to a critical post humanism and socio- materialism (Fox and Alldred, 2016; Murris, 2021). The distinctive feature of Critical Post Humanism and Sociomaterialism is a focus on an emergent, flat, relational ontology rather than a transcendent causal ontology (advocated by Critical Realism) or supervenient ontology (Fox and Alldred, 2016). In this, both human and non-human materiality is afforded ontological status (Kemmis, 2023). It could be argued that manifestations within this paradigm such as Feminist New Materialism (Fox and Alldred, 2016) share a focus on transformation with critical theories and make visible power dynamics and instigating social transformation (Fox and Alldred 2016). Therefore, it is noted that this family of approaches can be seen as being unified through an entangling of ontology, epistemology, and ethics that, in this view, cannot be separated - unlike the humanist and transcendental perspectives discussed above (Fox and Alldred, 2016). There are many approaches that fall under the Critical Post Humanist Sociomaterial family and there are many controversies as to the exact boundaries of the paradigm (Fenwick, 2016). Murris (2021) notes that this bigger family of sociomaterial approaches includes Feminist New Materialism (Fox and Alldred, 2017; Ringrose *et al.,* 2019) post qualitative research (Murris, 2020). Others, such as Nicolini (2012), also include Posthuman practice theory (Gherardi, 2016) and Kemmis' (2019) Theory of Practice Architectures, amongst others.

Nicolini (2012) distinguishes between sociomaterial approaches that adapt a residual humanist or agential realist ontological stance. Residual Humanism (Nicolini, 2012) limits the vitality of non-human materiality. Others utilise Agential Realism (Barad, 2003) as a starting point to argue that both human and non-human materiality are seen as lively and vital (Murris, 2020). The focus for agential realists is on assemblages of human and non-human materials and an analysis that focuses on affect within these (Fox and Alldred, 2016; Gherardi 2016).

There is a lively debate within the critical sociomaterial paradigm's literature on methodology and method (Fox and Alldred, 2022). Writing from an agential realist perspective, St-Pierre (2021) argues for a complete post qualitative reconceptualisation of method. Here, it is argued for a new lexicon of research to be used that troubles the current positivist and qualitative hegemony in an increasingly neo liberal academy (Murris, 2021). Others such as Kemmis *et al.* (2014) - writing from a residual humanist perspective - and Fox and Alldred (2022) - writing from an agential realist perspective - argue that qualitative data and ethnographic processes can be successfully analysed through a sociomaterialist lens. In practice, this means that there are many tools that can be used for data collection and analysis (Fox and Alldred, 2022). For example, those more aligned to St Pierre (2021) advocate for post qualitative, creative, and participatory methods - for example arts-based data collection as seen in Ringrose et al. (2019). Others, such as Fox and Alldred (2022), argue that qualitative data, collected in a manner that enables sociomaterial analysis, adds value to critical sociomaterial methodology.

Critical Sociomaterialism is an appropriate methodological framework for this study as the research questions are interested in how the sociomaterial components of gender-related violence affect youth work and how the sociomaterial components of youth work can disrupt gender-related violence. The study is also concerned with social transformation and change, a concern shared with approaches such as Kemmis's (2023) practice theory and Feminist New Materialism (Fox and Alldred, 2016). These two approaches are particularly useful for this study as they focus on everyday events and practices such as youth work and gender-related violence.

A Critical and Sociomaterial Participatory Action Research design

Background to the study

The foundations of the research design are in The GAP WORK Training research project (see Alldred and David, 2014). This sought to evaluate training for youth practitioners that enabled them to identify and respond to gender-related violence in young people's lives (Alldred, David *et al.,* 2014; Levitan and Alldred, 2022). The GAP WORK Training Project designed and distributed resources that youth practitioners could use to cascade or transfer their learning into the sites of practice that participated in this study. These were introduced as part the third day of the training (Alldred, David *et al.,* 2014). During this third day, practitioners were invited to create action plans for taking their learning into their organisations (see Alldred, David *et al.,* 2014). This was followed up during the summer of 2014 when participants were recruited for this PhD study from the pool of participants from the GAP WORK Training Project (Alldred, David *et al.,* 2014) and the Centre for Youth Work Studies as a follow up to the GAP WORK Training Project. The overall aim of my doctoral research was to further support practitioners to develop youth work practice based on the learning from the GAP WORK Training Project (Alldred, David *et al.,* 2014). An outline of the overall research design is provided here and discussed in more detail in the next chapter where the nuances of the participatory nature of the process are illuminated and discussed in depth.

Why Critical Participatory Action Research?

Action research has its roots in practical philosophy and focuses on the primacy of practical knowing and being, and therefore fits the practical knowledge interests of this study (McNiff, 2017). Action Research was first developed by Kurt Lewin (1946) and involved outside researchers observing and recording cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and re-planning (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014:9). During the last century, several versions of action research evolved with their own knowledge interests and ontological and epistemological orientations (Huang, 2010; Kemmis *et al.,* 2014). All the approaches share a

commitment to the generation of new practical knowledge. The focus of investigation is the action itself.

The main epistemological claim of action research is the primacy of action and practice. Hillary Bradbury Huang (2010:93) notes that:

> *"Action research is an orientation to knowledge creation that arises in the context of practice and requires researchers to work with practitioners. Unlike conventional social science its purpose is not primarily or solely to understand social arrangements but also to affect desired change as the path to generate knowledge and empowering stakeholders. We may therefore say that action research represents a transformative orientation to knowledge creation in that action researchers seek to take knowledge production beyond the gatekeeping of professional knowledge makers. Action researchers do not readily separate understanding and action rather we argue that only through action is legitimate understanding possible; theory without practice is not theory but speculation."*

One form of Action Research - Critical Participatory Action Research - fits the critical onto-epistemological stance of this study as it is interested in how reality is produced as the result of contextualised social and material dynamics. The main aims of Critical Participatory Action Research are to explore:

"Social realities in order to discover whether social or educational practices have untoward consequences." (Kemmis et al., 2014:16)

This form of Critical Participatory Action Research is compatible with critical orientation of this study as it is concerned with the role of power and social transformation (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014).

Feminist Participatory Action Research (Reid *et al.,* 2006) scholars are critical of the gender neutrality of traditional Critical Participatory Action Research and of the assumption Critical Participatory Action Research makes - that actions must affect structural change to be successful (Reid, 2006 in Seal and Harris, 2016:50-51). It has been noted by Feminist Participatory Action Research scholars, such as Reid *et al.* (2006), that smaller local actions also affect

change and are legitimate. Here a Foucauldian notion of power is used that focuses on practices and resistance to oppression (Seal and Harris, 2016:51).

Kemmis *et al.* (2014) extend this idea by arguing that change occurs in everyday sociomaterial practices that form the unit of analysis in Critical Participatory Action Research. The approach involves practitioners engaging in collaborative learning about their practices that are defined as being made up of doings, sayings, and relatings that are affected by the cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political conditions. Here, non-human materiality is seen as part of the composition of practices in a passive rather than agentic manner (Frid, 2021). Transformation occurs through transformation of practices (Kemmis, 2023). This reconceptualises Critical Participatory Action Research from within a critical sociomaterial framing.

Kemmis' critical sociomaterial participatory action research (2019) is useful for this study because it locates social change in sociomaterial practices and acknowledges the affective capacity of political, cultural, economic, and social conditions. However, this theory is limited by its use of an ontological stance of residual humanism that renders non-human materiality as passive, rather than vital (Frid, 2021). Scholars such as Gale (2013), Gherardi (2016), and Frid (2021), writing from an agential realist perspective argue that practices can be viewed as sociomaterial-assemblages comprised of bodies, discourse, and non-human materiality. To extend this, it could be theorised that these assemblages contain specific affect economies (Fox and Alldred, 2016) of intra-actions between doings, sayings, human relatings, non-human relatings, and the social, political, economic, and environmental conditions that affect these social material practices. The task of a Critical Participatory Action Research process in this theoretical formation becomes to identify these intra-actions (Frid, 2021). Therefore, this study uses Kemmis *et al*. (2014) as a starting point - focusing on social material practices as the unit of analysis. However, like Gale *et al.* (2014) and Frid (2021), sociomaterial practices are seen as a vital part of a sociomaterial-assemblage (Fox and Alldred, 2014) where sociomaterial components intra-act with each other to produce gender-related violence-youth work-assemblages.

A gender-related violence-youth work-assemblage can be defined as an enmeshment of the sociomaterial components of gender-related violence and Youth Work. In these assemblage formations, the sociomaterial components of gender-related violence assemblages plug into youth work-assemblages to produce a larger gender-related violence-youth work-assemblage in a web of complex intra-actions. These intra-actions produce a localised affect economy (Fox and Alldred, 2016). For example, sexist discourses that comprise part of a gender-related violence-assemblage can intra-act with a youth work activity such as a youth work conversation and a youth work building (manifested in the lay out or visual messaging) and have a psychological affect on a young person by regulating them in line with sexist social norms. Mapping the gender-related violence-youth work-assemblage becomes the focus on enquiry, and this illuminates complexity.

Data collection

Who took part in the Critical Participatory Action Research?

Four organisations - two that participated in the GAP WORK Training Project and two that aligned with the centre for youth work studies - opted into the PhD research. In relation to confidentiality and anonymity, consensus was sought within each organisation as to how they wanted to be named. It was decided that individuals would choose their own pseudonyms and each group of practitioners would choose a pseudonym for their organisation - an ethical process that borrowed from de St Croix (2016). The aim here was to give some ownership to individuals in each site as to how they would be presented (de St Croix, 2016). Because of the participatory nature of the project, different practitioners opted in at different points of the process. The details of who participated from each site and when is outlined in the next chapter. Overall, 27 practitioners across the four sites participated in this Critical Participatory Action Research project.

The first organisation to opt in was EastShire - a partnership between a county fire service in the Midlands and a large national youth charity. EastShire's lead practitioner had participated on the GAP WORK Training Project. The service

supported young people in four post-industrial towns and covered a large rural area. Activities were run from the local fire stations in each of these towns. EastShire's work was primarily focused on young people aged 16-25 years not in education, employment, or training. The partnership was formed as part of the 'Big Society' agenda. This was one of the flagship social policies of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government that involved a greater role for the private and third sector in the delivery of public services, including youth work (Davies, 2019). The main purpose of the youth work pedagogy at EastShire was to enable these young people to develop life skills to enter the workforce and become 'active citizens'. EastShire was managed by a partnership manager named Kieran. A team of coordinators from the national youth charity led on the youth work with support from volunteer youth workers from the fire service. The activities included a life skills curriculum designed by the national charity alongside work experience placements and holiday camps. Funding for the partnership came from the local crime reduction unit, the county local authority, and trusts and foundations.

Pride LGBT Youth is a youth and community work organisation serving the young LGBT+ community of Greater London. Pride opted into the study via the Centre for Youth Work Studies. It is a separatist LGBT+ space, with a feminist and queer pedagogical orientation. At the beginning of the research, Pride was primarily funded as part of a collaboration between two London boroughs and Public Health England. It is staffed by a team of full-time professional youth workers and a large cohort of sessional staff. Young volunteers aged 18 and over who have benefited from being members of Pride also volunteer, as do young adults. Activities include: a weekly youth club; sexual health and counselling services; non-formal educational workshops based on a co-designed curriculum; 'inclusion' work in schools and the community; and holiday activities including a large summer camp. Activities took place in the youth centre which was in the north of one of the partnership boroughs and attached to a library. At this time, Pride also facilitated rainbow clubs (known in other contexts as gay-straight alliances) as part of their school's work. This activity took place in 12 schools across the city. The youth centre was also running Continuous Professional Development programmes for teachers, youth

workers, and community work professionals. Pride's funding situation changed during the process when it lost its funding and had to set itself up as a charity.

Aspire was founded as a Community Interest Company (CIC) in a South London locality around 2006. They signed up to the study via the Centre for Youth Work Studies. Through local community fundraising, the Director, Zomi, and her team raised funds to open a youth centre on the grounds of an old post office. Aspire's activities included: an open access weekly youth club; non-formal life-skills workshops (for example, cookery and comedy classes); sporting activities; holiday provision; and children's activities. Aspire was staffed by two youth workers, Martin Luther and Rubi, alongside Zomi and other sessional project staff.

Tikkun was an international Jewish youth movement with a large UK and Ireland branch. The process at Tikkun was started by Golda who had attended the GAP WORK training at Brunel University London. Golda's work role was to support the welfare of Jewish young people across all the Jewish youth organisations. Tikkun ran weekly youth activities in Jewish community buildings including synagogues and community centres. They also ran a series of summer activities for young people of different ages including a large summer camp for children aged 9-15 and a summer tour of Israel for young people aged 16.

Written permission was gained by the leadership of each of these sites to participate in each phase of the project.

The data collection process

Huang (2010: 103) notes that a hallmark of quality action research is that research "methods and processes are articulated and clarified." The methods and processes used need to be made explicit throughout the action research process. This includes ensuring that data collection tools are fit for purpose and that there are explicitly explained processes and procedures for analysing data (McNiff, 2017). In relation to data collection methods, sociomaterial Critical Participatory Action Research collects evidence on sociomaterial practices

(Kemmis *et al.,* 2014) and the conditions that affect them (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014). This can include a wide range of textual data - for example, observations, interviews, documents - as well as visual data - such as teaching and learning resources, teaching, and learning artefacts and sketches, descriptions, and pictures of learning environments (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014). A summary of the data collected in each phase is detailed in table 1. The data collection process for this study borrowed heavily from the process for Critical Participatory Action Research used by Kemmis *et al.* (2014). The three phases of data collection are detailed below.

Phase one involved recruiting participants to take part in a "public sphere". The aim here was for the public sphere to identify a shared concern for mutual investigation; to collect and analyse evidence on how gender-related violence was present in the youth work in each site; and to start appraising how youth work could disrupt gender-related violence. The first phase of the Critical Participatory Action Research study involved investigating existing practices with the aim of identifying instances gender-related violence alongside strategies designed to disrupt it. This process is called 'reconnaissance' (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014:89). During this phase, a critical reflection team was formed in each site. The critical reflection team was tasked with deciding the specifics of the research process for their sites (this is detailed in the next chapter). In practice, phase one involved two methods of data collection. The first method involved collecting data from 5 orientation interviews. These interviews asked what enabled and constrained practitioners to disrupt gender-related violence in their setting. The interview schedule is provided in the appendices. Orientation interviews were selected as the method in dialogue with the practitioners because the conversational, unstructured, and conversational nature was seen as familiar to youth work processes. The prompt questions were sent to those who had volunteered to be part of the process so that they understood the focus of the interview and could feed into it if they so wished. All the interviews were transcribed and checked by the practitioners and stored online and in hard copy (see appendix for an example of an interview schedule). It was also decided that these interviews would help

identify the next stage of data collection. Therefore, informed consent was initially sought for these interviews only with an understanding made with the ethics committee that further approval would be sought once the collection methods for the next phase were identified. After the interviews were completed, each critical reflection team decided on the process for further reconnaissance data collection in each site. This involved collecting more evidence through a series of critical reflection workshops. These workshops involved identifying critical incidents (Fook *et al.,* 2015) of gender-related violence in youth work and plans for youth work interventions that can disrupt it. This phase ended with each site planning practice changes to address the issues of gender-related violence raised during this process. These "joint areas concerns" (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014: 89) are detailed in the next chapter.

Phase two involved implementing changes to existing practices. This was a creative process where practitioners used youth work as a method to disrupt gender-related violence. This involved the design and implementation of 13 actions that are described in detail in the next chapter. Overall, 13 observations and 17 debrief interviews (see appendices for schedule) containing critical reflections were collected during this phase, alongside 14 documentary artefacts.

Phase three comprised of evaluating the sustainability of the new youth work practices. This final phase occurred once the entire plan at phase two had been implemented. The aim here was to evaluate the ways in which the practice changes help to tackle gender-related violence with and amongst young people in each site.
This took place in the form of 7 debrief interviews with practitioners in each site.

Data was stored online password-protected as well as in hard copy at Brunel University locked in a cupboard.

Site	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
EastShire	1 orientation interviews 2 critical reflection workshops	4 observations, 6 debrief interviews 4 documentary artefacts	2 debrief interviews
Pride LGBT Youth Centre	2 orientation interviews 1 critical reflection workshop	4 observations, 5 debrief interviews. 4 documentary artefacts	3 debrief interviews
Aspire	1 orientation interviews 1 critical reflection workshop	3 observations, 4 debrief interviews. 4 documentary artefacts	1 debrief interview
Tikkun	1 orientation interview 2 critical reflection workshops	2 observations, 2 debrief interviews 2 documentary artefacts	1 debrief interview

Table 1: An overview of the data collected in each phase of the study in each site.

Ethics and Validity in Critical Participatory Action Research

It has been noted that what constitutes appropriate ethics and valid knowledge creation is dependent on epistemological starting points (Lincoln *et al.,* 2011). Adhering to ethical principles and values become the litmus test for ethical and valid Critical Participatory Action Research (Banks and Brydon-Miller, 2018; McNiff, 2014). As such, ethics and validity are linked in Critical Participatory Action Research (Banks and Brydon-Miller, 2018). It could be argued that there are two types of ethics that need to be considered in valid Critical Participatory Action Research (Banks and Brydon-Miller, 2018). First, there are ethics associated with accountability (Banks and Brydon-Miller, 2018). This is the form of ethics that ethics committees are concerned with. Here ethical considerations focus on risk assessment for harm. Banks and Brydon-Miller (2018:2) note that the elements of this form of ethics include "respect for rights to confidentiality, consent privacy, and protection of research subjects' informants." A summary of the risk assessment for this research is detailed in table 2.

According to Kemmis *et al.* (2014:159), there is an ethical imperative in Critical Participatory Action Research to ensure that the physical, psychological, and cultural integrity of the individuals and groups are protected as part of the process. In relation to this research project, a few risks needed to be considered. Firstly, there is a risk that people who have experienced gender-related violence might be re-traumatised by reflecting on it in relation to their practice (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014). To mitigate this, participants were informed at the first stage about the process and given the chance to reflect on whether participation was appropriate for them. Furthermore, I included a list of support organisations on the participant information form for people to access if they felt the need for extra support. Cultural sensitivity was also needed as we reflected on gender norms and assumptions as this might be uncomfortable for some people. To mitigate this, the nature of the reflection process was explained clearly at the first meeting so that individual practitioners could make an informed decision to participate or not.

Stringer (2007) notes that there is a ‘snowballing’ organic extension of participation in Critical Participatory Action Research. The decision to extend participation was led by each lead practitioner. Each lead practitioner mapped out who should be involved in the process and invited them to join with the understanding that participation in the research was not mandatory. Saying this, some managers did instruct staff members to attend training workshops associated with the action part of the research as part of their Continuous Professional Development. In this case, careful consideration was given to gaining consent for the research parts of the project. Those who did not want to participate in the research were asked to state their names at the beginning of the research activity and their data was then not used in the analysis.

Critical Participatory Action Research is a research approach that requires that group processes are non-oppressive and inclusive. As such, group dynamics were facilitated carefully. This required a high level of critical self-reflection from all practitioner researchers (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014), including myself. To facilitate group dynamics everyone is involved in the process in order to assure a non-oppressive experience for all involved. Anti-oppressive research approaches need to respect and work with organisational processes and systems (Groundwater-Smith *et al.,* 2007), so encouraging ‘buy in’ was important. Moreover, individual need and the identities of practitioners need to be respected. To do this, senior managers helped design the process and everyone was asked to inform me of any support they need to complete the process due to their individual circumstances (for example, being a carer). Individuals were reminded that they can withdraw from any aspect of the process at any time or join the process if they wish.

There was also a risk that participants would perceive that there is extra workload from participating in the process. To mitigate this risk, the process was designed so that it fitted into existing work plans. I spent time with each director and manager exploring the boundaries of participation in research activities so that the process would not take away resources away from young people. As such the data collection activities were designed in a way to maximise participation whilst ensuring that practitioners do not need to take responsibility for data management and processing activities unless they opted into this.

Finally, I included opportunities to disclose if they have a concern about the research process. Participants were instructed to inform their line management of any issues who then informed me face-to-face in a confidential manner. Participants were also able to get in touch with my PhD supervisors if they had any concerns. Space was also created to inform of concerns during the group and individual debrief activities.

Ethical approval from Brunel University was granted in two phases because of the participatory nature of the research. Phase one of approval focused on the orientation interviews and was granted in 2014. The second phase of the research was applied for once the participatory design for phases two and three was agreed by participants and included the observations and documentary artefacts. An amendment to the original protocol was granted on the 13th of January 2015 (see appendices). Participant Information forms were given to each participant alongside consent forms (see appendices).

Ethics in the context of Critical Participatory Action Research considers a second group of considerations that focus on elements such as collaboration, inclusion, and respect for epistemological diversity (Banks and Brydon-Miller, 2018). Ethical considerations in this layer include the quality of reflexivity (Bradbury, 2010), and partnership, collaboration, and power (Banks and Brydon-Miller, 2018: 8). This means that how partnerships are instigated and negotiated needs to be made visible. Specifically, agreement needs to be made regarding timelines, expectations, and power regarding decision making and inclusion/exclusion criteria (Banks and Brydon-Miller, 2018). Secondly, careful consideration was given to group dynamics and conflict management (Banks and Brydon-Miller 2018, Kemmis *et al.,* 2014).

Table 2 Ethics risk assessment

Nature of risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
Inequality of access to due mode of participation	Low – Medium	- Building this into my critical reflection/ reflexivity process
Psychological harm	Medium	- Briefing meeting to explicitly state that we will be reflecting on gender-related violence - Adding support organisations to PIS - Ensuring 1-1 and group support process are in place for practitioners who have concerns
Organisations and practitioners not completing the process (e.g. staff turnover)	Medium – High	- Clear timetable for completion of the project - Review levels of participation and amend research design accordingly - Flexible process so new people can join easily
In appropriate and oppressive group dynamics	Low – Medium	- Careful facilitation of group dynamic - Regular review with practitioners - Group contract Process for reflecting on concerns

Positionality and Critical reflexivity

Making visible positionality in all parts of the research process is vital for ethical and valid Critical Participatory Action Research (Brydon-Miller *et al.,* 2003, McNiff 2014). McNiff (2017) notes that researcher positionalities shift at different stages of the action research process. This makes it important to make the positionality of the researcher explicit during each stage. Moreover, to be congruent with my critical positioning, it was necessary to explicitly consider how my shifting social positions relating to gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status in relation affected relationships and the quality of the knowledge produced (McNiff, 2014).

To accomplish a critical reflexivity, I drew on Fook and Gardener's (2007) process for critical refection. The focus here was to put power and privilege centre stage in the reflective process and to make ethical adjustments based on this critical reflexivity. This involved a process of deconstructing assumptions and power dynamics and reconstructing more inclusive and just ways of acting and researching (Fook *et al.,* 2015). The result of incorporating a critical reflexive positionality is that everyone involved in the process - including myself - was changed fundamentally (Brydon Miller et al., 2003). This is discussed more in the final chapter.

Participation, partnership, and action

Huang (2010) notes that the validity of an action research project is dependent on making visible participatory processes in the initiation and management of partnerships and collaboration in the research process (Huang, 2010). Herr and Anderson (2005:51) note that there are six forms of human participation. Each are distinguished by the positionality of the co-researchers in any action research project. The least participative is co-option. In this form, participation is tokenistic, and participants do not have any real power over the process. Research is 'on' rather than 'with' or 'for' the participants. Next there is compliance. In this mode, an outside researcher leads the process with input from insiders (Herr and Anderson, 2005:51). Paternalistic in nature, participation is 'for' rather than 'with'. Next there is consultation (Herr and Anderson, 2005). Here, local opinions are asked, and

outsiders analyse data and decide on a course of action. In other words, research is 'with' and 'for' rather than 'on' (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014). Cooperation (Herr and Anderson, 2005) involves insiders and outsiders working together, although the process is still led by the outsider. Co-learning (Herr and Anderson, 2005:51) is more democratic and involves insiders and outsiders "sharing their knowledge to create new understandings and work together to form action plans with outside facilitation". The final mode of participation is collective action (Herr and Anderson, 2005; 51), where the process is directed by insiders without outsider involvement. All of these modes of participation were evident at different points of this study. Once again, this is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Kemmis *et al.*, (2014) argue that one of the distinguishing features of Critical Participatory Action Research is the attention to democratic participation in the form of a public sphere - a space where "communicative action" can take place (Kemmis, 2006; Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014). Communicative action is situated between co-learning and collective action on the continuum described above. Public spheres seek to ensure that the research is "considered legitimate and valid by the researchers themselves" (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014:36-43). As part of this it is vital that quality action research articulates joint and agreed upon objectives. Moreover, it needs to be clear as to what constitutes an action in the specific contexts of the research. There needs to be agreement on shared social action outcomes and constraints in relation to resources and sister institutional systems. Actions need to introduce new practices that affect change (Huang, 2010).

It was my initial aim to get as close as possible to the type of public sphere described by Kemmis *et al.* (2014) as I believed it was necessary to find consensus in decision making at all stages of the process. There was, however, a concern raised by some practitioners that a focus on complete consensus could cover up genuine and productive disagreement and silence minority voices. Therefore, a productive and constructive attention to conflict and diversity of views was built into the notion of a public sphere. Theoretically this was accomplished by incorporating Nancy Fraser's (1999) critique of Habermas's public sphere into the process. Fraser's feminist reconceptualisation of the public sphere promotes

diversity - in particular, voices that might be excluded or made invisible in the public sphere.

So far, the discussion on partnership, participation, and collaboration has centred on humanist understandings. To bring these concepts in line with the agential realist foundations of this study, it is necessary to extend participation to the non-human and more than human elements of the research-assemblage (Fox and Alldred, 2022; Frid, 2021; Gale, 2014). This renders all materiality as generative in the Critical Participatory Action Research process. This was acknowledged as part of the data collection and analysis process of this research, where non-human materiality is given equal status in the process. For example, observations included details of physical spaces and the affective compacities of these were analysed as part of the analysis process.

Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis and interpretation focused on identifying the sociomaterial components of both gender-related violence, norm critical, feminist, and queer youth work alongside the affect economies of gender-related violence-youth work-assemblages (Fox and Alldred, 2016). This was accomplished in two phases. The first phase deployed Template Thematic Analysis (King, 2012) where general themes were identified on the question of what enables or constrains youth workers to disrupt gender-related violence. Template Analysis (King, 2012) was chosen because it allows for analysis to take place using differing types of data; whereas Braun and Clarkes's (2006) process is designed primarily for textual data (King, 2012). King (2012) notes that undertaking Template Analysis involves an abductive process of using *a priori* themes and constructing emerging themes over numerous applications of the thematic template. This abductive process was useful for this study as it allows for Kemmis *et al.*'s (2014) elements of sociomaterial practice to be used as a starting point to generate semantic and latent codes and then themes. Moreover, using Template Analysis (King, 2012) to identify sociomaterial practices was also useful as the template can be refined through the different cycles of the Critical Participatory Action Research process. Template Analysis

(King, 2012) was also deployed as the first layer of an analysis process because it could be completed in the time frame both allocated by doctoral study and accessible to the participants. In practice, this involved data familiarisation where some of the practitioners and I read the entire data set making notes of mostly semantic and latent codes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Kemmis *et al.*'s (2014) questions for analysis guided this familiarization process.

As already mentioned, Kemmis *et al.*'s analysis process (2014) is limited by an adherence to residual humanism that limits the vitality of non-human materials. This limitation became apparent once the Template Analysis was underway. Therefore, following Feely's (2020) process, a second layer of analysis and interpretation was applied after the Template Analysis was completed. This layer of analysis and interpretation explored the sociomaterial affect economy (Fox and Alldred, 2016) and, by doing so, brought the analysis more in line with an agential realist ontological framework (Nicolini, 2012). This part had no participation from practitioners as, by this time, contact had been lost because of the pandemic severing communications for the latter part of the process. This second layer of analysis and interpretation involved used the Thematic Template (King, 2012) as a starting point to identify sociomaterial components of assemblages. Once this was accomplished, intra-actions (Barad, 2003) of sociomaterial components were explored through the lens of Feminist New Materialism's concepts such as territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization (Fox and Alldred, 2023).The analysis was carried out by hand only because I found it easier to embed myself in the data this way.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the methodological approach and methods of this study. In doing so, I explained the theoretical and underpinnings of the research in an Agential Realist Critical Sociomaterialism. I also justified the use of a sociomaterial Critical Participatory Action Research process to generate data (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014). The chapter also describes the data analysis strategy that is inspired by Template Analysis (King, 2012) and New Materialist micro political

analysis (Fox and Alldred, 2023). From this I explained the criteria for ethical and quality Critical Participatory Action Research (Banks and Brydon-Miller, 2018). The next chapter describes this process as it unfolded in each phase in more detail. This lays the foundation for the empirical chapter that follows.

