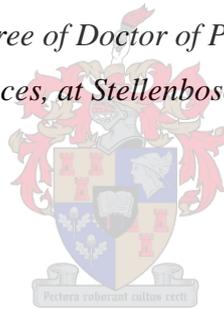


CULTURE AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: A CASE STUDY OF THE KROBO  
MUNICIPALITY, EASTERN REGION OF GHANA

By

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Social Sciences, at Stellenbosch University*



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December 2016

## **DECLARATION**

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

December 2016

## ABSTRACT

To address problems of child sexual abuse (CSA), it is important to study the cultural norms of the people it affects. To date, sub-Saharan Africa is marked as one of the worst affected regions. Yet, outside South Africa, few sub-Saharan African countries have prioritised research in this area. Knowledge of these cultural contexts may potentially provide a framework within which it may be more possible to help predict, describe and control CSA, and related consequences, effectively. The present study explored the lived experiences of the Krobo people of Ghana, specifically the meanings they ascribed to their sexuality as children and their experiences of CSA. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, these phenomena were explored from three major sources: participant observation of everyday practices in Kroboland, Ghana; interviews with Krobo people, comprising community members and community leaders; and interviews with key informants who had a history of working with children from this context. Five focus group discussions were conducted with the former, and 12 semi-structured interviews each with the latter groups.

The findings shed light on cultural expectations of child care in Kroboland, which mandate collective efforts to foster and promote healthy child development. Yet, conflicting evidence from the narratives of the Krobo people showed that limited or impaired child-guardian interactions were common. Disturbed child-guardian interactions negatively affected subsequent behaviour patterns. This was evident in the ways some participants described their interactions with others. Some means by people in Kroboland sought to satisfy personal needs, desires and wishes, at times jeopardised their personal safety and sometimes involving crime. Key informants talked about the extent of child neglect, parentified children and associated CSA problems they have witnessed.

Five male and four female participants shared personal accounts of CSA. For both genders, the occurrence of CSA was underscored by issues of age privilege and reciprocity. For male participants in particular, the desire to accomplish gender norms, assert masculinity and command control positioned them as willing participants. On the other hand, female participants laid emphasis on the influence of gender, emotional and financial neediness in the creation of a context of sexual risk. For male CSA survivors, sex with an older female was a welcomed passage of rite in the early stages of development. Later in life, however, sex offending, intimacy deficits and other sexually related problems became major concerns for some participants. CSA stirred up strong feelings of mistrust, hurt, pain, anger and a sense of

disappointment among female CSA survivors. Some also developed a strong dislike towards the opposite sex and an aversion towards sex. Key informants indicated that CSA survivors required specialised services and support to deal with emerging problems, following CSA, as existing structures were inadequate. Nonetheless, in the aftermath of CSA, a few survivors shared aspects of personal development and growth they had achieved. An understanding of these CSA experiences is deepened by a presentation of the researcher's own experiences of sexual harassment, during and after data collection. Study implications and recommendations for the community, and further research, are discussed.

## OPSOMMING

Ten einde die probleme ten opsigte van die seksuele mishandeling van kinders (SMK) die hoof te bied, is dit belangrik om die kulturele norme van die mense wat daardeur geraak word, te ondersoek. Afrika suid van die Sahara is een van die streke wat die ergste deur SMK geraak word. Desondanks het weinige lande in hierdie streek, buiten Suid-Afrika, navorsing op hierdie gebied 'n prioriteit gemaak. Kennis van hierdie kulturele kontekste kan moontlik 'n raamwerk bied waarin SMK en verwante gevolge makliker voorspel, beskryf en beheer kan word. Die huidige studie het die ervarings van die Krobo-stam van Ghana ondersoek, in die besonder die betekenis wat hulle aan hul seksualiteit as kinders heg en hul ondervinding van SMK. Deur vertolkende fenomenologiese ontleding te gebruik, is drie metodes gebruik om hierdie verskynsels te ondersoek: deelnemerwaarneming van alledaagse praktyke in Kroboland, Ghana; onderhoud met die Krobo, wat lede van die gemeenskap en gemeenskapsleiers ingesluit het; en onderhoud met sleutelinformante met ondervinding van werk met kinders uit hierdie agtergrond. Vyf fokusgroepgesprekke is met eersgenoemde gevoer en 12 semi-gestruktureerde onderhouds met die ander groepe.

Die bevindings werp lig op die kulturele verwagtinge ten opsigte van kindersorg in Kroboland, waar 'n gemeenskaplike poging om gesonde kinderontwikkeling te bevorder, aangemoedig word. Teenstrydige getuïenisse uit die verhale van die Krobo toon egter dat beperkte of swak interaksie tussen kind en voog algemeen voorgekom het. Versteurde interaksie tussen kind en voog het 'n negatiewe invloed op latere gedragpatrone gehad. Dit was duidelik uit die maniere waarop sommige deelnemers hul interaksies met ander beskryf het. Hoe die Krobo hul persoonlike behoeftes en begeertes probeer najaag het – partykeer op misdadige wyse – het soms hul persoonlike veiligheid in gedrang gebring. Sleutelinformante het vertel van die omvang van kinderverwaarlosing, kinders wat die rol van ouer moet vertolk en SMK-verwante probleme wat hulle waargeneem het.

Vyf manlike en ses vroulike deelnemers het hul persoonlike ervaring van SMK gedeel. Albei geslagte het 'n verband tussen aspekte soos ouderdomsvoorreg en wederkerigheid en voorvalle van SMK uitgewys. Die begeerte om aan gendernorme te voldoen, hul manlikheid te bewys en beheer uit te oefen, het veral manlike deelnemers in die posisie van gewillige deelnemers geplaas. Vroulike deelnemers het die invloed van gender asook emosionele en finansiële afhanklikheid in die skepping van 'n konteks van seksuele risiko benadruk. Mans wat as kind seksueel mishandel is, het seks met 'n ouer vrou as 'n

welkome deurgangsrute in die vroeë stadium van ontwikkeling gesien. Later in hul lewe het seksoortredinge, intimiteitsagterstande en ander seksverwante probleme egter groot probleme vir sommige deelnemers geword. SMK het sterk gevoelens van wantroue, seer, pyn, woede en teleurstelling ontlok by vroue wat as kind seksueel mishandel is. Sommiges het ook 'n sterk renons in die teenoorgestelde geslag of 'n weersin in seks ontwikkel. Sleutelinformante het aangedui dat kinders wat seksueel mishandel is spesialisdienste en ondersteuning nodig het om moontlike probleme te hanteer wat uit die mishandeling kan voortspruit, aangesien bestaande strukture ontoereikend is. Nietemin was daar 'n paar deelnemers wat as kind seksueel mishandel is wat aspekte van persoonlike ontwikkeling en groei gedeel het. Die deel van die navorser se persoonlike ervarings van seksuele teistering gedurende en na afloop van data-insameling dra by tot 'n dieper begrip van hierdie ervarings van SMK. Die implikasies van die studie en aanbevelings vir die gemeenskap en vir verdere navorsing word ook bespreek.

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## **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS**

Part of this thesis work titled “Traces of Global Inequality and Poverty: Emerging livelihoods in Ghana involving sex and crime” was presented as a poster presentation at the World Social Science Forum (WSSF) conference in September 2015 (see Appendix G). In addition, the article, “Researching sexuality” (see Appendix F) based on data drawn from this present research study was published in the New Voices 2015, a Stellenbosch University publication.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my family and all the children I have worked with, in one way or the other you have inspired my interest to understand the experiences of children better!

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/GLOSSARY**

CSA	Child sexual abuse
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence Victim and Support Unit
FCSA	Female child sexual abuse
JHS	Junior High School
SHS	Senior High School
WHO	World health Organization
MCSA	Male child sexual abuse
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
MOWAC	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child
GoG	Government of Ghana
SA	Sexual abuse
SHS	Senior high school
KI	Key Informant

## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.1. Background to the study

Many people do not feel comfortable discussing matters of sexuality, let alone experiences of child sexual abuse (CSA). However, the reality is that CSA is a widespread phenomenon (Anderson, Mangels, & Langsam, 2004; Bolen, 2001). Across the world, daily reports of CSA are common and usually accumulate into a significant number of cases per annum. Globally, approximately 13% of children report an experience of sexual abuse before they turn 18 years (Stoltenborgh, van IJzendoorn, Euser, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). CSA estimates provided by informants (persons who work with CSA in the context of their profession) are notably lower (4%) than CSA survivor self-reports (Stoltenborgh et al., 2011). The actual prevalence of CSA experiences may be much higher than existing studies estimate (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002).

CSA remains hidden from the official authorities in many countries (Priebe & Svedinv, 2008; Walsh, MacMillan, Trocme, Jamieson, & Boyle, 2008) and at times, is disclosed only when a survivor feels comfortable talking about it (McElvaney, 2013), for example, when asked anonymously as part of a research survey or in a face-to-face interview conducted in a safe and enabling environment (Bolen, 2001; Goldman & Padayachi, 2000). Low official reports of CSA experiences are sometimes attributed to delayed disclosure, non-disclosure and failure to seek help, to detect or recognise its occurrence (Palermo, Bleck, & Peterman, 2014; Priebe & Svedin, 2008).

Some events of CSA never become public knowledge until disclosed accidentally or willingly, years after the incident occurred (Fontes & Plummer, 2010). Many identified CSA perpetrators are trusted adults or peers known to the survivor (Marshall, Smallbone, & Marshall, 2015; Smallbone & Wortley, 2000). If people known to the CSA victim constitute a large proportion of the offenders, what does this tell us about CSA? Existing literature suggests that CSA may be a frequent part of our day to day interaction that we take for granted (Gavey, 2005; Hlavka, 2014). CSA has been argued to be driven by societal “attitudes, identities, ideologies and the unquestioned misuse of power” (Levett, 2004, p. 433). Some suggest that it is mediated by poor attachment outcomes and caregiving processes that legitimise its occurrence and further, its maintenance (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, & Rose-Junius, 2005). Children are hierarchically positioned in society lower than others because of their age, and this may also be a contributory factor (Bhana, 2009; Townsend,

Dawes, & Richter, 2004). Some children face additional vulnerability owing to their gender (Brownmiller, 2013) or poor socioeconomic background (Gerver, 2013; Jewkes, 2004; Luke, 2005). A child's cultural context or living circumstances may also potentially protect against the occurrence of CSA. In effect, various dynamics function in complex ways, producing different patterns and trends of CSA prevalence (Korbin, 1991; Yahaya, Soares, Ponce De Leon, & Macassa, 2012).

Among the Krobo people of Ghana, who are the focus of this study, little research has been conducted on CSA. However, the Krobo people of Ghana originate from one of the three regions in Ghana that was earmarked with a high CSA prevalence in 2007 (Ghana News Agency, 2008). In addition, the Krobo people form part of the broader Ga-Adangbe ethnic group, who from previous studies report high rates of early sexual activity among females (Addai, 1999; Anarfi, 1993). Some of these experiences were associated with coercion, especially at sexual debut, compared to females from other ethnic groups (Tenkorang & Owusu, 2013).

These findings stimulate specific interest in the Ga-Adangbe ethnic group, and, in particular, the Krobo people. What can be inferred from the ethnographic work of a few researchers (Huber, 1963; Steegstra, 2002) and research related to HIV/AIDS and sexual reproductive health (Agyei-Mensah, 2001; Anarfi, 2003; Ashong, Aikin, & Kunfaa, 2005; Omoighe, Castel, & Bingenheimer, 2013; Sackey, 2001) is that to the best of my knowledge after a thorough literature review, prior research on CSA among the female Krobo is lacking. In the case of the male Krobo child, even less is known or understood about their sexuality, let alone their experiences of CSA. Previous studies conducted in Ghana have, however, found that as is the case of females, a not insubstantial proportion of males may also experience CSA in childhood (Brown, 2003; Plan Ghana, 2009).

Scholars have argued that among the Krobo people, traditional norms and practices strongly abhor sexual activity involving children (Osafu, Asampong, Langmagne, & Ahiedeke, 2013). For the Krobo, sex with a child remains a violation of local norms. This is in keeping with CSA as a violation of national laws (Boakye, 2009; Schroeder & Danquah, 2000). Furthermore, it is possible that children in Kroboland may be predisposed to similar CSA risks as those reflected in the National Survey of Adolescents results (Awusabo-Asare, Abane, & Kumi-Kyereme, 2004) and Ghana police and state hospital annual records (Casey, 2011; Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC), 2011). Frequently identified

CSA risk factors include poverty and poverty-related problems, such as poor parenting practices, the breakdown of traditional family structures and associated child maintenance problems (Casey, 2011).

The Domestic Violence Victim and Support Unit (DOVVSU)<sup>1</sup>, among other official duties collates cases of CSA on a yearly basis (DOVVSU annual report, 2008). In 2007 alone, 2942 girls under the age of 16 made official complaints of sexual abuse to the Ghana police service (Wrigley-Asante, Owusu, Oteng-Ababio & Owusu, 2016). Since its inception in 1998, this is the highest number of cases DOVVSU has ever recorded. In a total population of approximately 23.5 million, with children constituting almost half (50%) of the population, this figure may seem almost negligible. However, as some authors suggest, official records are undermined by problems of underreporting (Lalor, 2004; Palermo et al., 2014). Thus, it is unclear what the real trends of CSA are in Ghana (Boakye, 2009). Based on data from additional sources such as school surveys and studies on street children, CSA may be a common problem in many Ghanaian settings such as Kroboland. As Finkelhor (1994, p. 412) suggests, “In every locale where it has been sought, researchers have demonstrated its existence at levels high enough to be detected through surveys of a few hundred adults in the general population”. Data from one Ghanaian school study, for instance shows that one in ten children aged between 6 to 17 years had encountered an experience of CSA within the home or surroundings of it (Plan Ghana, 2009). Results from a similar school survey (Brown, 2003) also indicates that the majority of the reported (67.3%) CSA cases occurred within the home of the offender or victim, other community locations included the bushes, the cemetery and farmlands.

Related findings from other research conducted in Ghana indicate that children who are less educated and live on the streets are at higher risk for CSA experiences (Boakye-Boaten, 2008; Glover et al., 2003; Oduro, 2012). Given that CSA remains a widespread problem associated with the community and not limited to the school environment, it is important to investigate people’s understanding and perceptions of sexuality and sexual behaviours within a common locality, and further, to establish the kinds of shared meanings people ascribe to these phenomena, to be able to develop a platform for addressing CSA and related challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> DOVVSU is a special unit of the Ghana police service that is mainly concerned with specialised services for prosecuting and incarcerating offenders who commit CSA (Casey, 2011).

### **1.1.1. Cultural scaffolding of CSA: Social and sexual scripts**

People's perceptions of CSA are strongly influenced by what types of behaviour are deemed socially appropriate (Gagnon & Simon, 1973). Scripts of socially appropriate behaviour powerfully communicates to members of society, the nature of expected behaviours subject to gender and age dynamics (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). These social scripts, for instance, dictate how a male or female, child or adult should "feel, think, and behave in particular situations" (Wiederman, 2005, p. 496). Specific behaviours that in turn guide expressions of sexuality are what Simon and Gagnon (1986) termed as "sexual scripts." As with social scripts, sexual scripts are cultural resources that assign people particular ways of expressing their sexuality.

Social actors draw upon these resources to make sense of their sexuality (Gavey, 2005; Ward & Siegert, 2002). People are commonly constrained by contradictory norms and expectations which sanction double sexual standards (Wight, Plummer, Mshana, Wamoyi, Shigongo, & Ross, 2006) and promote inappropriate sexual behaviour, such as CSA. Male superiority, female subordination and age privilege are but a few common issues that reinforce CSA behaviour. These ideas about CSA are socially ingrained and demonstrated in the way people behave when they experience CSA (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Dorahy & Clearwater, 2012; Easton, Saltzman, & Willis, 2014), witness CSA or engage with CSA survivors or offenders (Alaggia, 2002). For example, interesting trends in the male child sexual abuse (MCSA) literature reveal that at a certain age, sexual activity seems permissible for male children, but not their female counterparts. Entitlement to sex may in turn influence a boy's interpretation of a CSA event.

In contrast to the stereotypical male script, female behaviour is commonly viewed as naturally associated with love, responsibility and nurturance (Halliday-Sumner, 1997). Accordingly, even when a female is involved in inappropriate behaviour, such as perpetrating CSA it is often considered a harmless act (Deering & Mellor, 2010). In the same vein, societal attitudes and privilege ascribed to age may influence the willingness of a child to disclose an experience of SA involving an older person (Fonte & Plummer, 2010; Twum-Danso, 2009). A number of previous studies (Horvath & Giner-Sorolla, 2007a, 2007b; Sahl & Keene, 2012) also show that CSA acts perpetrated by other children are likely to be deemed less harmful, because of their assumed sexual innocence. Mellor and Deering (2010) assert that bias is even reflective in the attitude of professionals such as psychologists and

psychiatrists who work with child victims. The fact that people hold various understandings and perceptions about the circumstances and consequences of CSA holds important implications for understanding CSA, in any cultural context.

As I have discussed above, the influence of these culturally and socially constructed views can affect the detection of victims and offenders, as well as influence many CSA outcomes. These issues will be expanded on in Chapter Two. An important question concerns the social context and possible “normalisation” of CSA. Writing about adult rape, Gavey (2005) theorises that rape is normalised because of a general tolerance towards sexual scripts that promote gender inequity and inappropriate sexual expressions. She states that “the line between something that is just sex and rape can be quite blurred once we move beyond thinking of only strangers as rapists” (Gavey, 2005, p.3). For instance, Gavey (2005) suggests that rape is permissible due to taken for granted social norms about gender and sexuality that justify its occurrence, in normal sexual encounters. She finds that many everyday sexual experiences are characterised by coercion; in her view, this behaviour has been tolerated by society and considered a “normal” way of having sex. Gavey (2005) strongly opposes this stance of accepting coercive sex, as normal.

Gavey makes an important argument about society’s taken for granted notions about normative heterosexual relationships between adults, noting that coercion and abuse are in fact widely accepted as part of “normal” relationships. What does this inform us about the sexual abuse of children? Just as is the case with the context of adult rape, the situation of children and CSA similarly needs to be understood within the dominant social context. Looked at in this way, CSA is not simply or only an aberration, but also a product of social relationships, and gender and age inequalities in a range of contexts.

### **1.1.2. Point of departure: Study focus and scope**

An important part of this current research is founded on Gavey’s (2005) theory of cultural scaffolding of rape, which will be explained further in Chapter Two. As explained above, Gavey (2005) views rape as a social invention in the context of taken for granted discourses that sanction certain sexual behaviours that are not readily distinguishable from rape. While Gavey (2005) focused on rape and (hetero) sex, which largely includes the study of adults, I specifically focus on the period of childhood and CSA, analysing the perpetration of CSA not only against the female child but also children who are male. Further, I narrow the study

focus by centering on the Krobo people of Ghana; in Chapter Four I describe the context of this cultural group in more detail. The present study takes into account the cultural peculiarities of the Krobo people, plus prevailing social and economic circumstances in which these people reside.

### **1.1.3. Research aims and objectives**

Given the above discussion, the primary goal of the study is to understand the meaning of CSA in the context of the Krobo people of Ghana. The specific aims will be:

1. To understand various sexual experiences, that occur in childhood and the meanings attached to these experiences among the Krobo community.
2. To understand how the Krobo people of Ghana make sense of CSA. Are these meanings the same for Krobo men and women?
3. To identify situations and practices, that may enable or constrain CSA in a Krobo community.