Chapter 4: The 'Brave Spaces' Action Research Project

This chapter outlines the specific Critical Participatory Action Research process of this study, alongside the learning that occurred as a result of participation in the project. The aim here was to weave together the story of the Critical Participatory Action research as it unfolded (McNiff, 2014). This involves detailing the actions, the research, and the processes of learning that resulted from the critical reflections on each phase (McNiff, 2017). The chapter starts with giving detail of each phase of the process. This includes specific information about the participants in each phase and a more detailed discussion of some of the ethical decisions that were made in context. This chapter also details the critical reflections and learning from each phase.

It has been noted that the process of facilitating action research can be messy and frustrating, but also a creative and inspiring process of learning (Huang, 2010; Brydon-Miller *et al.*, 2003; McNiff, 2017). This was my experience of using this methodology for my doctoral studies. Like many action researchers, it is fair to say that I changed fundamentally during this process (Brydon-Miller *et al.*, 2003). This shifting of multiple positionalities (McNiff, 2017) is outlined in this chapter and discussed in more detail in the final chapter of this thesis. During each cycle of action-research, I made decisions in relation to the complex challenges I faced with data collection, analysis, interpretation, and writing. In doing this, I came face-to-face with my position as a 'novice' or 'apprentice' Critical Participatory Action Researcher (McNiff, 2017). This chapter thus details the story of undertaking this approach to research with transparency as a guiding principle (McNiff, 2017). I do this by describing in detail the process and decisions that were made. I also describe the data collection tools for each of the actions here.

An overview of the Brave Spaces Project

The name Brave Spaces emerged from the action research process itself. The decision to use this name arises from an article by Aroa and Clemens (2023) that invites educators to be brave in their facilitation of social justice education to

ensure that normativity is made visible, and the voices of marginalised groups are prioritised in discussion on privilege and oppression. This paper was introduced to the participants at the beginning of the process and used throughout the action research as an anchor for practice. The timeline of each phase is documented in the table below:

Time frame	EastShire CIC	Pride LGBT Youth	Aspire Community	Tikkun Jewish Youth
2013-2015	Reconnaissance	Reconnaissance		
2015-2016	Implementing change	Implementing change	Reconnaissance	Reconnaissance
2016-2018	Implementing change	Implementing change	Implementing change	Implementing change
2018-2019	Evaluation and endings	Evaluation and endings	Evaluation and endings	Evaluation and endings

Table 3: Timeline of the Critical Participatory Action Research process in each site

Phase 1: Reconnaissance

Initiating the Brave Spaces Participatory Action Research project

The first organisation to initiate the Critical Participatory Action Research process was EastShire during the spring of 2013. Kieran had attended the GAP WORK training and was keen to transfer his learning to his staff and the wider partnership. Although the process here started in the autumn of 2014, it was not until the summer of 2015 that the initiation into the project started. This was because there was a significant turnover of staff at the beginning of the process and EastShire wanted to give time for the new workers to embed into their roles before asking them to take on this piece of work. Once the new staff were in place, the process started quicky without any delays due to the enthusiasm of the partnership, and the leadership of Kieran who was keen to keep momentum from his participation on the GAP WORK Project.

Next to initiate the process was Pride LGBT+ Youth. The initiation stage took place between 2013 and 2015. It started with a discussion between Duchess

(the manager of Pride) and me about queer youth work practice. During this conversation, I introduced the GAP WORK project findings and Duchess was interested in how the learning could be transferred to his team of sessional youth workers and youth work volunteers. There was then a discussion with the local authority and sessional team and it was agreed that Pride LGBT+ Youth might benefit from participation. The start of the process was delayed because Duchess and his team were in a consultation process relating to service cuts. Phase one started during this process. However there was then a significant halt to the planning process as the team responded to the news that they were to lose their funding.

Aspire Community started the initiation process after Pride LGBT+ Youth in January 2016. Aspire was a community interest company created by Zomi - an alumnus of the Brunel Centre for Youth Work Studies. Zomi had followed the story of the GAP WORK Project closely and was impressed by the resources that were produced and keen to weave them into Aspire's activities. The process commenced at Aspire in January of 2015.

The final group to initiate participation was Tikkun Jewish Youth. The initial process started in January 2015 but was halted because of staff turnover. The critical reflection team was in place by the end of 2015.

Forming critical reflection teams

The decision to extend participation from the orientation interviews was led by each lead practitioner following dialogue with their organisations. As the doctoral researcher, I gained permission from the managers and directors of each organisation to 'snowball' recruitment to participate amongst professional youth workers and youth work volunteers. In line with youth work ethical principles (Banks, 2008), and participatory research ethics (Banks and Brydon-Miller, 2018), voluntary participation was built into the whole process. Specifically, it was important that managerial pressure was not put on people to participate (Levitan and Alldred, 2023). Each lead practitioner mapped out who should be involved in the process and invited them to join with the understanding that participation in the research was not mandatory. Potential

participants were informed of the benefits of participation by me and their line managers. The main benefit of participation was that they gained for internally recognised continuouse professional development that could be completed as part of their day-to-day work. They were also informed about the ways that this project would help them to develop anti-oppressive practices and help young people. I explained that there was no extra time commitment involved beyond what they were already doing and that activities were to be built into their workplans and/or voluntary hours.

The next stage in the process in all four sites involved creating a public sphere in the form of four critical reflection teams. To get as close to a public sphere as described by Kemmis *et al.* (2014), we created two options for participation in each phase of the process that incorporated cooperation, co-learning, and collective action.

The first option was full participation. In this option, those invited from the site joined the process as full practitioner researchers. This meant that they signed a consent form for the whole process and opted to be involved in implementing the action, evidencing change, and participating in data familiarisation and member checking. At this stage it was made clear that everyone had the opportunity to join or leave depending on individual circumstances.

In the second mode of participation, those invited to take part in the public sphere were as advisors or ‘critical friends’ (McNiff, 2017). They provided constructive critical feedback on the different aspects of this process but were not involved in all the research activities. For example, they might check data analysis and contribute to critical reflections on activities. During all stages of the process critical reflection ensured that membership of the public sphere was relevant and the process as democratic as the system allowed in the setting (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014).

It was also necessary to be open and honest about the limitations imposed by the time scales of completing doctoral research. Creating this level of democratic participation was time consuming and sometimes fell short of the ideal because of constraints placed upon me by the regulation of doctoral

studies and on the practitioners by their funding environment. It also required that the dynamics of each site were carefully navigated over a long period of time (Herr and Anderson, 2014); this was complicated by high staff and volunteer turnover. It could be argued that the public sphere was forever changing and evolving rather than an anchor of stability for the process. This meant that dynamics often contained productive conflict alongside periods of consensus.

During this phase of the process, there was a lively discussion about the level of consent required from young people. The initial agreement was that young people were not to be involved directly in research processes. There was a particular concern about the time it would take to prepare the young people to participate directly and fully. After much discussion it was agreed that young people under the age of 18 could be included as part of the sphere as critical friends who could participate in member checking themes and feeding back on actions on a voluntary basis. It was also decided that young people between the ages of 18 and 25 could participate fully as many already had either volunteer roles or paid sessional youth worker roles within their organisation. From these discussions, the following critical reflection teams were formed for the phase. Overall, across the 4 critical reflection teams, 27 youth work practitioners - including young volunteers and myself as the doctoral researcher - participated in the process. The details of the critical reflection teams in each site are detailed below:

Youth Work Site	Name of the practitioner researcher and mode of participation	Role	Positionalities and motivations
EastShire	Kieran - full participation	The strategic partnership manager/ practitioner research facilitator	Age: 36 White-British Working class Professional fireperson Heterosexual man Motivation: To embed feminism and pro feminism into the partnership
EastShire	Neil - full participation	LGBT and Jewish youth work practitioner and educator and doctoral researcher and practitioner research facilitator	Age: 34 White-British of South African origin Middle class Professional youth worker Gay man Motivation: Activist-practitioner wanting to share knowledge and support the development of critical praxis
EastShire	Karen - full participation	National charity youth work team leader	Age: 52 White-British Middle class Professional teacher Heterosexual woman Motivation: to learn / Continuous Professional Development
EastShire	Lucy - full participation	National charity youth worker (qualified)	Age: 26 White-British Working class Professional youth worker (recently qualified at local university; started work as a youth work volunteer with a background in football) Heterosexual woman Motivation: To carry on her learning on anti-oppressive practice from her university studies.

EastShire	Elliot - full participation	Apprentice youth worker from the national charity and fire service	Age: 23 White-British Working class Apprentice youth worker with a large national charity Gay man Motivation: To learn as he is new to youth work
EastShire	Pat - full participation	Fireperson seconded to the project	Age: 56 White-Scottish Working class Straight woman Professional fireperson Motivation: Is very interested in social justice and thinks it's a great opportunity to develop.
EastShire	Daniel - full participation	Fireperson seconded to the project.	Age:25 White-Irish Working class Straight man Professional fireperson Motivation: learning and developing his work with young people
EastShire	Antoinette - full participation	Fireperson from a station in the north of EastShire	Age: 43 White-British Middle class Straight woman Professional fireperson
EastShire	Danny - partial participation	Young person from East Shire	Age: 15 White-British Working class Man (undisclosed sexuality)
EastShire	Fran - partial participation	Young person from EastShire	Age: 14 White British Working class Straight woman

EastShire	Tom - partial participation	Young person from EastShire	Age: 15 White-British Middle class Straight man
EastShire	Sophie - partial participation	Young person from EastShire	Age: 15 White-British Working class Bisexual female
Pride LGBT Youth	Duchess - full participation	Qualified youth worker and social worker	Age: 25 White Polish Middle class Straight man Motivation: learning and developing his work with young people
Pride LGBT Youth	Jess - full participation	Qualified children's social worker who volunteered with supporting other volunteers	Age: 25 White Working class Lesbian woman Motivation: Wants to improve anti-oppressive practices amongst volunteers
Pride LGBT Youth	Kitty - full participation	Non-qualified sessional volunteer worker	Age: 19 White Middle class Gay non-binary person Motivation: Wants to help peers experiencing gender-related violence
Pride LGBT Youth	Judy - full participation	Youth worker in training (sessional)	Age: 23 Hispanic Middle class Pansexual Motivation: wants to improve youth work practice
Pride LGBT Youth	Audre - full participation	Non-qualified sessional volunteer worker	Age: 28 Black Working class Transfeminine Motivation: Has a specific interest in disrupting transphobia

Pride LGBT Youth	Marty - full participation	Teacher managing the schools and community	Age: 32 Asian Working class Gay man Motivation: Wants to improve schools' work
Pride LGBT Youth	Jordi - full participation	Non-qualified sessional volunteer worker	Age: 20 South Asian Middle class Transmasculine Motivation: Is interested in learning how he can be a better support
Tikkun Jewish Youth	Noam - f– Full participation	University graduate worker who manages Tikkun	Age 23 White-Canadian (secular Jewish) Middle class Heterosexual man Motivation: Has pro feminist values and wants to embed feminist practices into Tikkun
Tikkun Jewish Youth	Golda -– full participation	Welfare manager for the Jewish youth organisations	Age: 25 White (Orthodox Jewish) Middle class Heterosexual woman Motivation: has a specific interest in tackling gender-related violence
Tikkun Jewish Youth	David - full participation	Young leader	Age: 18 White (Reform Jewish) Middle Class Gay Man Motivation: Is specifically concerned about homophobic and transphobic language
Tikkun Jewish Youth	Ida - full participation	Young leader	Age: 17 White (Reform Jewish) Middle Class Straight woman Motivation: Is specifically concerned about gender-related violence
Tikkun Jewish Youth	Bella - full participation	Young leader	Age: 18 White (Orthodox Jewish) Middle Class Lesbian woman Motivation: Is specifically concerned about homophobic and transphobic language

Aspire CIC	Oscar - full participation	Sessional Youth Worker (qualified)	Age: 32 Black-Caribbean Working class Straight man Motivation: Sees this as good Continuous Professional Development
Aspire CIC	Zomi - full participation	Aspire's Director	Age: 36 Black-Nigerian Working class Man (Undisclosed sexuality) Motivation: Wants to build better and safer experiences for her young people.
Aspire CIC	Martin Luther - full participation	Youth work coordinator (qualified)	Age: 38 Black-Caribbean Working class Straight man Motivation: Sees this as good Continuous Professional Development
Aspire CIC	Rubi - full participation	Sessional youth worker (not qualified)	Age: 42 White Middle class Straight woman Motivation: No specific motivation, is interested in the project.

During the first two months the critical reflection team agreed the overall data collection strategy. This included how data was to be collected, processed, and stored. This was done during team meetings in each site that were facilitated by Kieran, Duchess, Zomi, and Golda at their respective sites. In addition to the orientation interviews, it was decided that data would be collected through critical reflection workshops that focused on critical incidents, documentary artefacts (such as session plans and resources), debrief interview data, and participant observations throughout the whole process.

During team meetings participants were reassured by the organisation and managers that participation was not part of their formal performance review, and the different modes of participation were re-explained. Everyone was offered the opportunity to choose to join or leave the process depending on

individual circumstances in all three phases. Furthermore, all participants were informed that they reserved the right to access all the data to check it and that they reserve the right to ask that data (e.g. practice observations, debrief interviews) be withdrawn or amended.

Ethical dilemmas presented during this first phase that related to consent and participation. At this stage we revisited the level of consent required from young people given that participant observation would include their input. The main challenge we faced was that it was almost impossible to know which young people would be attending each session in each site due to the voluntary participation principle in youth work that each site adhered to (McGimpsey, 2016). It was also noted by some practitioners that the observations focused on practice rather than individual young people which bought up a view that consent was not necessary. It was also noted that doing this kind of youth work fitted into the National Occupational Standards for youth work (2018) and youth workers who are *in locum parentis* could give permission for young people to participate. Other practitioners argued that the participant observations required consent from the young people in some form to avoid the research being covert. Inspired by the process in McGimpsey's thesis (2012), it was eventually agreed to verbally brief young people at the start of each participant observation and gain oral permission to collect participant observations from the whole group. Young people were also asked to 'donate' any artefacts (e.g. workshop outputs) to the research. Where individuals did not grant permission, the data from the observation was not used in the interpretation phase of the process. This did lead to considerable data loss as several young people were not willing to be part of the observation part of the data collection. The impact of this is discussed later in this thesis. It was agreed that at no point in the process would service users be identifiable and this was particularly important when using critical incident vignettes as a data collection tool.

There was also a discussion about data ownership and storage. A clear distinction as made between doctoral study data (documents, interviews, reflection workshops, etc) and data that practitioners collected as part of their day-to-day work (needs analysis and evaluation feedback, personal

reflections). The doctoral data belonged to the PhD project, all other data belonged to the practitioners and organisations; although individuals could share this data in the form of a document artefact if they wanted to.

According to Kemmis *et al.* (2014:159), there is an ethical imperative in Critical Participatory Action Research to ensure that the physical, psychological, and cultural integrity of the individuals and groups are protected as part of the Critical Participatory Action Research process. In relation to this project a few risks needed to be considered. This was a concern shared by the critical reflection team was a risk that people who experienced forms of gender-related violence might be retraumatised by reflecting on it in relation to their practice (Kemmis *et al*., 2014). To mitigate this, all had the opportunity to take part in designing the process and all were given the chance to reflect on whether participation was appropriate for them.

Furthermore, I included a list of support organisations on the participant information form for people to access if they felt the need for extra support. A lesson learnt from the GAP WORK Project was that cultural sensitivity was also needed as we reflected on gender norms and assumptions and this might be uncomfortable for some people. To mitigate this, the nature of the reflection process was explained clearly at the team meetings so that individual practitioners could make an informed decision to participate or not.

Collecting evidence on gender-related violence and Youth Work

Consensus for the next stage of data collection formed around producing a GAP WORK cascading workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to transfer the learning from the GAP WORK Project - including the use of the resources that were developed and funded by the EU in the planning of new activities in each participating site. We agreed to hold a face-to-face planning meeting in each site where we would produce an outline of the workshop and use the GAP WORK Project resources as the basis for this development. Critical incidents were chosen as the method for enquiring into gender-related violence as the teams often used this technique as part of their existing debrief processes.

The ‘Gender-Related Violence Here’ workshop

Next, each critical reflection team met to gather evidence on how gender-related violence was affecting the youth work and how youth work could disrupt gender-related violence. This involved a workshop entitled “Gender-Related Violence Here”, where the workshop was both action and research (Thoring *et al.,* 2020). During the workshop the critical reflection team identified the types of gender-related violence they had experienced amongst the young people in the workshop and the specific types of youth work practices that could disrupt gender-related violence. During the workshop the practitioners narrated critical incidents vignettes (Fook *et al.,* 2015) that focused on experiences of gender-related violence and of youth work practices that they had used or envisaged developing that could disrupt it. Next, participants undertook a critical reflection (Fook and Gardner, 2006) on what enables or constrains practitioners to tackle the issues of gender-related violence raised in the first half of the workshop. This explored the forms of gender-related violence, and what normativity was underpinning these. The critical reflection took the form of a ‘thought shower’, and this constituted the data collection part for this action. Finally, the group defined a collective understanding of what good youth work practice is to tackle gender-related violence in the specific sites given the specific goals of each organisation. The data collected at this phase included the meeting notes of each workshop. An example of an outline of the workshop is detailed below:

Time	**Activity/Time**	**Facilitator/Resources**	**Data collected**
5 mins	Contracting and ground rules	Kieran/Neil	Group contract and a diary entry of the introductions
20 mins	‘Gender-related violence Here’ thought shower	Kieran/critical reflection team	Thought shower on post-it notes of types of gender-related violence in our experience here from Vignettes of practice
20 mins	Good youth work practice thought shower	Neil/critical reflection team	Thought shower on post-it notes on how youth work can disrupt gender-related violence from critical reflections

10 mins	Our collective practice response to gender-related violence.	Critical reflection Team	Meeting notes
5 mins	Check out	Kieran	Meeting notes

Table 4: ‘Gender-Related Violence Here’ workshop outline

Data familiarization, initial template analysis, member checking and planning for change

From the beginning of the process, the practitioners were sceptical of some elements of the participatory research requirements. This added an extra level of complexity when trying to achieve full participation, especially in the research aspect of Critical Participatory Action Research. It was my intention to follow Seal and Harris (2016) in facilitating the development of the Ethnopraxis of the practitioners - including their research skills. In this case, Ethnopraxis (Seal and Harris, 2016) is a research-centred orientation to working with young people and communities on gender violence. The level of participation achieved here can be described as somewhere between compliance and consultation in Herr and Anderson’s (2005) typology of participation. Some of the critical reflection teams were willing to learn research skills - such as interviewing and undertaking participant observation - whilst others were reliant on me to do the research work.

The negotiation of participation was particularly challenging in relation to data analysis and interpretation. Initially, I discussed with the participants what a participatory interpretation process could comprise of based on using Kemmis *et al.*’s (2014) analysis questions to form a simple, yet inclusive, direct interpretation of the data. However, significant concerns were raised about the time commitment for this process by practitioners - in particular, volunteers. Professional youth workers were also concerned about fitting data analysis into already pressured reporting commitments for commissioners and funders. There was an attempt to see if and how the two could fit together. This was made difficult by the often quantitative and positivistic evaluation requirements

of data interpretation required by funders that were at odds with the ethos of the Critical Participatory Action Research project. Over time, a consensus was reached regarding this issue. At each stage of the process participants were offered the opportunity to be involved in collaboratively analysing the data - specifically during the data familiarization and the formation of each phase of the thematic template. Practically this meant that I completed a draft template of themes (King, 2012) that were 'member-checked' by everyone involved. This accomplished a consultative level of participation (Herr and Anderson, 2005). The participatory intention that was articulated in the outset was significantly constrained by the policy and economic conditions in which this study took place. The funding context limited the capacity for collaboration by the time constraints on practitioners.

To aid the data familiarization process, the data was processed in the form of a collaborative research diary. From this I collated a data pack and sat with Kieran, Zomi, Golda, and Duchess to familiarize them with the data (Braun and Clark, 2006) by reading the pack and interrogating it with the analysis questions developed by Kemmis *et al.* (2014). Next, I wrote a short summary of semantic and latent codes arising from this process that were sent to the members of the critical reflection teams and I asked for feedback. I used this as a starting point to interrogate the entire data set of phase one to develop the initial template (King, 2017). This template was then member-checked and used in the next phase which involved planning changes in each participating site with the critical reflection teams. The final stage in this phase consisted of a planning meeting with the lead practitioner, followed by a meeting with all participants where we agreed the actions that we would undertake including what evidence was to be collected and by whom.

Phase 2: Implementing and sustaining change.

Changes to the critical reflection team

At the start of phase two, all members of the critical reflection team were asked to commit to the activities in the implementing change phase. There were several changes at this point that are detailed below:

Site	Name	Explanation
EastShire	Karen	Left the critical reflection team because of change in personal circumstances meant that she had to reduce her hours
Pride	Judy	Left the critical reflection team team as she stopped volunteering
Aspire	Martin Luther	Left the critical reflection team because he felt that being part of Brave Spaces was impacting his capacity to perform the managerial responsibilities of his role
Tikkun	Golda	Left the critical reflection team due to a change in job and leaving the working in the Jewish community. This meant that direct GAP WORK experience was lost.
Tikkun	Noam	Left the critical reflection team as he relocated back to Canada.
Tikkun	Shira	Joined the critical reflection team as the new Director of Tikkun. Aged 34 and from Canada, Shira identified as bisexual, white, middle class and secular Jewish. She joined as she felt it important that Tikkun address some of the issues of gender-related violence that she had witnessed.
Tikkun	Yitzi	Joined the critical reflection team as the programme coordinator of Tikkun. Aged 29, Yitzi identified as non-binary, Orthodox Jewish and white working class. They were a qualified children's and youth worker. Like Shira, Yitzi felt that there was a professional duty to address gender-related violence at Tikkun and felt strongly about the role that Jewish informal education could play in this

EastShire	Wes	Joined the critical reflection team. Wes was an experienced fire person and ex social worker, aged 52. He was from a white working class background and identified as a heterosexual man. He joined after talking to Pat about her experiences of phase one. He saw this as a good opportunity to use his experience to help with Brave Spaces and update his skills in anti-oppressive working.
EastShire	Jessica	Joined the critical reflection team. Jessica worked for the national youth charity and coordinated activities in the north of the county. She was new to the EastShire team and joined after hearing about the plans for phase two during a regular team meeting. Jessica, aged 24, identified as queer, mixed heritage with a strong Jewish faith identity. She had a youth work qualification and was planning to do further study in the youth work field
EastShire	Fred	Joined the critical reflection team as a critical friend. Fred is a young person, aged 14
EastShire	Craig	Joined the critical reflection team as a critical friend. Craig is a young person, aged 15

Overview of the Action research cycles during phase 2

Phase two involved several cycles of planning, action, and critical reflection with the aim of making progress in relation to the specific concern identified in each site at the end of phase one. These concerns were presented in the form of a joint concern that became the focus of enquiry. These are detailed below:

Site	Question summary
EastShire	How do we tackle the abuses of power and privilege that underpin gender-related violence in relation to young people's interpersonal relationships? How do we support the development of a positive non-violent masculinity?
Pride LGBT+ Youth Club	How do we create a more inclusive space that takes into account intersectional dynamics to disrupt gender-related violence?
Aspire	How do we disrupt norms around gender and sexual orientation that can harm young people?
Tikkun	How do we create a space that celebrates differences in gender and sexual orientation?

Table 5: Statements of concern

The table below documents the sequence of actions during the implementing change phase.

EastShire action-research	Tikkun action-research	Aspire action-research. Pride action-research	
Action 1 - gender-related violence Matrix	Action 2 - Youth leadership Training	Action 3 - Norm Critical conversations	Action 4 - Identity, intersectionality and gender-related violence workshop
Action 5 - Gender robots workshop	Action 6 - Brave Space Summer Camp	Action 7 - What is gender-related violence? Workshop	Action 8 - Privilege and gender-related violence workshop
Action 9 - Challenging normativity workshop		Action 10 - Disrupting gender-related violence in our community workshop.	Action 11 - Creating a 'Brave Space' club and LGBT+ community workshop
		Action 12 - Brave Space Training	
Action 13 - Brave Spaces Training			

Table 6: Actions in context

Action 1: The gender-related violence matrix

The EastShire critical reflection team developed a programme planning tool called the 'gender-related violence matrix'. The aim of this planning tool was to help practitioners across the partnership to weave norm critical, feminist, and queer pedagogy across their youth work. This action started with a planning meeting attended by Karen, Kieran, and Lucy, who made initial suggestions for the structure and the content of the gender-related violence matrix. This was followed by the collaborative development of a gender-related violence matrix

tool. Lucy led on the development of the planning tool. This started with the team sending their existing programmes to Lucy and making suggestions about which one could be used to pilot a new way of working. To solidify the group development of the matrix, a guidance document was drafted by Lucy and agreed by the critical reflection team. The matrix tool and the document were sent to the wider team for constructive critical feedback. It was decided to also member-check the tool with several alumni of the programme as critical friends. Once the tool was finalised, Kieran agreed that this would be reviewed regularly and updated, and that it would become part of any induction of new staff. The critical reflection team then zoomed into appraising their employability workshops and redesigned them to include the new content. Finally, members of the critical reflection team designed three workshops for young people that would become the next set of actions. The data for this action included the matrix planning tool itself, the new session plans and debrief interviews with members of the critical reflection team.

Action 2- Youth leadership training

The Tikkun critical reflection team developed a youth leadership training programme for young people aged 14-16 that ran weekly activities for children and young people aged 12-13 across the local chapters of Tikkun. The planning of the youth leadership involved Shira, Yitzi, Bella, Ida and David who co-designed the programme with me. This involved a Zoom meeting where we revisited the learning from the ‘Gender-Related Violence Here’ workshop. From this we agreed three themes that would underpin the training. These were:
Theme 1 - What is gender and sexuality?
Theme 2 - What is gender-related violence and what does it mean in our club?
Theme 3 - Tackling gender-related violence here.

Yitzi and Bella then worked with representatives from each local chapter to design the content of the leadership training. In doing this, they used the GAP WORK resources as a guide. This was shared with other Jewish youth organisations to get critically constructive feedback as critical friends. The youth leadership training workshops were then delivered by the critical reflection team to over 200 young people. This is one instance where gaining consent for

participant observations was difficult. Therefore, the data for this action consisted of individual and group debrief interviews with members of critical reflection team and the workshop plans.

Action 3: Norm Critical Conversations

These conversations were planned and held by Oscar, Zomi, and Rubi at Aspire and the critical reflection team at Pride during phase two of the process. During the planning of the phase two actions, the team highlighted the importance of weaving norm critical, feminist and queer discourses into the ordinary conversations that practitioners were having with young people. They hoped that these conversations would enable the group to role model language that disrupted gender normativity specifically. This started with the critical reflection team mapping potential points of engagement with young people during club nights and workshops where the conversations would take place. The team then agreed norm critical narratives that could be used in conversation - such as destabilizing the gender binary and assumptions of gender roles. The critical reflection team then put this into action over a period of a month. For example, Rubi engaged a group of young people in conversation and impromptu activity around gender stereotypes. The young people involved in these conversations gave verbal agreement for participant observation to take place and these were undertaken by myself and Zomi. Other data in this action included a debrief interview with the critical reflection team.