### **1.2. Scope and limitations of the study**

The current research focuses on the “Krobo” who inhabit both the Yilo Krobo and Manya Krobo municipalities of the Eastern region of Ghana, which is collectively referred to as Kroboland. Therefore, a reference to Kroboland implies coverage of these two areas; participants of this study were recruited from this broad geographical area. The choice of inquiry, therefore, limits the extent to which these findings can be generalised to other populations as is the case with qualitative studies in general.

### **1.3. Thesis structure: Child sexual abuse explored in nine chapters**

This thesis is organised into three main parts. In the first part of this work, I evaluate the current understanding of CSA with a discussion centred on sexuality, child-adult relationships and associated dynamics. In the sections presented above, I have provided a brief background to the current study. In Chapter Two, I look at theories that explicate why CSA occurs, with a particular focus on gender and age inequalities. Important points are made here about gendered interactions and age-related experiences that appear ingrained in our social lives, contributing to the occurrence and maintenance of CSA patterns and trends, well-documented with physical and health implications.

Further, I discuss how the internet is fast becoming an extended part of our ecology (Martin & Alaggia, 2013) and how CSA is being perpetrated in new ways and opportunities that we may have never imagined possible in the past, via virtual space. Further, socioeconomic and cultural differences are highlighted. One striking revelation from the studies reviewed indicates that to date, a large part of what we know about CSA remains based on western data; data from low-resource countries are scant.

In this regard, Chapter Three is devoted to issues concerning CSA in Africa. I shall show that African studies on CSA are limited and that what is known about CSA in Africa is dominated by studies originating from South Africa. In this chapter, I discuss common beliefs and myths about CSA, issues of sexuality and the need for more contextual work on CSA in Africa, especially in the context of poverty. In Chapter Four, I consider child development in Africa, looking at attachment processes, socialisation practices and other activities that may be relevant to an understanding of CSA in Ghana. I also explore the implications these dynamics may have on the lives of CSA survivors and significant others within a common living context. Finally, I attempt to describe the social and cultural context of the Krobo people of Ghana.

Part two of this thesis specifically centres on the methods used for this current research. Chapter Five describes the strategies of inquiry employed and the justification for the use of these methods. As part of this chapter, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach is described in some detail. This section includes an overview of IPA theoretical and philosophical underpinnings. There is also a discussion on the integration of ethnographic methods. Subsequently, data collection procedures, analysis, ethical considerations and challenges, reflexivity, data quality control and limitations of the study are discussed.

The final part of the dissertation presents the actual findings of this current research and is provided in a succession of three chapters. Chapter Six is the first results chapter. It looks at contextual issues in the study context, focusing mainly on social interactions that affect child development, particularly, caregiving. Chapter Seven provides views on childhood sexuality and CSA experiences based on the job experiences of helping professionals who work with or for children in Kroboland, and who act as key informants in the study. Chapter Eight presents data on the lived sexual and CSA experiences of the Krobo people interviewed and their views about CSA. Further, this Chapter includes an account my

own experience as a single female researcher conducting research in Kroboland. It specifically highlights my experience of sexual harassment by some informants and the significance of this account for knowledge production in this study.

Finally, Chapter Nine offers a summary of the study findings from the three preceding chapters, leading to a discussion of the study implications. The chapter concludes with recommendations for the community, clinical practice and further research.

## **Chapter Two: Child sexual abuse at the global level**

### **2.1. Introduction**

CSA is a worldwide phenomenon and widely recognised as an enormous burden to society (Dawes, Richter, & Higson-Smith, 2004; Lim et al., 2013). Stoltenborgh, Bakermans-Kranenburg, Alink, and van IJzendoorn (2013) hold the view that to date, CSA remains the most frequently studied child maltreatment problem. The scope of research in this area and the amount of scientific knowledge generated, thus far, is extensive. Despite this corpus of existing knowledge, several issues surrounding the occurrence of CSA and its emerging consequences remain puzzling for many CSA researchers and practitioners (Haugaard, 2000).

Historical records dating back to ancient Babylon indicate CSA is not a new phenomenon (Tucker & Chiet, 2010). Yet, year after year new research findings and clinical observations in the field come to deepen our understanding of CSA. This chapter provides a general overview of CSA, at the global level, in a discussion of key issues about CSA, and challenges that require attention in the context of the current study.

### **2.2. Conceptualising child sexual abuse and other definitional concerns**

CSA is a portmanteau of the words “child”, “sexual” and “abuse” that collectively describe a range of heterogeneous sexual acts committed against children (Cocca, 2015; Olafson, 2011; Putnam, 2003). Sexual acts occur with varying degrees of physical contact (e.g., penetrative sex or oral sex) or involve no contact (e.g., exhibitionism or voyeurism) (Murray, Nguyen, & Cohen, 2014). Any attempt to involve children in sexual acts, including those that are unsuccessful could also be viewed as an act of CSA (Burton et al., 2016). Non-contact forms of CSA are documented to occur at a higher prevalence than contact forms of CSA (Barth, Bermetz, Heim, Trelle, & Tonia, 2013; Gorey & Leslie, 1997). For example, based on the analysis of fifty-five studies from 24 countries around the world, Barth et al.’s (2013) study estimate prevalence rates of forced intercourse at 9% for females and 3% for males. Results from the same research demonstrate that CSA prevalence estimates for non-contact CSA experiences were found to be much higher (31% for females and 17% for males).

To date, non-contact forms of CSA have not achieved similar public status compared with contact forms of CSA and are less likely to qualify as legal offences. One possible

explanation is that less harm is perceived when a child suffers sexual experiences that are less intrusive and bear no evidence of physical harm or injury. However, empirical research indicates that non-contact forms of CSA can also cause the victim adverse psychological harm (Fergusson, McLeod, & Horwood, 2013).

Some CSA offenders use no physical aggression or a minimal amount of force to engage children in sexual activity. In some cases, CSA is achieved when subtle forms of coercion and pressure are applied (Shefer & Foster, 2009) often within the confines of trusting and nurturing relationships (Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2008; Valente, 2005). Offenders may employ nurturing mechanisms that are otherwise encouraged as child caregiving practices. Under the pretext of nurturance, it is often very difficult for a victim to detect exploitative sexual behaviour, and nurturance and exploitation may easily be conflated (Smallbone et al., 2008).

Perpetrators of CSA are varied: there may be single or several offenders (Jewkes et al., 2014; Nowrojee, 2005; Turshen, 2001); adults and other children, same-aged or older (Finkelhor, Shattuck, Turner, & Hamby, 2014). Studies show that both males and females (Aebi, Vogt, Plattner, Steinhausen, & Bessler, 2012; Wijkman, Bijleveld, & Hendriks, 2014) are culpable of committing sexual acts against children. CSA may also involve non-offenders who do not take part in the sexual act but may have facilitated its occurrence, such as persons who trade children into prostitution on a commercial basis (Hodge & Lietz, 2007; Sossou & Yogtiba, 2009). Abuse of this nature is often illustrated in cases of sexual exploitation and child trafficking. These activities have been identified as special categories of CSA (Bolen & Gergely, 2014). Special categories of CSA may be more evident in low-income countries where conditions of poverty, child neglect and abuse are vast (Meinck, Cluver, Boyes, & Mhlongo, 2015; Lalor, 2008; Sossou & Yogtiba, 2009).

In a nutshell, CSA is defined by World Health Organisation (WHO) as:

The involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to: the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; the exploitative use of child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; the

exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials. (WHO, 1999, pp. 15-16)

Though many (Murray et al., 2014; Smallbone et al., 2008) make reference to this definition of CSA or variations of it, what actually constitutes the concept of CSA is extensively debated (see Haugaard, 2000).

In part, the debates centre on issues of ambiguity suggested by the use of the terms “child”, “sexual” and “abuse.” To date, controversy remains on how these terms should be operationalised (Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2013). Like other forms of maltreatment, CSA has undergone phases of re-conceptualisation from one historical period to another (Bensel, Rheinberger, & Radbill, 1997) for various reasons. A detailed discussion of this is beyond the scope of this study but has been discussed extensively by other authors (see Conte, 1994; Olafson, Corwin, & Summit, 1993).

### **2.2.1. Child sexual abuse assessment difficulties**

Operationalising CSA is often complicated by the difficulty of defining who a child is, and identifying behaviours that constitute “sexual” acts of “abuse” (Tucker & Chiet, 2010). There is little consensus on how these concepts should be established from the perspective of researchers, lawmakers and the many other professionals in the field of CSA (Haugaard, 2000). As a result, CSA is operationalised in multiple ways.

#### ***2.2.1.1. Legal definitions: Child sexual abuse and the law***

Legally, CSA is defined, assessed and established largely by predetermined age limits that determine the age permissible to engage in sexual activities (Graupner, 2000). Age of sexual consent tends to vary considerably (between 14-18 years), across countries worldwide. (Cocca, 2015). In Ireland, for example, a person can be placed on trial if found to have had sexual intercourse with an individual below the age of 17 (Lyden, 2007). The British law defines the age of consent for sex at 16 years (Horvath & Giner-Sorolla, 2007b). For Denmark, the minimal age limit at which one can engage in sexual intercourse is 15 years (Graupner, 2000).

Law infringements can result in serious statutory implications for offenders (Manlove, Mooore, Liechty, Ikramullah, & Cottingham, 2005). In Ghana, for instance, an individual can be sentenced up to a total of 25 years for engaging a child under the age of 16 in sexual activity (Ghana Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 1998 (Act 554). Separate laws exist to penalise persons who force individuals between the ages of 16 and 17 to have non-consensual sex.

While statutes are somewhat helpful for identifying and legally addressing CSA cases that involve young children, some authors note that the CSA cases involving older children and MCSA survivors are not dealt with satisfactorily by the law (Hlavka, 2014; Sahl & Keene, 2012; Weeks, 1990). These categories of people are usually viewed as willing participants when it comes to the discussion of sex, and not CSA victims. These observations reveal the limitations inherent in existing legal statutes and reveal dominant social perceptions of CSA deeply rooted in the law.

### ***2.2.1.2. Research definitions of CSA: methods and methodological challenges***

Research reviews on CSA methods and CSA studies in general also point to the challenge of defining CSA (Briere, 1992; Goldman & Padayachi, 2000; Gorey & Leslie, 1997). Wide variation exists in how researchers identify cases of CSA among the large numbers of samples usually surveyed in prevalence studies. For instance, methods for establishing the age cut-off point for childhood have ranged from persons below the age of 18 (Basile, Chen, Black, & Saltzman, 2007) to persons below age 13 (Jumaian, 2001). Sometimes the cut-off point is set even lower, that is, below 12 years (Sorrenti-Little, Bagley, & Robertson, 1984). Some researchers specify the use of an age differential between the victim and offender to differentiate CSA from sexual activity between peers of the similar age, while others do not (Finkelhor, 1994; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011). When used to assess CSA, age differentials may vary (from 5 to 10 years), contingent on the age of the victim (Finkelhor, 1979).

Defining what activities constitute “sexual” and “abuse” also pose a challenge to researchers. The term “sexual” typically refers to the erotic, a concept that is socially defined and variable depending on the context, therefore, what constitutes sexual is not always clear-cut (Jackson, 2006). Tucker and Chiet (2010) assert that it is much easier for researchers to clearly define acts like penetrative sexual intercourse as CSA than other behaviours that are less

intrusive – like fondling or exhibitionism – and may be ambiguously defined. Moreover, researchers undertake studies for various reasons and are often limited by their specific aims and objectives. Thus, this could affect their choice of CSA definition.

### **2.2.2 Child sexual abuse assessment: Cultural and social influences**

What is considered CSA may depend on the motivation and practical interest of who is doing the evaluation (e.g., researcher, medical practitioner or legal authority). However, for Fontes, Cruz, and Tabachnick (2001), the CSA interpretations of such evaluators remain underpinned by cultural backgrounds and settings. Put differently, the interpretative structures of sexual encounters that involve children are based on the norms and standards of the surrounding culture (Gavey, 2005; Ward & Siegert, 2002). People typically adopt cultural rules and follow standards to determine how CSA experiences should be understood and interpreted (Sanday, 2001).

Whatever the guiding motive, the literature suggests that the final judgement of what constitutes CSA is influenced by a number of interacting factors, which include characteristics of the victim and offender. Even the characteristics of the very people who play a crucial role in substantiating claims of CSA are subject to social influence (Golding, Fryman, Marsil, & Yozwiak, 2003; Tucker & Chiet, 2010). Of the many characteristics of victims studied in CSA prevalence research, as is discussed in section 2.5 below, gender and age seem to exert significant influence on how particular cases of CSA are evaluated in terms of incident severity and the extent of harm thought to be caused to the child (Bornstein, Kaplan, & Perry, 2007).

### **2.3. The integrated theory of sex offending: Sex offending and victim vulnerabilities**

The integrated theory of sexual offending (Smallbone et al., 2008) emphasises the importance of biological, psychological, social and situational factors for understanding sexual offending. Collectively, these core features provide an explanation for why people commit CSA and, address the question of why some people are at an increased risk for experiencing abuse. Smallbone et al. (2008) suggest that CSA may occur partly as a function of unrestrained biological tendencies that influence the exhibition of antisocial or prosocial behaviour. According to this ideology, males have the biological disposition towards aggression or nurturance. Sex is one example of many human behaviours (particularly, in the case of males)

through which these two contrasting traits can be expressed. Accordingly, this theory posits that males have the potential to act in a sexually aggressive manner towards potential targets, who may include women as well as children.

Yet, like Sanday (2001), the theorists (Smallbone et al., 2008) note that not all males (both adults and the young) sexually abuse children, though they may inherit biological tendencies to do so. Smallbone et al. (2008) suggest that aspects of a child's social ecosystem restrain the possibility of CSA from occurring. People learn how to refrain from perpetrating CSA based on knowledge acquired through their relatedness with others, starting from their early life attachments (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Early life attachment outcomes mediate biological vulnerabilities to sexually offend or otherwise refrain from doing so (Donner, Marcum, Jennings, Higgins, & Banfield, 2014). As a result of early attachment experiences, the child learns about his or her roles in relationships and the roles of others. Attachment histories affect a person's behaviour towards others, as well as how they use such behaviour to accomplish their needs, including sexual desires (Schachner & Shaver, 2004). Explaining Bowlby's attachment theory, Volpe and Barton (2009) liken the child-caregiver relationship to a safe hold against threat or danger such that attachments serve as a potential source of security for a child as he or she bonds with an attachment figure (Bowlby, 1969). Depending on caregiver availability the child is able to explore and negotiate their environment effectively using their attachment as a secure base for exploration (Alexander, 1992). If the caregiver is responsive and sensitive to a child's signals for proximity the child is likely to develop a sense of security and range of positive behaviour outcomes.

On the other hand, maternal deprivation can lead to insecure relationships that may be associated with: (1) emotional difficulties; (2) deviant sexual arousal and preferences for children as objects of sexual desire; (3) intimacy/social deficits; and (4) offence-supportive norms, attitudes and beliefs (Finkelhor, 1984; Ward, 2014). According to Smallbone et al. (2008) insecure attachment outcomes impact on a person's subsequent care seeking, caregiving and sexual interaction. For example, intimacy deficits can increase the exposition of self-interest by a person's choice of partner and by the way he or she acts aggressively towards a child to gratify his or her sexual needs.

While these attachment outcomes suggest vulnerabilities for CSA offenders, at the same time they also emphasise problems for vulnerable children. For instance, insecure attachments may be indicative of an absent parent, a dysfunctional home, maternal conflict, divorce or separation, as shown in the literature. Situations like these present with differential risks, creating opportunities for CSA to result (Smallbone et al., 2008). For instance, a child may be vulnerable to CSA due to the unavailability of a parent. This can cause social isolation, emotional distress or neediness which are often identified problems noted to increase a child's vulnerability to CSA (Johnson, 2002). I will return to the issues of CSA, attachment, and self-control in Chapter Four.

Focussing on differential risks associated with everyday situations and events that occur within a child's social ecosystem, some theorists (Wortley, 2001; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006) suggest person-context interactions operate to shape CSA into existence. Wortley and Smallbone (2006) re-analysed official data of incarcerated CSA offenders from a study conducted in 2000-2001. Of the 169 cases reviewed, 37% of the offenders were aged between 31 to 41 years old at the time of initiating sexual contact with the victim. The researchers noted that this age group consisted of adults who were intensively involved with child care and supervisory roles. This, they explained, may have facilitated the amount of contact the offender had had with targeted children and eventually the opportunity to abuse the child.

Providing additional evidence from the same study, Wortley and Smallbone (2006) noted that some of these offenders restricted their sexual activities to only one victim. In addition, in about 93.5% of the cases, the offender was known to the child, therefore, suggesting the child was accessible within a common environment. Overall, there was limited evidence to prove that the offender's actions were precipitated by an interest in child pornography or even necessarily general sexual preference for children. In view of these findings, Smallbone et al. (2013) suggest that certain conditions such as environmental cues, stressors, temptations and perceived provocations occur during frequent contact with a child and weaken self-restraint and controls on behaviour. In sum, these preconditions intensify or facilitate the opportunity for a motivated offender to sexually abuse, given the availability of a child, and in the absence of a guardian to prevent the event from occurring (Smallbone et al., 2008; Wortley & Mazerolle, 2013).

In this current study, I draw on Smallbone et al.'s, (2008) ecosystemic explanations of CSA. This account of CSA suggests the importance of social ecosystems in which both potential

victims and offenders are rooted, and guided in various kinds of behaviour, including the sexual and for that matter CSA. I will expand on the ecosystemic constituent of Smallbone et al.'s (2008) integrated theory of sexual offending using Gavey's (2005) theory of cultural scaffolding of rape. Further, I take an interest in the role of situational influences and the CSA opportunities created by these, as a result of daily routine activity and practices that may include the victim and offender in the same space.

#### **2.4. Cultural scaffolding of rape and sexual coercion**

The cultural context matters. As Magnusson and Marecek (2012) have expressed, people cannot be understood in the absence of social relationships and the cultural systems in which they are surrounded. Cultural and social mechanisms are what inform people about themselves and the world (Ward & Siegert, 2002). In support of this, Cooper and Denner (1998) assert that analysing the ecological system of a particular culture is informative in understanding how its residents make sense of a phenomenon. To understand why rape and sexual coercion occur, Nicola Gavey (1992) draws on the connections between sexual experiences professed by females as "normal" and the cultural context in which these women live and participate in, on a daily basis. Gavey's (1992) New Zealand-based study with a number of women aged between 28 to 52 years indicated striking findings about views of conventional sexual experiences. In this study, Gavey discovered that many of the participants' sexual experiences that they in their terms had labelled "normal" turned out to be personal accounts of unwanted and non-consensual sexual conquests from men.

Gavey (1992) reveals that many of the women she interviewed were against dominant male sexual practices in their narratives although they were not necessarily conscious of this. Their narrations indicated that such interpretations were not plausible, in a culture that tolerated sexual coercion as a normal act of heterosexuality expressed by men. For some women, sex was not a personal choice they willingly made. They gave sex because they were deemed responsible for arousing sexual feelings in a man and had to compensate them. They were obligated to satisfy the man's sexual desires against their wishes and desires.

Sex for these women was often part of a routine such that in some instances, its performance was termed "ordinary", as one participant remarked about sex, "it is just like having

a cup of tea” (Gavey, 1992, p. 345). Refusing sexual demands had consequences. For these women; sex refusal resulted in a variety of experiences, ranging from verbal abuse to episodes of emotional abuse that had long-term effects on the woman’s self-perceptions and subsequent mental health. Gavey (2005) notes that heteronormative discourses strongly place restrictions on female behaviour, thereby promoting some masculine sexual behaviours at the expense of the female. People’s general ways of thinking, feeling and behaviour about sexuality is supported or scaffolded by these “discourses that give legitimacy and often a sense of naturalness” (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012, p. 114). The ways in which males in this study expressed their sexuality in relation to the opposite sex was to an extent ordered by everyday normative processes that maintain and reproduce this kind of behaviour as an enduring social life pattern (Jackson, 2006). Gavey (2005) found that both females and males contribute to this process of normalisation by expecting men to behave in a particular way and ridicule men who do not live up to expectation.

Gavey (2005, p. 2) argues that “these everyday taken-for-granted normative forms of heterosexuality work as a cultural scaffolding for rape”. Lea and Auburn (2001, p. 12) also agree that “what has typically been perceived as ‘normal’ heterosexual sex is itself subject to critical interrogation”. Gavey’s (2005) theory of cultural scaffolding of rape offers a suitable framework for understanding how people make meaning out of their childhood sexual experiences. Following from Gavey (2005), if we examine “normal” or everyday interactions and routines of the surrounding culture and subcultures of the child, a lot can be learnt. These everyday routines provide not only a context for the perpetration of CSA but also for how it is understood. Meaning or significance is given to sexual experiences and experiences of CSA based on information from the surrounding culture (Ward & Siegert, 2002).

An analysis of these meanings can locate core beliefs and variations of these beliefs (Ward, 2014). Some researchers, like Gavey (2005) herself, theorise that sexual abuse occurs as part of the broader cultural context. This is partly a result of the range of ideas about masculinity and femininity, and concepts about heteronormativity, sexual desire and arousal that tolerate and permit abuse as a normal way of behaving sexually (Sanday, 2001; Seymour, 1998). In the section below I discuss the notions of heteronormativity that support and maintain ideas of

gender roles and power within our community, to shed more light on how CSA manifests into a reality.

## **2.5. Scaffolding of CSA**

### **2.5.1. Cultural scripts, gender and age**

Cultural scripts prescribe members of social or cultural groups should think, feel and act in particular life circumstances (Wiederman, 2005). This would include prescriptions about how to respond and behave regarding CSA. Analogous to what occurs in the theatre, Simon and Gagnon (1986) explain that cultural scripts set the stage for how members of the society should act sexually (Gagnon, 1990). Accordingly, scripts specify guidelines for the expression of sexuality, plus define and assign roles for males and females, within social interactions (Beres, 2014). As actors, members of a particular culture attempt to follow appropriate behaviour as prescribed by these scripts (Wiederman, 2005). In reality people do not always adhere to cultural norms; Simon and Gagnon (1984, p. 29) note that cultural rules are “rarely entirely predictive of actual behaviour, and they are generally too abstract to be applied in all circumstances”.

Cultural scripts operate within a limited scope of application, and do not always address a person’s presenting situation satisfactorily. Therefore, one may create interpersonal scripts to suit their particular circumstance and relationships (Elliott, 2010). For instance, individuals actively learn, interpret, and manipulate the same rule in different ways to accommodate their social needs or personal circumstances (Kottak, 2011). These kinds of scripts constitute personal adaptations of cultural scripts that are likely to meet social expectations of others (Simon & Gagnon, 1986).

### **2.5.2. Culture and gender roles**

Starting from childhood, people learn about the rules and standards of acting their gender, based on information communicated by their surrounding culture. Out of these experiences, people develop an understanding of themselves as male or female; in sum they develop a gender identity (Wood & Eagly, 2015). Gender identity is determined by the performance of gender roles, that is, particular types of behaviour defined by society as appropriate and specific to type of gender (O’Neil, 1981). Gender is not an inborn trait. Society classifies people into male or female

categories based on the presence of certain reproductive and anatomical features (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009) and on the basis of prevailing norms. Interactions with others and the media reinforce the meaning of gender in many complex ways (Wood, 2012). The process by which people become accustomed to cultural values, beliefs and norms and shared meanings of behaviour is termed socialisation (Shtarkshall, Santelli, & Hirsch, 2007). Primary caregivers, usually parents, are the first to act as role models for their children, and impart incorporated cultural values, meanings and expectations patterning their ward's behaviour in gendered ways (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001).

By age two, children develop a sense to distinguish between genders and start to establish their gender identity (Volbert, 2000) based on their parents' prompts of what it constitutes to be a boy or girl. Accordingly, children develop and continue to learn about traditional gender roles. For instance, DeLamater and Friedrich (2002) note that between the ages of 3 to 7 years, children can understand basic concepts of marriage and model family life in playing house activities with their peers. During such pretend play, roles are differentiated with boys taking up roles of the hero, while girls are assigned to family characters and caretaking roles (Golombok, Rust, Zervoulis, Golding, & Hines, 2012).

When this process of socialisation is applied to the instilling of values about sex and sexual behaviour in specific ways (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001), the process is termed sexual socialisation. Sexual socialisation starts at an early age, with social agents such as primary caregivers conveying self-valued messages to children about issues such as self-restraint and nudity, while instituting what behaviours are deemed private, and what is considered public (Shtarkshallet al., 2007). As the child grows older, sexual socialisation efforts centre on issues of self-restraint and sexual involvement (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001). Usually at adolescence, traditional gender role expectations are deeply emphasised, in many contexts with a focus on policing a female's sexuality and the preservation of virginity (Elliott, 2010). On the other hand, male sexuality is usually ordered around male physique, sexual prowess, skill and sexual performance records (Forrest, 2010); this allows for sexual permissiveness among males but not in the case of females.

### **2.5.3. Culture and age norms**

Age is also a recognised standard for constraining and enabling behaviour within society. In every society, age distinguishes the experiences, roles and statuses of various community members (Settersten & Mayer, 1997). As a result of their age, people learn what is expected of them within interpersonal interactions. In other words, age defines the timing or regulation of social experiences (Mollborn & Sennott, 2015; Neugarten, Moore, & Lowe, 1965). Applied to sexuality, social norms organise the appropriateness of sexual behaviour based on one's level of maturity or age (Gowen, Felman, Diaz, & Yisrael, 2004).

Like gender role norms or conventions, age is a defining feature that guides and controls male and female behaviour and its appropriateness (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). In a similar mechanism to gender norms people are influenced to think, feel and behave according to their age; accordingly, children acclimatise to age expectations. Given their function of social regulation, these factors of gender and age seem to be rooted in many ways, giving different meaning to people's everyday experiences, interactions and practices.

### **2.6. Going against gender roles and age norms**

As it will become clearer in subsequent sections, findings from the CSA literature indicate that aspects of age and gender are taken to be naturalised, fixed and embedded in the fabric of society, such that people may face dire consequences for failing to act in accordance with these roles and expectations. As argued by Gavey (2005), the normalisation of gender divisions and the extensions of these into everyday sexual interaction and practices maintain and underpin the scaffolding of CSA. Powell (2006) talks about age hierarchies in a similar manner. Powell (2009, p. 5) states that, "Just as gender used to be invisible, part of the taken for granted reality of the world, so is age categorisation currently something so assumed, so naturalised in biology, that we fail to acknowledge its power".

In this sense, children who experience CSA are often considered to have indirectly deviated or violated social expectations of persons of a particular gender or age. As a result, victims may face social consequences for non-conformity, although the occurrence of CSA may be no fault of theirs. Going against social norms as a result of the CSA incident may result in role conflicts, because of the way people are socialised to think, feel and respond to gender roles

(O’Neil, 2008), as well as age norms. For instance, outcomes of gender role conflicts and conflicts with age norms are reflected in a variety of ways within the context of CSA, such that the sexual abuse of males, CSA cases involving older children, female offending and CSA cases committed by young offenders is often overlooked.

### 2.6.1. Underreporting of the sexual abuse of males?

In a meta-analytic review of CSA studies originating from 20 countries conducted over two decades ago, Finkelhor (1994) concluded that more girls (between 7% - 36%) than boys (3% - 29%) experience an event of CSA prior to turning 18 years. In the last 6 years, a few international meta-analytic studies of CSA have expanded on Finkelhor’s (1994) work. Details on three of these study reviews are shown in the Table 1.1. below.

Table 2.1: *CSA prevalence estimates for three global study reviews*

Year	Sampling characteristics	Combined CSA Prevalence
Pereda et al. (2009a)	65 publications from 22 countries across the world	7.9% - males 19.7% - females
Stoltenborgh et al. (2011)	217 scholarly articles from the 6 continents	7.6% - males 18.0% - females
Barth et al. (2013)	55 studies from 24 countries	8% - males 15% - females

Akin to Finkelhor (1994), the study results consistently show that fewer men than women report CSA histories (Barth et al., 2013; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011). With a very few notable exceptions (Mbagaya, 2010), other studies support low rates of CSA among male samples

compared with their female counterparts (Aboul-Hagag & Hamed, 2012; Priebe & Svedin, 2008).

It is not clear if, or to what extent, true gender differences exist as the study reviews seem to portray, since a growing body of research exclusively centred on Male Child Sexual Abuse (MCSA) suggests that the sexual abuse of boys may possibly be more prevalent than previously established (Holmes & Slap, 1998; Valente, 2005). Further studies on CSA non-disclosure rates link low MCSA prevalence rates to the reluctance of MCSA survivors to divulge their experiences of CSA (Easton, Saltzman, & Willis, 2014; Goldman & Padayachi, 2000; Priebe & Svedin, 2008). For instance, of the 1,505 girls and 457 boys Priebe and Svedin (2008) surveyed, more boys (31%) than girls (19%) had never disclosed their history of CSA until asked in the study. Previous study reviews have also reported similar low rates of CSA disclosure among other male samples (Paine & Hansen, 2002; Pipe, Lamb, Orbach, & Cederborg, 2007). Findings from the literature, suggest the reluctance on the part of MCSA survivors to disclose an experience of CSA is attributable to a number of reasons, underpinned by social implications of what it means for a male to be a victim of CSA (Putnam, 2003; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011)

#### ***2.5.1.1. Traditional male roles and underreporting child sexual abuse***

Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) assert that to achieve the status of a “man” one must act in accordance with roles that allow one to claim membership of manhood. By being born male, a child becomes privy to a wide range of roles or expected masculine behaviours. As the male child increasingly interacts with the world, he comes to learn about various roles expected of his gender, behaviours that violate these expectations, and accordingly, the consequences for violating gender roles or norms (O’Neil, 2008). A number of scholarly articles have catalogued masculine roles around a number of common themes. O’Neil and his colleagues, for instance associate male identity with ideas of restrictive emotionality, success, control, power and competition issues (O’Neil, 1981; 2008; O’Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995). Drawing on the notions of other writers (Brannon, 1976; Harris, 1995; Pleck, 1981), Jansz, (2000) groups male identity into questions of autonomy, achievement, aggression and stoicism. These attributes essentially promote traditional male roles (Levant, 2011; O’Neil, 2008).

In keeping with male norms, when CSA occurs some survivors may not disclose in order to remain consistent with traditional male attributes and to avoid being associated with female traits and homosexual men. In other words, societal expectations acclimatise males to fear expressing anything which could be termed feminine behaviour. Thus, features of femininity such as emotional expressiveness, are avoided (Wong, Pituch, & Rochlen, 2006). Males are socialised to express a restricted range of emotions and not to communicate their innermost feelings (Jansz, 2000). Consistent with traditional gender roles the male child is rather socialised to foster pride, and to be assertive and remain in control of emotions (Else-Quest, Higgins, Allison, & Morton, 2012). Accordingly, boys commonly fail to articulate their own emotions and the feelings of people (Jansz, 2000; Wong et al., 2006).

In light of this, Levant (1996, p. 263) calls men “strangers to their own emotional life”. For this reason, O’Neil (2008) notes that males are vulnerable to themselves and others, as their deficits tend to affect their ability to disclose and recognise their feelings. Levant (1996) put forward that most male emotions are channelled through expressions of anger and sexuality. Recent qualitative research on MCSA survivors supports this claim, as accounts of anger seem to be prominent themes in their life histories as triggered by the CSA event (Dorahy & Clearwater, 2012; Lisak, 1994). Discussing the cases of men who had reported histories of CSA, Dorahy and Clearwater (2012) found that participants frequently traced bouts of anger that occurred in their interaction with others to the event of CSA.

Sexuality for males is structured around sexual competence and reinforced through sexual interactions with persons of the opposite gender (Forrest, 2010). These activities serve the purpose of validating a person’s manhood. Therefore, some MCSA survivors report CSA encounters as normal sexual occurrences. Artime, McCallum, and Peterson (2014) supported this assertion when they examined the childhood sexual experiences among male adults. They found that endorsing behavioural indicators of at least one CSA experience was not subject to admitting or acknowledging the history of CSA. Fifty-two percent of participants did not identify as MCSA survivors, although they met the criteria for CSA as established by the researchers.

Consistent with Artime, McCallum, and Petersons’ (2014) findings, results from a section of the MSCA literature indicates that sexual intercourse, especially with an older female (who is assumed sexually experienced) is interpreted and viewed as desirable. To have sex with a woman

is constructed as male privilege, an initiation into manhood, and a positive life experience (Easton et al., 2014; Kulick, 2005; Romano & De Luca, 2001). For some survivors, the experience of CSA may be a pathway for reinforcing the presence of manhood (Pereda, Guilera, Forns, & Gómez-Benito, 2009a). In contrast, some research evidence indicates that some MCSA survivors may not share this popular view. Take the accounts of some male participants in Teram, Stalker, Hovey, Schachter, and Lasiuk's (2006) study for instance, who discussed their sexual experiences with women and opposed the popular notion that their experiences with an older woman were experienced positively. One participant was noted saying, "I notice a lot of males will take it lightly that being abused by women ... its part of growing up ... it upsets me that they think that way" (Teram et al., 2006). This is a good illustration of how some males may contest the dominant views of heterosexuality.

#### ***2.5.1.2. Traditional male roles and credibility of CSA reports***

Children who report an experience of CSA are more likely to receive the needed support when the account of sexual contact between the victim and the offender is deemed a credible CSA report (Giglio, Wolfeich, Gabrenya, & Sohn, 2011). Dominant views of male sexuality affect how people view the CSA reports of male victims. One study by Rogers and Davies (2007) shows that participants, particularly males, rated the CSA experience of a 15-year-old male victim with a female perpetrator as less severe compared to a female counterpart who suffered a similar experience. Typically, persons whose CSA reports are disbelieved are held accountable for the occurrence of CSA and their sexuality is questioned as well. Goldman and Padayachi (2000) found that some CSA survivors who were sexually abused by a member of the same sex did not disclose this for fear of being labelled a homosexual, which is a violation of traditional masculinity. Traditionally, males are socialised to be homophobic, and to fear being labelled a homosexual which is considered a deviation from the masculine norm (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Dhaliwal, Gauzas, Antonowicz, & Ross, 1996; O'Neil, 1981).

CSA perpetrated by a same-sex perpetrator can cause some survivors to question their sexual orientation and express concern about how others would view them. A few men with a homosexual orientation who reported CSA histories in Grossman, Sorsoli, and Kia-Keatings' (2006) study wondered if the abuse had contributed to their existing sexual orientation. Other

MCSA survivors expressed worry about being labelled as weak and vulnerable should they disclose their history of CSA (Lisak, 1994). Fear of being equated with females, a status which stands in stark contrast to what is expected of the traditional male, is another reason for CSA non-disclosure. For some MCSA survivors, a man is deemed a powerful being and “should never show weakness” (Levant, 2011, p. 769).

Non-adherence to traditional male gender roles can result in negative consequences, affecting the lives of the many boys who are not able to live up to social expectation; including the lives of others they have interactions with (O’Neil, 2008). According to O’Neil et al. (1995), conflict results when gender socialisation is critical of males. Conflicts can lead to personal devaluation and the violation of others. Considerable evidence of this is traced in the narratives of MCSA survivors as they recount outcomes of resisting traditional gender roles, and the effects this resistance caused to their daily functioning (Dorahy & Clearwater, 2012; Easton et al., 2014; Kia-Keating, Grossman, Sorsoli, & Epstein, 2005).

In sum, the reason for underreporting is multifaceted. Considerable evidence as reviewed above, points to the fact that MCSA has been overlooked. Largely, due to the knowledge and practice of deep-seated social norms that serve to normalise, minimise and discount CSA committed against males. Particularly, the lack of attention that is demonstrated in the research of males in matters concerning CSA is striking and has implications for the victims’ well-being. These findings question our current understanding of CSA, and the ways in which the construction of gender and sexuality are intertwined and linked, producing different meanings to the phenomenon of MCSA.

### **2.6.2. Age of the victim and sexual experiences**

In Stoltenborgh et al.’s (2011) study higher frequency of CSA reports (29%) involved children below the age of 14 compared to the other age ranges assessed (e.g.,  $\leq 12$ ,  $\leq 13$ ,  $\leq 15$ ,  $\leq 16$  and  $\leq 17$ ). Pereda et al. (2009a) indicate no significant differences between the age groups they examined in their study. In the Barth et al. (2013) study, CSA was not examined across the age groups. Given these results, the effect of age on the prevalence of CSA is inconsistent and unclear. Smallbone et al. (2008) indicate that children of younger ages seem to be at risk for CSA involving family members or relatives compared to children of older ages who risk being

sexually abused by non-family members. This may account for why CSA prevalence estimates below the age of 13 are low compared to the CSA prevalence for 14-year-olds. Intrafamilial CSA is not easily disclosed by the affected children or the family for fear of stigmatisation and as part of efforts to maintain the survivor and family's reputation and honour (Bolen, 2001; Huong, 2012).

Fonte and Plummer (2010) suggest that the age of the child may cause a delay in CSA disclosure. Minors for instance are considered sexually naïve and too young to have knowledge about sex (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994) or the mental capacity to understand what he or she was involved in; at worst the offender may threaten the child to keep quiet (Fonte & Plummer, 2010). Older children, on the other hand, may not easily divulge the incident of CSA for fear of cultural and social repercussions (Hershkowitz, Lanes, & Lamb, 2007). For instance, some victims fear that their sexuality would be questioned, since sex is a domain considered the privy of adults and not children (Stanford & Rademakers, 2000). As a result of age-related cognitions, research shows that older children are held more accountable for CSA occurrences compared to younger children, as sexual knowledge is assumed to increase with age. To avoid negative reactions from others it is less likely older children will disclose their CSA experiences (McElvaney, 2013). This may account for why children above 14 years report low CSA prevalence.

### **2.6.3. Adolescent – adult sexual relationships**

Given the discussion above, it can be inferred that younger children are more likely to be viewed as CSA victims than are older children. This notion hints that the CSA disclosures of older children may often be ignored and in some cases, even tolerated as ordinary sexual experiences the child must have consented to, for the incident to have occurred. Especially if the age difference between the child and offender is narrow (Horvath & Giner-Sorolla, 2007a; Oudekerk, Farr, & Reppucci, 2013; Sahl & Keene, 2010).

For instance, Hines and Finkelhor (2007) distinguish between four patterns of sexual experiences that occur between adults and juveniles indicating the regularity of these affiliations within the general public domain. Most state laws would term such relationships as statutory offences due to issues of consent and equality. Research studies suggest these categories represent existing sexual relationships that are often accomplished within a continuum of love at

one side of the spectrum and coercion at the other end (Bordini & Sperb, 2013; Lenderking et al., 1997; Oudekerk, Guarnera, & Reppucci, 2014; Rothman, Exner, & Baughman, 2011).

As Hines and Finkelhor (2007) reveal, these relationships are a complex set of relationships because they often illustrate “clear signs of voluntary participation by the youth, including such things as initiating sexual behavior, returning for sexual encounters, or professing romantic love for the adult” (p. 302). The characteristics or features of these relationships bring to the fore questions about equality and coercion (Ryan, 1997). Taking equality as an example, as many feminists have argued, the difference in age between the child and adult is a construction of inequality that reflects power an adult maintains and a child usually lacks (Brownmiller, 2013; Cossins, 2000). Children are considered to be less powerful within society and thus suitable targets for exerting power and control over (Townsend et al., 2004). This notion of power and dominance usually underpins ordinary child-adult relationships and also extends to sexual activities.