Action 4- Identity, intersectionality and gender-related violence workshop

This action was created by the Pride team with Jordi leading its development. The workshop went through different stages and drafts with the whole critical reflection team inputting. The aims of the workshop were to enable the young people to:

- Identify elements of gender-related violence in their lives.
- Identify differences and similarities amongst LGBT+ young persons.
- Understand the importance of embracing difference and how this can disrupt gender-related violence.

- Tackle gender-related violence through understanding how intersectional dynamics can underpin gender-related violence and undermine personal growth.

Twenty young people voluntarily attended the workshop that was held on the youth club evening. The workshop used the metaphor of a tree as an example of how different components of individual identity makes a whole person. The main activity of the workshop was for each young person to create a tree that represents them. This was followed by a discussion on how gender-related violence can disrupt the growth of the trees and what can be done to prevent this. The data for this action consisted of the session plan and debrief interviews. A small group of young people consented to taking part of in participant observations and these young people were grouped together. They also consented for their trees to be used as documentary artefacts.

Action 5 - Gender Robots workshop

The Gender Robots workshop was planned by Lucy at EastShire for twelve young people, aged 13, at one of the satellite community fire stations that also hosted a youth club. The workshop was planned to last an entire programme day (5 hours).

Lucy led on the planning. The aims of the workshop were for the young people to:

- Learn to assess their strengths and weaknesses in relation to employability, and to value individuality.
- Challenge gender stereotypes at work, therefore tackling gender-related violence.

The activity was delivered by Antoinette, Daniel, and Lucy. It started with Lucy giving instructions to young people for drawing a robot. Antoinette then asked the young people to feedback on their learning from the drawing activity and the discussions of famous robots that performed specific work roles. Next, the practitioners and the young people engaged in a dialogical conversation that explored the ‘gender’ of the robots and a discussion of the gender stereotypes that could be identified for each specific robot. Lucy then introduced an academic study that explored and experiment that showed how robots are gendered by humans based on assumptions of work roles. This was followed by an appraisal of the

experiment from the young people. During this conversation, the practitioners and young people discussed gender stereotyping and its implications for the workplace. The final part of the activity involved the young people building their own robots. They were encouraged to be creative with assigning gender roles to the robot they were constructing and trouble gender stereotypes of work during this process. Finally, the young people were asked to think about how their new robots could solve some work-related scenarios. The data collected for this action included the lesson plan, participant observations (where all young people consented to participation), and a debrief interview. Artefacts were not part of data collection as no young person volunteered their work to be included.

Action 6- Brave Spaces summer camp

The Brave Spaces summer camp was initiated by Tikkun as their second and final cycle of action research. All members of Tikkun's critical reflection team were involved in this action. The overall aim of the action was to weave norm critical pedagogy into the informal Jewish education of the camp. The camp was attended by 300 young people and staffed by the critical reflection team. This included the norm critical educational content but also using norm criticality to structure the physical space on the camp. The action started with a planning workshop where issues of gender-related violence on camp were identified. This was followed by creation of some workshop content and space planning that could disrupt some of the issues of gender-related violence that had been identified. The content included programmes on consent and sexual violence, lad culture and masculinity, and LGBT+ inclusion. In relation to space, consideration as given to creating gender neutral spaces and how the space could be decorated to celebrate difference. The data collected for this action included debrief interviews and workshop artefacts voluntarily given to the research by the young people.

Action 7 and 10 – gender-related violence workshops

These actions were planned by the Aspire team, led by myself and Zomi. The purpose of these workshops was to enable young people to understand gender-related violence and identify it in the context of their youth club and

community. They were delivered by the whole of the critical reflection team. It started with addressing common misconceptions on violence. For example, it challenged the idea that violence is an action that only leads to physical harm. Next, the young people were presented with some of the examples of gender-related violence in their club that had been discussed during phase one. Young people were asked to reflect in pairs on why each example constituted gender-related violence. Finally young people were asked to identify all the good things that they were already doing to tackle gender-related violence in the club. They then wrote a social media post advocating for these things to become the norm. This was followed up by a workshop exploring how young people could tackle gender-related violence in the wider community. The data collected here included the session plans and the debrief interviews. The young people also consented to being part of participant observations.

Action 8 - Privilege and gender-related violence workshop

This was the second action designed by the Pride team. The development was led by Duchess and Jess. The final draft was agreed by the entire critical reflection team. The aims of the workshop were:

- To recognise how power inequality and abuse of privilege underpins gender-related violence how this relates to the young people.
- To challenge the young persons to empathise with each other's experiences and to confront the power imbalances that underpin gender-related violence.

Twelve young people attended the workshop voluntarily. In this workshop, the critical reflection team developed some fictional characters with specific identity traits. For example, one of the characters was a young black bisexual woman from a Muslim background. Next, young people were instructed to ask questions of this person to try ascertaining how they experience gender-related violence and the societal changes that they wanted to see that would make life better for them. There were four groups of young people who took part in this action. Once again, young people who consented to taking part in the

participatory observations were grouped together. The data consisted of the session plan, group debrief interview, and the participant observations.

Action 9- Challenging Normativity workshop

This was the final workshop that was run directly with young people at EastShire. Ten young people attended. It aimed to help young people use thinking skills to reveal their prejudicial and stereotypical views around gender and sexuality. Students explored stereotypes of different genders, of masculinity, and of sexuality. The aim was to enable them to empathise with other groups that can be stereotyped and to challenge labelling. There was then a conversation about how this applied to the workplace. This conversation included the responsibility of all work with diversity and inclusion. This workshop used different types of media to identify and challenge normativity. This included adverts and the 'Billy Elliot' movie (2000). The young people consented to participant observations which was complimented by debrief interviews and session plans. No young person consented for their work to be used as artefacts.

Action 11- Creating a Brave Space Club and LGBT+ community

This was the final action in Pride. It continued the discussion on how the young people at the club can disrupt normativity by creating a Brave Space culture. The session was facilitated by the whole critical reflection team team for thirty young people who voluntarily participated. The workshop started with an introduction to the Brave Space Principles in the form of a video created by the critical reflection team. This was followed by a discussion on how a Brave Space was already in place in the club and what could be done to improve this. Finally, the critical reflection team presented the young people with some scenarios of gender-related violence in relation to the LGBT+ community and asked them to reflect on how Brave Space principles could disrupt the normativity underpinning the scenarios. The data for the action consisted of a debrief interview and the session plans. The young people were hesitant to be part of a participant observation because of the sensitive nature of the

conversations so the decision was taken not to collect participant observation data.

Actions 12 and 13 – Brave Space Training

These actions took place in EastShire and Aspire. This training was modelled on the GAP WORK Training. The training came about as the result of critical reflections that showed that the critical reflection team teams in these sites needed to develop their facilitation skills to hold a Brave Space. Additionally, it was decided that training was needed for the new staff and volunteers who were not currently part of the critical reflection team. This was important because there had been experiences of backlash from some of the young people to the attempts of the critical reflection team to engage them in these conversations. Staff not involved in the critical reflection team were not equipped to handle these incidents themselves. The training was designed collaboratively by the critical reflection team in both sites. The training explored the definition of gender-related violence and located gender-related violence in intersectional normativity. This included a discussion of how gender-related violence manifested itself in each organization. The training then looked at the responsibility of individuals and organizations to tackle gender-related violence and some of the learning from the other actions. In this sense, this action doubled up as dissemination. Each team then put together an action plan to tackle gender-related violence. At this point invitations went out to all new members to become part of the critical reflection team for this final action.
There was significant resistance to taking part in the research part of the process. Out of 40 participants only two agreed to be part of participant observations and for their evaluations and action plans to be used as artefacts. Therefore, the data collection here was limited to the training plan and the debrief interview with Zomi and Kieran who had led the facilitation.

Updating the Template analysis

At the end of phase two, further participants were invited to be involved in updating the template. This invitation was declined, once again for various local reasons. For example, EastShire was now experiencing significant staff

turnover which meant that some of the critical reflection team were to leave the process. This had a more significant effect than was planned for, as significant knowledge of the process to date was lost. Pride found itself homeless and jumping from site to site until finally settling in their new home. It was decided that the youth workers needed to spend their time with the young people, helping them navigate the chaos. At Tikkun and Aspire, staff turnover also hindered participation. Therefore, I updated the template analysis and sent it to be member checked by the critical reflection team even if they had left the process by now. The feedback was minimal but positive.

Phase 3: Evaluation of sustainability and the final template analysis

The final phase involved evaluating the sustainability of the new practices around Brave Spaces once the learning had had time to embed. This involved final interviews some months after the implementing change phase was completed. The key feature of this phase was the huge turnover in the critical reflection team teams which meant that only 6 interviews were held. These interviews are detailed below:

Site	**Name**
EastShire	Kieran
EastShire	Lucy
Tikkun	Yitzi
Aspire	Zomi
Pride	Duchess
Pride	Kitty

The interviews were once again in depth and conversational and simply asked what was continued, what was not, and why. During phase three, the template analysis was finalised. A copy of this is in the appendices.

Positionality and critical reflexivity

My critical reflections at the beginning of the process focused primary on my positionality in the relationship building process and the quality of the research process in which the reconnaissance data was collected. In relation to my positionality during this stage of phase one, I held multiple positions that both enabled and constrained relationship building. For example, I was an insider to all four sites by being a youth worker. This made it easier for me to speak a specialised discourse (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014) and build trust. There were times where I adopted an outsider researcher positionality. I noticed that when this occurred, practitioners were less likely to engage and trust that the process would be beneficial for them. For example, when we discussed methods for collecting data, practitioners were more likely to engage with using methods that were familiar to their youth work. My critical reflections at this phase enabled me to understand how my social positions affected relationship-building. In this sense I was both insider and outsider in complex ways in each site.

My Jewish faith made it easier to build relationships with practitioners at Tikkun. I spoke the language of informal Jewish education, and this gave me credibility. They also trusted that I knew about the boundaries of interaction on what was a sensitive topic for the more religiously Orthodox. Aspire was in the part of London in which I lived which gave me an intimate understanding of the environment of the youth work and knowledge of the young people. Once again, I spoke a local language that helped to build trust and openness with Aspire practitioners. I was of similar age to most practitioners at EastShire and shared the broadly feminist affiliations of all the practitioners who opted to be part of the process. Being able to reference this affiliation in relation to the motivations to take part made building rapport and trust easier. Similarly, my positionality as an LGBT+ youth work practitioner enabled me to build relationships at Pride. I shared similar experiences of growing up queer and of supporting LGBT+ young people and these similarities aided the process.

My outsider positionalities also affected the quality of relationships during the initiation stage. In relation to Tikkun and Pride, I was significantly older than the practitioners doing the youth work as both sites adopted a peer leadership model where young people led the activities for other young people. I had to be very careful about age-based power inequalities and use some of the skills I had learnt as a youth worker to address these. For example, I was careful not to project my own experiences of doing youth work onto the conversations I was having with the practitioners. Differences in socio-economic position and race also initially affected the relationship building process with EastShire and Aspire. I had to be careful not to be a white or middle class 'saviour' and be willing to work with the practitioners from their cultural starting points. My skills as a community worker and experiences of growing up in an ethnic minority community were useful in overcoming some of these dilemmas as they arose.

Another of my positionalities that was helpful was my position as a queer and pro-feminist youth work practitioner. I was able to bring experiences and suggestions to each of the critical reflection teams in the planning of this workshop. For example, once of the concerns that arose was the need to understand inclusive language in relation to LGBT+ people. To facilitate this, I created a glossary of terms to help the practitioners orientate themselves in using inclusive language.

A point of learning related to the planning of the Gender-Related Violence Here workshop. Most practitioners were concerned with the amount of time available to run the workshop. Originally, Kieran suggested 45 minutes which was the length of the team's team meeting, and this was well received with the other practitioners. I suggested that at least two hours were needed to allow for a deeper and more critical reflection based on my learning from the GAP WORK Project. The rest of the critical reflection team were reluctant to have any more than half an hour as this would take away time from discussion on troubleshooting in relation to programme outcomes and targets. We agreed to reflect on the issue of the timings and discuss during a final follow-up phone meeting. Youth work skills - in particular, conflict management - were helpful in this instance.

During the final planning discussions, we shared openly our critical reflections on the two issues of controversy. I admitted that I had adapted an ‘expert’ position within the planning conversation, and this meant that I was not being sensitive to the time constraints and pressures that practitioners were highlighting. I noted in my diary that I had become fearful that the objectives of the research project would be overlooked to meet the neoliberal audit needs and I felt it necessary to push for a longer time. In doing this, I had positioned myself as an ‘outsider-insider’ and this had affected the public sphere. I realised that I needed to find a way of communicating the needs of the research in a language that would help the team see the benefits of the research without it becoming a drain or stressor. Practitioners were also critically reflective in this example of divergence. For example, Kieran said that he had become aware that he was thinking as a ‘manager of process’ during this conversation, and that, on reflection, there was a need to adapt his management style for this situation. We all wanted to move from an ‘official’ institutionalised positionality to a facilitative positionality for the workshop to allow for more time for his team to engage deeply and be open with us about their experiences. All these reflections show how my multiple positionalities affected the research process during phase one.

During phase two and three of the process, my insider positionality continued to help the process. I noticed that I had started to blend into each team and was collapsing the dual position of researcher and participant even further. For example, I started to dress in the same way as the practitioners and the young people were becoming accustomed to my presence on the youth work in each site. They trusted my intentions as I kept checking consent to participate. One area of concern I had was that the practitioners seemed to lack confidence to participate in the data processing activities. For example, I was often met with “I trust you” as an answer to checking transcripts for accuracy. This could have been down to my insider positionality or the reluctance of people to take part in these kind of research activities.

Gender, sexuality, socioeconomic, and racial positionalities were strongly present in the dialogue and the decision-making process during all phases. For

example, during phase one, Elliot - using his position as an LGBT+ person - fed back that gender identity had been included in the matrix planning tool document but sexual orientation missed off. He was concerned that sexuality would be made invisible in the process. I later fed back that gender expression and roles had been left off. I drew on my experiences of doing LGBT+ youth work to advocate for the inclusion of gender expression in the tool. There was some difference of opinion around where the issue of gender expression and role fitted into the matrix, and it could be argued that was based partly on the identity positions of each practitioner. Karen, Kieran, and Elliot argued that it fitted under gender stereotypes; whilst the rest of the critical reflection team argued for it to be considered as its own unit in the gender-related violence matrix. After some discussion, it was agreed to adopt a broad understanding of gender stereotyping including any gender-related violence focused on gender expression. I noted my concerns around this potentially leading to a 'deficit' stance on gender nonconforming and non-binary people. Although the critical reflection team acknowledged this as a potential issue, it was decided by consensus to keep gender expression as part of a broad unit of gender stereotyping but take into consideration my comments as part of the planning. This example shows how positionality in relation to gender and sexuality affected the process.

Epilogue

It was envisaged at the planning phase that the learning from the Brave Spaces process would be disseminated locally via podcasts, blogs, presentations, and article writing. This included disseminating the learning to key stakeholders within and outside the organisation and that this would mark the end of the formal Action-Research process. For example, EastShire intended to present findings to both the Fire Service and the National Charity with the rolling out of some of the activities nationally. Aspire wanted to create a policy on gender-related violence for the wider organisation. Pride wanted to create a blog of the learning and more training for teachers and parents. The data that was to be collected at this final stage included local dissemination documents - for example, presentations and meeting notes. This was hampered by the onset of

the pandemic. Despite my efforts to keep the practitioners engaged, the chaos that ensued meant that I lost contact with them due to the onset of the pandemic. Where contact was maintained, it was often on a personal level as they did not have time to continue with the process - including the final production of the template analysis themes and the New Materialist phase of data analysis. After the pandemic ended, I tried to contact the remaining members of the critical reflection team. I was to learn that EastShire had folded and was no longer delivering services to young people. Out of the rest of the team, Zomi and Duchess remained in post but no longer responded to my messages offering for them to check the final analysis and the write up. Therefore, the pandemic had profound effects on meeting the ethical and participatory aims of Critical Participatory Action Research (Banks and Brydon-Miller, 2018). An effect of Covid-19 was to reduce the capacity of practitioners to participate in research.

Beyond Residual humanism

During the process there was also methodological learning concerning the participation and collaboration of non-human materials in the Critical Participatory Action Research process (Frid, 2021). During all the phases described above, I became aware of how non-human materials were present and active in the research process. I noted detailed descriptions and sketches of the places where the workshops were taking place in my diary; how transport could be an enabler or hindrance of the research process; and the process of enabling the critical reflection teams to disrupt gender-related violence in their setting. For example, I noted how extended debrief conversations happened in the car on the way back to the station and on the tube. I would ask permission to note down these conversations as I found that practitioners were more open in these informal environments than the more formal interview setting. The GAP WORK resources also played a role in the data collection, as did the set-up of the room - the tables, the chairs, the PowerPoint slides, and the chairs - and, as above, a virus or series of viruses. Post-it notes enabled ‘thought showers’ to take place and flip chart paper hosted the workshops. This aided the data collection process. This shows how these materials participated fully in the

research collaboration in this Critical Participatory Action Research project (Frid, 2021).

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter described and reflected on the Critical Participatory Action Research process in detail, highlighting the messiness and innovation that defined the experience of doing this research. This included a description on the participation and collaboration of non-human materials in this research process.

Chapter 5- Analysing The gender-related violence-Youth Work Assemblage

Introduction

This chapter documents the results of the assemblage data analysis and interpretation process. This process is another example of what Kemmis *et al.* (2014) call an Empirical-Philosophical approach, where the analysis is grounded in the data yet theoretically informed by Feminist New Materialism. It starts a discussion around the usage of assemblage as the unit of analysis for this study (Feely, 2020; Fox and Alldred, 2023) and provides a detailed description of the analysis process. It then moves on to detailing seven cases of assemblage analysis from the Critical Participatory Action Research process. This offers a cartographic mapping of seven gender-related violence-Youth Work Assemblages highlighting the complex sociomaterial Intra-actions that produce different types of effects on young people, youth workers and youth settings.

Assemblage as unit of analysis

Assemblage is grounded in Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) philosophical work. The original French word agencement translates as arrangement although there are debates in the literature about what may be lost in translation (Nail, 2017). Drawing from the work of Delanda (2006), a simplified definition of an assemblage is provided by Feely (2019:6) who notes that:

"An assemblage consists of heterogeneous components or forces, belonging to the orders of existence considered separate (for example, the architectural, the technological, the emotional, and the discursive) whose unity comes in solely from the fact that they work together to produce something…… Its diverse components come together over time; work together for a time to produce something; and, in time, will fall apart."

According to Delanda (2006) assemblages exist at different scales and feed into each other in an unstable manner with different affects in time-space. For example, what a building does in one youth setting in a particular time may be very different to a building in another time and space. There are many social and material forces that can intra-act with a building to affect young people,

youth workers, and youth settings. What is important is that a building as a form of architecture/infrastructure has the capacity to affect; but how this affect occurs may be different in different contexts. Therefore - unlike critical realism - the focus is on the multiplicity of possibilities rather than essential composition (Feely, 2020:6).

Feely (2020) notes that an affect in the Deleuzian frame includes (re)territorialization, which are

"regulatory processes …. that serve to stabilize and maintain order within an assemblage;" and "subversive processes of deterritorialization … destabilize and order and allow for change, creativity and novelty within the assemblage…" (Feely 2019:12).

Importantly, Feely (2020:12) notes that moments of re/de/territorialization should be understood as being produced, not by human processes alone, but through sociomaterial intra-actions.

Although it has been argued that there is more complexity to conceptualising an assemblage (Nail 2017), Feely's (2020) simple explanation that draws that from DeLanda's (2006) scholarship offers a practical starting point as a novice researcher for applying a New Materialist analysis and is therefore adopted for this study.

Interpreting the assemblages in this analysis

There have been several attempts to practically apply assemblage analysis in social research. This includes Feely's assemblage (2020) and Fox and Alldred's ethological approach (2022) amongst others. Both place emphasis on identifying the components or forces that produce an assemblage by describing how these components work together to form a specific event or singularity. This approach was taken as an overall strategy to analyse the data.

The assemblage analysis process

The data that was analysed included the observations, orientation interviews, debrief interviews, session plans, and documentary artefacts that were taken from each action in the process. This data offered the most in-depth insight into the complexity of each assemblage and the research questions. The process started with transcribing verbal data into text and formatting the data (King and Brooks, 2016). In doing this I read the data items and numbered the data extracts to help with writing the analytical memos (King and Brooks, 2016). Next, I identified events in the data sets that focused on youth work and gender-related violence. Examples of events included youth work conversations and other youth work activities where gender-related violence was present or being addressed. Data extracts were coded and clustered into two higher order themes: critical reflections on youth settings, and youth work - activities such as youth work conversations and workshops. The critical reflections on youth work settings came from the first and third phases of the Critical Participatory Action Research process and the youth work activities came from the second phase of the process. These became the event-assemblages that were analysed. Next, I used the template analysis results to identify the domains (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014) that comprises each event-assemblage. These domains were not fixed and stable but ever-changing and with diverse components. The four domains that were identified from the template analysis were:

- Social/political/economic conditions. This domain focuses on the external conditions. For example, conditions such as austerity, youth culture, Neoliberalism, and the culture wars all had the capacity to affect the young people, youth workers, and youth settings.
- Social practices. This domain focuses on the doings, sayings, and relatings that comprised the assemblage. For example, Cissexist Social practices affected the young people and the youth workers in the form of the doings, sayings, and relatings of norm critical youth work.

- Bodies and emotions. This domain focuses on the physical body and embodied emotional affects.
- Nonhuman materials. This domain included non-human materials that were affective in the assemblage for example, buildings and youth work resources.

These domains were used to structure the next phase of the analysis.

Next, I interrogated the data using the following analytical questions, writing detailed analytical memos for each data set:

- What is the event?
- What components/forces affect this event for each domain?
- How do the components/forces intra-act with each other? What kinds of affects do they produce (for example, emotional, psychological, physical, material, pedagogical). How do these re/de/territorialise youth settings, young people, and youth workers?
- Where do the components/forces flow from?

It is important to recognise that the aim here is not to provide a complete mapping of every intra-action and flow in the assemblage, but rather to give illustrative examples of how each assemblage worked. To capture the interpretation, I wrote analytical memos that were used to write up the analysis of each event-assemblage. An example of a memo is included in the appendices.

Many event-assemblages were identified of differing sizes. For example, there were smaller event-assemblages such as critical reflections on a critical incident of youth work and larger event such as a youth work activity or Gender-Related Violence Here workshop. This meant that I had to make decisions as to which assemblage analyses to present in this chapter. The aim is therefore to present seven cases of assemblages. I have chosen the assemblages that allowed for the most comprehensive analysis based on the availability of enough data to demonstrate the depth and complexity of the intra-actions within the assemblage. These cases offer the best demonstration of this analytical approach.

Case 1: A critical reflection from Pride

This analysis comes from the two critical reflections that were captured during the orientating interview during phase one, and the final evaluation interview during phase three of the Critical Participatory Action Research at Pride. The assemblage being analysed is the youth setting:

Neil: How do the young people experience gender-related violence in the club?

Duchess: Some of our young people experience a combination of sexist and racist behaviour from peers at school. It causes anxiety, and we have a large proportion of young persons who experience mental health distress. The way I think it's visible the most is with trans young persons. When I have encountered trans people desperately, desperately trying to pass as the gender that they feel they are, and they feel that society must recognise them.

Neil: Can you give me an example?

Duchess: I mentored a young black person of Caribbean descent, who transitioned from female to male, who was quite petite in body build and body type and quite slim with a super-fast metabolism that I was jealous of, but obviously they were not very happy about the way they presented as it was too feminine. The distress was caused by the fact that they are very small. They are not very big and they are not very butch and therefore they are not passing as much as they would like as a male. People do have this tendency of assuming that he's a woman and this has badly affected his mental health.

Neil: That's interesting, thanks for sharing. Are there any more examples?

Duchess: Another thing I've noticed is that some young people hold the opinion that you have to be masculine and straight acting, and this pushes those who are not into depression and that feeling of, "I'm not fitting in." This campaphobia comes from societies expectations of binary gender. My friend said, once upon a time, very, very poignantly that the gay male community loves and buys into heterosexual, masculine, muscly male images but the straight community prefers a

camp gay man who is flamboyant and funny. This puts a lot of pressure on young people to choose a side, you have to be one or the other.

Neil: How does this make you feel?

Duchess: When I hear stories like this and young people tell me stories like this, I get angry but I don't think it's helpful to react emotionally to that situation because then emotions blind my ability to guide them to solve the situation or for them to build resilience. I think it's just how I was trained from youth work and that has stayed with me in my practice. Obviously, I engage with what they are telling me and I say, "It sounds really upsetting." I would obviously empathise, but I wouldn't necessarily be like, "Oh no, let's go and punch them in the face then."

Neil: Tell me more about how you respond in this situation.

Duchess: We try to cultivate a culture of inclusion by allowing the space for gender diversity just to happen. It starts from the moment you come into the building, where you must fill in the membership form and gender are left as an empty box. They can put in what they want. This shows the young person that we validate who they are. I've got boxes I have to tick on the local authority system when I have to put them in as their sex assigned at birth and this causes us problems. I have managed to challenge it already and they are reinvestigating it and are going to change it. But for us and for our information, you can put whatever you fancy on your gender. You can say, trans, you can say queer, you can say whatever, it's an empty box.

Neil: What kind of things do you do on a day-to-day basis to tackle gender-related violence?

Duchess: We challenge the norms around gender and sexuality. I think the fact that they can come up and say that "Today my gender pronoun is 'it'," knowing that nobody there is going to question it because they know that if they did, they'd have me on their case really sets the tone for them. We basically excluded heteronormative, heteronorms entirely from the space. I think a massive shift happened when we decolonised our physical space. Before we started the space had a very clinical feel to it, there was a lot of white walls, a medical room and then an open space for activities. Over time we made it more Queer by putting up inclusive posters and inclusive symbols and made the

space entirely gender neutral. for example, one of the posters is, “What makes a trans ally an ally?” I think that allows people to see that this is safe space. That helps massively. We also have a good library with LGBT+ books and DVDs that are representative of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. This makes the young person’s feel welcome and more connected to the LGBT+ world. It makes the young people feel accepted and celebrated and to a certain extent normalised. There was really something about the space that influences behaviour as it is the symbolism of the trust and respect.”

Duchess: Having staff that are very diverse in their experience helps us to tackle issues like gender-related violence too. People knowing that you are there for them is quite important because a lot of the time, they simply know that you care and therefore they care themselves. It creates that level of simplicity of going back to the routes of having a relationship with your young people. I have a relationship with my young people; I know what is happening to them and they trust me to have a conversation with them about things. The relationship makes it easier for us to know what issues of gender-related violence are happening and act.

Neil: Can you tell me more about what you do?

Duchess: Well, when it comes to campophobia we help the young person see that some of their views are transphobic… that they have had those views, not because they are eternally evil or because they have a lack of education but because they simply were not able to comprehend complex concepts. They could just not clock gender. So, we make it simple for them. I think it’s about just the fact that we are asking at the beginning of every session about the young person’s gender pronouns, and this normalises difference. We have had young people in the past who say,
“Well, I think I’m trans but I’m not sure.” I might like to “trial it” as it were in inverted commas and try and hear and see how you feel and if it makes you feel good, then you’re more than welcome to take it outside into the wider world but this can be your laboratory.

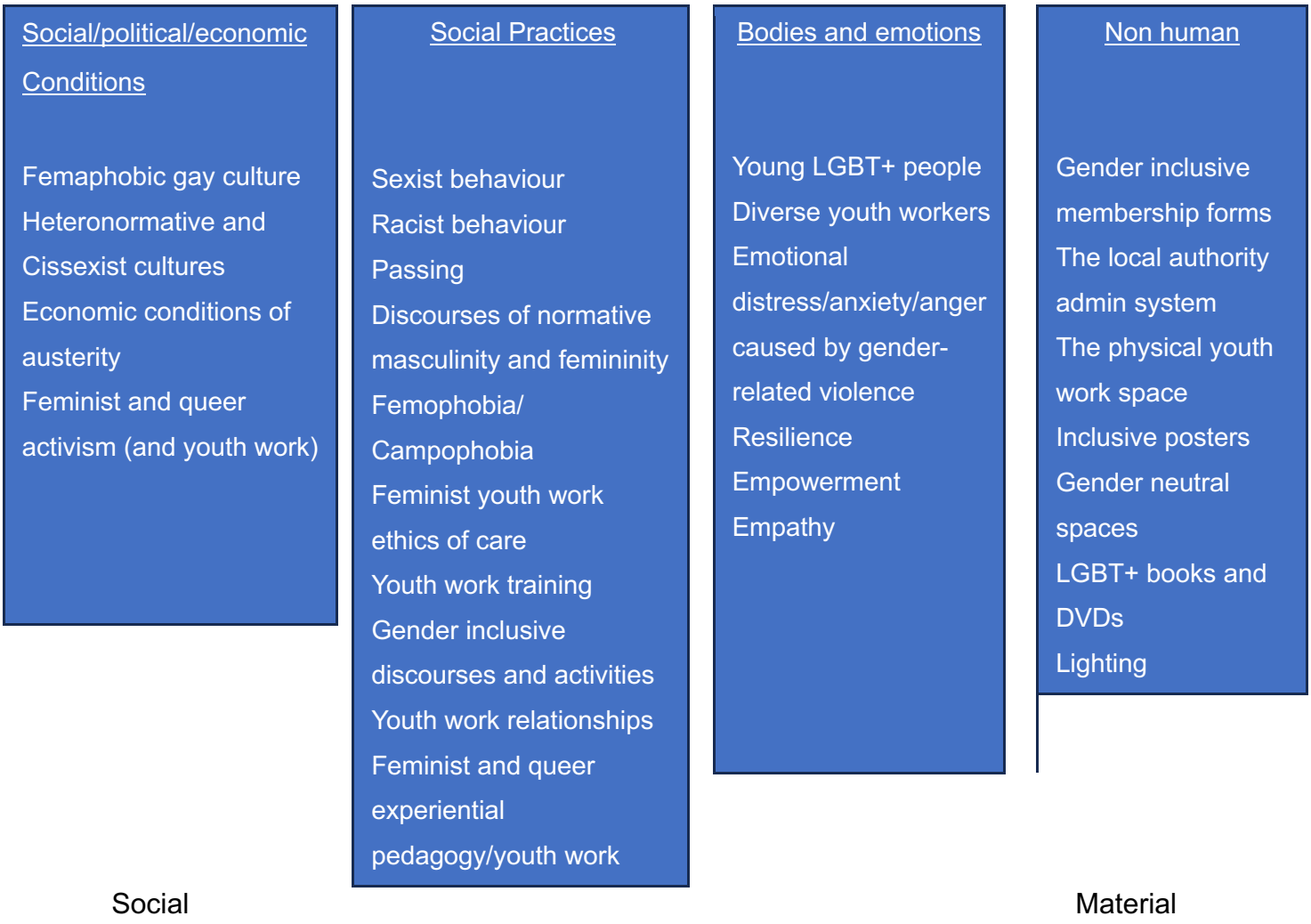
(Data source: Duchess (Pride), orientation interview, 20/01/2016)

Neil: Can you tell me about what affects your ability to tackle gender-related violence at Pride?

Duchess: Because of the cuts to our funding and resources we had to move spaces three times. The outdoors centre had a bit of a laddie feeling about it. It had all the kayaking gear; it's not very well maintained or tidy,; it's a bit run down. It feels like it has been out drinking all night. Once thing I really hated about it, was this is what you traditionally think of as run-down youth club. And I tried everything to tidy it up a bit, but we did get a few complaints about the space and that the facilities manager wasn't very welcoming to the LGBT+ young people. We couldn't really find the space to have a consistent conversation it just became messy and distorted and derailed. The space also did something to the young people that enabled forms of gender-related violence to take place. We had boisterousness. Young people were acting out. We had young people acting oppressively towards one another. There were trans young people acting oppressively towards gender non-conforming young people. Suddenly there was sexualised play fighting. We never ever had play fighting, and then suddenly when we were in this new space, we have play sexualised fighting, and we were suddenly needing to strategize as to how to deal with it. The group was a lot less caring that it used to be in this space. Then we moved to the promised land and it has been a journey. We moved across to the new venue and it is so much better. It has a calming effect and we were able to queer it up in the same way as our original space. For example, we have all the inclusive posters and the library again. Also, we can adjust the lights to signal that we are moving from social time to group work time and so the behaviour shifts too." This wasn't available at the last venue

(Data source: Duchess (Pride), evaluation interview, phase 3, 6/3/2018)

There are several sociomaterial forces/components that affect this assemblage. These are detailed below on a social material continuum:



In this assemblage, there are numerous intra-actions of these forces/components that affected the youth work setting and young people. Intersectional oppressive social practices such as sexist behaviour, racist behaviour, normativity, and femophobia/campophobia intra-act with young LGBT+ people and youth workers to have emotional affects of distress, anxiety, and anger. These social practices flow from heteronormative and cissexist cultures that comprise larger gender-related violence-assemblages.

These intra-actions territorialise young people.

The social practices of feminist and queer youth work intra-act with young LGBT+ people and youth workers and have emotional affects - in this instance, to build the resilience of young LGBT+ people. For example, a feminist youth work ethic of care intra-acts with the youth work relationship to have an effect of building empathy. Importantly, queer-feminist social practices intra-act with the diversity of youth workers to have relational affects where young people build rapport with 'elder' LGBT+ people. This makes the youth work relationship more intimate and useful for disrupting gender-related violence. The example of Duchess enabling trans young people to navigate social practices of 'passing' provides evidence of this. Intra-actions between this intimate youth work relationship and feminist/queer experiential pedagogies have pedagogical effects on the young people - enabling them to develop a feminist and queer consciousness and to empower all the bodies in their queerness. These social practices flow from assemblages of feminist and queer activism and larger critical/radical and feminist youth work assemblages. These intra-actions enable Duchess and his team to disrupt/deterritorialise the effects of gender-related violence on the young people.

Duchesses' reflections on the youth setting also demonstrate how intra-actions between social practices, social conditions, and non-human materiality can both territorialise and deterritorialise the young people. The original architecture of the club was formed through intra-actions of gender inclusive social practices, such as discourses of gender inclusion and gender neutrality with non-human materials such as inclusive posters and LGBT+ resources having both pedagogical and emotional affects. These affects build a feminist/queer consciousness and a sense of empowerment and belonging in the young people. These intra-actions deterritorialised the effects of gender-related violence on the young people.

Duchess also notes the behavioural affects that physical space has on the young people, for example through the comment on how lighting can affect behaviour. The behaviours associated with gender-related violence; for example, sexualised play fighting is enabled by the physical space when the LGBT+ resources and posters are absent. Therefore, young people's behaviour is territorialised by non-

inclusive physical space that enables gender-related violence. Finally - and importantly - economic insecurity, in the form of the budget cuts of austerity, affect the youth work settings having the affect of limiting the queer and feminist pedagogy. This enables the capacity for gender-related violence to occur and territorialises the youth work setting.

Case 2: The Gender-Related Violence Here workshop at EastShire

This example's event is the Gender-Related Violence Here workshop which is the assemblage. The data is taken from the fieldwork diary where I incorporated the workshop training plan, my observations and the debrief interviews:

Kieran picked me up at the station and updated me in the car during the 20-minute drive to the Fire station. During this informal conversation, we discussed the current situation at the partnership in relation to bringing norm criticality and feminism into the partnership's work practices. He mentioned that funding was precarious, and he was spending a large amount of time on diversifying funding streams, which meant that he had less time to focus on a developing a strategy with his team for the gender-related violence work.

He also mentioned that several members of the critical reflections team from both Fire Service and the National Charity were struggling with work-related anxiety due to increased workload demands as the numbers of staff were being reduced due to funding pressures.

We also discussed the increasing numbers of young people attending the programme experiencing relative poverty because of austerity and that there was a feeling amongst the staff that this should be the priority, not the work on gender-related violence.

In the car, we started to formulate a nascent idea of doing a programme audit to establish where the norm critical and feminist pedagogy could be weaved through the programme activities and resources. We also discussed the need to be creative when designing programme outcomes and focus theories of change that were relevant to tackling gender-related violence. We both agreed

that this could be a way that the critical reflections team could justify the practitioner research project within the governance structures of the partnership.

The workshop took place at the main fire station. It also hosted the youth work activities. We parked next to the garage that housed the fire engines. The fire station is situated on the outskirts of the town and is surrounded by countryside. The complex consists of the two attached buildings. The first building is a youth centre and the fire station is adjoined next door. The entrance to the complex consists of an entrance hall with a main office situated to the right and three toilet spaces with ‘male’ ‘female’ toilet and a ‘disabled’ signage situated to the left. An entrance hall that leads to a main office. At the end of the entrance hall was the activity room. The activity room consisted of a table in the middle that was set out in conference style. There were also several motivational quotes from famous people like Nelson Mandela and Churchill stuck on the walls above the computers, and a notice board with information about local sexual health services and the local job centre. I noticed that the posters depicted white, heterosexual, and gender normative young people.

We sat down and Kieran welcomed the team and handed out the outline of the workshop. Kieran noted that the team meeting would take a slightly different form and if anyone had any questions about what we were to discuss, and no one had any questions at this stage. The meeting agenda that was presented was as follows:

Time: 5 minutes. Activity: Contracting and ground rules

Time: 20 minutes. Activity: ‘Gender-Related Violence Here’ thought shower

Time: 20 minutes. Activity: Good youth work practice thought shower

Time: 10 minutes. Activity: Our collective response to gender-related violence

Time: 5 minutes. Activity: check out

The training workshop started with a request to introduce ourselves including our gender pronoun(s) that were written on a sticky label. At this point, Daniel asked for

clarification on what a gender pronoun is and why we needed to disclose our pronouns. I explained that asking gender pronouns helps workers not to make any assumptions about a person's gender as it's sometimes the case that someone who we assign a gender based on how they look does not identify with having the gender that's been assigned to them. I gave the example of a young person who presents their gender in the masculine and identifies as a girl. I might assume she uses he/his pronouns based on her gender expression, when the reality is she uses feminine pronouns. I explained that in LGBT+ youth work, it is sometimes suggested to ask people to disclose pronouns so that everyone feels validated. I then modelled this format of introduction: "My name is Neil. My pronouns are He/Him and I identify as gay, a gay man. The rest of the team then introduced themselves. Then, I introduced the contracting activity. This involved a discussion on what the practitioner researchers needed in order to be able to participate fully in the process. Learning Zones were used. After the Learning Zones discussion, the practitioners agreed a contract with the following principles to ensure that all could participate in the process safely:

- *We have agreed that the following principles will underpin our group dynamic:*
- *Allow each other time to reflect and process ideas and information.*
- *Be clear on the process and give each other information on what we are doing and what is next.*
- *Allow each other equal space to speak and to ask questions.*
- *Be mindful that not everyone has the same basic understanding of language and terminology and to allow space for this to be explore.*
- *Be mindful of tone when talking to each other and avoid judgement and patronising ideas.*

We went through the aims of the workshop which were to:

- *Know the meaning of gender-related violence.*
- *Identify gender-related violence within the site of practice.*
- *Create a statement of good practice that can disrupt gender-related violence.*

The gender-related violence here activity took 20 minutes, and the purpose of this was to identify gender-related violence in the youth work practices of the East Shire partnership. I introduced the feminist and queer conceptualisation of gender-related violence that was used in the GAP WORK project and the GAP WORK project's resources. We talked about sexism and sexualisation with its normativity in the language and behaviours of the young people being the focus.

I then asked the practitioners to think about critical incidents of gender-related violence in their youth work and to thought shower young people's practices of gender-related violence. To aid this, we used resources from the GAP WORK project and specialist organisations such as 'Everyday Sexism' website to help discussion. The examples that were given were:

- Sexist and homophobic language and ideas: "you are a slut" and "you are not man enough" during an altercation workshop on fire safety.
- Transphobic bullying: denying trans people exist during a conversation on different types of relationships.
- Machoism: e.g. hazing type activities
- Sexual harassment: unnecessary touching; jokes of a sexual nature; sexting; intimidating behaviour such as asking for sexual favours in return for money or status.
- Normative violence: discrimination based on sexuality or gender e.g. exclusion from group activities.
- Symbolic violence: boys and men dominating space.

Kieran wrote these examples of the screen for us to use.

The group split into small groups and were asked to think of critical incidents. Kieran, Daniel, and Lucy retold the following incident:

During a fire safety workshop last year with ten young people aged 18, two young men started arguing with each other. A young man started to shout at the other using homophobic language. A young women intervened to ask them to stop, and the young man shouted at her telling her 'Shut up, you slut.' The group agreed that this was a significant incident as the facilitators did not know how to intervene

appropriately and shut down the conversation. They also recalled other experiences of sexism, including having to remind young people of safer use of mobile phones and the things to be careful about when sending sexualised messages (sexting). They also recalled many experiences of physical harassment such as bra-pranging and up-skirting, and having to support a young woman who was being groomed by a family member. They were concerned at the time that they might say something that would make the situation worse and not knowing what to say. They noted that they had their safeguarding policies to fall back on and did report things which were followed up if deemed serious enough. Feelings of fear and anxiety meant they reacted by temporarily excluding some the young people who had been perpetrating so that the rest could just get on with the programme. The impact of making this decision was that the relationships with these young people soured and they missed an opportunity to discuss sexist language and turn this into a learning point. They had only one way of dealing with these types of incidents - report and exclude.

Elliot recalled an incident during a lunch time break. Elliot was sitting with a group of young people talking about a family member who is transitioning from male to female. One of the young people said loudly to the rest of the group 'man dressed as a woman, that's so wrong.' They then continued to misgender the family member. We felt that this was a critical incident as they heard other transphobic and normative language.

Antoinette recalled numerous conversations where young people seemed surprised that a women would and/or could be a fireperson. She felt that the young person's language on women's roles and trans issue (*sic*) was significant as it is something that we come across more and more each day and we don't always know how to respond correctly. This made her feel like she was letting the young people down.

The team then discussed the conditions (contexts) that they felt enabled young people's enactment of gender-related violence:

- The fire service culture as a "macho" space - with corresponding gendered ideas and language.
- General societal inequalities such as age, race, and location impacting the experiences of the young people alongside gender and sexuality were identified.

- Misogynistic and homophobic elements of youth culture were significant too.
- Social tolerance of sexism, transphobia, and homophobia.
- Lack of affirming sex education and porn as sex education.
- 'Stiff British upper lip' - not talking about issues that make people feel uncomfortable.
- Misogyny in the home and witnessing domestic violence and coercive control.

The final part of the works included identifying what makes good youth work to tackle gender-related violence. Here they identified the following themes:

<u>Theme 1: Building inclusive youth work.</u>

- Building youth work relationships, where they can constructively challenge young people's assumptions about gender when they are engaging in practices of gender-related violence.
- Taking someone out of the room to discuss any sexist, sexualising and norm driven behaviour that is disruptive, then bringing them back in rather than.
- Developing critical reflection so we know which approach to use (feminist/queer/intersectional).

<u>Theme 2: Creating social and educational learning opportunities.</u>

- Enabling the young people to become aware of the general issues of sexism, sexualisation, and normativity.
- Educating on cultures that enable normativity.
- Developing critical thinking workshops with young people through conversations.
- Building feminist, and LGBT+ role models into workshops e.g. showing examples of women who has successes in traditional "male" job roles.
- Making sure that activities are interactive and engaging e.g. gender trust fall. Role playing gender-related violence critical incidents and solutions with young people and youth workers.
- Conversations that educate and not "preach".
- Addressing gender inequality in our activities, for example creating gender inclusive football teams

Theme 3: Practice conditions/contexts:

Make visible toxic masculine youth and adult cultures that go unchallenged.

Theme 3: Dispositions (ethics and values)

A commitment to work with:

- Openness/congruence/care
- Self-aware/consciousness
- Positive role modelling
- Willingness to challenge and be challenged
- Living equality/setting examples
- Not reinforcing gendered assumptions
- Having a support mechanism to express our own feelings on gender-related violence.
- An ethic of care for all

The critical reflection team collectively agreed a statement of good youth work practice to tackle gender-related violence.

“Our vision for good youth and community work practice to tackle gender-related violence:

We will strive to create a practice that tackles gender-related violence by ensuring our language, activities, relationships, and conditions in which we practice are underpinned by the following practices and conditions:

At EastShire, we practise:

- Safe and open, boundaried relationships with young people that are respectful of difference and sensitive to power and privilege.
- Based on a value of gender and sexual equality amongst the practitioner team. Social and educational and fun, creative and address the norms and values that are the root causes of gender-related violence.
- An ethic of care, sensitivity and respect for where young people are starting from. Always remembering to educate than penalise young people for being young and not knowing.

- A culture that creates EastShire as a space to learn and willingness to be challenged constructively.
- Tackling assumptions that reinforce the stereotypes that lead to the forms of gender-related violence we have identified as needing to be challenged.
- Working with young people where they are at never preaching or forcing a personal belief.
- Ensuring our physical environment is set up in a way that tackles gender-related violence and that changes are suggested to the fire and rescue service.
- Enabling young people to develop positive and non-violent identities and community attachments.
- Seeing the good in all young people and helping those who need support to build healthier belief systems and ideas about society.
- Having systems in place that allow us to have the time to plan and make space so activities that help tackle gender-related violence are implemented (e.g. 1-1 time).
- Acknowledging the needs of all young people, not judging them but helping to find solutions.
- Being mindful of how our own personal opinions and experiences affect our ability to tackle gender-related violence (being critically reflexive).

(Data source: Field notes, EastShire, 16/10/16)

There are several sociomaterial forces/components that affect the assemblage. These are detailed below on a social-material continuum:

Social/political/economic Conditions	**Social Practices**	**Bodies and emotions**	**Non human**
Austerity, poverty, social inequality	Gender-related violence (Homophobia/(cis)sexism/ sexualization/grooming)	Young people (indirectly) and youth workers	The delayed train
The partnership	Feminist and queer youth work/pedagogy	Work performance anxiety/stress	The car
The learning from the Gap Work Project	Youth work ethic of care		The fire station
Macho Fire-service culture	Non punitive youth work relationships		Gendered social spaces
LGBT-phobic youth cultures	Norm critical and feminist programme audit		The youth work space in the fire station
	Gender normativity		The GAP WORK and Everyday feminism resources
	Discourses of gender inclusion		Safeguarding policies
	Norm critical, feminist and queer training (e.g. pronoun-around, group contract, critical incidents)		

Social ⟷ Material

These components/forces intra-act in complex ways to produce this assemblage.

Starting with the material end of the continuum, the car intra-acts with learning from the GAP WORK Project that leads to the development of the norm critical and feminist auditing tool - a pedagogical affect. This is important as it demonstrates how learning can take place outside the confines of the formal workshop process and how this learning is territorialised by non-human materiality. As with the previously analysed assemblage, the physical building affects the young people. In this case, the lack of gender-neutral social spaces and the use of normative posters on the walls territorialises the young people by enforcing gender normativity - in particular, the norms relating to the gender binary.

Moving back to the social side of the continuum, the critical incidents highlight how social practices of gender-related violence intra-act with the young people to have behavioural affects. This means that the young people are territorialised by gender-related violence. This once again flows from larger gender-related violence assemblages.

During the actual workshop, the GAP WORK and Everyday Feminism resources intra-act with the social practices of the norm critical, feminist, and queer GAP WORK training resources to have pedagogical affects - in this case, enabling understanding of gender-related violence amongst the youth workers. This shows how non-human components territorialise youth workers' learning at the same time as deterritorialising the affects of gender-related violence. Another example is the pronoun around - and the subsequent explanation activity - that intra-acts with sticky labels and discourses of gender inclusion to produce more pedagogical affects, and deterritorialise the effects of gender-related violence amongst the workshop participants. Group skills intra-act with the youth workers to have both positive and negative effects. The lack of critical and feminist youth work skills in the youth workers to respond to gender-related violence have emotional affects in the form of work performance anxiety, limiting their capacity to act when they experience gender-related violence amongst the young people. On the other hand, feminist and queer youth work skills that focus on disrupting gender normativity and are based on an ethic of care once again deterritorialise the affects of gender-related violence. As with the previous example of an assemblage, the effects of austerity are also highlighted here. Austerity affects the youth workers' emotional state as it affects the time that they have to do work on gender-related violence. It could be argued that austerity territorialises the youth workers, limiting their capacity to do feminist and queer youth work around gender-related violence.

Case 3: A Critical reflection on a critical incident of gender-related violence in the club

This example is taken from the Gender-Related Violence Here workshop fieldnotes at Aspire that took place during the reconnaissance phase. The assemblage that is being analysed is a youth work conversation and is a good example of a smaller assemblage that feeds into a larger one (Aspire's Gender-Related Violence Here workshop):

During the workshop, Rubi and Oscar talked about a youth club drop-in session and a conversation that was heard in the space. They described three young men who were gathered in the games area, playing a video game and talking. Oscar and Martin Luther were sitting with them. As they were playing, the conversation turned to a relationship that was forming between a young man and a young woman in the club. The youth workers were discussing what makes a healthy relationship and what makes an unhealthy relationship. The focus here was on how the partners in the relationship communicate with each other and the importance of being authentic, open, and honest.

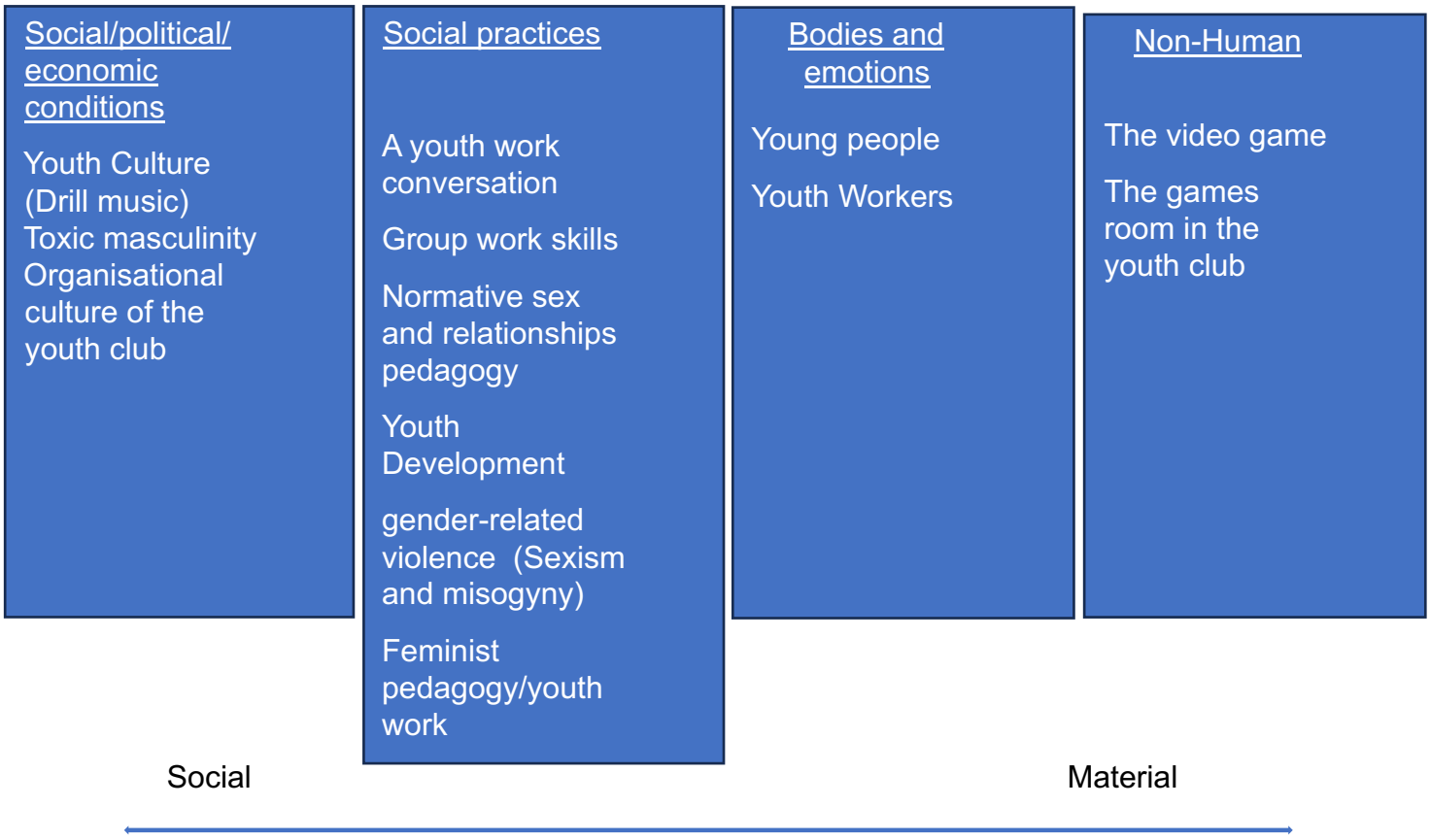
Oscar talked about how the young men were using sexist and sexualised words in their talk about the young women. For example, some of the young men referred to the young girls as 'axe wounds' and 'bitches.' Rubi and Oscar moved onto discussing where this language came from, and they identified Drill Rap music and elements of youth culture that glorifies violent and toxic masculinities. There was a conversation during this discussion where Rubi and Oscar justified the language calling it banter that young people do all the time. They argued that they saw their role as developing young people's life skills not telling them what to think.

Zomi challenged them on this. She noted that that even if one person saw it as banter there might be others who see it as abuse and this will bring up feelings of being unsafe and excluded. She used the example of a youth worker who may be able to fend off the 'banter' and help the young people see the assumptions underpinning it, versus a young woman who is still learning about her sexuality who sees this and feels unwelcome and unable to be themselves in the confines of the club because they hear this.

Rubi and Oscar talked about how they didn't know how to respond when they heard young people talk in this way. Zomi talked about using humour to de-escalate the language and then how open questioning to encourage the young person to reflect on the gendered assumptions and the impact of this. She also talked about the need to help young people reflect on how gender inequalities help shape their understanding and relationships. After this discussion it was acknowledged by Rubi and Oscar that the idea of gendered banter was very much part of the culture and practice tradition of the youth club and not always as harmless.

(Data source: Aspire's fieldnotes. 6/5/17)

There are several sociomaterial forces/components that affect the assemblage. These are detailed below on a social-material continuum:



The games room and the video game act as a catalyst that enables the youth workers to engage in informal group work with the three young people. This has a pedagogical affect as it enables Oscar and Martin Luther to have a youth work conversation where the young people engage in learning about relationships. The conversation intra-acts with a relationship's education, foregrounded in discourses of youth development that does not contain a gender/power orientation. Oscar and Martin Luther's lack of feminist group work skills to challenge the sexualised language and that weave a feminist discourse into the conversation enables a violently sexist discourse to permeate the young men's talk about the young women and this has a relational affect.

Moreover, it could be argued that the sexist discourses and relationships flow from the organisational culture of the youth club. This further constrains the youth workers to infuse a feminist discourse into their youth work practice. This manifests within the assemblage where the practice tradition of Aspire - that draws from developmental discourses of youth work - is used as a justification for inaction. Therefore, the intra-action of the video game playing, developmental sex and relationships pedagogy, the practice tradition, the social practices of gender-related violence, and the youth work conversation have learning affects, and relational affects territorialising the young people and to an extent reterritorialising the youth workers.

During the latter part of the conversation, Zomi introduces a feminist inspired form of critical reflection to enable Rubi and Oscar's understanding of feminist youth work responses. This affects the feelings of the youth workers who feel more confident to disrupt sexism through their youth work. This also affects the youth workers learning, enabling creative thinking that has an affect of deterritorialising gender-related violence.