The child may be oblivious of the implications of engaging in sexual relations with an older person and may have limited understanding of the act of sex (Murray et al., 2014). As the WHO definition rightly states in section 2.2.1., a child’s level of development or maturity does not place them in the right position to give consent or make decisions about participating in sexual activity. In the widely cited article, “What’s wrong with sex between adults and children?: Ethics and the problem of sexual abuse”, Finkelhor (1979) suggests two conditions that are necessary for consent to be given. “A person must know what it is that he or she is consenting to, and a person must be free to say yes or no” (Finkelhor, 1979, p. 694). Children do not usually have the requisite knowledge nor the free will to decide on sexual encounters, argues Finkelhor.

Further, there is considerable research evidence to suggest that these sexual experiences are forced, coercive and exploitation (Kuate-Defo, 2004). In one study, Manlove et al. (2005) found that sexual relationships involving female youth was more likely to be with an older person compared to the sexual experiences of their male counterparts. A similar study by Gowen et al. (2004) found that female sexual relationships with older persons were more likely to be characterised by coercion and power differentials compared to other girls who were in similar sexual relationships with same age mates.

For instance, Gowen et al. (2004) found that younger female youth reported that sex with

an older person was spontaneous, with the latter showing a greater sense of sex entitlement, initiating sexual interactions with a lack of negotiating power on the part of the youth. These mechanisms both illustrate an understated dimension of power and authority maintained by the older person and subordinate position of the adolescent. Accepting male aggression and sexual entitlement remained evident among these youth as was observed about the women in Gavey's (1991) New Zealand study. These youths were tolerant of their older partner's behaviour and justified their actions as signs of maturity and sexual experience, thus indicating that their accounts of sex were ordinary.

Similar structures of authority and subordination are evident in male adolescent-female adult relationships. The lack of negotiating power due to age and social status differentials renders the young boys' inability to refuse sex from an older person. Examining the retrospective accounts of 31 Xhosa-speaking men in South Africa of ages between 18-25, Sikweyiya and Jewkes (2009, p. 536) recount an earlier childhood sexual experience of one of their participants:

One teenager had met three older and respected women known in the community, one was a teacher and they were carrying beer and invited him to join them at their place. He got drunk and the women started touching him and persuaded him to have sex with all of them.

Male participants in Sikweyiya and Jewkes' (2009) study indicated their inability to refuse sexual advances out of an obligation to follow social order. Although not always wanted, the narratives in this study indicate that refusing a request from an adult, although sexual, is a difficult decision for a child to make, given societal expectations of respect and obedience for older persons.

This raises questions about widely held assumptions about sexual abuse, and the gendered accounts of these predominantly reported by experienced females, as some authors like Gavey (2005) have emphasised. In the case of children, explanations of abuse may persist beyond issues of gender, exposing the effects of power differential dynamics. Sexual relationships between juveniles and adults are prohibited by state laws and cultural norms, yet appear so prevalent and accepted by both victims and offenders, that it is assumed a normal part of life. Older persons have the defining power for proscribing sexual encounters (Dawes, Richter, & Higson, 2004). Normative understandings of these asymmetrical relations between

adolescent and adults are problematic since they are assumed natural ways of life such that many do not recognise these relationships as inappropriate.

#### **2.6.4. Female innocence and child sexual abuse**

There is considerable evidence pointing to males as predominantly responsible for the majority of CSA cases. Few CSA studies have been concerned with female CSA offending; this is recognised as a largely understudied area of research (Denov, 2003; Deering & Mellor, 2009) as is the case with MCSA. The prevalence of female offending is difficult to estimate due to the problem of underreporting. However, emerging research suggests that some cases of CSA are perpetrated by females (Denov, 2001, 2004; Negriff, Schneiderman, Smith, Schreyer, & Trickett, 2014).

Negriff et al. (2014) for example found that of the 60 children's records they examined, one in five children was sexually abused by a female offender, who was more likely to be identified as the child's biological mother than an unrelated female. Other authors bring our attention to the numbers of females incarcerated for committing sexual offences against children per annum, especially in the West (Oliver, 2007; Synder, 2000). Although observed in smaller percentages in comparison to males, there is still indication of female-perpetrated occurrence with these percentages translating into a notable number of affected children. Despite the evidence that female CSA offending does occur, research shows that people perceive female offending as less severe compared to CSA committed by males (Davies, 2013). Dynamics that partly influence the non-disclosure of female CSA offending may include, among others: the view that the female is usually the victim, the lack of perceived harm; and the inability to recognise CSA acts implicating women as abusive. Further, there is the belief that females tend to inherit traditional scripts of femininity organised around ideas of innocence, warmth, nurturance, vulnerability and submissiveness (Mahalik et al., 2005).

Being female is traditionally naturalised with caring, non-aggressive and sexually passive roles (Denov, 2003). Very early in life, females are also socialised to accept positions of dependency and a role of servitude to the male gender (Seymour, 1998). Typically, these feminine roles lead girls to value other people's needs, sometimes at the expense of their own needs (Warshaw & Parrot, 1991). For instance, females are described as gatekeepers of sexuality

and in charge of nurturing and protecting children, placing them in a position of dependency and trust (Hayes & Baker, 2014). The pervasiveness of acceptance of existing female ideals may obscure the possibility that a female can sexually abuse a child (Denov, 2001; Mahalik et al., 2005), leading to a “culture of denial” (Mellor & Deering, 2010) when it does occur. Accordingly, female offending is overlooked and underreported. The neglect of female offending cases is also extended to CSA encounters that involve persons of the same-sex.

#### ***2.6.4.1. Homosexual relationships and child sexual abuse***

Stereotypes about gay men and their perceived deviant sexuality towards boys remain common among the general public (Herek, 2000; Sennott, 2002; Wiley & Bottoms, 2013). The series of scandals that have popularly involved the Catholic and Anglican Church clergy and MCSA may also have helped reinforce negative notions about homosexuality and abuse (Mc Mackin, Keane, & Kline, 2014; Parkinson, Oates, & Jayakody, 2012; Terry & Freilich, 2014). Existing studies suggest that CSA involving same genders may be popularly understood as more harmful when the victim is male but not when identified as female. For instance, in Wiley and Bottom’s (2013) study, 125 mock judges were administered an attitude to homosexuality questionnaire and were asked to review a case scenario of an offender and a 10-year-old victim whose gender was manipulated. The findings showed that participants with more negative attitudes towards homosexual men were more likely to pronounce the defendant as guilty when the victim was male. Similar findings have been found in other studies (Dollar, Perry, Fromoth & Holt, 2004; Wiley & Bottoms, 2009).

These findings illustrate the possibility that both female offending and female CSA involving homosexual relations are likely to be overlooked or unidentified. Although there is some evidence to suggest that CSA may occur within these encounters (Nathan & Ward, 2002; Negriff, et al., 2014), there is a dearth of research in this area. Taken together, stereotypes about female innocence and CSA offending portray ingrained beliefs the public hold about female ideals and how these are held to be natural such that violations of these are not recognised even when acted in the context of CSA.

### **2.6.5. Age of the offender: Adult and young offenders**

The problem of adult males implicating children for sexual and other related purposes has been a focus of research for several years. After years of long debates regarding CSA offenders, we find that the portrayal of the offender as a stranger is not entirely true. Evidence emerging from the 1980s provides contrasting evidence about who is committing CSA offences. The growing body of CSA literature suggests that the bulk of CSA offenders are people who form an integral part of the targeted child's own social network (Lussier & Blokland, 2014). For many this came as a shock and as if this revelation was not enough, several research studies brought to our attention (as does the WHO definition) a sector of persons, who may constitute a large proportion of all documented CSA offenders, those who, like the targeted child, are juvenile (Bolen, 2001; Boyd & Bromfield, 2006). Young offenders are children who sexually abuse other children.

Currently, there is substantial evidence that suggests children, both male and female, may constitute a not insubstantial portion of the CSA offending group (Aebi, Vogt, Plattner, Steinhausen, & Bessler, 2012; Wijkman et al., 2014). In their study of 15- to 17-year-old American youth, Finkelhor et al. (2014) found that one in twenty boys and one in four girls were sexually abused by other juveniles, while adult offenders were found responsible for perpetrating fewer reported CSA cases, one in nine girls and one in fifty-three boys. One United Kingdom (UK) survey (Radford et al., 2011), using a random probability sample of 2,275 young people of between 11 and 17 years also informs us of the high prevalence of young offenders. The researchers found that 65.9 % of the cases involving contact abuse were perpetrated by other children.

One Zimbabwean study (Gwirayi, 2012), however, showed mixed study results. In this study a high prevalence of young offenders compared to older offenders engaged in various forms of CSA contact cases (e.g., kissing, touching, etc.). Yet, when cases of forced sex were assessed the researchers found equal prevalence estimates for adult and young sex offenders. While variations may exist in the prevalence rates of adult and young offenders, and subsequently, their pattern of sex offending, it is important to note that both sub-groups constitute a valid part of the CSA offending population.

A key factor that may account for the overlooking of juvenile cases is the fact that sexual play between juveniles – which is usually consensual and non-threatening – is often complex

phenomenon to determine and differentiate from statutory CSA (Barbaree, Hudson, & Seto, 1993; Barbaree & Marshall, 2008), particularly when it involves children of similar age who are both below the minimum age limit for having sex. Who then is termed the offender, and who the victim? This discussion has been a site of contention in the literature and to date controversy remains over identifying children who sexually abuse other children (Finkelhor, 1994; Letourneau & Miner, 2005). Given the presence of minimum age laws for sexual issues, establishing that sexual interaction has occurred between an adult and underage child is often sufficient basis for defining CSA (Murray et al., 2014). The literature seems to suggest that it is easier to hold adults more accountable for their involvement in CSA compared to young offenders (Sahl & Keene, 2010).

Comparing vignettes that involved three age groups, Horvath and Giner-Sorolla (2007) found that adults implicated in CSA cases are usually viewed more negatively. Consistent with Horvath and Giner-Sorolla's (2007b) study, one online survey by Sahl and Keene (2012) found that participants were more likely to hand out strict judgments to older offenders (with a 27 year age gap) and define them as sex offenders compared with younger offenders (with a 7 year age gap). As a function of age, adults are assumed to be more mature; this accords them more authority and responsibility for their actions than young offenders (Horvath & Giner-Sorolla, 2007a; Sahl & Keene, 2012). For instance, when 145 university students were asked to evaluate a vignette describing a CSA event of an adult male neighbour and child, where the age (6- versus 13-year-old) and gender of the child was manipulated, Back and Lips (1998) found that the same case of CSA resulted in different judgement when the age of the child was varied.

Although this is not inevitably true, it is usually the adult and not the child who takes blame for the occurrence of CSA. One tenet of the feminist discourse on the subject of CSA proposes that adults inhabit a great sense of authority and dominance owing to their level of development and maturity, a quality that is believed under-developed in the case of children (Angelides, 2004). This notion of authority is demonstrated in feminist discourses that interpret CSA, against the background of patriarchy (Purvis & Ward 2006).

Notwithstanding this, Johnson (2002) suggests that akin to adults, some children can manipulate, trick, threaten, bribe or physically coerce other children to have sex with them. Therefore, researchers like Friedrich, Fisher, Broughton, Houston, and Shafran (1998) advise

that sexual normative behaviour and CSA should be distinguished. The study of normative sexual behaviour is under-researched due to the discomfort of discussing sexuality (Sandfort & Rademakers, 2000). However, Johnson (2002) suggests healthy exploratory sexual behaviour occurs between similar aged children with similar developmental characteristics. According to Johnson, participation in healthy sexual activity is limited and on a voluntary basis, and this proceeds concurrently with other developmental areas. Supporting studies indicate that certain sexual behaviours like genital touching, showing genitals off to others, touching others genitals and breasts are to mention but a few common behaviours among children aged 2-5 (Friedrich et al., 1998). Hornor (2004) reports that a child is exposed to a range of sexual behaviours with the formation of new relationships. As they grow, children demonstrate sexual interest by asking questions related to sexual activities and private body parts (Russell, 2014). Parental responses to these questions and the exhibition of sexual behaviour influences a child's subsequent sexual behaviour (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001). Friedrich et al. (1998) note, by age 12, observable sexual behaviours decline, at least where adults are present.

Although sex exploration and play are known to form a normal part of a child's development (Floyd & Ryan, 2010; Yarber, Sayad, & Strong, 2013), a child's behaviour may be of concern when they show age inappropriate sexual knowledge, or engagement in sexual behaviour and activity that is typical of adult populations (Hornor, 2004). However, the context in which these behaviours are observed needs to be taken into consideration, and cultural factors and perceptions may be at play. Administering the Child Sexual Behaviour Inventory (CSBI) to a sample of Latino mothers, Kenny and Wurtele (2013) found that the sexual behaviour among Latino pre-schoolers differed significantly from the normative sample which was predominantly Caucasian. The results showed elevated scores for Latino boys and girls on CSBI items empirically related to sexual abuse, although none of the children assessed had a known history of CSA. These results indicate why it is important to develop culturally sensitive measures.

This is also an indication that normative sexual behaviour for children varies from one cultural context to another. Therefore, CSA needs to be explored taking cognizance of this notion. Russell (2014) and Johnson (2002) propose that a lack of understanding the difference could lead to incorrect interpretations of what may be normative or inappropriate sexual

behaviour even in the case of professionals who have also been found to hold stereotypes about CSA.

#### **2.6.6. Child sexual abuse, professional responses and gender effects**

Despite the expertise of professionals who work in the field of CSA, as is the case with lay persons, some hold certain false beliefs and assumptions about CSA. Accordingly, some mental health professionals in the CSA field fail to inquire about sexual abuse while taking patient histories (Agar, Read, & Bush, 2002; Read & Fraser, 1998; Read, Hammersley, & Rudegear, 2007) or accurately substantiate CSA cases and resulting harm (Maikovich, Koenen, & Jaffee, 2009; Negriff et al., 2014). Particularly, in cases where the victim is male, an older child and is a being evaluated by a male professional.

For example, in a sample of children receiving child protection services following an incident of CSA, Maikovich et al. (2009) examined gender differences regarding the professionals' presentation of PTSD symptoms and the victim's life experience. Caseworkers were more likely to substantiate cases that involved females and rate them as experiencing more harm than cases that involved males, even though no significant gender differences were found for psychometric measures of PTSD and objective measures of harm severity (Maikovich et al., 2009).

Similarly, in another survey of 179 nurses, psychologists, and psychiatrists, Lab, Feigenbaum, and De Silva (2000) examined the practices towards MCSA. The results show that mental health professional did not probe about sexual abuse histories when the client was male, although a number of participants acknowledge that some male clients do present with CSA histories. Lab and colleagues found that 33% of these health professionals never enquired about their patients' CSA histories. Further, 73% of the participants held the view that it is not always necessary to ask about CSA histories.

Meanwhile, findings from one study (Read & Fraser, 1998) indicate that men may fail to disclose a CSA history unless they are asked about it directly. Other research by McGregor, Glover, Gautam, and Juelich (2010) among female CSA survivors tells us that mental health users often desire that mental health staff would ask about them about their abuse history.

A range of experimental studies show gender affects the evaluation of CSA cases, for instance, males more than females are generally less sympathetic towards victims of CSA (Back & Lips, 1998; Rogers & Davies, 2007). In a sample of 141 male and 184 female participants, Rogers and Davies (2007) found that men were less likely to view the perpetrators as responsible for the occurrence of CSA compared with women. Men viewed the victims as less credible and partly to blame for CSA. Other vignette study findings indicate that males were more likely to view the account of CSA as harmless, and the offender as less responsible for the occurrence of CSA, compared to how their female counterparts viewed the cases (Davies & Roger, 2009; Horvath & Giner-Sorolla, 2007b). One study reported no gender differences on the views of a victim's credibility and culpability (Giglio et al., 2011).

As a result of gender stereotypes, professionals may fail to identify genuine cases of MCSA (Maikovich et al., 2009) and to create conducive conditions to enable male victims to talk about their CSA experiences (Holmes, Offen, & Waller, 1997). As such, some concerned researchers have suggested special training for mental health staff (Denov, 2003; Read, McGregor, Coggan, & Thomas, 2006) and practical guidelines on inquiring about a client's past histories and emerging needs (Read et al., 2007). Further, Hepworth and McGowan (2013) suggest CSA enquiries be made mandatory during client admissions and routine clinical assessments. Given the possible implications of CSA disclosure, and victim and offender treatment following an event of CSA, the social perceptions of CSA are an important area to study within every culture. However, less is understood about how CSA is perceived in the African context. As is shown above, the understanding of and the reactions to CSA are largely underpinned by cultural scripts that direct appropriate behaviour based on age and gender norms (Font, 2013; Giglio et al., 2011). Age and gender seem to strongly influence the scaffolding of CSA in any context. Therefore, to make meaning of CSA in the African context, understanding notions of age and gender norms in the African culture may be an important step for any researcher (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012).

An important point to emphasise here is the range of ways in which sexuality is enacted and the ways in which these modes of sexual activity have changed dramatically over time. Yet these changes are relevant to understanding dimensions of CSA in contemporary times, such as forms of sexual activities that occur in cyberspace. In the next section, I discuss CSA against the

background of advanced technology and country context in order to explore how some life situations can also impact on peoples' understanding of CSA.

## **2.7. Child sexual abuse and situational influences**

### **2.7.1 Child sexual abuse, technology and virtual space**

In the space of a few decades the internet has increasingly become a daily used facility by both children and adults (Fallows, 2004; Wellman & Haythornthwaite, 2008) expanding our ecology of communication (Martin & Alaggia, 2013). One survey (Seybert, 2011) of 27 European countries indicates that 56% of people in Europe use the internet daily or virtually every other day. Some 68% of people use it, at minimum, once a week. Frequent internet users (91%) are between the ages of 16 to 24 years. Internet usage seems to have increased over the years, along with an increase in the number of personal electronic devices that can allow one to access the internet conveniently. There has also been an increase in Africa. For instance, the number of 15-year-old and above internet users in Botswana increased from 5.8 – 29% in a span of 2 years. During this time the number of people who had access to computers also increased (4.5 – 15.7%) (Stork, Calandro, & Gillwald, 2013).

As is the case of adults, the use of the internet has extended to, and become an integral part of a child's life (Livingstone, Haddon, & Görzig, 2012). In Europe, children below the age of 9 years are actively engaged in the use of internet entertainment and social services, such as watching videos, playing games, researching for homework, and socialisation (Holloway, Green, & Livingstone, 2013). According to Jones and Fox (2009), statistics from the United States indicate that 65% of children between the ages of 12 to 17 years sign up on social media websites for networking purposes.

With advances in technology, the invention of the internet and the multitude of digital electronic devices (i.e., desktops, laptops, phones, tablets) that enhance internet usage, communication has been made a lot easier for this present generation (Livingstone & Smith, 2014). With the internet comes a broad range of societal benefits. However, on the downside, recent research suggests access to the internet may expose children to a variety of risks, including sexual activities that amount to statutory sexual offenses committed against children (Bryce, 2013).

Illegal sexual activities occurring online include sexting, that is, the sending or receiving of sexually explicit videos, images or text messages (Mitchell, Finkelhor, Jones, & Wolak, 2012; Wolak & Finkelhor, 2011). In their study of internet facilitated CSA offenses, Wolak and Finkelhor (2013) found that non-contact offenses, for example, the solicitation and the sending of sexual images, are common activities perpetrated by online CSA offenders who are known by the victim or who were first met online, some of which led to sexual interactions offline such as child pornography and sexual intercourse, with less cases involving the use of force, and enacted against more females (90 – 85%) than males (10 – 15%).