Case 4: A pool table conversation at Pride

This case of an assemblage is also a youth work conversation that took place at place during phase two of Pride's process. The data is taken from an observation:

I joined two young people and Jordi at the pool table. One non-binary feminine expressed young person had their name Sam and pronouns (they/he) written on a sticky label. The other young person also had a feminine gender expression and his name Peter and pronouns (he/him) written on the sticky label. Jordi was standing with them listening in on their conversation.

The young people started to play a game of pool. Peter asked Sam if they were “one of us.” Sam looked confused and asked Peter for clarification. Peter responded, “you are a trans man like me.” Still playing pool, Sam corrected Peter to say that they are non-binary not trans and got visibly upset.

Jordi jumped in at this point and asked if he could play too. He mentioned that Sam had been misgendered and asked if they were ok. Jordi pointed out that Sam’s gender tags used the pronouns they/he and explained that sometimes nonbinary people don’t identify themselves as trans as they don’t live in the binary. Jordi asked Sam if this was their experience and Sam responded yes. Jordie explained to Peter that we should never assume things about the people we meet but rather spend time getting to know them.

Peter then had a conversation with Sam about his experiences of being non-binary. Sam talked about how they had come out and the similarities with Peter and Jordi’s experiences of coming out as transmasculine.

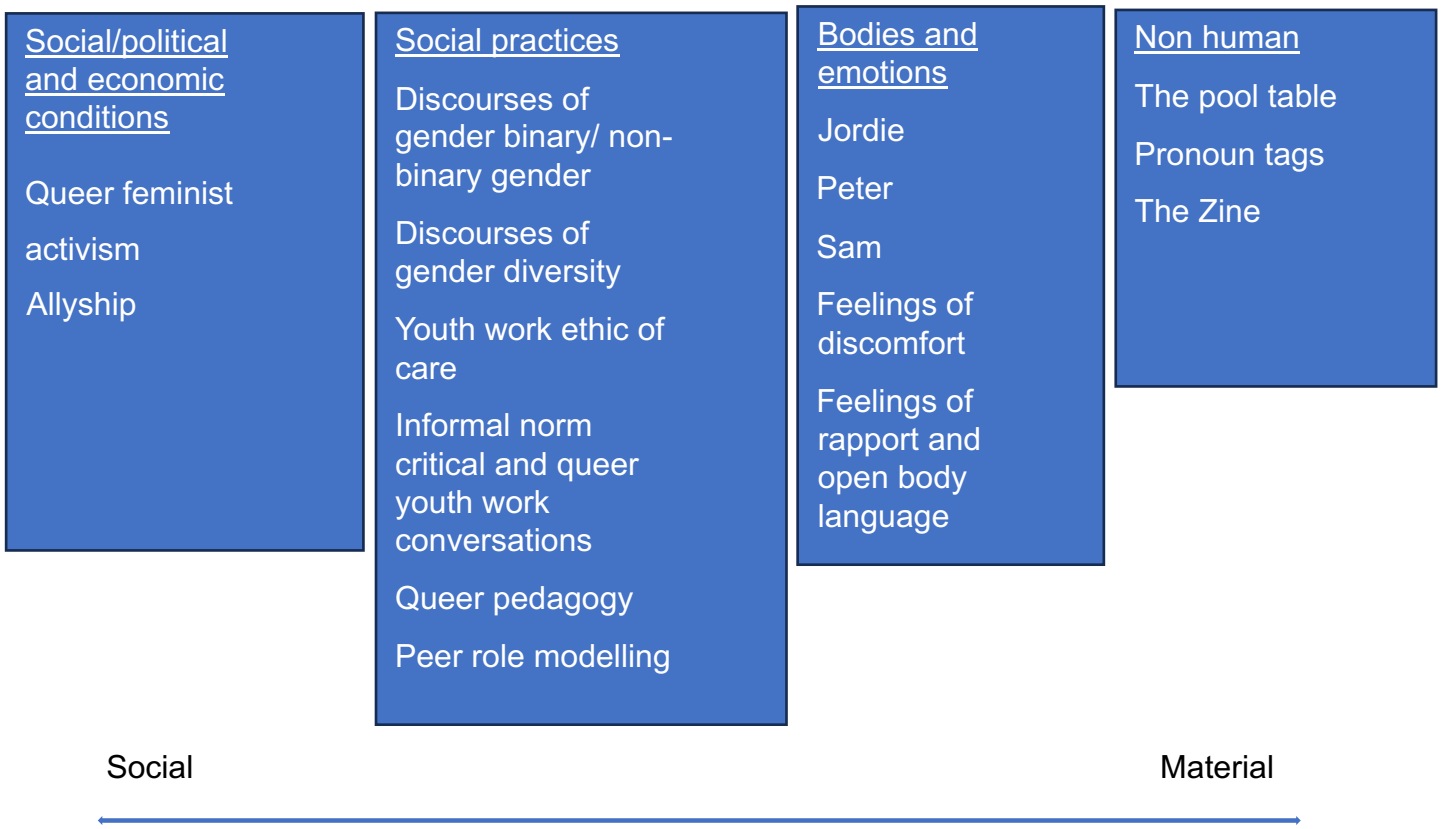
Sam and Jack talked about how it would be interesting to have more discussion in the group about coming out experiences of the different genders that attend the club and how they could create a zine with these experiences. Jordi mentioned that there many different genders and this may be a good way of learning about all the different ways that people identify and express their gender and help to trouble some of the assumptions people make about non-binary people.

As they started the second game of pool, I noticed how Sam and Peter’s rapport had developed. Their body language was more open, and they were joking and engaging in non-abusive banter.

At the debrief Jordi talked about his experience and reflected on how the informal setting of playing pool had enabled him to have a critical conversation about gender diversity and help two young people develop a supportive and nourishing relationship. He also talked about being an ally to non-binary folk and how this motivated him to intervene and turn this into a teachable moment.

(Data source: A practice observation of a Youth Work Conversation Pride, Phase 2, 2/12/2017)

There are several sociomaterial forces/components that affect the assemblage. These are detailed below on a social-material continuum:



In this assemblage the pool table/playing pool has a pedagogical affect, enabling learning from a youth work conversation to take place. At the beginning of the conversation, the discourses of binary gender intra-act with Sam and Peter's conversation, producing a moment of non-binaryphobia that has emotional affects and territorialises both young people. This flows from wider normative cultural-assemblages.

Jordi carries discourses of gender inclusion from wider allyship assemblages into the conversation. These intra-act with Sam, Peter, the sticky labels, and a queer pedagogy to produce Gender Tags that then intra-act with an informal norm critical and queer youthwork conversation that is foregrounded in a Queer pedagogy. This has a learning affect, thereby deterritorialising the young people during the conversation. Once again, non-binary allyship enables Jordi to have a norm critical and queer youth work conversation.

A youth work ethic of care is evident in how Jordi approaches Sam and Peter's initial relational state of conflict and misunderstanding. Jordi uses the feminist youth work

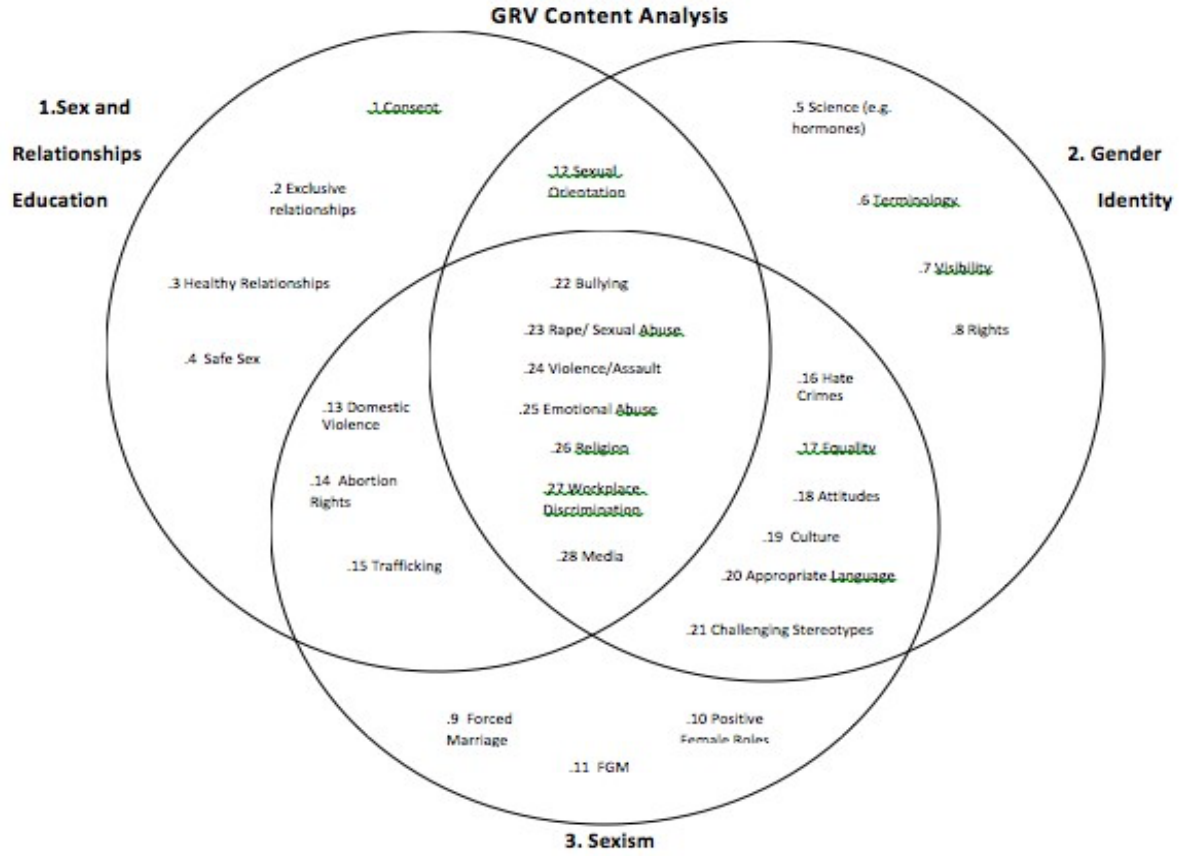
skill of self-disclosure relating to coming out and this enables rapport to be developed between Peter and Sam. This then intra-acts with the peer role modelling producing a Zine which can have further learning affects on the wider cohort of young people.

Case 5: The gender-related violence matrix

The assemblage in this example is the gender-related violence matrix (an activity-event) that was designed by the critical reflection team at EastShire during phase two. The data extracts come from the fieldwork diary and a planning document that was created by Lucy:

We met to discuss a planning tool to help the practitioners to weave norm criticality into the existing workshops. This started with the team sending their existing programmes to Lucy and making suggestions based on the GAP WORK resources about which one can be used to pilot a new way of working. The critical reflection team collectively agreed to focus on employability skills workshops and weave the norm criticality from the GAP WORK project into their pedagogy. Lucy and Kieran drafted a suggested content analysis document for comment and sent it out to the critical reflection team for comment. Elliot fed back that gender identity had been included in the document, but sexual orientation missed off. Neil fed back that gender expression and roles had been left off and that the critical reflection team should also consider Lucy and Kieran. The critical reflection team agreed that sexual orientation should be included in the planning document. There was some difference of opinion around where the issue of gender expression and role fitted into the matrix. Karen, Kieran, and Elliot argued that it fitted under gender stereotypes whilst the rest of the critical reflection team argued for it to be considered as its own unit in the gender-related violence matrix. After some discussion, it was agreed to adopt a broad understanding of gender stereotyping included any gender-related violence with a focus on gender expression. To solidify the group development of the matrix, a guidance document was drafted by Lucy and agreed by the critical reflection team. Kieran agreed that this would be reviewed regularly, updated and that it would become part of any induction of new staff.

(Data source: Fieldwork diary, 01/07/17)



Gender-related violence content analysis tool

The Venn diagram illustrates the topics that may arise either as an issue during youth work sessions and relates to the numbers that are picked from the drop-down menu on the matrix. The topics can also be drawn upon to inform session planning of educational activities such as debates and case studies that aim to tackle gender-related violence. All topics fall under three main headings:

- *Sex and relationships education*
- *Gender identity*
- *Sexism*

As the Venn Diagram illustrates; topics can relate to each heading alone, or to a combination of 2 or all 3 headings

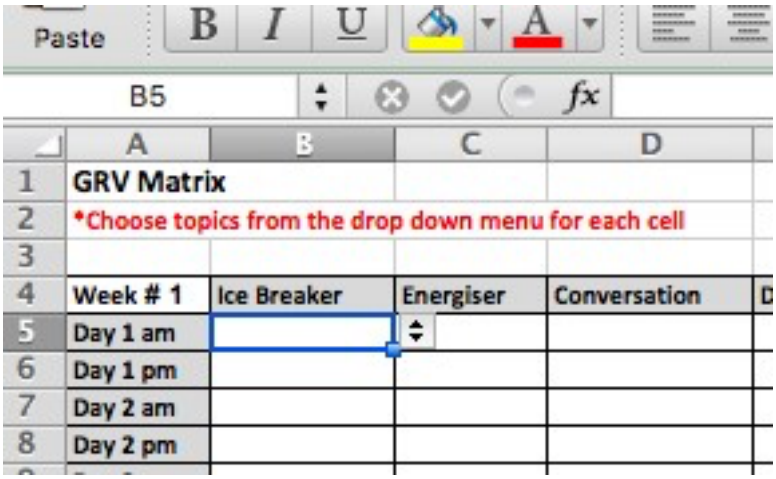
Gender-related violence audit matrix

This is a monitoring spreadsheet that should be populated after each session to record any gender-related violence topics that arose or were addressed via various

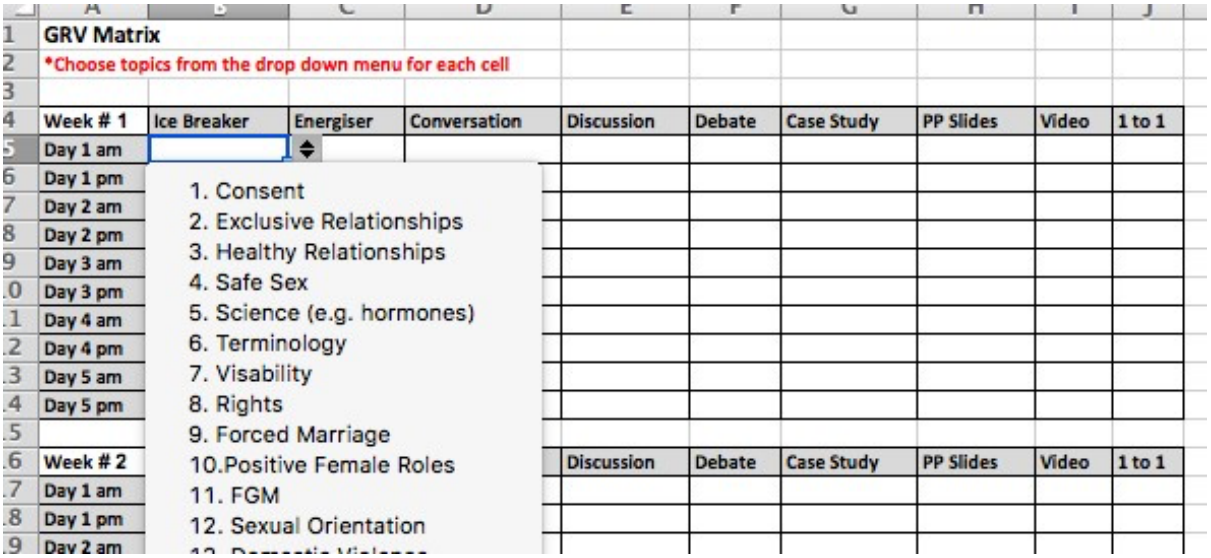
educational tools. This will allow the user to identify what topics are being covered and can be used as an evaluation tool to ensure best practice going forwards.

Instructions for the gender-related violence matrix

To populate the matrix, click on the cell that for the relevant session and activity and a drop-down menu button should appear to the right of the cell

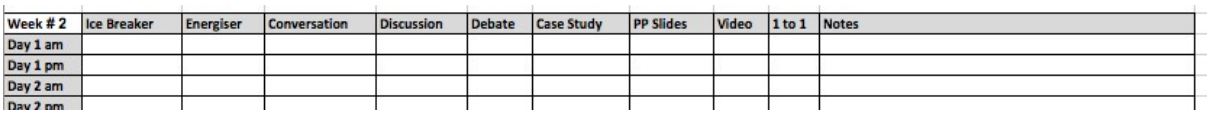


Click on that button and a list of the gender-related violence topics will appear:



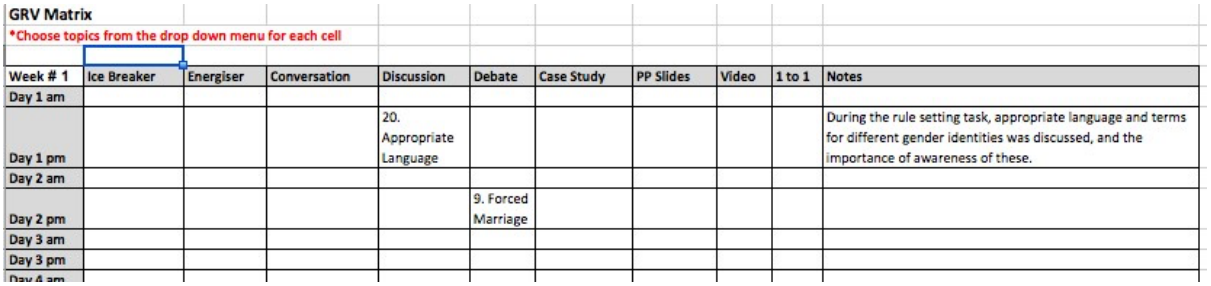
Pick the topic that was covered.

Add any extra notes in the relevant notes section that can be found on the right-hand side of the table.



Example:

In the example below, on day one of week one in the afternoon session, a discussion took place regarding appropriate language (and some further detail can be found in the notes). Also, on day two in the afternoon session, a debate was held on the topic of forced marriage.



GRV Matrix

*Choose topics from the drop down menu for each cell

Week # 1	Ice Breaker	Energiser	Conversation	Discussion	Debate	Case Study	PP Slides	Video	1 to 1	Notes
Day 1 am										
Day 1 pm				20. Appropriate Language						During the rule setting task, appropriate language and terms for different gender identities was discussed, and the importance of awareness of these.
Day 2 am										
Day 2 pm					9. Forced Marriage					
Day 3 am										
Day 3 pm										
Day 4 am										

Reflection on the gender-related violence matrix

During the conversation in the car on the way to the train station, Lucy vented her frustration with the funding situation. Her frustration centred on the delay to the employability programme because of a last-minute dispute between the National Charity and the main funder of the partnership over outcomes and cost. She was feeling frustrated that the programme had been delayed which meant that they did not have the time they hoped for to properly embed the gender-related violence matrix in their work. She also noted that preparation time was underfunded and that the demand was on youth work staff to do this in their own time so that more time could be allocated to delivery. They had to focus on the delivery of the eventually agreed funded outcomes to gain the remaining funding as they were being paid on results. Motivation in the team was low and there had been some conflict on a way forward. Some of the team felt that there was no longer capacity to continue with implementation of the gender-related violence matrix. Others felt that there was duty and imperative to act and this was a matter of integrity. She told me that there was a schism between ‘second wave’ and ‘third/fourth wave’ practitioners and there has been many arguments about the theoretical foundations of the gender-related violence definition. The schism was mostly generational and becoming a problem for the cohesion of the new practices that they were trying to produce.

(Data source: Fieldnotes, Matrix evaluation)

I caught up with Antoinette about her experience of implementing the Matrix. As with Lucy, time constraints and issues with the ‘programme’ reporting had been frustrating. Like lucy she felt ‘very tired and unhappy’ with the constraints of the programme but acknowledged that Kieran was a great manager and trying to absorb the stress of the ‘wicked’ problems that partnership was facing. She also noted that incorporating gender-related violence into existing programmes was “harder than originally thought’ due to standardised and an inflexible nature of the programme. I asked her why this was the case and like Lucy she pointed to the fixed outcomes that they had to demonstrate to gain funding.

(Data source: Fieldnotes, evaluation phase)

Gender-related violence matrix-assemblage analysis

There are several sociomaterial forces/components that affect the assemblage. These are detailed below on a social-material continuum:

Social/political / economic conditions	**Social Practices**	**Bodies and emotions**	**Non-human**
Youth work funding regimes	Discourses of gender inclusion	Lucy	GAP WORK Resources
Feminist, LGBT+, and Queer activism	LGBT+ and Feminist Pedagogy	Antoinette	Programme resources
	Feminist sex and relationships pedagogy	Frustration	Content analysis Venn diagram
	Programme auditing		Guidance document
	Feminist consensus and conflict (Relatings)		Excel spreadsheet
	Critical Participatory Action Research		The car
			Time

Social ⟷ Material

In this assemblage, the GAP WORK resources intra-act with the Critical Participatory Action Research process, the existing programme documents and norm critical and feminist pedagogical discourses and relationships built on consensus to have learning affects that territorialise the youth workers. This intra-action produces an idea for a norm critical, feminist, and queer programme auditing tool that can deterritorialise the effects of gender-related violence amongst the young people.

This idea is put into action by the production of a Venn diagram. The Venn diagram is territorialised by norm critical, feminist, and queer pedagogies and sex and relationships education. Once again, this has a learning affect - enabling the youth workers to tackle gender-related violence in their programming which in turn deterritorialises the affects of gender-related violence and the youth work sessions.

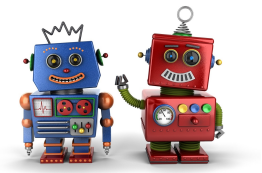
An intra-action between the Venn diagram, the excel document, and new managerial discourses and feminist auditing produces the Matrix Auditing tool that turns a neo-liberal social practice into a feminist tool for action. This has a regulating/territorialising effect on the youth workers, ensuring that they do the work on gender-related violence. The youth workers are therefore territorialised by this tool, which in turn deterritorialises the effects of gender-related violence on the youth setting, including the youth workers, the young people, and the youth work pedagogy.

In Lucy and Antoinette's evaluation, the precarious funding regimes, neo-liberal discourses of performativity and management; relational conflict between feminists and time (in this case lack of and pressure on time) intra-act to have an emotional affect, limiting their motivation to implement the gender-related violence Matrix, thereby reterritorializing the youth workers.

Case 6: The Robots session

The sixth example comes from EastShire and is an activity-assemblage of the Robots workshop. The data comes from the fieldwork diary, observations, and the debrief interview with Lucy:

Robots Session



(Data source: The Robots PowerPoint slide).

The Robots workshop was planned by Lucy for twelve young people (YP) aged 13 at one of the satellite community fire stations that also hosted a youth club. The workshop was planned to last an entire programme day (5 hours). Using the gender-related violence matrix to frame the development of the programme, Lucy defined the aims as follows:

Young people will be able to learn to assess strengths and weaknesses in relation to employability, and to value individuality. Young people will develop communication and problem-solving skills using the learning cycle (plan, do, review, apply). The learning outcomes were defined as follows:

By the end of this session all students will be able to:

- *Solve a puzzle by examining information and identifying the skills required to complete a task.*
- *Reflect on personal abilities and identify own strengths and areas of improvement.*
- *Understand and apply the plan, do, review technique.*
- *Describe characteristics of successful teamwork.*
- *Challenge gender stereotypes.*
- *(Data source the session plan).*

- Lucy also considered for inclusion and difference:

Most students will be able to:

- Take part in a philosophical discussion and identify diversity in gender.
- Demonstrate positive group communication exchanges.

Some students will be able to:

- Explain the significance of learning styles within the education system.

All activities will support those with additional needs to be fully involved. One of the session aims is to value individuality. Each YP to have a set role within their group and therefore contribute equally to completing the task.

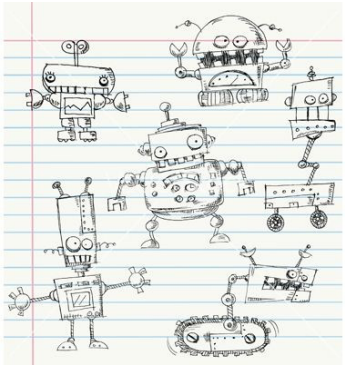
(Data source the session plan).

My journey started at the crack of dawn as I needed to travel to another town in the county to a community fire station in Rivervale about 10 miles north of EastShire Town. Lucy arrived to pick me up. We arrived at the station and entered the youth centre where Daniel and Antoinette were engaged in conversation with six young people. Daniel was seated with the main group of young people, playing a game of Monopoly. The game came to end, and Daniel announced to the young people: “you smashed it, well done”. I noticed the great interaction that the young people had with the fire service personnel. Their body language was open and engaged and there was a lot of laughter amongst the young people. Lucy left the room and re-entered with two already assembled mercado robots. The young people crowded around her asking questions about what the session was about. Lucy calmed them down and went to put her PowerPoint presentation on the screen. There was a delay as the projector wasn’t working. Slightly panicked, Lucy asked Daniel to go the main reception and ask for one of the admin staff to come help reset the screen. In the meantime, Lucy instructed the group to “turn to each other and name all the famous robots that you can think of.” It took about 15 minutes to get the projector and computer to work. Whilst the young people were discussing famous robots, Antoinette, Daniel, and Lucy huddled to discuss adapting their plan as time was now short due to the technical issues. They decided to combine the discussion of famous

robots with the starter activity to save time. Daniel used a ‘3-2-1’ countdown to bring the young people back together. Lucy asked the young people to hold on having any more conversations about the famous robots.

(Data source: Fieldnotes)

Draw a robot task… (No peeking!)



(*Data source: PowerPoint slides)*

Antoinette handed out paper and pens and paired them up. Daniel split the young people into two groups of six. Lucy explained that to the group that the purposes of the ‘starter' task were to: *learn how to follow instructions; learn to communicate effectively; explore the gender of robots; and set goals relating to our own individual assumptions about gender.*

The young people introduced themselves. They were asked to tell their name, their gender pronouns and what job they were interested in and one thing they were looking forward to

Lucy highlighted that this workshop would be used in their personal development plans, where each young person has set a goal for themselves relating to tackling gender-related violence. She also highlighted that the conversations could be sensitive for some, and that maturity and kindness was needed. The group were asked to nominate 4 ‘drawers’ and two explainers.

(Data source: Fieldnotes)

Lucy handed a piece of paper with the instructions to the 'explainers' who then agreed which points they would read out and they started the drawing activity:

"Divide the young people into two groups, A and B. Group As will need a piece of paper and a pencil or pen and they need to be seated with their backs facing towards the board. It's vital they don't turn around and look at the board. Group Bs should face the board and find a partner from group A and sit facing them. When the young people are seated correctly, draw a simple line drawing of a robot on the board. Students in group B describe the picture to their group A partner who should draw the same line drawing.

Directions:

- *Draw a rectangle body.*
- *Add a rectangle head and neck lines.*
- *Draw two matching legs and feet.*
- *Draw two curved arms with hands.*
- *Add details to the head and neck.*
- *Add lines to the arms.*
- *Draw details on the body.*
- *Add lines to the legs.*

If the seating arrangements for this activity are impossible you can dictate the robot drawing to the whole group or give one of the students, the picture and get them to do it."

(Data source: lesson plan)

As I circulated the room, I noticed that some of the young men were trying to force a sexualised gender expression onto the robots. For example, Daniel challenged a young man who kept on saying 'Put big boobage on it. Put big boobage on it." Daniel was very calm and kindly brought the young people back to task by insisting they follow the instructions and not put any kind of physical characteristics onto the robot. I also noticed that several of the young women were talking critically about themselves and their peers and their body shape as the activity progressed. "Make her fat like babs", one of the young girls announced. Antoinette also tried to keep these young people on task by asking them to follow the instructions, remember the

rule to be kind, and to remember these comments for the discussion that was still to come.

(Data source: Field work diary).

After 10 minutes, Lucy stopped the discussion and brought the young people back together. Antoinette asked the young people to feedback on their learning from the drawing activity and the discussions of the famous robots so that they - the practitioners and the young people - could engage in a dialogical conversation that explored the 'gender' of the robots:

Lucy: How did you find the task?