Wolak, Finkelhor, and Mitchell (2012) note that between 2006 and 2009, technology-facilitated CSA offenses increased from a total of 7,010 arrests made in 2006 to 8,144 arrests in 2009, in the USA. The researchers found that the majority of these cases were enacted by people personally known to the victims who had facilitated face to face meetings and sexual interaction via the internet and with the use of mobile phones. A growing body of CSA literature indicates a prevalence of online users who employ the internet as a another way to identify vulnerable children for sexual purposes (Durkin, 1997; Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Ybarra, 2008). Via the internet a motivated sex offender can easily browse, gain access to, and groom child internet users (Kierkegaard, 2008). The offender's online activity with children receives less monitoring from guardians compared to child activity that occurs in physical space (Davidson & Gottschalk, 2011). The internet makes it easier for the offender to lose inhibition and act in ways not deemed possible in personal interaction (Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, 2011).

Finkelhor (2014) compares virtual space to the “offline worlds youth inhabits” and notes no difference between the two in terms of risk; he even asserts that virtual space may be comparatively less dangerous. Finkelhor describes the virtual world as an extension of our social ecology and media service problems experienced in the real world which he suggests should be assessed holistically rather than treated as a special case. Describing the virtual world in a different sense, I would like to suggest that virtual space may be comparable to capsule environments, which include schools, prisons, orphanages to mention but a few. “Capsule environments are bounded locations where people are brought or come together for specific reasons” (Wortley, 2008, p. 61). There is considerable evidence to suggest such locations increase the probability that a motivated offender and vulnerable child would converge at some

point in similar time and space (Davidson & Gottschalk, 2011; Smallbone et al., 2008; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006).

As is postulated in Smallbone et al.'s (2008) new integrated theory of sexual offending, the environment presents cues, stressors, temptations and perceived provocations that can induce a person to offend. Like the above named capsule environments, cyberspace provides opportunities for CSA-related motivations to be acted upon. Describing the implications, Wortley (2008, p. 61) indicates that, "The press of people combined with the enclosed nature of these environments can create pressure-cooker conditions. With limited options for escaping the capsule, the potential for situational precipitators to generate aberrant behaviour is intensified". As already emphasised above, virtual space may account for facilitating the course of some CSA cases (Wolak & Finkelhor, 2013).

### **2.7.2. Other risky contexts for child sexual abuse**

Other opportunities for people to sexually offend include the living conditions of a child who may have been neglected, is homeless, lives in poverty, comes from a broken home, is orphaned and has HIV. In the absence of effective child protection services and support structures such children become vulnerable. As documented by researchers (Meinck et al., 2015; Plummer & Njuguna, 2009) these factors create opportunities for people to offend. Environmental conditions account for differences observed in CSA prevalence studies across countries, hence the need for localised studies to understand people's living conditions and the effects these have on their behaviour.

### **2.7.3. Child sexual abuse, geographical region and country context**

Besides possible method constraints, current research suggests country contextual factors may account for variation in CSA prevalence estimates. The earlier reviewed meta-analytic reviews partially offer support for country effects. For instance, in Pereda et al.'s (2009a) study, prevalence differences were found across the 22 countries assessed. Specifically, the findings show that the highest prevalence estimates (34.4%) of child sexual abuse are found in countries in Africa and the lowest in Europe. Other reviews show similar high prevalence in Africa, while, results from the other countries remain relatively inconsistent (Barth et al., 2013; Stoltenborgh et

al., 2011). On the one hand, the inconsistencies in results raise questions about the reliability of CSA frequencies and prevalence estimates (Mustaine, Tewksbury, Huff-Corzine, Corzine, & Marshall, 2014), on the other, it calls for more research to be done using quality controlled methods.

Focusing on Africa, several questions are raised about the over reliance of studies from South Africa, the absence of research from other parts of Africa and possible cultural specificities that may account for high prevalence scores. As the situational constituent of the new integrated sexual offending theory (Smallbone et al., 2008) indicates, the environment in which CSA occurs contributes to the scaffolding of CSA. Chapter Three discusses these arguments in more depth.

## **2.8. Chapter Summary**

Research has defined and measured CSA in a variety of ways, and diverse populations have been sampled, but these often produce conflicting results when comparisons are conducted across countries. The fact that there is no consensus on what specific behaviours constitute CSA worldwide, nor precise guidelines on how CSA should be measured, creates problems of CSA verification and validation across countries, and is of concern to many researchers.

The above discussion raises very important questions about our normative way of life, routines and practices, which produce and maintain gender and age hierarchies that are reflected in various aspects of our life, including the sexual. The effect of these social orders is illustrated in our response to cases of CSA, from the victim to the professional; problematic social norms are evident in our thinking patterns. While the effect of gender and age norms on the perpetration of CSA seems to be universal, results from meta-analytic reviews indicate some differences based on geographical location.

Another concern is the fact that the current literature on CSA research is not wholly representative of all countries worldwide. The situation in many countries remains silenced and overshadowed by research originating from high-income countries. Unless similar research work is done in such regions, we cannot claim to understand correctly this phenomenon, CSA. The next chapter leads to a discussion of CSA in the context of African countries; one of the

continents that contributes little research to the field of CSA. Focus is later narrowed to the particular case of Ghana.

## Chapter Three: Child sexual abuse in Africa

### 3.1. Introduction

Children in Africa have been said to be the worst affected by CSA (Finkelhor, 1994; Pereda et al., 2009b) compared with children elsewhere. Within this region, prevalence estimates vary widely. In a review of 26 African-based studies, Meinck et al. (2015) estimate that between 2% – 78% of children experience sexual abuse in a lifetime, a range so wide it is difficult to interpret. Varying country settings and research methods yield different CSA prevalence rates. Differences in CSA estimates may result from differing country contexts and variations in definitions, questioning techniques and measures used (Lachman, 1996; Yahaya et al., 2012).

In Stoltenborgh et al.'s (2011) study, CSA prevalence estimates suggest that 20.2% of females and 19.3% of males in Africa suffer sexual abuse during their lifetime. Stoltenborgh et al. (2011) assessed CSA using a variety of different measures ranging from self-report questionnaires to informant reports. In an analysis of five African countries, Brown et al. (2009) found that of the 22,656 students sampled, 22 – 29% of girls and 17 – 24% of boys respectively reported a lifetime prevalence of CSA. For this study, the WHO Global school-based student health survey questionnaire was used to measure CSA. The same study found that CSA prevalence was comparatively higher for children in Namibia and Zambia, whereas prevalence in the other three countries (Uganda, Zimbabwe and Swaziland) under investigation was much lower.

In a related study using the country demographic and health survey data of a total of 6,351 females from six countries, Yahaya, De Leon, Uthman, Soares, and Macassa (2014) show that CSA prevalence varies from between 1% (reported in Liberia) to 6% (reported in Zambia), depending on the country context. These figures are clearly dramatically lower than those reported by other researchers. Prevalence rates are clearly affected by data collection methods, quite apart from substantive issues such as a child's level of vulnerability and important community characteristics (Yahaya et al., 2014).

From an ecosystemic point of view, children become CSA-vulnerable based on community risk and protective dynamics that form an integral part of the victim and offender's course of development, social circumstances, and physical surroundings (Mustaine et al., 2014; Smallbone et al., 2013). Hence, various authors emphasise the importance of

localising country studies due to the relevance of contextual features of CSA prevalence (Finkelhor, 1994; Lachman, 1996; Lalor, 2004).

As will become clearer in the studies reviewed here, what is currently understood about CSA in Africa is predominantly based on a broad range of research from South Africa (for example see Birdthistle, Floyd, Mwanasa, Nyagadza, Gwiza, & Glynn, 2011; Collings, 1997; Jewkes, Levin, Mbananga, & Bradshaw, 2002; King, Flisher, Noubary, Reece, Marais, & Lombard, 2004; Levett, 1989; Madu, 2001; Madu & Peltzer, 2000, 2001; Meursing et al., 1995; Slonim-Nevo & Mukuka, 2007). Therefore, CSA prevalence estimates documented for Africa in international CSA reviews are usually based on an overrepresentation of South African studies, and a reflection of the CSA situation in South Africa rather than the rest of African continent.

For example, in an early cross-cultural study (Finkelhor, 1994) of countries worldwide, South Africa was the only country represented by Africa. Prevalence rates were high, 34% and 29% for women and men recounted a history of CSA respectively. Similarly, out of the seven CSA studies reviewed from Africa in Pereda et al.'s (2009a) global meta-analysis of a 100 studies world-wide, four were South African with prevalence rates as high as 61% for boys and 47% for girls, against a lower global estimate of 34% for Africa.

For other parts of Africa, CSA scholarship is often limited to data from national annual police records, media reports and national demographic health surveys (McCran, Lalor, & Katabaro, 2006). The ability to conduct research in some countries is often restricted due to a lack of funding and the lack of quality controlled research and research experience (Lachman, 1996), which can seriously undermine the integrity of any study inference (Bolen & Scannapieco, 1999).

Methodological issues are of concern even in South African studies. Take the example of two CSA pioneering studies (e.g., Collings, 1991,1997; Madu & Peltzer, 2001) conducted in South Africa. In their study, Madu and Peltzer (2001) sought to determine the extent of CSA prevalence among 649 high school students in the Northern Province of South Africa. The results showed an overall CSA prevalence rate of 21.7% for males and 23.7% for females. Collings (1991,1997) examined CSA prevalence among male and female university students respectively, in two separate studies. For these studies, CSA prevalence estimates were 28.9% and 34.8% for females and males correspondingly.

At first glance, one may interpret that rates found in Madu and Peltzer's (2001) study are lower compared to that observed in Collings's studies. However, a close analysis of these studies reveal major methodological variations that may partially account for observed CSA estimate differences. For instance, different definitions were used to assess CSA. Whereas, Madu and Peltzer (2001) applied an age differential of five years between the victim and perpetrator, Collings (1991, 1997) did not.

In a corrective analysis of his earlier studies, Collings (2002) found a CSA prevalence of 22.2% and 10.2% for females and males respectively. Comparing the means of the females in these studies to Madu and Peltzer's (2001) study, no significant difference was found. Contrary to earlier impressions, the male participants in the Collings (2002) study present with a lower CSA prevalence rate compared with Madu and Peltzer's (2001) study. This raises questions about CSA research reviews that do not take CSA definitional issues into account (Glover et al., 2003) as these may vary based on context.

In the context of Africa, when defining CSA, it is important to consider a range of CSA related vulnerabilities including common beliefs and myths some believe to be unique to this context. Some cultural practices negatively affect the quality of child care, caregiving received and sought after by a child (Murove, Forbes, Kean, Wamimbi, & Germann, 2010). In some African societies, the manifestation of male dominance and female subordination is still considered pervasive and underpinned as ordinary and an integral part of life by both males and females (Carter, 2015). Gender inequality affects various kinds of behaviour including the perpetration of CSA (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Jewkes et al., 2005).

Further, inequality enacted through age hierarchies also increases the vulnerability of the younger ones and the power of older persons (Townsend et al., 2004). In Africa, children are expected to obey and respect adults or anyone chronologically older than themselves (Johnson, 2004). Age inequalities further translate into the way children are brought up and expected to behave. Accordingly, children may become vulnerable to persons who take advantage of their superiority in a relationship, and proposition children for sex (Jewkes et al., 2005). The issue of poverty also impacts on the lives of children in Africa as is the case of similar low-income countries (Veenema, Thornton, & Corley, 2015) and positions children at an increased risk for CSA (Jewkes, 2004; Townsend et al., 2004).

Over the years, there is some evidence, however, to show that male dominance in Africa is highly contested and to some extent disabled by social pressure for gender equality, economic change and hardship and the challenge of female agency (Levant, 2011; Silberschmidt, 2001). Similarly, to enhance child protection, child rights have been sanctioned by various countries. However, the institution and practice of child rights is notably a problem for some cultures, as these rights are viewed as threats to the traditional ideals of age privilege (Fakunmoju et al., 2013; Twum-Danso, 2009). This issue remains problematic to the field of CSA. That notwithstanding, some cultural norms and practices can operate as protective factors against CSA (Plummer & Njuguna, 2009). This chapter expands on these aforementioned dynamics in more detail; subsequently, existing protection services are examined. In the final section, contemporary realities surrounding events of CSA in Africa are briefly discussed.

## **3.2. Common beliefs, practices and myths in Africa**

### **3.2.1. Culture of denial and silence**

Until recently, CSA was an unexplored area of research in many African countries. The open discussion of sex is widely considered taboo and a topic reserved for adults in many contexts (Anarfi, 2003; Gune & Manuel, 2011; Tamale, 2011). As a result, many adults struggle with the open discussion of sex with children (Pattman & Chege 2003). Talking about sex and sexuality has however, become a necessary life task due to a number of sexual health risks such as HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, abortions, as well as CSA, that affect children on the continent (Cobbett, McLaughlin, & Kiragu, 2013).

With the advent of HIV/AIDS came the need to educate the public on HIV/AIDS and aspects of sexuality to halt its transmission and promote its prevention (Fuglesang, 1997). As part of efforts to curb its occurrence, sexuality education became the viable response for many countries in Africa as is found elsewhere in the world (Piot, Bartos, Ghys, Walker, & Schwartländer, 2001). To a large extent, sexuality education has tended to focus on children, as evidenced in various school curricula (Boler, Ibrahim, Adoss, & Shaw, 2003).

While many adults may agree that sexuality education is a good initiative to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS, its content and approach has been a site of contention (Wamoyi, Frenwick, Urassa, Zaba, & Stones, 2010). Residents in some African communities argue that similar tenets of sexuality education were taught in the colonial past but only when a person

was considered mature and right for marriage (Mbugua, 2007). Now sex education is taught to children well below the age appropriate for marriage in most countries (McLaughlin, Swartz, Cobbett, & Kiragu, 2015). Many of these children, adults presume, are sexually innocent and not old enough to cope with information about sex (McLaughlin et al. 2015; Oshi, Nakalema, & Oshi, 2005). It is heavily debated and a widespread belief that sexuality education indirectly promotes promiscuity among children (Fuglesang, 1997).

For many adults, giving instruction in sexuality education has been a problem, even for teachers who receive training. They often feel uncomfortable teaching various aspects of sexuality due to personal moral values (Pattman & Chege, 2003). Therefore, the silences around sexual matters seem to be perpetuated even in sexuality teaching, and this is reflected in other domains of communication such as CSA disclosure and CSA research in Africa. A number of authors (Ahlberg, 1994; Bhana, 2009) argue that prior to the colonial period in Africa, sex education occurred along with other life schoolings (for example, responsibility, personal hygiene, hospitality) without much apprehension. A lot seems to have changed concerning the outlook of sexuality during and after the colonial era (Delius & Glaser, 2002).

For instance, social norms and rules instituted to regulate sexuality due to its level of significance seem to have transformed over the years. Traditional societies originally had control over the sexual behaviour of children via certain practices and strategies that taught and instilled cultural values to children (Osafo et al., 2013). Sex education was initiated by community or family elders at puberty when the child was considered ready to take part in adult life. However, informal education through traditional modes weakened during the colonial era and was compromised further with the advent of globalisation and rapid social change (Kisanga, Nystrom, Hogan, & Emmelin, 2011). The breakdown of traditional care systems (Lalor, 2004) has taken a toll on the control of sexuality, as well as the interpretations of sexuality, expressions and experiences of it. Thus, a context that has been portrayed as historically informative is now altered by silence and secrecy (Ahlberg, 1994). I will return to this notion of sexuality control in Africa in a latter section on protection services in Africa.

Currently, rules seem to be lax, creating a leeway for conflicting and sometimes inaccurate messages from a multitude of sources such as the media, peers and even conniving perpetrators (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012). These factors may contribute to the development of myths and misconceptions about sexuality, such as the wide spread belief that CSA is a rare

occurrence in Africa (Lalor, 2004; Veenema et al., 2015). Other common beliefs forged as a result of misinformation about sexuality include CSA myths related to wealth accumulation and well-being of the offender; this is discussed in the section below.

### **3.2.2. Child sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS and the virgin cleansing myth**

In some African cultures, it is alleged that traditional healers recommend having sexual intercourse with a virgin as an efficacious way: to accumulate wealth; to achieve business success and to receive cure of and safeguard against sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS (Lalor, 2008; Madu & Peltzer, 2001; Meursing et al., 1995). For example, in some parts of Africa there is a widespread belief that persons infected with HIV/AIDS sleep with virgins with the hope of receiving a cure for HIV/AIDS. The misconception of having sex with a virgin as an antidote to HIV/AIDS is popularly referred to as the “virgin cleansing myth” (Townsend et al., 2004).

Some authors have argued that the “virgin cleansing myth” was a popular practice in the 16th century among a section of men in Europe who believed sexual intercourse with a virgin could guarantee cure to persons infected with a venereal disease (Bowley & Pitcher, 2002; Groce & Trasi, 2004). In one study conducted in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, traditional healers claimed that sex with a virgin may have a dual effect of facilitating cure and preventing disease (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002).

Little empirical evidence exists to confirm that the virgin cleansing myth is common and a contributor to a substantial number of CSA cases (Townsend et al., 2004). For example, when Mtibo, Kennedy, and Umar (2011) asked persons convicted for CSA in a Malawian prison their reason for committing CSA none of the 58 offenders mentioned that it occurred as a means to cure or avoid acquiring an HIV/AIDS infection.

Jewkes (2004) analyses the notion of virgin cleansing in the context of Southern Africa. Here, Jewkes observes that the virgin cleansing myth gained its prominence because of the media. She proposes that the media indirectly contributed to the propagation of the myth’s popularity by communicating the possibilities of healing to persons who are desperately seeking for cure, who may be ready to try any remedy in hope of survival. Jewkes discounts the possibility that the virgin cleansing myth is responsible for the increase in numbers of CSA victims as she suggests many men are unaware of their HIV/AIDS status.

On the contrary, Jewkes (2004) suggests that other reasons other than the virgin myth facilitate sexual abuse and hence the spread of HIV/AIDS among children. Some other

authors (Bhana, 2009; Lalor, 2008) support this contention, highlighting the role of social hierarchies in the propagation of CSA. Describing cases of HIV/AIDS among 8- to 10-year-old girls and the low incidence of HIV/AIDS found among their male equals, Jewkes speculates that these girls were infected by older males. As emphasised in Chapter Two there is evidence that adult males may implicate young girls in both consensual and non-consensual sexual relationship. Many of these sexual experiences position the child at a disadvantage, as these encounters are characterised by poor communication strategies and a lack of ability to negotiate sex because of the age differential, or put differently, power imbalance between the young and older (Jewkes, 2004).

These assertions are consistent with findings highlighted in the previous chapter about gender and age hierarchies. They reiterate the fact that adults or older persons hold greater bargaining power than that of adolescents or younger children, as a result of their given status in society. For Jewkes (2004), poverty rather than the virgin cleansing myth is an important risk for CSA and is related to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in many complex ways. Other studies also support the link between poverty and CSA (McCran et al., 2006; Mbagaya, 2010). I discuss literature reported poverty is a contributory factor to events of CSA, in the sections below.

### **3.3. Child sexual abuse and poverty**

#### **3.3.1. Poverty and country context**

Africa is one of the poorest regions in the world (Thorbecke, 2013). This is despite the fact that economic growth seems to have improved since the 1990s, and the evidence of increased economic activity (Maathai, 2011; McMillan, Rodrik, & Verduzco, 2014; Sala-i-Martin & Pinkovskiy, 2010). In the context of the impact of rapid population growth and the legacy of economic deprivation, there is also growing inequality. Political instability, corruption and the outbreak of HIV/AIDS seem to have had a toll on the living conditions of many people in Africa, including children, despite some notable improvements (Mbagaya, 2010).