YP: It was easy!

Lucy: Tell me why it was easy

YP: It was easy because the instructions were good

Lucy: Could it also be that you are a good listener?

YP: I guess.

Antoinette: What about the other group? How did you find it?

YP: Frustrating.

Antoinette: Can you tell me more about why it was frustrating?

YP: I found it difficult to follow the instructions, what he described is not what I *wanted to draw. It was hard.*

Daniel: What would have made it easier?

YP: If I had more time to ask for clarification on his description.

Lucy: This is good learning for the workplace. Sometimes we need to ask for clarification when we are doing undemand and accept that working comes with frustrations and it's about how we handle the frustrations that counts.

Lucy: Look at the drawings of the robots. What do you notice about their gender?
YP: They don't have a gender.
Daniel: How do you know?

YP: Well, I can't tell if they are a man or a woman or neither a man nor a women.
L: But we wanted to draw boobage on it and you told us not to!

Laughter

Lucy: What do I mean by gender?

YP: Well, it's how a person looks, you know if he (sic) looks like a man of a women.
Antoinette: Do others agree?
**Silence*.*

Lucy: Let's go back a step. What is biological sex?

YP: I know this one, it's if a person has a penis or vagina.

Laughter

Lucy: That's part of it. Well done. Sex is someone's biological make up. For example, biological males have certain biological characteristics. For example, they have an Adam's apple and produce sperm. Young females have ovaries and during puberty develop breasts. Gender is different to sex. Gender is about how people identify their gender; how they express their gender; and how communities and society see their gender. So, when you were trying to draw breasts on the robot, were you focusing on sex or gender?

YP: Sex.

Lucy: Exactly. But what gender do the robots have?

YP: We don't know.

Lucy: Exactly. You drew the robots without any gender. Now, let's think about what gender you would give the robots if you had drawn a penis and breasts on them?

All: Boy or girl!

Daniel: But how do we know they are a boy or a girl? Have we asked them?

Silence

Antoinette: This happens a lot, we assume someone's gender based on assumptions we make about them based on what we perceive about their sex. But we don't always know. Can you give me an example of when we might get it wrong.

YP: When someone is trans?

Lucy: Well done. What does that mean?

YP: A boy changes to be a girl.

Lucy: That's a good start, it is when someone gives a sex to a person based on what they can see. But some people don't feel or express their gender in that way. This means that there are some people who we may perceived to be a boy but feel and express their gender as something that is more feminine. There are many names for these people who may identify themselves as transgender.

Lucy: So, let's go back to your robots. What were we doing when we started to draw sexual characteristics onto the robots?

YP: We were giving them a sex.

Daniel: And what about gender?

YP: We were assuming their gender.

Lucy: But how do we know?

YP: We don't know.

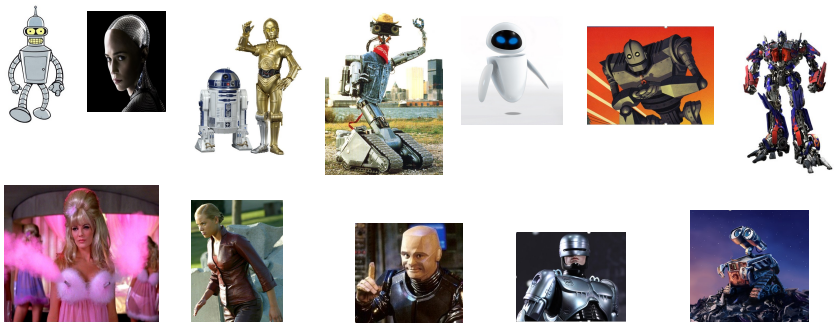
Lucy: How can this apply to the workplace?

YP: We can't assume that we know a person's gender from our perceptions of their sex.

(Data source: workshop transcript recorded in fieldwork diary).

The conversation then moved onto a discussion of gender stereotypes. At this point, Pat popped in to see how the workshop was going. She asked if she could join in the conversation and Lucy agreed. Lucy put the famous robots slide on the screen and asked the young people to shout out as many of the names of the robots as possible:

Famous Robots



(Data Source: PowerPoint Slides, Field work diary)

The young people shouted out:
Fembot (lots of laughter), I am Giant, Walley, Robocop, Optimus Prime, Eve, terminator 3 robot, Jonny 5, Terminator, R2D2, X Men Robots, Binder, Crayton from Red Dwarf.

Daniel asked the group to tell him what the young people noticed about the robots:

YP: “They are all Robots”.

YP: “They are all mechanical”.

YP: “Some look more human than others.”

YP: “There are some that look male, some female and some that don’t look like they have a gender.

(Data Source: transcript in the Fieldwork Diary

Lucy then asked the young people to discuss the following questions in pairs:

How are the feminine, masculine and gender nonbinary robots portrayed?” Which of the robots are portrayed as most useful and why?

(Data source: session plan)

The group was split in two with Antoinette facilitating one group for the discussion: *How are the ‘male’ and ‘female’ looking robots portrayed?*

Some of the yp’s responses included:

“Fembot is sexy and is pretty.”

“All the robots assigned female are made to look sexy.”

“The robots assigned male are often violent or made to look hard”.

“Even the hard looking lady robot from terminator is pretty” ‘the robots without a gender look sad and angry”.
Daniel: What do I mean when I say gender stereotype?

Group: Silence

Daniel: Think of some of the things that ‘boys’ typically do?

YP- Play football, fight lol.

Laughter

Antoinette: Boys play football; girls don’t is a typical gender stereotype, as they label and box in people based an assumption about their gender.

Lucy: What kind of building are we in?

YP: A fire station

Lucy: What would you say if I said that many people don’t think there are or should be women fire service personal?

YP: That’s ridiculous, we have a fire woman sitting in this session with us!

(Data source: workshop transcript incorporated into the fieldwork diary)

Lucy then paused the conversation and asked for a volunteer to read the next slide:

Read out the ‘When stereotypes meet robots’ slide’. Ask the YP for their views on this experiment with a focus on the gender element.

(Data source: lesson plan).

When stereotypes meet robots…

- A study published in 2013 asked participants to interact with a robot security guard, a stereotypically male occupation in the human world. Half of the participants met a robot that was given the typical male name "John," and the other half met a robot with the typically “emale”name "Joan." John had a male text-to-speech voice, and Joan a female voice, but otherwise the robot remained identical. After doing some security tasks, like detecting an intruder on CCTV, the participants rated the robots.
- They rated John higher than Joan. He was considered more useful and more acceptable as a security bot than his female twin.

(Data Source: PowerPoint slide)

This was followed by an appraisal of the experiment from the young people. During this conversation, the practitioners and young people discussed gender stereotyping and its implications for the workplace.

Lucy: What did you think about the experiment?

YP: It's true though, women can't do security it's a man's job to protect.

YP: Shut up, you're an idiot.

YP: Come on then, I'll fight you.

Antoinette: Calm down, remember our rules and the rules of the programme, we are not abusive towards each other.

YP: I was just joking, needs to not be so serious

Lucy: What do others think about this experiment.

YP: Well it shows how bad sexism is and we can all sometimes be sexist

Antoinette: Why is it sexist?

YP: Because it shows a stereotype about women.

Lucy: What other stereotypes about girls and women have we heard during the programme.

YP: Well during lunch the other day I heard someone say that women shouldn't be allowed to do what they want.

YP: Yeah, my brother said the same.

YP: And I heard that someone from my road had a naked picture sent out and he said she was asking for it.

Antoinette: That's hard to hear. When these things happen who are we blaming?

YP: The girls

Antoinette: Is that right?

YP: Not always but sometimes yes.

Lucy What about the person that sent it out? Are they in the wrong?

YP: Yes, its cruel and nasty.

Daniel: When we say that it's a girl's fault, what are we saying about the boy who sent it?

YP: That's they are ok, that they are trying to prove themselves.

Lucy: Can you tell me more about what you mean when you say that they are just trying to prove themselves.

YP: Show off, show they are the man, and they are in charge and that it's not their responsibility.

Lucy: It's important we don't blame someone who has experienced this kind of behaviour but rather understand who it may harmed them and how we can help them. At this point Lucy asked Pat to join in the conversation and talk about her experiences of working in the Fire service, which can be described as a typically masculine profession.

Lucy: I want to come back to this idea that there are some jobs suited for men and some for women.

Lucy: Can you tell us a bit about how you experience being a woman in the fire service?

Pat: I've been in the service for 16 years and am so excited to be seconded to this project. Things have changed a lot since I first started. Back then there were very few of us and I remember at the interview them asking me why I wanted to be in the service given it was more a man's job. Back then I was girly, but I am less so now. I've learned to toughen up. I remember answering that I felt it important that women are visible within the fire service so we can act as role models to people in the community. And fast forward to today and we have a chief who is a woman and openly Lesbian.

YP: Is it hard being a woman in the fire service?

Pat: Yes, there is sometimes sexist comments that are said, things like women don't belong here or sexual banter which may seem like a joke but is really hurtful. But I've learned to toughen up. And now there is more of a move to make the station gender neutral which makes life a bit easier for everyone.

Lucy: Yes, sometimes what can seem like a joke is harmful sometimes.

Lucy: What does this tell us about gendered expectations and the impact that they have on people?

YP: forcing an expectation can bad

Daniel: What do you mean by bad?

YP: Harmful.

Daniel: Exactly it limits people.

Lucy: We need to move on. Turn to the person next to you and tell them one thing you have learnt from this activity.

Young people complete think-pair-share
Lucy as we are running out of time, I'll ask for one or two of you to share back.

YP: Can I go?

Lucy: Yes, please do.

YP: I learnt that gender stereotypes can limit and harm people by forcing them into a box. It made me realise when I do this and now I can try change.

YP: Can I go next?

Lucy: Yes.
YP: I kind of get it more now but I sometimes feel like we make too much of a big deal about sexism and gender and we never talk about boy's things. But I am more aware now.

Lucy: Thank you both.

Lucy: Antoinette and Daniel would you like to say anything before we move on?

Antoinette: Yes I would actually. I know that this discussion brings out a lot of emotions for people. I've been feeling lots of things myself. The important thing is that we don't judge each other's feelings and experiences and that we try not to behave in harmful ways. So, thank you all for taking part in it.

Lucy: I agree 100%. Right everyone, lunch time, we will come back here at 13.15. Please remember not to go off-site.

(Data Source: workshop transcript incorporated into the Field work diary)

The critical reflection team and young people came back to the workshop room at 12.15. They settled down quickly and Lucy put the next slide on the screen. Daniel and Pat were present during this part of the activity. Lucy asked the group to discuss each question on the slide and be ready to give feedback.

Jobs for Robots

- How might robots help you in your everyday lives?
- Brainstorm ideas (which are your favourites?)
- The 3 d's – Robots tend to do work that is dirty, dangerous or dull.

(Data source: PowerPoint slide and observation notes)

Lucy: I've given out some post-it notes. Please brainstorm onto them jobs that robots can do.

The young people wrote down:

- Build cars
- Typing
- Cleaning
- Satnavs
- Factory work
- Army bomb disposal
- Homework and write essays

Lucy: It's sometimes said that robots do jobs that are dirty, dangerous, and dull. Do you agree?

YP: Yes, I hate doing all those jobs.

Pat: Do you think robots doing these jobs can free up time for you to what you like doing?

YP: Yes. If I don't have to write my own homework, I can play football.

Lucy: That's an interesting answer. Let's think about gender for a moment. Which of these jobs that you've written down can Robots who are not gendered by human's do to help us tackle gender stereotypes at work?

YP: All of them.

Lucy: That's correct, and it shows us how the idea of a gendered job is a bit silly. I wish we had more time to discuss this but I want us to move onto having some fun with our robots.

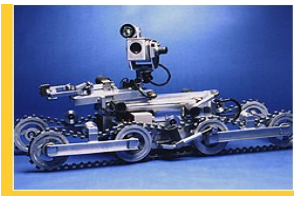
(Data source: Critically reflective fieldnotes)

Lucy then put up the next slide:

Hazardous Duty Robots – The Scenarios

Terrorist Bomb Threat

- The local newspaper receives an anonymous call—a terrorist group has placed a bomb in the basement of a downtown bank. Immediately, the area is evacuated. But if 'he bomb isn't removed or defused, it will cause millions of dollars worth of damage.



Land Mine Patrol

- Peacekeeping troops encounter an open field known to contain land mines; many local children have lost limbs and even lives as a result of stepping on them. The commander orders that all the land mines be found and disabled.

Nuclear Disaster

- There's been a explosion inside a nuclear reactor. The damage is contained within the reactor itself, but radioactive matter is everywhere. To further complicate matters, large pieces of debris cover the floor and engineers need to know whether the core is still intact.

(Data source: PowerPoint Slides)

Lucy asked the young people to read the scenarios and problem solve solutions.

Instructions:

- Put the hazardous scenario PowerPoint slide onto the screen.
- Hand out the matching game cards.
- Split the young people in groups of three or four. Ask the young people to read the Hazardous scenario and consider the dangers and discuss what skills are needed to complete these tasks.
- Read each robot and discuss which is suitable for which scenario and why. Ask the young people to consider if gender is relevant to how the robot does its job. Ask the group to think about robots as a solution, and whether the same robot can be used or would differently types of robots are needed.

(Data source, session plan)

After about 10 minutes Lucy bought, he groups back together. Firstly, she revealed the answer to the matching game, where a robot and their job were aligned. At this point the fire she then asked for feedback on the activity. As part of this the young people fed back on their discussion about the gender of the robots:

Lucy: Is it easy to tell the gender of these helper robots?

YP: No, you can't really tell the gender.

Daniel: Yeah, it looks neutral, doesn't it?

Lucy: What does this tell us about who does what kind of work?

YP: I dunno. Anyone can do any type of work?

YP: Yeah, I think that too. Gender doesn't matter in work when you are helping people.

Lucy: Brilliant, if there is one thing you take away from today, remember, anyone can strive to do any of these jobs regardless of their gender. It may be a challenge for certain genders to do these jobs because of society's expectations of gender but that can be overcome with resilience.

The penultimate activity involved the young people ‘driving’ the robots through an obstacle course. In doing this, one young person was blindfolded and another was giving instructions.

Critical reflection – Robots Session

This session was created to help young people learn about gender stereotypes in the workplace. The activity took place in the community Fire station. The Robots session helped young people to explore the issue of gender roles and stereotypes. It encourages young people to reflect themselves on their own assumptions and is delivered through a fun and relatable theme it’s an interesting topic that is emerging in the workplace.

The young people could relate to the topic and the use of AI and Robots in this workplace is of current interest, and the young people had a lot to say on it (Lucy) It was inclusive and everyone had something to contribute (Young people). All the young people understood the context and they all had experiences that they could contribute. (Daniel)

The young people engaged well with the gender identity and stereotypes. Talking about gender stereotypes was directly relevant to implementing the matrix and it showed us how we can weave the gap work messages and resources into our programme. (Kieran)

It was designed with young people with special educational needs in mind. It was engaging and diverse so that they could access it more (Lucy).

The young people changed their perspective and became more inclusive as the activities progressed as shown by in their inclusive language and relationships (Neil). The structure was informal and conversational. We designed a workshop that allows me to step away from them so that can still do some of the activity, rather than me having to hand hold them, and that’s something I need to think about more for next time.

The non-punitive approach to supporting behaviour.

Even better if:

- Discussion of sexuality and other identity factors (Lucy and Antoinette)
- Time was given to challenge homophobic language (Daniel)
- We had ordered some reconditioned tablets through the other budget to make some of the gender discussions more interactive (Lucy)

Practice conditions that constrain or enable the workshop:

- Having the planning document to guide the activities helped with planning when we were not too secure on the subject knowledge.
- Lack of time resource and adequate staffing. There was illness in the run up to the session that impacted both planning and delivery.
- The volume of activities expected by funders and a very packed delivery schedule means that we haven't had time to implement the matrix with its extra time pressures.
- Lucy only works 3 days a week and it needed more coordination.
- Lucy, Daniel, and Antoinette are new to this kind of youth work delivery, and it takes hours to pull together resources and session plans and complete the project paperwork. The matrix requires a lot of tick box paperwork and it's not possible in the time that we have. We need to revaluate the administrative tasks of the matrix as these are burdensome.

(Data source: fieldwork diary, EastShire)

The robots workshop is an example of a larger assemblage. The assemblage is produced through a variety of complex, shifting Socio-material Intra-actions that have differing affects. The components of the assemblage can be placed on a sociomaterial continuum as follows:

Social/ political/ economic conditions	Social practices	Bodies and emotions	Non-human
Lack of resources and time	Discourses of youth development	Lucy	The gender-related violence matrix
Feminist activism	Feminist pedagogy	Daniel	Learning resources (pens. paper, projector, PowerPoint)
	Disability inclusive pedagogies	Antoinette	The gendered robots experiment.
	Group facilitation skills	Pat	
	Youth work ethic of care	Admin staff	
	Youth work relationships	Young people	
	Discourses of gender diversity	Aggression	
	Pronoun-around	Frustration	
	Role modelling	Rapport and trust	
	Experiential group work activities (drawing, discussion, brainstorming, reflecting, Socratic dialogue, think-pair-share)	Feelings of harm	
	Normative body discourses	Feelings of enjoyment	
	Gender equality discourses		
	Sexualised pics swapping		
	Slut shaming language and behaviour		
	Victim blaming		
	Sexism		

Social → Material

At the beginning of this narrative of the robots workshop, the gender-related violence matrix intra-acts with an existing programme, feminist pedagogy, and discourses of

disability inclusion to have learning affects that are manifested in the learning outcomes. The learning outcomes territorialise the young people and the workshop, acting as an anchor throughout the narrative.

Throughout the narrative, social practices of gender-related violence intra-act with the young people and the youth workers and the non-human materials - most notably the robots. This can be seen in the discussion about gender stereotypes where some of the young people use sexist and sexualised discourses in their language and behaviour towards each other and the robots. It can also be seen in the projection of sexualised imagery onto the robots - for example, deploying normative discourses of body image onto the robots. Sexist discourses, language, behaviour, and relationships intra-act with the group work activities and these have emotional effects on both the young people and the youth workers. This can be seen in sexist and sexualised language that permeates some of the discussions. This shows how both the human and non-human components of the assemblage are territorialised by the sexist social practices of gender-related violence.

Group work facilitation skills and activities intra-act with the young people, non-human materials, and the social practices of feminist producing learning affects and emotional affects. These intra-actions both help and hindered learning. For example, the intra-action between the projector, the PowerPoint, and the young people at the beginning of the workshop hinders the learning process due to technical fault. This territorialises the young people. This hinders the learning.

Later in the narrative, there is an intra-action between the toy robots, feminist discourses of gender diversity and equity, the research on the experiment, group work activities and skills such appraising the research, reflecting on gender stereotypes at work, building and gendering the robots that enables the young people to develop a feminist consciousness. This a good example of how this intra-action can enable learning, and as a result deterritorialise the effects of gender-related violence amongst the young people.

There is an intra-action between the youth workers, group facilitation skills, group work activities, and feminist pedagogy that has emotional affects in this assemblage. For example, the stereotypes discussion intra-acts with both sexist and feminist pedagogical discourses and this has differing emotional effects on different young people. Some become overwhelmed by frustration and aggression whilst others find

emotional safety in the discussion. Young people are therefore (re)territorialised by this interaction. A youth work ethic of care is also part of this intra-action, and this provides emotional safety and hold this discussion. Therefore, when this component is added into the intra-action, a deterritorialising affect is produced. This creates a Brave Space that facilitates young people's learning.

Finally, economic conditions that limit resources intra-act with the youth workers resulting in both emotional and practical affects. For example, limited time and human resources affected the planning and affected feelings of distress for Lucy and Antoinette.

Case 7: The Brave Space Camp

This last example of an assemblage is the Brave Spaces Camp at Tikkun which is the event-assemblage. The data is taken from a critical reflection interview with Yitzi at the end of the process:

Neil: Can you teel me about how you went about creating a Brave Space on camp?

Yitzi: It was hard but I think we did it overall.

Neil: Can you tell me a bit more about what happened?

Yitzi: It started when we arrived on camp and were going through expectations and ground rules.

Yitzi: The chanachim (young people) were all sitting in a circle as part of a group work activity. One of the madrichim (leaders) started to talk to the group about not using the term guys as a collective for the group and why this was important. And I could see the chanicha (feminine young person) getting frustrated. She was disrupting and rolling her eyes and kept saying that she didn't understand why we couldn't use it. For her it was just a common phrase, and she didn't understand why it needed to be something to think about. The madrachim were giving her good answers about privileging masculinity and she didn't like it. Yes, it was a frustration that led to resistance. She was giving her opinion but not willing to hear a different viewpoint.

Neil: Can you teel me more about what the madrichim did?

Yitzi: She kept saying I am sick of people justifying why we can't use that phrase anymore. It was clear that no one had engaged her in conversation with her views and or given her space to learn. Oh, so this happened - she said to the group 'put your hand up if you are offended by the term "guys"' and the madrachim stopped that and said that it wasn't appropriate, and she said why. The madrachim replied that she was putting people on the spot and that people might feel pushed into saying they liked the phrase when they don't. This seemed to open the space up for others to say how they felt, and many agreed with the madrachim. There were a couple of other kids in the circle who also didn't like the discussion but didn't react in the same way. `There were some who were talking about how using the terms guys is reinforcing that men are more important than people who don't identify as women. It excluded people who don't identify as men all together. One of the madrachim talked about how there are memes on social media that shows a group of students sitting in a lecture and the lecturer says 'Guys, can you help' and only the men stand up because it shows how this term excludes women and people who don't identify as men. And they just described this and how for someone who may be non-binary or gender fluid, that this term might make them invalidated. Its hurtful to be referred to as a guy when you are not.

Neil: How did the group respond?

Yitzi: This was very difficult for the group to hear and they resisted.

Neil: Where do you think this resistance comes from?

Yitzi: My experience has taught me that families and peer groups play a big role. And since Brexit there has been less tolerance for equality, and I think this is a huge factor too.

Neil: So what happened next?

Yitzi: Then some of the other teens interrupted and said 'I have non-binary friends' at school and we really try hard not to say guys. So, some of the teens really pitched up on it and helped the others learn. It wasn't that it was just an argument with her and the madrachim, it was more of a dialogue. The interesting thing is that as the camp progressed, it was clear that she had changed her attitudes and that came from the

discussions and the two activities. It was good, she didn't leave the circle feeling answered as she learnt as camp progressed.

Neil: Can you tell me more about how things progressed?

Yitzi: The movement passed a motion at veida (conference) a couple of years ago that all residential events where the site allows has to have a gender-neutral bathroom and we had one at camp this year, but we had some complaints from participants that the space was being misused and that cis people were using it as a space to hook up with others. So that is where these conversations came from as we sat down with the teens to talk about why it is not acceptable to use a gender-neutral bathroom to hook up. It started as a small conversation and grew and grew into a wider conversation about gender inclusion in the movement. All it took was one small conversation. But even just having a conversation about a gender-neutral toilet was challenging for some of the teens. I think we could have done more on the first day of camp and done a better job of explaining it. We needed to make sure they understood what the purpose of having a gender-neutral bathroom is.

Neil: What were they questioning?

Yitzi: Well, some of them had legitimate questions, like why we need to promote gender-neutral space. The way we answered this was to ensure that everyone know that there where spaces for them and where these spaces are. There were a few of them saying 'I don't understand, why can't they just use the disabled toilets?' and we had to explain about why that wasn't the appropriate thing to do. 'Why would you want to be forced to use the disabled toilet just because you don't ascribe to being male or female?' It was the first time and they had never thought about this.

Yitzi: We then had the issue that some of the kids didn't understand why they couldn't use it as a place to hook up. We spoke about how this is disrespectful and how having a gender-neutral bathroom for someone questioning or expressing their gender identity, it needs to be treated with respect as it might be the first time that they have this type of space and that they may just want to use it without having to worry about being observed, out of public sight. So, using it as a hook up space is disrespectful and oppressive and inappropriate. It stopped after this conversation. And I was standing there thinking that I can see how this behaviour is gender-related violence. I think it shows a massive amount of disrespect and creates an

environment where those who don't adhere to the norm are forced out. It is a form of discrimination because it doesn't register for them that it's a space for people to use as a place of safety, in their heads, they are like, why cant they just go and to use the other toilet, the female toilets whereas we knew that there were kids who wanted to use the gender-neutral toilets.

Neil: Can you tell me more about how you turned this into an educational moment?

Yitzi: I turned it on them. I led a discussion. So we asked the young people, 'why do you think we are having this discussion with you? Why is it important?' I phrased it as, 'I'm not here to tell you off. I'm not angry with you.' I was helped by some of the kids who were saying that it's not fair to use it for hook ups where there are others who want to use it as a safe space and I asked them, 'How we can make this a more inclusive environment if some of you abusing the space.?' In having this conversation, other things came out, like what is the point of having a gender-neutral bathroom if people are not using it. I then explained that people wanted to use it, but I was very careful by saying that people might want to use it, and they don't need to tell anyone, and that's the point of having the space. It's so people can use it without fear even if no one is around. It's at their discretion, and we must not put barriers in place to letting this happen. This is why we have this. After this conversation, they understood.

Yitzi: Remember I talked to you about the safe zones? We put these stickers in every room. We had Pride flags as well. And we made sure they understood the gender-neutral toilet is a safe zone too. So, thinking about our ideology and how we want to behave as a movement, and with the help of others started to have a conversation with them about how we can stop gender-related violence from taking place though safe zones and reflecting on how we use the space.

Neil: It sounds like you created a Brave Space.

Yitzi: Yes. Listen, I'm not here to blame or attack. I don't think it was a direct act of hate or violence. It wasn't a direct attack on non-binary people. It was their lack of education and understanding. There is a lack of knowledge. And it comes from the reactionary parts of the Jewish community and sexist society. Having had that conversation really helped them as after we had that conversation things changed.

One thing I didn't do was call them out. I knew who the individuals are but, rather than call them out, I asked the whole group to lead.

Neil: Tell me more about how you created a Brave Space on camp.

Yitzi: Let me tell you about these two programmes. One was a general LGBT+ inclusion programme which came from the reflection workshop we did together. Some of the kids on camp really needed it. There was an agreed programme. It was very well received by everyone. It focussed on using the correct terminology and combatting LGBT-phobia on camp. And the second programme was about gender. Here in the UK we are co-ed, but in other parts of the country, they split the genders which is interesting as they use a fraternity and sorority structure. And to try and be in line with the movement there, we will occasionally do gender specific activities, and I would say that just going by this programme, so, um the girls programme was on consent and rape and the boys programme was on pro-feminism. I ran the girl's session, and they said it was a great session. They discussed consent and we used the GAP WORK resources to help with this. After the session, the girls suggested that they run it for the boys and that the boys run a similar session for the girls on pro-feminism. They educated each other. The session that the boys ran for the girls focussed on gender inclusion - including different perceptions of gender and sexism - and from this they made this wonderful banner out of paper that they called the equality banner. This was made by the boys who wrote different statements in felt-tip pen that they came up with to promote gender equality. It has things on it like: boys and girls are equal; boys have emotions; boys, don't be afraid of periods etc. The boys made this banner for the corridor that separated the dorms, and they then discussed it. It had a real impact.

Neil: What do you see as the impact?