Locating children and potential offenders in shared spaces affected by broader socioeconomic conditions, some studies (Plummer & Njuguna, 2009; Townsend et al., 2004) highlight multiple stages of influence where CSA related risk is apparent. For instance, at the country level, some researchers suggest that internal upheavals or conflicts have led to social and economic difficulties, as is evidenced in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and family

characteristics such as poverty. Poverty-related factors in turn affect a child's developmental, social and individual life experiences yielding a range of outcomes including CSA (Lalor & McElvaney, 2010; Stoltenborgh et al. 2011; Young & Ansell, 2003).

For instance, using country level of economic development based on the World Economic Outlook database, Stoltenborgh et al. (2011) found that CSA rates for boys are significantly high in low-resource countries, including countries from Africa. By contrast, estimates were low for males from high resource countries. Likewise, Mbagaya (2010) indicates similar patterns of high CSA rates among children from Kenya and Zambia, compared with their counterparts from the Netherlands. Mbagaya asserts that in his study children from Africa were 2- 3 times more likely to report a history of CSA than were children in the Dutch sample. Further, in the Kenyan sample, males were more likely to report a history of CSA than were females. Mbagaya, (2010) links CSA prevalence differences to socioeconomic conditions in the countries examined.

As discussed in Chapter One, global trends indicate high reports of CSA among female samples and therefore similar results found among African samples is not surprising. What is striking, however, is the pattern of high prevalence noted for male victims in Kenya. There is some evidence from other regions in Africa that provide additional support for these findings. For instance, Brown et al. (2009), in a study of five African countries (Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda, Zimbabwe & Zambia) found that 24% of boys below the age of 13 reported cases of CSA, a figure slightly higher than that reported by their (22%) female peers. Consistent with other previous studies conducted in Africa (Madu, 2001; Madu & Peltzer, 2001; Ruto, 2009), the researchers (Brown et al., 2009) conclude that the sexual abuse of boys may be more prevalent among African samples than is the case for males from elsewhere in the world. This assertion resonates well with Finkelhor's finding about African males over 20 years ago (Finkelhor, 1994).

### **3.3.2. Child sexual abuse, neighbourhood and family related poverty**

There is a dearth of research on neighbourhood related poverty in Africa. However, related research from the United States indicates that disadvantaged neighbourhood effects exert a powerful influence on the sexual abuse of children, due to associated problems of poverty and unemployment (Mustaine et al., 2014). These structural conditions tend to impact on potential CSA victims and offenders in different, yet related ways.

Townsend et al. (2004) analysed seven studies and found unemployment was a common feature of CSA offenders. The researchers speculate that as a result of unemployment, men were at an increased risk to sexually offend vulnerable children as they assumed to have more time to groom children into sexual activity. This notion is consistent with results found in one South African based study conducted by Jewkes et al. (2014). In an analysis of 1,886 documented single and gang rape cases, 55% and 37% of cases respectively were perpetrated by unemployed men. Few of these perpetrators held professional jobs.

Similarly, Townsend et al. (2004) also suggest that unemployment or the lack of a stable source of income can be disabling to family maintenance, affecting the ability of parents to provide basic needs and support their child to ensure healthy development. In South Africa, for example, the apartheid disrupted livelihoods deprived many South African communities of country resources and the ability to accrue personal assets (Carter & May, 2001). As a result, many people, both men and women, migrated from their hometown to other privileged provinces in search of work (Collinson, 2010).

Madu and Peltzer (2000) speculate that the high rate of CSA (53%) observed in a Northern Province study in South Africa was partly due to the absence of parents and associated instances of child neglect. Some parents of the participants (particularly men) were noted to have travelled to work as migrant workers in Gauteng, a different South Africa province.

In the case of children, Adato, Carter, and May (2006, p. 244) explain that “poverty causes conflicts over resources and other strains among family and among neighbours, further diminishing sources or potential sources of support”. Thus, some children, both male and female who come from poverty stricken homes seek alternative means of financial support or resources (Ruto, 2009; Williams, Binagwaho, & Betancourt, 2012). For instance, some economically challenged parents unable to provide basic necessities for their children may solicit for assistance from relatives. For example, Young and Ansell (2003) suggest that in an extended family system the affected child may be relocated to live with a wealthier relative to ease the financial burden of child maintenance. This may lead to decreased parental supervision.

In other circumstances, potential CSA offenders who may have the resources to sustain and supply basic needs offer such children financial rewards, material items and food supplies in exchange for sex (Kuate-Defo, 2004). For instance, participants from three

Rwandan towns in Williams et al.'s (2012) study suggested that some wealthy persons within their communities take advantage of girls and boys by having sex with them in exchange for basics needs and even luxuries.

In a Kenyan study of 1,230 children, Ruto (2009) found that approximately half of the girls and over one third of the boys had been sexually prepositioned by an adult. While the majority of them rejected the proposal, 12% of the children accepted, some of whom attributed their decisions to the need of financial support. Other studies provide additional evidence that some children actively acquiesce to suggestions of sex as a means to support themselves or survive within extreme conditions of financial hardship (Rampazzo & Twahirwa, 2010; Williams et al., 2012).

Findings from these studies suggest that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are at an increased risk for engaging in child prostitution, transactional sex and early marriage as a means to survive. Data from one Zimbabwean study (Shumba, 2009) illustrates that sometimes parents who struggle to provide economically for their children may be in support of such transactions due to the perceived benefits. Survival sex is also practiced by vulnerable groups of children (for example, street children and orphans) who are also affected by poverty (Oduro, 2012). For instance, using qualitative methods Oleke, Blystad, Moland, Rekdal, and Heggenhougen (2006) examined the life experiences of children orphaned in the Lira District of Northern Uganda. They found that female orphans became victims of transactional sex and early marriage as a means of acquiring economic security.

Research also shows that disease outbreaks such as HIV/AIDS also place constraint on the family organisation and parental care, subsequently affecting the care of HIV/AIDS orphaned children and exposing them to various types of sexual exploitation. In one study, Cluver, Orkin, Boyes, Gardner, and Meinck (2011) found that compared to non-orphaned children, AIDS-orphaned children were at risk for transactional sex exploitation as a result of poverty. Townsend et al. (2004) suggest poverty is also linked to other CSA-related vulnerabilities such as standard of housing, informal settlements and associated overcrowding. These housing conditions are viewed by some community members as living and sleeping arrangements that bring vulnerable children and opportunistic offenders into close contact (Ruto, 2009).

### **3.4. Child sexual abuse and rapid social change**

As explained earlier in Chapter Two, some research suggests that rapid social change has had a drastic impact on the lives of various men. For instance, talking about the case of Kenya and Tanzania, Silberschmidt (2001) concludes that due to struggling country economies and resulting socioeconomic difficulties, the roles and experiences of men and women have changed and shifted. For example, Silberschmidt (2001) found that some men could not afford to enter into relationships, afford to pay the bride price of women they wished to marry or provide financial support for their households.

Elsewhere, Richter and Morrell (2006) explain that, traditionally, men are expected to provide partners with economic resources, a notion that is often socially accepted as an indication of a man's sincerity and commitment to a relationship. Further, Jewkes, Morrell, Sikweyiya, Dunkle, and Penn-Kekana (2012) assert that over the years, the provider role has increasingly become an indicator of masculinity for men. An inability to fulfil this provider role due to obstacles such as economic constraints, leaves some men feeling disempowered.

Some authors suggest that disempowerment for men causes a sense of low self-esteem and impinges on their identity as a man (Holmes & Slap, 1998; O'Neil, 2008; O'Neil et al., 1995). To this end, Silberschmidt (2001) asserts that many men, in response to challenges of playing provider, try to regain, establish and maintain male power through alternative avenues. One means by which this is done is through the assertion of violent sexual behaviour against various targets, including children (McCran et al., 2006; Cossins, 2000).

Findings from some studies indicate that men who fail to negotiate sex with women due to their poor financial status often resort to young females (Coker-Appiah & Cusack, 1999; Kisanga et al., 2011). Kuate-Defo (2004) suggests that younger girls are usually identified as easy targets to sexually coerce and exploit with inexpensive material compared to older female counterparts.

In Silberschmidt's (2001) study, at the same time that some men were struggling to meet financial demands and migrating elsewhere in search of work, women were forced to assume multiple responsibilities to sustain their families. Many women became financially successful after entering into various businesses, in support of maintaining the household. With their increased involvement in providing for the home, some women gained economic power and independence, Silberschmidt indicates that this emerging status impacted on their

sexual behaviour. For instance, some business women popularly known as sugar mummies were reported to engage with younger males for sex.

Similar to Gavey (2005), various authors like Kariuki (2004) have questioned the gendered nature of CSA patterns with males usually named the offender; hence the widespread use of the term “gender-based sexual violence”. Yet, a few authors like Levett (2004) acknowledge the possibility that females, whether identified as a child, adolescent or adult can perpetrate CSA. This notion is largely unexplored in the field of CSA although there is considerable evidence to suggest it is a valid CSA problem, especially in the case of Africa. To this end, Kuate-Defo (2004, p. 6) rightly says:

I consider sexual abuse to involve forcing a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether the young individual is aware of what is happening or not, whether it is perpetuated by an older man or woman, and the extent to which sexual abuse and consensual sexual activity may have co-existed during the course of these relationships. At issue is the extent of coercion in these sexual relationships.

### **3.5. Protection services in African communities**

#### **3.5.1. Child sexual abuse and sex norms**

Just as was the case concerning the outbreak of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s, the high prevalence of CSA recorded in Africa compared against low global estimates reignites:

. . .the old debate about whether sexuality in sub-Saharan Africa is essentially similar to sexuality in the West or fundamentally different. A central issue has been whether sexual cultures in sub-Saharan Africa are fairly permissive compared with European cultures, or whether they are characterised by restrictive rules, ritual practices and self-restraint. (Wight et al., 2006, p. 988)

As some authors (Murove et al., 2010) suggest, failure to protect children calls into question the culture of people living in Africa, their beliefs, norms and customs that may contribute to the enactment of CSA. However, as I have already reiterated above, the current modes of regulating sexual activity in Africa, such as sex education and other child protection initiatives, are not a new phenomenon in Africa.

There is evidence to suggest that sex play and exploration occurred in the past, but it was delimited via the institution of values, practices and customs by the strict monitoring of guardians and other adults living within the same context (Delius & Glaser, 2002; Mudhovozi, Ramarumo, & Sodi, 2012). Sex norms and associated practices to constrain sexual behavior among children have been an integral part of African societies for decades

(Undie & Benaya, 2006). African traditional systems acknowledged the power of sexuality and the possibility of CSA occurring, hence the existence of taboos to arbitrate its control (Kesby, Gwanzura-Ottmoller, & Chizororo, 2006).

For instance, it has been suggested that in pre-colonial Africa, members of African communities worked collectively to prevent various crimes, including CSA, by instituting norms and enforcing sexual proscriptions (Delius & Glaser, 2002). Childhood in particular seemed to represent a perilous period for an evolving sexuality (Fuglesang, 1997), a period that required strict guidance and protection. Consequently, strategies and controls were in place to avoid sexual activity among children.

For example, talking about the Gusii people of Kenya, Levine et al. (1996) explain the concept of “rules of kin-avoidance” which is described as a separation strategy. This strategy was used by the Gusii to constrain the sexual behaviour of – potentially aggressive – young men who had their farmlands sited far from their villages. This resulted in minimal contact with members of the opposite sex whose duties remained in the home. In the case of young girls, the preservation of virginity was deemed fundamental until marriage. Young girls who remained chaste and maintained their virginity till marriage were revered and considered a family pride (Bashiru, 2012). If expected codes of conduct were breached, however, grave consequences resulted (Ahlberg, 1994; Busia, 1950).

In the Shona tribe of Zimbabwe, the loss of virginity before marriage gave the potential groom cause to negotiate the maiden’s worth and bride price, bringing about shame and embarrassment to the bride’s family (Kambarami, 2006). In the Ashanti Kingdom, sexual intercourse with a virgin out of wedlock was considered an abominable act, synonymous to committing murder; repercussions were severe, sometimes even for the victim (Sarpong, 1977). In Busia’s (1950) survey of the Ashanti people of Ghana, as far back as 1935, a man was punished for sleeping with a prepubescent girl<sup>2</sup>.

Similarly, among the Luo tribe of Kenya, sex offenders were charged substantial fines, forced into exile and in a few cases, made to undergo a cleansing ceremony (Plummer & Njuguna, 2009). Other cultures sanctioned harsh judgements of death for sexual misconduct with a child (Sarpong, 1977). These practices illustrate the type of control African societies had over sexual behaviour.

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<sup>2</sup> In this tribe it was assumed a prepubescent girl is a child (virgin) and not ready for sex until her first menstruation which marked the onset of puberty for girls at that time. Since the girl was considered a virgin, forced sex led to hymen breakage in an unlawful manner.

It was the performance of traditional initiation rites at puberty that provided legitimacy for sexual activity within the confines of kinship recognised relationships (Kapungwe, 2003). Before then, sexual activity was considered inappropriate for children as is illustrated above.

It has been argued that when Africa traditional systems were intact and regulatory mechanism fully functional, few transgressed sex norms and rules for the fear of resultant consequences (Lalor, 2004; Plummer & Njuguna, 2009). As a function of colonialism, globalisation and associated social change, and subsequent effects on the traditional family structure, incidents of CSA seem to occur more frequently than evidenced in the past (Lalor, 2004).

Most pre-colonial African customs and practices that were once viewed influential and widely practised have been relegated to the background by contemporary powerful forces – other religious institutions (e.g., the church), the state government and global institutions (Awusabo-Asare, Abane, & Kumi-Kyereme, 2004). This has rendered some cultural practices and norms obsolete, with some of these becoming cultural heritage products that do not operate in their original capacity as behaviour controls (Fuglesang, 1997).

For instance, the collective responsibility of the community and members of the extended family towards socialising a child seems to be transforming from a shared communal task to individual responsibility (Anarfi & Owusu, 2011). In some cases, what remains of the extended family system is the nuclear family, headed by parents who in most cases are not adequately prepared to take up the role of a sex educator (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2006). Some authors observe that single-headed households managed by females, and the absence of parents, as evidence among street children, are increasingly becoming emerging family forms (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1994, 2006). These disruptions in the family structure have been argued to be associated with the occurrence of CSA.

Comparing CSA prevalence in Africa to other countries across the globe, some researchers have earmarked initiation ceremonies as one explanation for comparatively high rates of CSA in Africa (Mbagaya 2010; Moyo, Zvoushe, & Rusinga, 2012; Murove et al., 2010; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011). For instance, research in the Mbare district of Zimbabwe shows that traditional initiation rituals facilitate early sexual activity among the youth with sexual experiences often characterised by coercion, and likely to be perpetrated by a relative or a non-relative, who could even be a stranger (Moyo et al., 2012).

Mbagaya (2010) speculates that the early performance of initiation rites for males may partially influence high estimates of CSA found among the African children samples as the initiates assume sexual roles characteristic of adulthood. In one study (Skinner, Underwood, Schwandt, & Magombo, 2013), for example, male initiates in the Mangochi and Thyolo districts of Malawi were often advised to have sex soon after the initiation ceremony to cleanse the dust (*kusasa fumbi*) of childhood.

Over the years the practice of traditional initiation ceremonies in Africa seems to have suffered a decline with the advent of western education, national rule and globalisation (Boakye-Boaten, 2010; Kumetey, 2014; Mudhovozi et al., 2012). But the relationship between the practice of initiation rites and the occurrence of CSA, if any, may be still relevant for contexts like Kroboland, where initiation is still practised on a yearly basis. I will elaborate on this in more detail, in the next chapter.

### **3.5.2. Child sexual abuse, the law and law enforcement in Africa**

Despite the adoption of international legislation, such as the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UN, 2016), and the existence of policy and national laws by most African countries to deal with child sex offenders, many children in Africa remain at risk for sexual abuse (Mbagaya, 2010), as is found in other regions with comparable living conditions (Veenema et al., 2015). Results from a number of studies (Anarfi & Owusu, 2011; Fakunmoju et al., 2013) indicate that the local laws are hardly predictive of sexual behavior. This may not be surprising, as results from a Ghanaian based study (Anarfi & Owusu, 2011) found that respondents view the state as non-influential in regulating sexual behaviour in Ghana. To support this assertion, the researchers claimed that many citizens are unaware of what is legally permissible and what is not.

Another explanation for why the law is ineffective in controlling sexual behaviour is the many challenges that impede the discharge and enforcement of CSA laws (Abeid, Muganyizi, Olsson, Darj, & Axemo, 2014; Kisanga, Nystrom, Hogan, & Emmelin, 2011, 2013). For example, evidence from a larger study conducted in Temeke, Dar es Salaam, a district located in Tanzania, show that some legal system services are conducted unsatisfactorily. According to the participants, CSA victims and caregivers were often frustrated by a denial of due justice, including offenders being offered bail and incomplete prison terms. Due to these experiences, many participants distrust the very system that

institutes and enforces the law (Kisanga et al., 2011). Abeid et al. (2014) reported similar problems of bribery and corruption, a scarcity of resources for victim support services and interference from family which impact the implementation of the law.

### **3.6. Child sexual abuse: present realities in Africa**

Despite denial of its existence, CSA is prevalent in Africa. Evidence of this is masked by other problems that seem more salient such as the occurrence of sexual debut in childhood, teenage pregnancy, abortions and STIs found among the youth. Underlying factors that lead to the occurrence of CSA in Africa are vast. In order to understand contemporary realities of CSA in specific contexts, the social environment of children within that context needs to be taken into account.

South Africa for instance, is distinctively noted for high rates of both single and gang cases of CSA and thus labelled the “rape capital of the world” (Jewkes et al., 2014). Furthermore, empirical studies on CSA conducted in South Africa suggest the relevance of CSA and emerging cases of HIV infections found among children (Jewkes, 2004). In other country settings, like Tanzania, events of early sexual debut, teenage pregnancy and induced abortions have been prominent predictors of CSA (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001).

From the discussion in the next chapter, it will become clear that studies on CSA in Ghana are sparse, hence the need to explore this sociocultural context as experiences here may differ distinctively from that known about other African contexts (Fakunmoju et al., 2013; Yahaya et al., 2014). Results from one cross-cultural study, Fakunmoju et al. (2013), for example, illustrates that participating persons from Ghana perceived more sexual acts committed against children as abusive than did participants from Nigeria. The researchers relate differences found in varying sociocultural experiences associated with differing levels of awareness, cultures, family structures, national policies and laws and the presence of operating protection mechanisms for vulnerable children.

These findings raise questions about generalising study findings and making inferences from one population to another, since cultural and social experiences vary from country to country. At the same time, it re-emphasises the need for more CSA studies to be conducted in Africa. As is documented above, most African scholarship on CSA is largely limited to the South African context and similar countries in Southern Africa, and a few in East Africa (LeVine & LeVine, 1981; McCrann et al., 2006). Lachman (1996) commented

about the lack of research and various methodological problems he had observed about studies conducted by African researchers. Based on his observations concerning the general attitude towards conducting research in Africa, Lachman (1996) remarks that “much remains to be discovered and undertaken” (p. 546).