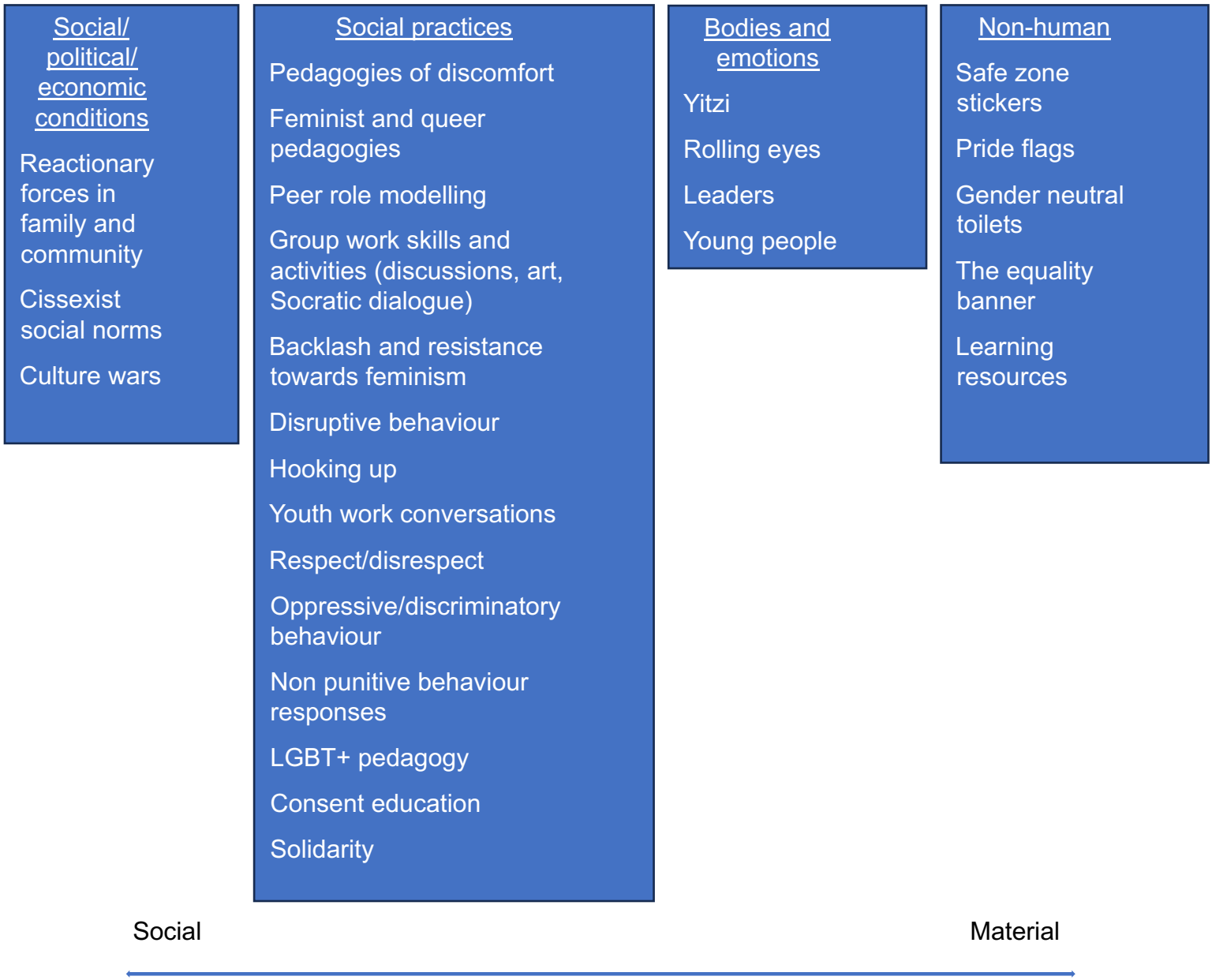
Yitzi: The boys' behaviour towards the girls changed - there was less inappropriate sexual banter. The girls also seemed more willing to talk about their experiences.

Neil: Can you give me an example?

Yitzi: The boys used to tease the girls about 'being on the blob' when they had their periods. This changed after the banner was made. There was more empathy with the girls.

Brave Spaces Camp-assemblage analysis

The Brave Space camp is another example of a larger assemblage. The components of the assemblage can be placed on a socio-material continuum as follows:



There are several intra-actions between the young people, the group work activities associated with the forming stage of the process, (cis)sexist social practices, feminist and queer pedagogies, pedagogies of discomfort, backlash and disruptive behaviour (embodied by rolling of eyes) that produce both learning and emotional affects. This

is demonstrated at the beginning of the narrative when the feminine young person resists the attempt of the leaders to deploy feminist pedagogy in the introductory group work activity. The leaders use Socratic questioning in the frame of a pedagogy of discomfort that has a learning affect. This elicits a physical affect by the young person, as she uses her body to communicate her disproval in the form of rolling her eyes and this is seen as disruptive. This intra-action enables an emotional response that manifests as resistance in her language and interaction with the youth workers and other young people. This resistance constrains the feminist and queer pedagogies at the heart of the learning activity, and this produces a learning affect that territorialises the other young people.

Moreover, this social practice of backlash/resistance is deployed again later by the other young people who also resist the attempts at developing a feminist and queer consciousness. In the middle part of the narrative, resistance is produced through an intra-action between resistance/backlash, cissexist behaviour, the young people, and the gender-neutral toilet. This is demonstrated by the cis young people's colonization of the gender-neutral space where they then sexualise that space. This produces a relational affect that manifests as disrespect and a discriminatory affect where young people who want to access this social space are constrained from doing so. These discriminatory affects territorialise the young people and the summer camp. These flows of back lash and resistance flow from social conditions such as the culture wars, family and community and cissexist social norms (that in turn flow from larger gender-related violence assemblages) also (re)territorialise the young people.

On the other hand, there are numerous intra-actions that deterritorialised the effects of gender-related violence on the young people and the summer camp setting; for example, the Safe Zone stickers, gender-neutral toilet, a youth work conversation, the youth work relationship based on an ethic of care and trust, non-punitive behaviour management intra-act producing a learning affect raising the feminist and queer consciousness of the young people. This affect also deterritorialised the affects of gender-related violence on the gender-neutral toilet and the young people. Additionally, group work skills and activities located in feminist, LGBT+ and queer pedagogy, consent education social practices of solidarity, the youth work

relationship, and the learning resources intra-act to produce a learning affect that manifests as the gender equality banner. This intra-action territorialises the camp, and this also disrupts the affects and flows of gender-related violence.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the process of assemblage analysis. I described how I identified the different assemblages and their unstable and ever-changing sociomaterial domains. I provided seven cases of assemblage analysis that give useful insights as to how gender-related violence intra-acts with feminist and queer youth work to affect the young people and the youth setting. The analysis showed how complex intra-actions between social and material components of assemblages produce a variety of affects including learning affects, emotional affects, and material affects. These affects can both regulate young people through processes of territorialization that disrupt the effects of gender-related violence through processes of deterritorialization.

Chapter 6 - Discussion and conclusions

Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis explores the significance of the findings. I start by introducing the concept of gender-related violence-youth work assemblage. I explore the workings of this by focusing on how the sociomaterial components work. I then explore the capacity of norm critical, feminist, and queer youth work to disrupt gender-related violence. The chapter concludes the thesis with a discussion of the role that youth work plays in disrupting gender-related violence and an appraisal of the research process and ends with lessons for research and practice and recommendations for further research.

The gender-related violence–youth work assemblage

A first key finding from this research is that gender-related violence can be understood as a complex assemblage of intra-acting sociomaterial forces. This gives empirical weight to Fox and Alldred's (2022) scholarship that advocates for an analysis of gender-related violence through the lens of Feminist New Materialism. Examples of the components of the gender-related violence-assemblage includes gendered austerity, sexist, cisnormative and heterosexist social practices, and youth work buildings. These components intra-act with each other to regulate young bodies. This is most evident in the Brave Space Camp-Assemblage where gender-neutral spaces are hegemonised by cissexist forces. This insight adds weight to those who argue for a comprehensive conceptualisation of violence (Bufacchi, 2005). It also suggests that gendered violence has a ripple affect (Bufacchi and Gilson, 2016) where one form can give rise to another in an infinite unfolding of sociomaterial events.

Moreover, gender-related violence assemblages plug into youth work assemblages in this study (Nail, 2019). This is where the components of the gender-related violence assemblage intra-act with components of youth work assemblages (Pisani, 2023). This produces a gender-related violence-youth work assemblage. The micropolitical dynamics of the gender-related violence-youth work assemblage can be analysed by zooming into the assemblage to examine how it works (Fox and

Alldred, 2016). When zooming into the assemblage, it can be observed that there are four domains that host the components. These domains can be found across all the cases analysed in this study and can be placed on a social-material continuum (Feely, 2020). The first domain is located on the social side of the continuum and comprises the sociomaterial conditions that affect the case-assemblages. For example, the gendered effect of austerity has a profound impact on the Pride Youth setting-assemblage. The next domain, also closer to the social side of the continuum includes social practices, that are the doings, sayings, and relatings (Kemmis, 2019) that affect the assemblage. For example: the social practice of cisnormativity that includes cisnormative language; behaviour that reinforces the gender binary; and relations where those who do not live in the binary and excluded affected the Brave Space Camp- Assemblage in this study. Next, in the middle of the continuum are bodies and emotions. This includes the people in the study and their feelings about themselves and towards others. Finally, on the material side of the continuum is the non-human - for example, youth work buildings and resources. It is important to recognise that these non-human components have equal ontological status to the other components of the assemblage.

It is also important to note that that these domains are not fixed and essential but unstable and in flux. Rather than constituting a mechanism, they can be viewed as the material of a texture of sociomaterial practices (Gherardi, 2016). The components of the domains of one assemblage are completely different to that of another. Moreover, what one component of a domain does in one assemblage may be different to what it does in another assemblage. For example, a building can either enable gender-related violence to take place or it can disrupt the normativity that underpins gender-related violence.

How does the gender-related violence-youth work-assemblage work?

A first observation mirrors scholars such as Sundaram (2013) who illustrate how normative social practices of sexism, cisnormativity, and heteronormativity regulate the youth workers, and the young people as shown through their normative doings (behaviour), relatings (interpersonal interactions), and sayings (language) (Kemmis, 2019). These social practices affect the non-human components of the assemblage

as demonstrated by the way in which normative social practices regulate the physical building. For example, there are many cases where cisnormative discourses affect architectural designs that reinforce the gender binary that in turn regulates bodies. Therefore, it could be argued that social norms that manifest as social practices are affective (Fox and Alldred, 2023). It can also be observed that components of the non-human domain can affect the social practices in an assemblage. The best example of this can be found in the Pride Youth setting-assemblage case where the masculinized architectural design of the youth setting affects the young people's behaviour, enabling forms of gender-related violence to take place. This suggest that gendered architectural spaces are affective (Kuhlmann, 2014).

The findings also give weight to Hook and Wolfe's (2018) analysis that sociomaterial forces have emotional effects on bodies. Although all types of bodies are affected in this study, it could be argued that the findings show the specific precariousness of bodies that do not fit the gender binary (Butler, 2004). The best example of this can be found in the Brave Space Camp-assemblage where young people that do not fit the gender binary are excluded from a space that was specifically designed for them. This seems to indicate that institutionalised cisnormativity has a profound impact on youth workers and young people in a youth work setting, and this mirrors the experience of young people in school settings (McBride and Neary, 2021; Horton, 2023). This is troubling considering that one of the key features of youth work is to provide more empowering and inclusive experience for young people that may be lacking in their lives in formal education. This also suggests that youth work that is not grounded in a broadly critical pedagogy (Seal, 2016) risks reproducing the inequalities that it is designed to tackle (Jeffs and Smith, 1990) - such as the marginalization of young people based on their gender identity or expression.

In this study the socio-political conditions of economic austerity have material and emotional affects on the young people and the youth workers. This is most pronounced in the Pride Youth setting-assemblage where the original building where the youth work took place was affected by loss of funding and this in turn affected the language, behaviour, and relationships of the young people and the youth workers. This is an example of the affects that material, non-human factors can be seen to have on the human components of an assemblage. This compliments the

literature that has mapped how services for women and LGBT+ people have been disproportionally affected by political and economic austerity (Colgan *et al.*, 2014; Hastings *et al.*, 2023), with a specific focus on the effects on services for young people (Davies, 2019). The emotional impact of austerity (Jupp, 2022) is also highlighted by the findings of this research. A good example of this comes from the gender-related violence matrix-assemblage where the youth workers feel frustration and despair at not being able to implement the matrix because of the pressures imposed on them by performativity cultures (de St Croix, 2018) of grant-givers.

Cisnormativity and heteropatriarchy as social conditions are also affective in this study. This manifests in a variety of ways, for example, the femophobia and sexism in the young people's language during the robots workshop-assemblage that flow from broader youth cultures or community norms (Lombard 2016).

Disrupting gender-related violence through norm critical, feminist, and queer youth work.

It is clear from this study that that gender-related violence is disrupted by a youth work praxis that is comprised of a creative, norm-critical (Alldred, David *et al.*, 2014) and a broadly feminist and queer pedagogy (Batsleer, 2012; Batsleer, 2015). A wide range of practical strategies are used to produce the effect of enabling critical consciousness in the young people and youth workers (Seal, 2016). This growth is achieved through deploying pedagogies of discomfort and care that lead to growth (Cullen and Whelan, 2021). This praxis flows from broader feminist and queer activist praxes that stem from liberation politics.

Feminist youth work doings, sayings, and relatings (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014) play a vital role in disrupting gender-related violence. For example, feminist youth work activities such as gender audits (Batsleer, 2015) were adapted to plan content for gender-related violence workshops at EastShire in the case of the gender-related violence matrix-assemblage. Pronoun-arounds and pronoun labels troubled gender normativity across the whole Critical Participatory Action Research process (McGlashon and Fitzpatrick, 2018). This means that young people are enabled to learn about some of the educational themes that the literature suggests disrupt

gender-related violence. For example, a youth-centred sex and relationships education (Alldred and David, 2007) and LGBT+ inclusion education.

Moreover, norm critical and feminist inspired conversations that incorporate feminist critical reflection (Morley 2020) helps young people to gain understanding of the violent effects of their gendered assumptions and attitudes. This in turn shows how taking a feminist youth work approach as described by Batsleer (2018) disrupts the specific normativity that underpins gender-related violence and affects the young people's behaviour. This is shown in the case of the Brave Space Camp-assemblage where the young people's gendered and violent language and behaviour is changed through deconstructing their normative assumptions and then reconstructing their attitude and behaviour using pro-feminist discourses as an anchor. This is a significant finding as it gives empirical evidence to the argument that youth workers need a praxis that is framed in critical and feminist theory (Seal and Frost, 2014; Alldred and David, 2014; Cooper-Levitan and Alldred, 2022) to deal effectively with issues such as gender-related violence. This praxis involves weaving norm criticality and feminism into different youth work activities such as having a conversation.

There is also evidence that deploying a feminist youth work praxis can counter some of the negative emotional effects of neoliberalism and austerity. Doing this kind of anti-oppressive youth work enables a sense of empowerment in the youth workers. This is accomplished by circumventing the prescriptiveness of outcomes driven neoliberal youth work (de St Croix, 2018). For example, in the case of the gender-related violence matrix-assemblage the youth workers at EastShire take a neoliberal practice (outcomes mapping for funders) and fuse this with a feminist pedagogical intent, thus partly erasing the meaning of an audit in its neoliberal sense. This in turn motivated the youth workers to take action to tackle gender-related violence with and amongst their young people through producing creative and engaging workshops that helped young people to reflect critically on gender and sexuality. It could be argued that this is another example of sousveillance (Seal, 2016) - but one where the regulatory mechanisms of performativity as part of neo-liberal surveillance are erased and reinvented for a new and more progressive purpose.

Significantly, this study shows that non-human materials are productive as part of a feminist youth work praxis that disrupts gender-related violence. The car, pool table, safe zone posters, pronoun labels, gender-neutral social spaces, toy robots, and LGBT+ books are just a few examples of non-human components in anti-oppressive youth work praxis that help to trouble normativity and disrupt gender-related violence. In accordance with the work of the Phematerialists (Ringrose *et al.,* 2020), this finding shows how youth work in general and youth work that seeks to disrupt gender-related violence is not solely a product of human rationality but is produced through complex intra-actions of sociomaterial components of an assemblage. This suggests that youth work research should adopt a critical post-humanist stance to fully understand the post-human condition (Pisani, 2023). There is also a methodological observation to be made here. Non-human materials are active and affective in the assemblage rather than passive as assumed in Kemmis *et al.*'s (2014) Theory of Practice Architectures.

Additionally, the findings show how the resources from the GAP WORK training research project transferred norm critical feminist knowledge into these youth work settings. As a result, this shows how the GAP WORK training translated into practice as part of a Feminist youth work Praxis. This gives empirical evidence to Cooper-Levitan and Alldred's (2022) suggestions for further research into the application of the GAP WORK training and resources in the settings of the practitioners that participated in the research project.

Appraising the research-assemblage

Fox and Alldred (2014, 2023) argue that social research can be seen as an assemblage of human and non-human social forces. In this view, each element of the research - for example data collection and analysis - can be viewed as a machine that produces affects (Fox and Alldred, 2014). The task of the researcher is to understand the effects of the decisions taken in the building of the research-assemblage. Fox and Alldred (2023) propose four strategies that can be deployed that limit the negative effects of researcher-affect and boost the quality of the research. These four strategies are used here as a framework for appraising the research-assemblages in this research project.

The first strategy proposed is that of substitution. This is described as:

"involving citizens or others in the co-construction of the research design or the development of policy; and by substituting less researcher-led data collection methods - such as a walking tour of a location or setting - and involving research participants and service users in data analysis or report production" (Fox and Alldred, 2023:105).

To a certain extent this was achieved in this research, but not to the extent that had originally been planned. For example, a strength of the process was that youth workers decided on the types of data collection tools that would work in their settings. They also had the opportunity to learn how to collect the data themselves and some of them took up this opportunity. This participatory process was hindered by the external conditions of the project. For example, time limitations - often imposed by the need to meet service funding criteria - meant that many of the participants couldn't participate to the extent that they had originally envisaged. Although it was the original intention to involve participants in the design, this was hampered by the effects of the pandemic, which included one of the sites, EastShire, ceasing operations, and communication severed with the other sites. Saying this, there was a limited level of participation earlier in the process in analysis.

The second strategy involves undertaking a macropolitical analysis of the research-assemblage. The aim here is to identify "the affective shortcomings of a study" (Fox and Alldred, 2023:105). The decision to utilise Critical Participatory Action Research as the methodological framework was made to mitigate some of the issues associated with researcher-led research. For example, in the design of data collection methods and analysis (Fox and Alldred, 2014). The research process was broadly transparent and in line with the considerations for ethical and rigorous research as described by Banks and Brydon-Miller (2018). For example, the use of the research diary made the data collection process transparent to the participants throughout the process. There were also some specific positive affects using a Critical Participatory Action Research methodology on the organisations that participated.

Although the intention for participation in this study was co-learning, the reality was that the time limitations and requirements of PhD research meant that cooperation

was the main outcome. This highlights the tension in academia that is increasingly favouring positivistic and realist research over participatory and creative designs. A further set of limitations centres on the research design. Firstly, the data collection strategy was too ambitious which resulted in too much redundant data being collected - for example, the session plans. As the result of this, I experienced frustrations during the data analysis phase. The data that was most useful in the analysis were the in-depth interviews, observations, and artefacts. If I were to repeat the research, I would focus on collecting more of this type of data in a more focused manner. I also underestimated the time it would take to collect data, process, and analyse so much data which highlights the need for a more focused and considered approach.

The decision to not involve young people directly at the beginning of the process impacted on the quality of the data collection. Young people were generally reluctant for observations and artefacts to be used. This might have been different if they had been involved in the process from the beginning, consenting in a more participatory manner and taking ownership on the methods as was with the practitioners. Moreover, interviewing young people could have complimented the critical reflections and incidents of the practitioners giving more insight into the research questions. Finally, I didn't account for the impact of staff and volunteer turnover and the negative affect this would have on the process. This was significant as new joiners often didn't have the same level of tacit knowledge that had been gained through being part of the process earlier on.

The third strategy involves mixing the methods (Fox and Alldred, 2023:105). This was broadly accomplished as part of this process. A wide variety of qualitative and creative tools were used, and this added value to the analysis. The fourth and final strategy included discussing what the participants wanted from the research (Fox and Alldred, 2023). This was accomplished through the actions being focused on the needs of each specific organisation. The actions introduced as part of the Critical Participatory Action Research project resulted in the embedding of new practices into the youth work settings. These practices helped the youth workers to meet the anti-oppressive criteria for quality youth work.

The vitality of non-human materials in the research-assemblage

The vital role that non-human materials play in the research process cannot be underestimated. Recording equipment, word processing programmes, and research articles all contributed to the production of the research-assemblage (Fox and Alldred, 2014). There were also a few specific instances where the non-human had a profound impact on the process. For example, there was loss of data when my recording equipment failed. Moreover, the car and public transport played a vital role in the process. Even though they are not generally considered formal spaces for research to take place, some of the most helpful research discussions were enabled in these settings and captured as data in my research diary.

Personal reflections on the Critical Participatory Action Research process

It has been noted that the hallmark of good Critical Participatory Action Research is that change occurs at all levels including at the level of individual researchers (McNiff, 2014; Brydon-Smith *et al.*, 2003). This was true for me. For example, I gained valuable insight into how to be a collaborative researcher and the value of this. As a result of the participatory nature of the research process, I learnt that trust is easier to build when assuming an insider positionality. I also learnt that I needed to establish professional boundaries as there was a potential for friendships to develop with the researchers in this process. This meant that, at times, I had to pull back from discussions when they were of a personal nature. Most importantly, I learnt that research - far from being a neat and tidy process depicted in textbooks - is a messy process that is impacted as much by internal factors (such as research design) as external factors (such as pandemics, referendums, personal illness, job insecurity).

I would not do justice to this section without noting the impact that this decade long process has had on me personally, and specifically in relation to my own gender identity. As a result of working with the youth workers and young people, I came to realise that my gender identity was not the one that I was assigned at birth. More importantly, I also came to the realisation that I had an ethical responsibility as a non-binary person to get involved directly in disrupting gender-related violence where I saw it. Part of this was embracing the coming out process once again. My social transition took place directly as the result of being a participant in this process and this shows the power of change in Critical Participatory Action Research (McNiff, 2017).

Contribution to knowledge

Contribution to theoretical and propositional knowledge

Propositional knowledge is theoretical knowledge that can be stated as a clear proposition (McNiff 2017). This study proposes that gender-related violence and youth work can be theorised as a flat ontological phenomenon that is comprised of unstable and ever-changing sociomaterial-assemblages (Fox and Alldred, 2023). For the sake of description only, these assemblages comprise the following domains: social conditions, social practices, bodies and emotions, and non-human materials. The non-human components of the youth work assemblage are not passive, as suggested by Kemmis et al. (2014), but vital, active, and productive in line with an agential realist ontological stance (Barad 2003).

When discerning how the youth work-gender-related violence assemblage works, it is helpful to focus on how the elements within these domains intra-act with each other in complex ways, producing a range of affects that either regulate/territorialise young people, youth workers and youth settings or deterritorialise/liberate young people, youth workers and youth settings (Fox and Alldred 2023). An example of an intra-action during the Pride Youth Club - an assemblage that demonstrates the territorialisation/regulation of the young people involves the entanglement of the youth club architecture (in this case, the toilet area), with cissexist social practices (notably discourses of hyper-masculinity), masculinised youth work social practices and the young people themselves to produce behavioural effects that manifest with the young people engaging in gender-related violence, specifically symbolic violence. This colonises a safe gender-neutral space. An example of deterritorialisation at Tikkun is found in the Brave Space Camp-assemblage. It involves an intra-action of art materials, with discourses of gender inclusion drawn from feminist pedagogy, the young people, and the architecture of the building (in this case, the walls) to produce the gender equality banner. The banner deregulates the effects of gender-related violence on young people.

This study's evidence that youth work is constituted of human and non-human materiality gives empirical weight to Pasini’s (2023) call for youth work praxis to be

viewed through the lens of critical posthumanism. The proposition is that youth work praxis is not a solely humanistic endeavour but a complex texture of socio-material practices (Gherardi 2016), which is significant as it destabilises the humanist foundations of youth work theorising.

Contribution to practical knowledge

A second level of contribution to knowledge relates to practical knowledge and lessons for youth workers. This study contains valuable insights as to how youth workers can meet their professional obligations to support the health and well-being of young people and disrupt intersectional inequalities that manifest as gender-related violence and blight young people's and some youth workers' lives. This study reinforces the conclusions by Seal and Harris (2016), who argue that youth work can play a role in responding to violence. The youth workers in this study were able to identify and recognise gender-related violence in their youth work setting. They were also able to sculpt a variety of youth work practices ranging from non-formal interventions to informal conversations that disrupted the forms of gender-related violence that they identified.

Importantly, these Youth Work activities were framed by norm-critical, feminist, and queer pedagogies that disrupted the normativity that underpins the forms of gender-related violence identified in each context. The importance of deploying a norm-critical (Alldred, David, et al. 2014), feminist and queer youth work Praxis (Batsleer 2012, Batsleer 2015) as part of any endeavour to disrupt gender-related violence in a youth work context is, therefore, a significant finding in this study.

On the other hand, this study shows that youth work practice that is designed with neoliberal intentions runs the risk of exposing young people to forms of gender-related violence where there is a lack of critical reflexivity in the youth work praxis. Once critical reflexivity is introduced into the practice, youth workers can disrupt gender-related violence in young people's lives by addressing the normativity that underpins gender-related violence. There is also evidence in this study that the critical praxis developed as part of this study combatted neoliberalism's invasion of youth work in these youth work settings. The gender-related violence matrix is a good example of this. When framed by feminism, the neoliberal auditing process was

turned on its head to become a tool to tackle the normativity of gender-related violence. It could be argued that this is an example of sousveillance, where youth workers take back space occupied by Neoliberal practices (Seal and Harris 2016).

Moreover, a critical and posthuman orientation to youth work is vital to meeting professional obligations as described in the National Occupational Standards (2018). In doing this, this study shows how youth work can be used as primary prevention of violence and that this can benefit from having a gender focus at the core of its pedagogy (Ellis and Thiara 2014).

Contribution to procedural knowledge

Procedural knowledge relates to how to perform methodological tasks and processes (McNiff 2017). This study demonstrates how to undertake an assemblage analysis in the context of youth work research. This involves mapping the interactions of the socio-material elements of the gender-related violence-youth work assemblage and describing their affects. A crucial methodological finding is that non-human materials are vital and productive, not passive or innate in the research process (Fox and Alldred 2016). For example, the car played an essential role in the data collection. This demonstrates the utility of a posthuman youth work research praxis (Pisani, 2023).

Contribution to personal/tacit knowledge

Personal or tacit knowledge describes ways of knowing that are subjective and embodied (McNiff 2017). This research developed my tacit knowledge in multiple ways regarding my research practice and knowledge about my gender identity. I learnt a lot about the impact of my complex multiple identities due to this process. Notably, the study reinforced my critical, feminist, and queer values, and I was honoured to be able to share these with other youth workers to develop their tacit knowledge. The personal transformations that occurred were significant and life-changing. I came to acknowledge my nonbinary gender identity as the result of the experience of doing this research. I also became very aware of my multiple positionalities and some of the weaknesses I have in my worldview, notably around the intersection of gender and sexuality with race and socioeconomic position. I also

became aware that reflexivity is a phenomenon that goes beyond humans. My understanding of myself changed in dialogue with the research. This study was, therefore, transformative at the personal level.

Recommendations for further research

This research provided a snapshot of changes in youth work praxis in the four youth work settings. There would be a benefit in revisiting the organisations that are still functioning to ascertain if the Critical Post-humanist Praxis was sustainable a few years after the formal Critical Participatory Action Research process ended. A new analysis of the current gender-related violence-youth work-assemblages could add further insight into which sociomaterial components persist and which have left new assemblages. As already mentioned, there is more work to be done directly with young people on how they would tackle gender-related violence in their lives, using youth work as a primary form of intervention. This could be creative participatory research involving a broad public sphere of young people, youth workers, decision-makers, families, and communities. Another area of research that opens as the result of this study relates to the culture wars. Youth work can play a role in overcoming some of the harm that is being done by this social conflict. Therefore, understanding the role of youth work in tackling the culture war conflict is an area of further research. There is also more work to be done in bridging second, third, and fourth-wave feminism under one theoretical framework for tackling violence. This can be achieved by deploying a posthuman Critical Participatory Action Research framework similar to this study.

Overall conclusion

This thesis explores how youth work can disrupt gender-related violence that affects young people, youth workers, and youth settings. Through deploying a Critical Participatory Action Research design and a feminist new materialist assemblage analysis, insight has been gained as to how a wide range of sociomaterial components of gender-related violence affect young people, youth workers, and youth settings. The contribution to knowledge covers four forms of knowledge (McNiff, 2017).

These include emotional affects, material affects, and social affects that regulate people, places, and things. The thesis also demonstrates how norm critical and feminist youth work disrupts gender-related violence through creating resistance to the normativity that is at the heart of how gender-related violence functions. This builds on the GAP WORK project (Alldred and David, 2014; Cooper-Levitan and Alldred, 2022) by demonstrating how youth workers put feminist and norm critical praxis into practice. The importance of the non-human cannot be underestimated and are a vital part of this praxis. This suggests that youth work research and practices need to give more consideration to the vitality of non-human materials when looking to address issues such as gender-related violence. This finding challenges the humanist orthodoxy in current youth work research. This thesis has provided practical insights as to how a post-humanist youth work enquiry can be undertaken. The key is to explore sociomaterial intra-actions that shed light into the complexity of youth work and the role that buildings and resources play in the production of youth work assemblages.

In summary, a wide range of youth sociomaterial components of gender-related violence affect youth workers, young people, and youth settings through a ripple affect (Bufacchi and Gilson, 2016). These affects are in turn disrupted through deploying the sociomaterial components of norm critical, feminist, and queer youth work. This disrupts the normativity of gender-related violence from affecting young people, youth workers and the settings in which they practice.

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Appendices

Ethics approval letters

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13 January 2015

Proposer: Neil Levitan

Title: Action Research with youth practitioners to tackle gender violence with and amongst young people in the UK

Reference: 14/12/PhD/03

LETTER OF APPROVAL – STEP 2

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the amendments recently submitted by you in response to the Committee's earlier review of the above application.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority, is satisfied that the amendments accord with the decision of the Committee and has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to step 2 (involving individual interview) of the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions of approval set out below are followed:

- The agreed protocol must be followed. Any changes to the protocol will require prior approval from the Committee.

Please note that:

- Research Participant Information Sheets and (where relevant) flyers, posters, and consent forms should include a clear statement that research ethics approval has been obtained from the Research Ethics Committee.
- The Research Participant Information Sheets should include a clear statement that queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Supervisor (where relevant), or the researcher. Complaints, on the other hand, should be directed, in the first instance, to the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee
- Approval to proceed with the study is granted subject to receipt by the Committee of satisfactory responses to any conditions that may appear above, in addition to any subsequent changes to the protocol.

- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to sample and review documentation, including raw data, relevant to the study.
- You may not undertake any research activity if you are not a registered student of Brunel University or if you cease to become registered, including abeyance or temporary withdrawal. As a deregistered student you would not be insured to undertake research activity. Research activity includes the recruitment of participants, undertaking consent procedures and collection of data. Breach of this requirement constitutes research misconduct and is a disciplinary offence.

Dr John Barker

Chair, Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Clinical Sciences

Participant information form and consent form

College of Health and Life Sciences

Department of Clinical Sciences

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title: Action Research with youth practitioners to tackle Gender Violence with and amongst young people in the UK

What is the purpose of the Action Research Project?

This project will contribute to my PhD thesis. It aims to support youth practitioners to tackle Gender Violence with and amongst young people. Specifically, the goal of my PhD project is to support you to explore how youth work practice can help to tackle gender-related violence with and amongst young people. This includes tackling violence against women/ girls, transphobic and homophobic violence.

Why have been invited to participate?

I have been working with your organisational leadership who feel that it would be good learning to participate in the process. As such, we would like to extend participation so that we can learn how practices and conditions are changed to better tackle gender-related violence.

Do I have to take part?

There is no obligation to take part and participation is not linked to any performance review. Deciding not to take part, or to withdraw part way through will not impact upon your employment or any pre-existing with Brunel University. The process will happen as part of your normal work pattern and there is no expectation to take any extra work on.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part in the full process you will:

Take part in consensus building meetings.

Provide stories of your practice concerning gender-related violence

Take part in a practice observation and a critical reflection on this practice observation.

Help design an action plan and implement it individually or with others.

Take part in critical reflection debriefs of activities from this action plan.

Take part in a final short interview on your learning and how it is challenging gender-related violence in your setting.

What data will be used as part of the PhD write up?

The following data will be used to write my thesis:

Meeting notes

Interview transcripts

Practice observations and narratives Debrief critical reflections

Any other documentary materials relating to your activities and reflections on your Action Research.

Please note that at any stage, you can ask for data not to be used as part of my PhD. To do this, all you need to do is contact Neil Levitan by email with your request. All processed data will be stored in a research journal that will be made available to you.

What are the recruitment criteria?

The only recruitment criteria is willingness to want to improve your anti oppressive practice to tackle gender-related violence. You are free to opt in and out of the depending on your individual circumstances.

What do I have to do?

To register your interest, please contact Neil Levitan directly on Neil.levitan@brunel.ac.uk. You also need to sign a consent form.

What does this mean for my day-to-day work?

Participation is an opportunity for you to engage in internally recognised continuing professional development that will involve a degree of support and mentoring to improve your practice. The activities described above will take, as part of normal working hours and there will be negligible impact on normal working practices as we are building on what you are already doing. This is an opportunity to try out new things and to reflect on how to develop your practice. It is envisaged that the work you do will fall within your existing work role.

What if something goes wrong?

There are a number of ways that you can raise concerns that may arise from the process. These are:

1- Talk to your line manager who can advise on a way forward.

2- Contact Neil directly with any concerns on the details above.

3- Contact Neil's research supervisors directly with any concerns.

You can also contact the following organisations if participating in the process distresses you:

1- Rights of Women http://rightsofwomen.org.uk

2- GALOP (LGBT+ Domestic Violence charity) http://www.galop.org.uk

3- Women's Aid **https://www.womensaid.org.uk**

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

The study will not report the names of participants or service users either in the PhD or subsequent publications. Participants may be known to each other and we will agree a group contract to ensure everyone feels safe as part of the process. Confidentiality will only be broken where there is a disclosure that is a risk to your safety or the safety of others. In this case your organisational policies and procedures apply.

What will happen to the results of the action research?

At all stages you will have the opportunity to review any data that is used and the analysis of this data. As part of the planning we will decide on how we would like to communicate the results to other practitioners, our communities and organisations. Copies of academic articles will also be made available to you.

Who is organising the research?

This contributes to Neil Levitan's PhD research as supervised by Dr Pam Alldred and Dr Sandra Naylor.

Who has reviewed the study?

The Research Ethics Committee of the Department has reviewed this study for Clinical Sciences at Brunel University, and approval was granted on 18th July 2016. If you have concerns about the project, please contact Dr Alex Nowicky on alex.nowicky@brunel.ac.uk

Many thanks for reading this. We hope you will want to take part. Please feel free to ask any further questions before you decide.

Orientation interview schedule

Theme	Questions/Actions	Notes during interview
Arrival and introduction	Go through brief and clarify any points. Remind practitioner of purpose of the interviews. No right or wrong answers - the aim is to hear their voice and opinions. Check consent - reinforce that participant has control over dictaphone and can stop it at any point.	
Scene setting prompts	Please describe your professional/occupational background, your day to day work, the organisation and the community/young people you work with. How do you understand gender-related violence? Have you experienced gender-related violence in the work you do with young people? How? How do you feel when you experience gender-related violence from/with/amongst young people? Why is tackling gender-related violence important to you?	
Follow up prompts	What is useful in supporting you to tackle gender-related violence? How do policies at a national level affect your ability to tackle gender-related violence in your practice? How do policies at a local level affect your ability to tackle gender-related violence? How does the physical environment affect your ability to tackle gender-related violence? Policy impact at organisational, local and national levels. What helps and hinders the community you work with to tackle gender-related violence with and amongst young people?	

	Do you feel supported to tackle gender-related violence in your organisation? Why is this? Have your personal and professional experiences motivated you to tackle gender-related violence in your practice? How? Can you say more about your professional identity and how your professional experiences relate to these issues or the challenges of tackling gender-related violence? Can you say more about your personal experiences and how these experiences relate to these issues or the challenges of tackling Gender Violence?	
Endings	Can you describe your vision for tackling gender-related violence in your practice? Why have you chosen this? What would help you to achieve this vision What would hinder you in achieving this vision? What supports do you need to support, sustain and embed this change? Explain that this is now the end of the interview and ask if there is anything they want to explore further. Explain later stages of the research and reiterate that there is no expectation to participate but discuss what this could entail. If practitioner wants to be apart, establish the limits of what this will look like Explain that transcripts will be sent for checking accuracy. Thank the practitioner and reiterate that they can contact me if they have anything they want to discuss further.	

Debrief interview schedule

Prompt questions:

- Tell me about what you did in the activity?
- Tell me about any moments where you witnessed gender-related violence?
- What did you do to address this?
- Overall, the activity was helpful for disrupting gender-related violence because…
- It would have been better if we had…

Collaborative research journal: Tackling gender-related violence through anti-oppressive youth work practice

Reconnaissance

The purpose of this stage is to establish the local context of current practices to tackle gender-related violence with and amongst young people. In doing this we will create a critical reflection team who will support us with the Action-Research process. Importantly, we will analyse current practices and reflect on how they can be best changed to better tackle gender-related violence.

Step 1: Identify a site of practice

Read through your transcript and list the different ideas you have for a site that we will investigate. A site is simply defined as a place that is “the site of human coexistence.” For example, you may choose a community, a youth club, or a school.

Choose a specific site that we will then focus on.

Complete the reflection template below

Step 1 Reflection space

In this box describe the site you have chosen and reflect on the reasons for this.

Step 2a: Forming a critical reflection team (CFT)

The purpose of this step is to reflect on whom we should ask to join the CFT at this stage. In doing this explain that there are 2 option for participation. These are detailed below. The smallest size of a reflection team is 3. If you opt for this, it will comprise of Neil and yourself as the practitioner-researchers and a friendly senior manager

1- Full participation

In this mode of participation, you will invite colleagues from your site to join the process as additional practitioner researchers alongside Neil and you as the main anchor. This means that they will need to sign consent form for the whole process and will be involved in implementing the action and evidencing change. Please note that if you are asking people you line manage to participate that they have to volunteer to participate. Under no circumstances should anyone be told they should participate.

2- Partial Participation

In this mode of participation colleagues provide constructive critical feedback on the different aspects of this process but will not be considered as research participants. For example, they might check data analysis and contribute to critical reflections on activities. Please note that if you plan to involve any young people under the age of 18, they can only participate partially due to limits on ethical clearance from Brunel University.

Using the reflection space below make some notes of your thoughts of important stakeholders to involve in the critical reflection team. Anyone who you invite to the critical reflection team should be associated with the site we are exploring. Once you have completed the reflection please return it to Neil for discussion. We will be returning to this reflection at various stages of the process and update the membership of the critical reflection team if and, as we need to.

Step 2a Reflection space

Describe who is affected by gender-related violence in your site. The majority of the people you recruit need to be directly involved in the site although some may be indirectly.
Describe who in a position of authority that needs be included in the critical reflection team. It will be important to involve people who are responsible for the

strategic direction of the work within the site we are exploring. As part of this, reflect on who is going to support this work rather than hinder it?

Reflect on which voices are excluded at this stage? Why are they excluded? Can you think about a way of involving them if they are important people in your site? Make a final recommendation about which you will include in the critical reflection team this stage.

Step 2b: Critical reflection team working agreement

Once the make up of the critical reflection team has been confirmed, the next step is to agree a working agreement. Do this by following the instructions below:

Site name:

Names of Critical Reflection team:

Describe:

How will you ensure open, respectful and non-hierarchical communication? How will you manage feedback on data analysis and interpretation? What level of access and checking of data does the group want to have?
In what ways members of the group might need/want the evidence generated for use in funding bids or other organisational matters?
What level of confidentiality anonymity is needed? Does your report need to be totally anonymous or would you prefer to be fully acknowledged?
How each person involved needs/wants to be acknowledged in the site report?
Expectations of the research process and in giving feedback on the research process?
How will you review the group membership and manage people joining and leaving the group?
How will you check that the final report is representative and accurate for all of those involved in the CFT?
How you will communicate e.g. over email or face-face

Please ensure everyone signs the following final declaration:

We agree that our participation will be of value to us as professionals reflecting on developing better youth work practice in (name of the site).
We understand that the study is an extension of and contribution to what we are already committed to doing in our professional practice through supporting critical self-reflection.
We undertake to participate as agreed in each part of the action- research process
We understand that each individual has the right to withdraw from the group without penalty
We understand that membership of the critical reflection team is voluntary.

Signed Date

Step 3a: Setting contexts

The aim of this step is to come to common agreement about what constitutes good youth work practice to tackle gender-related violence in your specific sites. This definition will be used as part of the critical reflection of the practices in your site. In doing this please is mindful of the ground rules you set and try to come to common agreement on definitions in a non-hierarchical manner. When agreeing definitions we will be using the following starting points for understanding what constitutes gender-related violence and Youth Work Practice.

For gender-related violence will be using the broad GAP WORK project definition. Gender-related violence is therefore defined as: '***Sexist, sexualizing or norm driven bullying, harassment, or violence whoever is targeted' (Alldred and Biglia, 2015:662).***

For youth work, we will be using the definition and ethical principles developed by Sarah Banks (2012). Banks argues that:

"The purpose of youth work is to enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate personal, social, educational development, to enable them to develop voice, influence and place in society and reach their full potential." (Banks 2012:10-11)

In this, the principles of youth work are:

- *"A voluntary relationship – free to participate on own terms*
- *An informal educational process – self-critical reflective and creative exploration, experiential learning*
- *The value of association- young people working together in groups, supporting each other to learn and develop.*
- *The value of young people participating democratically and as fully as possible – involvement in decision-making."* (Banks, 2012:11-12)

The ethics of youth work are:

- *"Respect for young people – recognising and respecting each young person's identity emotional, capabilities and avoiding adult imposed label's and negative discrimination.*

- *Respect and promote young people's rights to make their own decisions and choices, unless they're are at harm or can cause harm to themselves and others – includes working to ensure their voice is heard in practice settings.*
- *To promote the welfare and safety of young people which allows them to learn.*
- *Contribute towards the promotion of Social Justice".* (Banks, 2012: 11-12)

Step 3 Reflection space

With your critical reflection team complete the following visioning exercise. We will be returning to this as we progress through the process to update it. The method for completing these questions is up to you and your critical reflection team to decide.

Reflection space: Defining good youth work practice to tackle gender-related violence

Describe what gender-related violence means in your site? You can give examples in order to do this. Describe the ways that different gender norms, assumptions and power inequalities contribute to gender-related violence in your site. Describe what you believe the purpose of youth work and informal education is. Explain how this definition of youth work and informal education can help to tackle gender-related violence in your site. Describe the activities, and outcomes that can help us tackle gender-related violence. Explain what material conditions (for example: physical spaces; objects such as session plans; policies and procedures) are needed to support these activities and outcomes. Describe the ideas and language we ought to be using to tackle gender-related violence. Explain the cultures we need to develop in order to support these ideas and language. Describe how we can better relate to one another in order to tackle gender-related violence. In doing this think about your staff, trustees, volunteers, young people and parents/carers Describe how we can better relate to our physical environment to better tackle gender-related violence. Explain how these relationships can be supported by better administrative systems?

Describe the values, ideologies, ethics, skills, and theories (for example, different feminisms) that should underpin our vision of good youth work practice to tackle gender-related violence Explain the ways organization ought to support these values, ideologies, ethics, skills and theories.
Create a statement of good youth work practice to tackle gender-related violence
Reflect on how you came to this agreement? Was there any conflict and how was this resolved? Which any voices silenced or not heard?

Step 4: Observation of current practices

Reconnaissance observation (adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart, 2014). Date: Practitioner(s) observed:

Activities

1 - Observe:

- What practitioners are doing in the activity, where the activity has taken place, how it relates to other activities in your plan?
- The material and financial resources you used in this activity
- How space was used in this activity
- Any interesting moments in your activity that shows how it can contribute to developing your vision good youth work practice in your site to tackle gender-related violence

2 - Debrief with practitioner(s):

- How this activity has helped you meet your vision of good youth work practice to tackle gender-related violence in your setting
- How has the set up of space and access to resources enabled or constrained you in this activity and what this means for meeting your vision.

Language/discourse

1 - Observe:

- The ideas and language used in the activity, including how professional youth work/informal education orientated language was used.
- If/how you and the participants changed your ideas, language during the activity
- The ideas that are most important to the facilitator and the participants
- Any interesting moments that demonstrate how language and ideas changed during the activity.

2 - Debrief with practitioners:

- Differences in ideas and language used and how/if this was overcome Is anyone excluded from the changes in ideas and language? Where the language you are using has come from (e.g. new policies, communities, texts from your faith etc.)
- How this activity is helping to change and develop ideas and language in relation to your vision of good youth work practice to tackle gender-related violence in your setting?
- Reflect on how these changes and development in the language relates to the language in your site and in society in general.

Reflecting on Relationships

1 - Observe:

- How people relate to the content of the activity and each other? How power is being exercised, in particular relating to norms based on gender, sexuality and other conduits for oppression?
- Who is included and who is excluded?
- Is there common agreement? If not why do you think this is so?
- Describe any interesting moments in regards to relationships. Please be mindful to either keep it general or to anonymise specific incidents.

2 - Debrief with practitioners:

- How the relationships in the activity help or hinder you to meet your vision for tackling gender-related violence in your setting?
- How organisational dynamics, in particular gendered dynamics have enabled or constrained relationships in this activity?

Dispositions:

1- Describe:

- How the people involved in the activity understand what is happening in your own words?
- What skills and capacities are being used in this activity and how these are exercised?

- How norms, values and commitments are being exercised? - Reflect on why there is collaboration, resistance or conflict in the activity and the role gender and sexuality might play. 2 - Practitioner debrief: - How the understandings, values, skills and commitments you used helped you meet your vision of good youth work practice to tackle gender-related violence? - What does your learning from this activity tell you about the practice traditions in your site (how we do things around here?)? - How do the traditions of different professional practices and the practices in the community enable or constrain you in achieving your vision?
What does the learning from this activity tell us about what needs to change?

Step 5: Critical reflection on reconnaissance analysis with your CFT

Using the analysis that Neil has drafted as basis for dialogue, write a short narrative below using the prompt questions. Please do this with your critical reflection team. The manner in which they are involved is once again for you to decide.

Does our definition of good youth work practice to tackle gender-related violence is our setting enable us to tackle the gendered norms, assumptions and power inequalities that enable of gender-related violence to take place in our site? Are there contradictions between what we say we want to do and what we do?

In addition to oppression based on gender and sexuality, are there other inequalities that we need to be mindful of as contributing to gender-related violence, for example faith, ethnicity, and ability?

Are there ways in which our current practices reinforce norms or make assumptions about gender and sexuality that leads to gender-related violence in our site?

Does our definition of good youth work practice need to be updated in light of the analysis and our reflection?

What do we need to do differently? How can we go about changing our practices to make them more congruent with the way our practices ought to be? What goals can we set in light of our reflection?

Does the current make up of our critical reflection team help us meet the goals we have set? Do we need to invite any new people to take part?

What is our common concern about your practice that can be the focus of action?

Activity 4: Planning and implementing your practice changes

Step 1: Complete a planning document

With your critical reflection team, complete the following action planning template.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Describe your practice concern</td></tr>
<tr><td>Describe the questions you want to ask about your practice in order to investigate your concern</td><td>Describe the activities (with timeframes) you will undertake
to answer these questions</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Describe how you will involve your critical reflection team</td></tr>
</table>

Step 2: Keep a debrief Journal, collecting documents and arranging an interview

For each activity in your plan:

- Fill in an activity debrief journal entry with your critical reflection team and ask for feedback. Neil is happy to facilitate this process as a member of the critical reflection team
- Collect documents on each activity. For example, you might include a session plan and evaluation. You can tailor you evaluation questions to include questions on gender-related violence.

Reflective Journal entry example (adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart 2014).

Date:

Activity name: (as described in the planning document) Completed by (practitioner/members of the critical reflection team (e.g. Neil):

Instructions:

The purpose of this journal entry is to record thick descriptions of the changes to your practice practise and to critically reflect on how these elements are congruent with your definition of good youth work practice to tackle gender-related violence in your setting. Please remember participants right to confidentiality and anonymity; this means changing names and places and not disclosing any sensitive information. How you reflect with your critical reflection team will be dependent on how they are involved in the activities.

Activities

- Describe:

What you are doing in the activity, where the activity has taken place, how it relates to other activities in your plan.
The material and financial resources you used in this activity
How space was used in this activity
Any interesting moments in your activity that shows how it can contribute to developing your vision good youth work practice in your site to tackle gender-related violence

- Reflect on:

How this activity has helped you meet your vision of good youth work practice to tackle gender-related violence in your setting

The set up of space and access to resources have enabled or constrained you in this activity and what this means for meeting your vision.

Activity 5: Journal interview

Arrange a short interview where we will explore the diary entries in more detail. This final interview will also explore the ways in which your practice changes have helped to tackle gender-related violence in your site. In doing this you will be asked to reflect on if/how issues of gender-related violence in your site have improved and what has influenced this change. During this interview we will also explore a final event to say thank you, go through site findings and think about next steps

The final template analysis

Theme	How does it enable or constrain Youth workers to disrupt gender-related violence?	Cases from the data
<u>Higher order theme: The Non-Human</u>		
Theme A: Architecture of the youth workspace Codes: - The building - The artefacts on the wall's posters - Social spaces e.g. toilets	- Cissexist architecture enables gender-related violence and hinders youth workers through hegemonizing space e.g. inappropriate hooking up in gender neutral spaces. - Disrupts gender-related violence through creating gender neutral spaces. - Hinders norm critical and feminist youth work through disruption. - Can reinforce the gender binary.	- Field work diary entry on Pride's move from the library to pirate's castle - Reflection on how gender-neutral spaces can be used in inappropriately sexualised ways. - The wall decoration that the young people made as part of the Brave Spaces camp. - The bell going off at the Fire station. - The pool table vignette from Pride. - Tikkun Cycle 2 line 375. - Tikkun cycle 2 line 366
Theme B: The car and public transport Code: The Car Code: Public transport	- Enables Critical reflexivity and the research process. - Was a space for critical reflection away from the pressures of neoliberal expectations?	

Theme C: educational resources Code: Posters Code: Norm critical resources including the GAP WORK resources Code: youth work resources including table tennis resources, pool tables, PowerPoints etc	- Photos posters etc used to decorate a space can either reinforce normativity or trouble it. - Norm critical resources from the GAP WORK project lay the foundations for the activities of the Brave Spaces project. - Resources have emotional affects. - Resources enable norm critical education.	- The library at Pride - Robots session - The gender-related violence Matrix - Robots - Intersectionality Session - The gender-related violence matrix and Tikkun's sessions on camp, Aspire's conversations.
Theme D: Time Code: Time limitations on learning imposed by workshops Code: Time pressures	- This indirectly enabled gender-related violence through imposing limits on how much collective time practitioners afforded the planning and the delivery of the cascading workshop. This in turn, limited their early attempts at raising critical consciousness as the depth of reflection was not necessarily met. This is demonstrated by all the practitioner's concerns about external time pressures placed on them, usually by various forms of regulation link to a bit of description above like the tension about if to have 45- or 90-min cascade sessions.	EastShire's gender-related violence Matrix reflection
Higher order theme: Sociomaterial Conditions (policy/culture/economics)		

Theme A: Neo Liberalism Code: Austerity Code: New managerialism	- Neoliberalism constrains the ability of youth workers to develop norm critical and feminist youth work. This is specifically true of austerity and new managerialism.	The loss of Pride's building The funding constraints imposed on EastShire
Theme B: Youth Cultures Code: Toxic masculinity and misogyny Code: Feminist youth activism	Enables gender-related violence through valuing misogyny and privileging toxic masculinity. Disrupts gender-related violence through feminist activism, for example against gendered cuts to their services.	
Higher order theme: Social Practices (doings, sayings, and relatings)		
Theme A: Cissexist and Heterosexist Social Practices Code: Sayings Code: Doings	Cissexist discourses underpin the behaviour of the young people in chapters and on camp. Young people's sexist behaviour hinders youth workers.	Tikkun young leaders training Cissexism in the behaviour of the young people on camp.

Theme B: Norm critical and Feminist Practices Theme C: Critical and Feminist Youth work practices	The participatory ethic underpinning youth work relationships enable young people to engage with norm criticality and feminism on their own terms. The activities of feminist and queer youth work empower practitioners and young people to disrupt gender-related violence.	Tikkun's process of peer leadership Robots workshop

Example of a documentary artefact – Slide form Brave Spaces Training

Tackling gender-related violence

Reflect on the term "Gender Straightjacket"

What impact does it have on gender?

Example of an analytical memo

Data item: Observation of a Gender-Related Violence Here workshop, Aspire, Feb 2017

Data extract: Reflection on a critical incident

During the workshop, Rubi and Oscar talked about a youth club drop-in session and a conversation that was heard in the space. They described three young men who were gathered in the games area, playing a video game, and talking. Oscar and Martin Luther were sitting with them. As they were playing, the conversation turned to a relationship that was forming between a young man and a young woman in the club. The youth workers were discussing what makes a healthy relationship and what makes an unhealthy relationship. The focus here was on how the partners in the relationship communicate with each other and the importance of being authentic, open, and honest.

Oscar talked about how the young men were using sexist and sexualised words in their talk about the young women. For example, some of the young men referred to the young girls as ‘axe wounds’ and ‘bitches.’ Rubi and Oscar moved onto discussing where this language came from, and they identified Drill Rap music and elements of youth culture that glorifies violent and toxic masculinities. There was a conversation where Rubi and Oscar justified the language calling it as banter that young people do all the time. They argued that they saw their role as developing young people’s life skills not telling them what to think.

Zomi challenged them on this. She noted that that even if one person saw it as banter, there might be others who see it as abuse. She used the example of a youth worker who may be able to fend off the ‘banter’ and help the young people see the assumptions underpinning it, versus a young woman who is still learning about her sexuality who sees this and feels unwelcome and unable to be themselves in the confines of the club because they hear this.

Rubi and Oscar talked about how they didn’t know how to respond when they heard young people talk in this way. Zomi talked about using humour to de-escalate the language and then how open questioning to encourage the young person to reflect on the gendered assumptions and the impact of this. She also talked about the need

to help young people reflect on how gender inequalities help shape their understanding and relationships. After this discussion it was acknowledged by Rubi and Oscar that the idea of gendered banter was very much part of the culture and practice tradition of the youth club and not always as harmless.

Analytical memo:

What is the event: a critical reflection on a critical incident of youth work.

Stage 1: In this event the components include:

- The games room
- The video game
- The three young people
- Oscar, Martin-Luther, Zomi, Rubi
- A youth work conversation
- Relationships pedagogy
- Violent sexism
- Youth work facilitation skills
- Feminist critical reflection and feminist pedagogy.

Stage 2: Affects and flows in this event:

Line 1 - The games room and the video game act as a catalyst that has a pedagogical effect on the young people. enables Oscar and Martin Luther to have a youth work conversation with the young people.

Line 3 - Martin Luther and Oscar draw on a non-gender sensitive sex and relationships education to frame this conversation.

Line 3 - Oscar and Martin Luther's lack of skills and understanding to weave a feminist discourse into the conversation enables a violently sexist discourse to permeate the young men's talk about the young women (line 4).

Line 5 - The violent discourses flow from toxic masculinist and violent youth culture social-cultural social conditions.

Line 6 - Justification for inaction comes from adopting a non/anti-critical discourse of youth work.

Line 9 - The sexist discourses and relationships flow from the organisational culture of the youth club. This constrains the youth workers to infuse a feminist discourse into their youth work practice.

Line 8 - Rubi and Oscar lack critically reflective youth work skills and this constrains their understanding to formulate a critical response to the sexist discourses and relationships.

Line 9-11 - Zomi uses a feminist inspired form of critical reflection to enable Rubi and Oscar's understanding about feminist youth work responses. This affects the feelings of the youth workers who feel more confident to disrupt sexism through their youth work.