## **Chapter Four: Child sexual abuse in Ghanaian context**

### **4.1. Introduction**

As is the case with many other countries globally, in the late 1990s, Ghana initiated a few research studies (Coker-Appiah & Cusack, 1999; Pappoe & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1998) to investigate the case of CSA in some local settings. Historically, research on sexual abuse ensued a few years after the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UN, 2016) was ratified (in 1990) by the Government of Ghana (GoG) and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China (in 1995) had taken place. Conjunctionally, initial research began in the same year (1998); the Children's Act (Act 560) of Ghana was passed and the Women and Juvenile Unit (now known as Domestic Violence Victim and Support Unit [DOVVSU]) inaugurated (Twum-Danso, 2009). In the history of Ghana, these aforementioned legal instruments, the conference, and supporting institution embody important milestones in the series of campaigns against various types of violence, including CSA. The studies mentioned above set the pace for establishing prevalence estimates of CSA among Ghanaian females and subsequently created some public awareness of CSA in Ghana.

Out of a national sample of 2,069 female participants aged 13 and above, Coker-Appiah and Cusack (1999) found that 17% had experienced an incident of forced sex in childhood. Of these victims, 15- to 18-year-olds seem more prone to an episode of CSA than children below the age of 15. However, none made official complaints of these incidents to the state agencies responsible for child protection (Coker-Appiah & Cusack, 1999). On the whole, the results showed that parents and friends were the main points of disclosure for these victims.

Findings from one school survey (Brown, 2003), however, indicated that more parents than friends (52% versus 14%) seemed to form crucial points of disclosure for CSA victims. Nonetheless, in response to disclosure, it is striking that nothing was done in 35% of the reported cases; at most the offender (21%) was reprimanded. Similar results were found in the Plan Ghana (2009) study; in 38% and 28% of the CSA cases, no action was taken or the offender was scolded respectively. Reasons for inaction on the part of the confidants are not well understood; nor are the views and perceptions of CSA experiences. Although previous research points to the influence of gender disparity as a contributor to CSA, little explanation is given for the sexual

abuse of male children or sex offending initiated by females. There is however evidence to suggest that this type of CSA occurs, as highlighted in the preceding chapters.

In contemporary Ghana, besides what is inferred from school surveys, very little data exists on CSA; the lack of data raises the need to fill the gap beyond the scope of school data. Based on what is known about CSA from elsewhere, a good starting point is to explore the communities in which children are embedded, particularly the nature of their social relations and interactions. Therefore, in this chapter, I examine the position and status of a child within the Ghanaian context to understand the relevance these conditions may have on the occurrence of CSA and related consequences. Further, I probe related Ghanaian and African literature to gain a better understanding of Ghanaian worldviews and underlying concepts of development in childhood, while attempting not to be oblivious of other cultural influences, not African oriented, but significant to contemporary childhood realities.

#### **4.2. The status of a child: not a person yet!**

Writing about the status of the child in African thought, Nsamenang (1992a) notes that the development of a child in Africa is intricately defined, within the boundaries of interconnected relationships (Nussbaum, 2003a). For instance, at conception, the African child claims an uncontested interdependent self, being born into a particular family lineage: it is from family, a child gains a status (Nukunya, 2003). The child is viewed as a complementary and meaningful part of a unified set of social and spiritual relationships which fundamentally includes living relatives and those of the ancestral world (Boakye-Boaten, 2010; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Thus, the family is of utmost importance to the child; in fact, Mkhize (2004, pp. 4-26) puts forth that “to be disowned by a family is to cease to exist”. The family forms a distinctive part of the individual in the African context (Sossou & Yogtiba, 2009). This notion of interconnectedness has particular relevance for understanding one’s position in collectivistic communities, such as Ghana (Boakye-Boaten, 2010; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sossou & Yogtiba, 2009).

Like others before them, Nsamenang and Lamb (2014, p. 137) argue that:

The notion of social intelligence changes according to ontogenic status, as children are systematically incorporated into different roles at different stages of life. Without functional integration into “this” or “that” social stratum, individuals are considered mere “danglers” to whom the designation of person does not appropriately and fully apply.

Gyekye (2014, p. 216) supports this contention and also states that:

While children are actual human beings and are members of the human community, they are not actual persons yet; they are persons only potentially and will attain the status of personhood in the fullness of time when they are able to exercise their moral capacity and make moral judgments.

These statements seem to suggest that the status of the child is underdeveloped, until the attainment of adulthood, which usually comes with the ability to think analytically and morally. Children are conceived to have the lowest status in the hierarchy of social beings, held suspect and designated as the ones requiring of moral knowledge and instruction. The notion of morality is a central theme for most Africans. Though literature on this is scant; African language, proverbs and songs are rich with this emphasis and provide compelling insight into human behaviour, within particular cultural contexts (Gyekye, 2014; Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008). Thus, I often make reference to some of these cultural artefacts to explain some relevant African concepts. In this section, I attempt to give an overview of a child's moral development in Ghana and other related contexts.

#### **4.2.1. Early childhood: Moral development in Ghana**

Traditionally, at birth, the new incarnate is first considered a spiritual being. It is only after the performance of a series of traditional rituals that the child is incorporated into the physical world as living and is given a name (Opoku, 1978). Discussing the Ewe people of Ghana, Abotchie (1997) demonstrates how a new-born is acquainted with good morals at the start of life. As part of the rituals performed at the child's out-dooring or naming ceremony the baby is given a mixture of water and corn flour to sip, and subsequently, a drop of gin. Concurrently, the family lineage leader addresses the child by his or her name for the first time as words of wisdom are spoken. This ritual, according to Abotchie (1997), symbolically teaches the baby to distinguish between good and evil respectively; this is done seven days after the baby's original birthdate. Similarly, among other Ghanaian tribes (e.g., Krobo, Akans, etc.) it is customary that a child is initiated into the physical world in a similar fashion – after only a week – here moral instructions are instituted right from infancy (Huber, 1963; Nyarko, 2014).

Since new incarnates are incapable of understanding moral instruction given, it is the parents and family members who witness the naming ceremony that are tasked by the lineage head to bring up the children with proper conduct (Abotchie, 1997; Nukunya, 2003). Through their interaction with the community, children are taught to conform to various moral principles, particularly by primary caregivers who are usually mothers (Ahorlu, Dunyo, Afari, Koram, & Nkrumah, 1997). Other relevant media for inspiring moral conduct in children include older siblings, family relatives and at a broader level, community members. These form the corpus of traditional social agents (Anarfi & Owusu, 2011).

As a child matures, older siblings are assigned roles to assist parents with child rearing or nurturance (Nukunya, 2003; Sam, 2001). Studying a group of Ghanaian children, aged between 10 and 16, Imoh (2013) found that participants talked about the authority they had – similar to that of their parents – to punish their younger siblings for wrongdoings. In addition, findings showed that this power was often reinforced by parents who supported their corrective methods, suggesting that older siblings are legitimate persons for instilling moral values in children. Similarly, Abotchie (1997) talks about the Ewe, noting the prominent role played by kinsmen to assist with inculcating ideal morals.

In the past, moral knowledge was largely expressed to its recipients through proverbs, songs and folktales; however, with the institution of school that offers parallel gains of imparting moral knowledge, the use of such cultural artefacts have declined (Abarry, 1989). To date, there is an extensive body of literature that indicates schools are largely responsible for imparting moral knowledge to children in Ghana, and similar contexts (Alhassan, 2013; Mumuni, 2010; Sowah, 2012). To the list of social agents, Osafo et al. (2013) add the institution of religion. The juvenile corrective systems which Arthur (1996) conceives of as a legacy of colonialism in Ghana, also supplements these groups of socialisation agents.

These named agents are of particular importance, as they sensitise and guide children to develop a sense of self-constraint and an understanding of proper standards of conduct in a community. Here, emphasis is laid on instilling moral character with a set of underlying core beliefs and assumptions centred on principles of wholeness, community and harmony (Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013). This idea is well captured in Nussbaum's (2003b, p. 2) definition of "Ubuntu", a common South Africa concept used to express African thought:

Ubuntu is the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interests of building and maintaining community with justice and mutual caring. Ubuntu, an Nguni word from South Africa, speaks to our interconnectedness, our common humanity and the responsibility to each other that flows from our deeply felt connection. Ubuntu is consciousness of our natural desire to affirm our fellow human beings and to work and act towards each other with the communal good in the forefront of our minds.

In this definition, elements of a shared consciousness, which include expressions of benevolence; mutual responsibilities and duties towards each other; and the goal of maintaining harmony for a common good are essentially highlighted here. These tenets of Ubuntu present an interpretative structure or framework for guiding behaviour and other cultural practices, typically, among Africans (Koltko-Rivera, 2004).

Similar to the concept of Ubuntu, Twum-Danso (2009) argues that among the Ghanaians, respect, responsibility and reciprocity are core values that underlie and maintain social relationships. In one study among the Kwahu people of Ghana, Van der Geest (2004) found that a sense of respect was socially expected and formed an integral part of people's daily lives. Findings from a sentence completion test that started with the phrase "my Grandfather" showed that out of 83 responses, only two statements partially included negative descriptions of their grandfathers. Van der Geest explains that this outcome reflects ways in which children are required to talk about the elderly as "a way of showing respect, courteousness, and politeness" (Van der Geest, 2004, p. 55). Children found to behave in a disrespectful manner are likely to face consequences, such as punishment as a corrective measure for inappropriate behaviour (Kyei-Gyamfi, 2011).

It is important to note that adults are not the only ones who require respect; children do too. For example, in one Ghanaian study, Mac Domhnaill, Hutchinson, Milev, and Milev (2011) engaged with school children via focus group discussions to understand their views on aspects of sexual health. Issues regarding ideal morals, respect and reciprocity, hierarchy and age were prominent themes that emerged from the focus group discussions. The results indicated that children actively engaged in certain activities (i.e., chastity and moral clubs) to uphold moral behaviour. The participants also expressed deep deference for persons older than themselves,

However, the results also showed that male teachers lost the respect of children because of their alleged sexual involvement with school girls and perceived lack of morality.

There is a belief in Ghana that older persons with no morals are comparable to children (Gyekye, 2014) and thus treated as such. This expectation of respect sought for as a child is also reflected in the type of care the elderly received from their children in old age. Talking about the care of the elderly in Ghana, Van der Geest (2002, p. 20) suggests “the willingness to render continuous care depends on the care they received from their parents when they were young”. Underlying this understanding is the concept of reciprocity that reflects the relevance of mutual responsibility. Examining parent-child relationships among a sample of Ghanaians in Accra, Aboderin (2004, p. S136) explains that, “Many adult children today are not willing to do much, if anything, to meet the needs of parents for whom they feel no particular indebtedness, gratitude, or appreciation”. Twum-Danso (2009) suggests that the concept of reciprocity explains why neglected children may feel indebted to other persons who take up the duties and obligations of their parents.

Given the above discussion, it can be said that in Ghana, moral knowledge and instructions to children are usually centred on dimensions of responsibility, respect and reciprocity which is reflected in parent-child interactions and rearing practices. It is usually believed that, if good behaviour is practised over time, child would acquire important virtues (Gyekye, 2014). From a social learning perspective, children usually observe and imitate the behaviour of others in their social context (Nsamenang, 1992b). Therefore, most parents are particular about the company in which their children are found (Dei, 2012).

Most of the time, it has been argued, children unconsciously accept and follow their parents’ moral standards (Louw, Van Ede, & Louw, 1998). Unlike Nsamenang and Lamb (2014), who emphasise social competence over biological maturation, Abotchie (1997) relates a child’s moral competence to the stage of puberty, which marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. In precolonial Ghana, the entry into adulthood was usually symbolised with an initiation ritual ceremony (Abotchie, 1997; Huber, 1963; Sarpong, 1977). The content of the ceremony usually varied based on the gender of the child. Due to the introduction of western education this practice is less common these days (Fuglesang, 1997). I will discuss this in more detail in the section on sexual development below.

Making reference to the Edo proverb, “if you wash your hands very clean (in the sense in which you are morally clean), then you can eat and dine with elders”, Ikuenobe (1998) seems to suggest moral uprightness permits a good standing in the moral hierarchy. Exploring the lived experiences of children in the Northern and Ashanti region of Ghana, Alexander (2012) found that children actively participated in the shared process of moral development and adopted ways to prove that they had good moral standing.

Discussing Akan and Yoruba moral thought of persons without good morals, Gyekye (2014, p. 215) explains that:

When the behavior of a human being fails to conform to the acceptable moral principles or standards, or when a human being fails to display the expected moral virtues in his conduct, he is considered to be “*not a person.*” The evaluative judgment opposite to the one we have been considering is “he is a person” (*oye onipa*).

As demonstrated in the quote above, the African notion of earning personhood is based on a person’s moral character, a position which has been established as difficult for children to assume, especially being positioned in the context of persons with higher authority. As Goodley and Swartz (in press) have argued elsewhere, being a minor within the position of older persons places constraint on one’s decision making power. Hermans (2001) notes that social power or dominance forms an integral part of the dialogical process between the self and its social environment. Given this, the reverence for age hierarchy may have implications for the status of children in Ghana, and subsequently the occurrence of CSA.

#### **4.2.2. Early attachments and emotional development in Ghana**

As already highlighted above, children in Ghana are born into a family lineage where they may form early attachments with primary caregivers. In nuclear families, the child’s grandmother may relocate temporarily to the daughter’s premises to support with the child’s care in the first few months after birth (Dumbaugh et al., 2014). Usually, in extended family house settings, older female relatives who may not necessarily be the birth mother’s biological parents, assist with the upbringing of the child (Abotchie, 1997).

Data on the early attachment and emotional development of children in Ghana is scant. However, observing the child-mother bond interactions among the Ashanti, Clark (1999, p. 720) describes bonding between a mother and child as:

An inevitable biological response that should last through life, so that deviations are considered unnatural. The bond between mother and child is seen as so strong that virtually nothing can dissolve it. The biological event of child birth establishes a culturally undeniable debt to the mother for her pain and blood and the invaluable gift of life. This debt can never be repaid or cancelled, but must be honored by passing it on to one's own children.

Clark (1999) further suggests that this unique bond is irreplaceable by other significant persons who are delegated with the child's care while the mother attends to other business. The biological link powerfully holds importance for children. She notes that even when there is minimal physical intimacy between a mother and a child due to work responsibilities, this may not be a challenge to this maternal bond. Within this kind of context, Clark (1999) notes children rather form emotional ties with relatives (i.e., siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles) who are actively involved in his or her care. Clark (1999) does not talk about the bond between the child and father among the Ashanti's in a similar manner, as she does for mothers. Based on her study, Clark (1999) notes that fathers are also less physically involved in the formation of emotional ties. However, financial responsibilities are expected to facilitate some kind of bonding between father and child.

In an early study among the Tallensi people of Ghana, Worsley (1956) also notes the central role played by the mother of a child but claims this is short-lived for boys, who after weaning are monitored less under the mother's tutelage compared to the kind of policing girls were noted to receive until the time of marriage. Nonetheless, Worsley (1956) notes the child still remains dependent on his or her parents for their emotional needs, after weaning. Especially, in the absence of food children seem to be more attached to their parents, when food is in abundance they tend to ignore their parents.

If what Clark (1999) and Worsley (1956) seem to suggest is true, and remains true since their writing, then this raises concerns for children in similar Ghanaian contexts, as intimacy may be found in the context of relationships, other than those with the parents. The provision of financial needs and food seem to suggest possible means for expressing affection, close to what is observed between child-parent relationships as these items tend to fulfil their basic needs. In the Ghanaian CSA literature, the provision of such items mentioned above have identified means by which sex offenders lure their victims (Plan Ghana, 2009; Brown, 2003).

### 4.2.3. Gender development in Ghana

Child responsibilities may be viewed to be similar in the early years, but after age six, gender roles gradually become differentiated, as demonstrated in socialisation activities and practices (Miescher, 2005; Nukunya, 2003). Findings from one study (Osafo et al., 2013) conducted among a group of parents indicated that children were nurtured to indulge in specific activities or behaviour patterns based on their gender. The same sex parent is usually in charge of imbibing expected social norms among their offspring. The findings also indicated that child socialisation may involve collaborative effort from other adults within a community.

As part of socialisation practices in Ghana and similar settings, boys are trained to take up masculinity roles as exhibited by male guardians and elders in society whose masculinities are assumed to reflect power and authority, wisdom and wealth (Miescher, 2005). Boys are encouraged to develop the hegemonic masculinity which is typified by strength and aggression, suggestive of control and authority, even in time of adversity (Dako-Gyeke & Owusu, 2013). Adinkrah (2012) writes about how boys are socialised in Ghana to suppress emotions, as the expression of affect is presumed a sign of weakness inherent of females. He illustrates how common adages in the Akan language, such as “ɔ̃barima nsu” (“a man doesn’t cry”) are used to reinforce attributes of resilience in men in times of pain and suffering.

On the other hand, females are groomed to be subservient, humble and obedient (Akotia & Adote-Anum, 2012) with their mothers and other respectable women in society as role models to emulate. Girls are kept under their mothers’ close supervision and made to assist with household chores, such as cooking, cleaning, and the care of younger siblings (Miescher, 2005).

Expectations of these gendered norms are enacted and reinforced by adults in everyday life experiences; through dialogue with the community children learn and imitate adult behaviour. Children who fail to conform to gender roles or attitudes may face various sanctions and consequences (Ampofo, 2001). Thus, children usually seek for opportunities to perform in line with their expected gender roles; the expression of sexuality is one way in which gender roles become evident.

### **4.3. Child sexuality**

Little is written about sexuality in Ghana (Anarfi & Owusu, 2011; Fiaveh, Okyerefo, & Fayorsey, 2015). In particular, knowledge about child sexual experiences is scant, although events of this nature have been frequently linked to problems of abuse and violence in childhood. To understand sexuality, Tamale (2011) suggests a shift from the general to the specifics of the cultural context of interest. Further, she recommends that researchers should be well-versed in the lived experiences of the locals. Therefore, in the next few sections, I examine the concept of sexuality in the cultural context of the Krobo people of Ghana, who are the population of interest for this study.

#### **4.3.1. The Krobo people of Ghana: Sexuality, common beliefs and myths**

Based on earlier discussions, I take a departure from the essentialist, biomedical or universal traditions of studying sexuality, and argue that in any culture, sexuality is socially constructed, and also largely dependent on one's subjective experience (Tamale, 2011). Thus, from culture to culture, person to person expressions of sexuality may manifest differently. As highlighted in Chapter Two, Magnusson & Marecek (2012) and other authors suggest that the cultural and social context needs to be analysed in depth to understand the sexuality of an individual. Therefore, in this study, I draw on facets of cultural anthropology, sociology and psychology literature: to understand how a specific ethnic group – the Krobo people of Ghana – make sense of their sexuality, and in particular CSA, by exploring their values, norms and customs; their way of life.

The established literature on the sexuality of the Krobo people to a large extent reproduces colonial and early anthropological interpretations that ignored the specificities of African culture and sub-cultures. From time immemorial, the African body has been a site of controversy; one popular view is that Africans have a homogenous sexuality, one that is naturally sexually promiscuous (Caldwell, Caldwell, & Quiggin, 1989). Similarly, Krobo sexuality has been homogenised (Epprecht, 2010) and stereotyped as sexually promiscuous, perilous and unchaste (Steegstra, 2002). A primary basis on which this typification is made is with reference to cultural practices, and more significantly the practice of dipo initiation rites (discussed below) which carries several connotations for the sexual development, sexual

expression and sexual regulation of females (Awusabo-Asare et al., 2004; Schroeder & Danquah, 2000). For several reasons, as is discussed below, some Christian religious bodies, social activists, researchers (Anarfi, 1993, 2003; Anarfi & Owusu, 2011; Kumetey, 2014) and even insiders (Boakye-Boaten, 2010) support the view that sexuality of the female Krobo is problematic.

Tensions surrounding the sexuality of female Krobo can be traced to the colonial era, founded on the early Western interpretation of the dipo. Colonial interpretations of dipo were linked to missionary discourse and ideas of African civilisation (See Steegstra, 2005). Issues surrounding the Abidjan sex trade boom of the 1970s, and the adulterated practice of dipo in contemporary times (Anarfi, 2003), also contribute to negative views and attitudes about the Krobo people in general, and the females in particular. In the next few sections I discuss these questions in more detail.

#### ***4.3.1.1. Tensions: The Krobo culture versus Western Christianity***

Marijke Steegstra, a cultural anthropologist from the Netherlands whose work is well cited in the Krobo literature – after the work of Hugo Huber the Swiss anthropologist – has written extensively since the late 1990s about the cultural life of the Krobo people, including the practice of dipo. Based on an analysis of western (Basel) missionary reports, Steegstra (2002) demonstrates the presumption that the Krobo people are sexually lax. According to Steegstra, the Christian missionaries working among the Krobo people since the 1880s began to raise question about their religious and social practices, specifically, the practise of dipo (Steegstra, 2005).

Steegstra (2005) describes “dipo” as a set of social and sacred activities ordered by old Krobo women and priests on an annual basis for a selection of females, of a wide variation of ages. By tradition, any female child born into a Krobo family is expected to pass through this custom to be accepted as a part of the Krobo society (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). The performance of dipo is linked to purity, fertility and Krobo identity (Steegstra, 2005). For instance, at the onset of menarche a girl is considered ritually unclean, and the dipo rituals form the medium for purification and pacification (Huber, 1958). Upon successful completion of the dipo rites the initiate emerges with a new status or identity (Adjaye, 1999; Odotei & Awedoba, 2006). Thus, girls who do not participate in these initiation rites are traditionally considered pariahs, and not

suitable for marriage within the Krobo community (Anarfi, 2003; Osafo, Asampong, Langmagne, & Ahiedeke, 2013). Schroeder and Danquah (2000) suggest that a section of the Krobo society strongly believe that an uninitiated girl can bring great misfortune to her family.

In the pre-colonial era, the practice of dipo was essentially restricted to young maidens who were considered mature and ready for adulthood or womanhood. Van Gennep's theory of passage of rites is a useful framework to understand the transition these young girls go through to become a real Krobo woman (Steggstra, 2005). According to this perspective, the transformation occurs in three stages: separation, transition and incorporation (Helman, 2007).

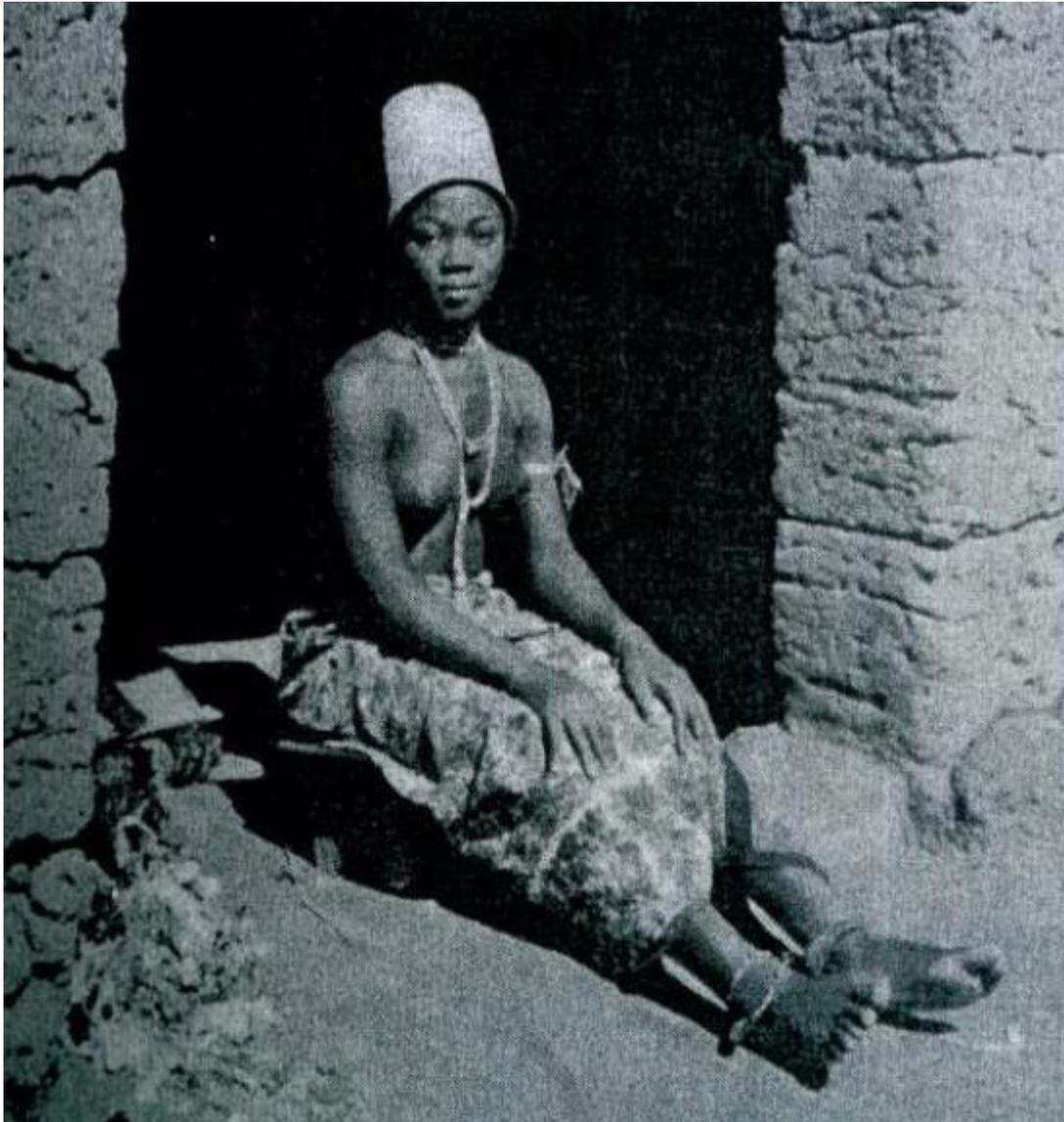


Figure 4.1. A picture of a dipo yo (girl) during confinement<sup>3</sup>

Yearly, qualified girls from various households were isolated from the main village settlements and confined to fetish shrines located on the Krobo Mountain (*Klowem*)<sup>4</sup> for a specified period of time (Odotei & Awedoba, 2006). As theorised by Van Gennep this is the

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<sup>3</sup> From *The Krobo: Traditional social and religious life of a West African people* (p. 161), by H. Huber, 1963, Austria: Anthropos institute [1963] by Anthropos institute. Reprinted with permission.

<sup>4</sup> Klowem is the ancestral mountain where the Krobo people used to inhabit before relocating to their current location.

separation stage; here the dipo girl is set apart from the typical social routine and confined to life on the mountain (Steggstra, 2005). See a picture of the Krobo Mountain below.



*Figure 4.2.* A view of Klowem (the Krobo Mountain), the ancestral home of the Krobo people of Ghana, October 2013. Photograph taken by Dzifa Attah.

Following separation, the initiate advances from one identity to another, at this point according to Helman (2007, p. 230) the person is considered to be in an interval of “social timelessness,” in a vulnerable, “abnormal position”, potentially dangerous both to themselves and to others. For that reason, special rituals of social transition are invoked that mark the event and protect both the individual and society by various ritual taboos and observances. These events define the transition period. According to Steggstra (2005) historical records and native narratives document that the time spent on the mountain was committed to cleansing and purification rituals, and informal teaching. For instance, the girls were taught various life skills related to health, sanitation, ethics, and hospitality, including aspects of sexuality in preparation for life as a woman (Ashong et al., 2005).

A very important highlight of these rituals is where the dipo initiate is made to sit on the sacred stone (*Tegkpεε*); this event usually conducted in the secrecy of the shrines (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). Any girl found to have been sexually active or pregnant during this process or test

stands the risk of encountering misfortune during the course of this event, such as, getting stuck on the stone. A guilty initiate could also slip or fall (Ostrow, 2011). Uninitiated girls found to be pregnant before or during the rituals were banished from the community (Adjetey, 1994).

Although secluded from the rest of the Krobo community, the confined initiates received ardent support from kinsfolk and fiancés who were allowed to visit occasionally (Odotei & Awedoba, 2006). In the past, it was the fiancé who carried the dipo girl out of the shrine area and around the community after the dipo girl successfully passed the sacred stone test.

The final phase is “incorporation” – at this stage the person assumes his or her new social role normally symbolized by a ritual bath or the rite of symbolic purification (Helman, 2007). The stage of incorporation is the climax of the ceremony where the initiates are dressed attractively with traditional beads. According to Boakye-Boaten (2010), dipo graduates also wear expensive clothing, wigs, headgear and make-up. At a traditional durbar (a public gathering normally associated with full community representation and cultural activity with a particular intent or purpose) organised specifically for them, they are made to dance in the full view of the village folk symbolizing the end of the rites and readiness for marriage. Although the missionary personnel had limited access to the sacred activities held on the mountain, Steegstra (2005) notes that they wrote about and criticised the dipo practice and sexuality of the young girls who participated in the private initiation ceremonies on the mountain.

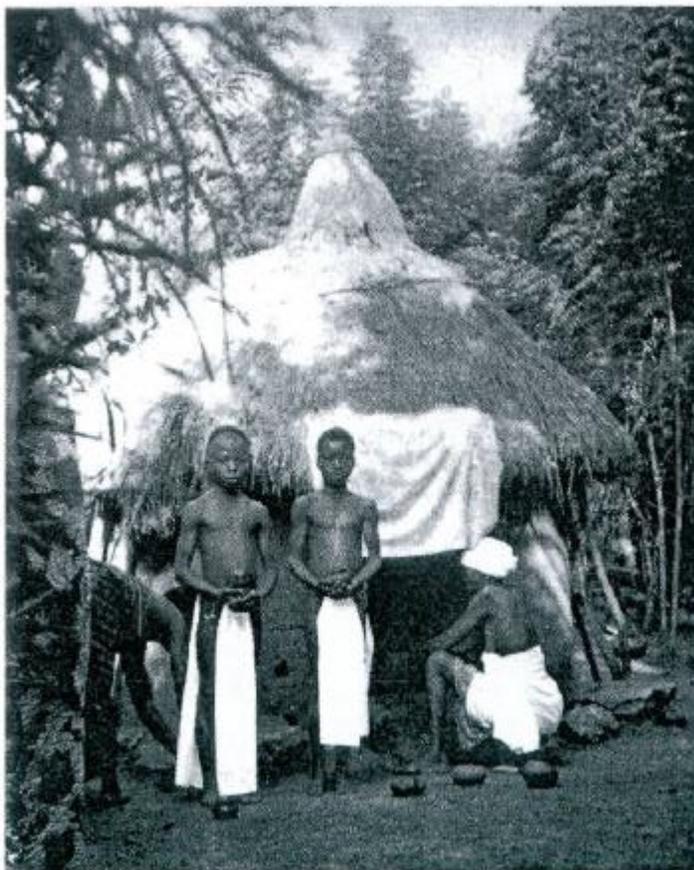


Figure 4.3. Two young dipo initiates and the priestess invoking the gods<sup>5</sup>

A major point of contention in the past and to date has been the fashion in which the girls undergoing initiation rites are dressed (usually in a manner that reveals their upper chests ([breasts] and other body parts partly exposed) (Agra & Gbadegbe, 2014) (see the picture below). Missionaries commonly viewed the traditional dress and regalia of initiates during their time of seclusion on the mountain as inappropriate and immoral (Steggstra, 2002). Steggstra (2002) writes extensively about the missionaries' understanding of the female initiates dress code that presents the girls as partially naked (with their breast exposed to the public) draped with minimal clothing, beads hanging from their neck and wrapped around their waist.

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<sup>5</sup> From *The Krobo: Traditional social and religious life of a West African people* (p. 162), by H. Huber, 1963, Austria: Anthropos institute [1963] by Anthropos institute. Reprinted with permission.



Figure: 4.2. A group of *dipo* initiates getting ready to take the sacred stone test<sup>6</sup>

Discussing comments made by a western missionary, Steegstra (2002, p. 211) explains that one of the missionaries:

Johannes Zimmermann in a report described the Shai and Krobo *dipo* girls he saw in a market as almost naked but for the many glass beads and other jewellery they wore. He calls them 'a kind of female Nazarenes, whose nakedness however doesn't match with their oaths of chastity.' So to him the particular dress of the girls was in contrast with the chastity they had to adhere to during their *dipo* time.

Zimmermann's view echoes the voices of many others who believe that the exposure of the body is sexually immoral; this is epitomised in much of the Krobo Christian discourse. Up until now,

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<sup>6</sup> From *The Krobo: Traditional social and religious life of a West African people* (p. 163), by H. Huber, 1963, Austria: Anthropos institute [1963] by Anthropos institute. Reprinted with permission.

this aspect of the custom has received a lot of scrutiny. For instance, a section of natives and outsiders have argued that the dress code of female initiates during the time of dipo creates an opportunity for a display of sexuality that is inappropriate (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). Though conceived as inappropriate in an ordinary context, in the context of the Krobo tradition the dress code is symbolic and functions as a form of identification for girls who are dipo initiates (Steegstra, 2002).

The Christian missionaries tried persistently to convert the Krobo people to accept the Christian religion and reject their own religious tenets and culture (Steegstra, 2002). A large section of the Krobo people remained adamant and committed to their traditional religion, which the missionaries considered heathen and evil (Schroeder & Danquah, 2000). Some individuals, however, adapted to become Christian, but these were commonly girls who had been found to be pregnant without undergoing the dipo ritual. While these girls under tradition are considered unchaste and unclean, they were accommodated by the missionaries, thus Christianity soon became a space of refuge for girls who would otherwise have been banished from the community (Steegstra, 2002).

Besides reservations shown by the Christian missionaries towards the Krobo people, Steegstra (2002) notes that the British (who colonised Ghana) also disapproved of the Krobo culture and dipo. For the British government, the practice of dipo posed a threat to their rule and authority over the local people. Fearing that the British would forbid the practice of dipo, after their established political rule over the southern part of Ghana, as a matter of urgency, the traditional authorities performed dipo for a large number of girls, including girls at very tender ages (Steegstra, 2002). Eventually, the British government banned the performance of dipo (Steegstra, 2005).

Yet, when dipo was banned, the Krobo people still continued to perform dipo rites secretly but in a shortened version. Interestingly, even converted Christians participated in the rituals and later had their girls baptised in the church, to accommodate the demands of both tradition and Christianity (Steegstra, 2002). The ban on dipo had unforeseen consequences such as incidents of early sexual activity and the number of pregnancies among uninitiated girls rose in the following years (Odotei & Awedoba, 2006). A faction of the Krobo people argue that

these effects, following the disruption of dipo traditions, are still evident long after colonialism and the exit of the Christian missionaries (Kumetey, 2014).

#### **4.3.1.2. The Ghana economic crisis: HIV/AIDS, migration and work**

During the post-colonial era in the 1960s and 1970s Ghana experienced an economic crisis. Anarfi (2003) notes that at this time, employment opportunities were few: as a result of the economic depression, people migrated from their home regions to other viable locations in country and across the borders, in search of work. Some of these migrants were of Krobo origin (Agyei-Mensah, 2001). For some, sex commercial work soon became a source of livelihood (Anarfi, 1990) and Abidjan, La Côte d'Ivoire a popular destination (Anarfi, 1993). As a result of the diamond trade of the 1960s, and the smuggling of diamonds to this location, Abidjan became an economic route for many people who sought ways to make ends meet (Agyei-Mensah, 2001; Konotey-Ahulu, 1988).

The luxurious lifestyles immigrants could afford when they returned home urged others within the vicinity to embark on similar journeys (Anarfi, 2003; Konotey-Ahulu, 1988). Anarfi (2003) speculates that the completion of dipo may have encouraged young girls to travel to Abidjan. He explains that, “With the few employment prospects in the Krobo area many young ladies having justified themselves by having gone through the *Dipo* rituals, leave the country to work in the neighbouring countries as commercial sex workers” (Anarfi, 2003, p. 32).

Performing the dipo custom allowed female natives some amount of independence from home; after undergoing the dipo, the girls gain the full status of an adult, thus they could freely engage in sexual activity, even out of wedlock without offending tradition (Oppong, 1973).

Due to the outbreak of HIV, some of the Krobo women who migrated abroad returned home infected, some accompanied by fatherless children (Agyei-Mensah, 2001; Atobrah, 2004). In one study for example, out of the 183 caretakers (of children orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS) interviewed, 113 and 10 reported that the deceased mother of the children in their care had had a history of migrating to Abidjan and Nigeria respectively (Atobrah, 2004).

Other research also suggests that the return of these immigrants partly may have contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Ghana. Since the 1990s the first HIV/AIDS sentinel surveillance site located in Agomanya (a sub-town in Kroboland) recorded a high prevalence of

HIV/AIDS in comparison with other sites (Anarfi, 2003; Osafo, Asampong, Langmagne & Ahiedeke, 2013). The uneven distribution of HIV/AIDS cases in this area, and not others, has been a major public health concern as shown in the Ghana HIV/AIDS literature, and the practice of dipo a major part of this discourse (Agra & Gbadegbe, 2014).

As seen so far, the sexuality of the Krobo has been largely shaped by historical events that originate from the colonial period marked by British presence and western missionaries' insinuations, the post-colonial period characterised by economic hardships, international migration and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

#### **4.4. Conceptualising the current study: Culture and child sexual abuse in Kroboland**

Contemporarily, a faction of the Krobo people still practise dipo despite strong criticism. Some Krobo even practise this cultural custom secretly, although they are publicly known as Christians (Steegstra, 2005). Dipo is critiqued because its completion has been adjudged to create a context of sexual permissiveness and vulnerability (Ashong et al., 2005). Particularly, considering that scores of prepubescent girls undergo initiation on an annual basis, some as young as two (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). For many critics, the age at which some girls go through the initiation rites has been a major concern.

Findings from one study of 306 single Krobo females aged between 13 to 20 years old showed that girls initiated at tender ages were at an increased risk for engaging in early sexual activity compared to older dipo initiates (Omoighe, Castel, & Bingenheimer, 2013). The researchers explained that older dipo initiates had to endure a longer period of sex abstinence as they are obliged by cultural norms to remain chaste until the dipo rites had been performed. As already highlighted above, in the olden days, marriage followed the completion of dipo. But with the advent of Western education, marriage is delayed because of academic pursuits. The early completion of dipo may create a discursive context or risk for CSA as many initiated girls are not ready for marriage (Anarfi, 2003; Kumetey, 2014). Accordingly, some research has related the period after dipo to high levels of sexual activity (Anarfi, 1993; Tenkorang & Owusu, 2013) before the age of 17 (Addai, 1999). The high records of teenage pregnancy in this area (Steegstra, 2005) support this view. Attributing the current negative outlook of sexuality among the Krobo solely to the practise of initiation rites, as other researchers elsewhere have done in the

past, may be too simplistic. The cultural context in which the Krobo people live needs to be examined.

To date, few studies have explored Krobo sexuality in depth. Besides, what can be inferred from the ethnographic work of a few researchers (Huber, 1963; Steegstra, 2002, 2005) and studies that focus on disease and reproduction, knowledge about sexuality among the Krobo people of Ghana is limited. Further, extant literature on these issues has been gender biased, implicating the Krobo female as perplexing with little known about Krobo male sexuality. The absence of studies relating to the sexual behaviour of the Krobo male is intriguing. Since this clan is known to be male-dominated, from what is known about male sexual behaviour in patriarchal societies (Cusack, 1999; Jewkes et al., 2005; Proulx, 2012; Sanday, 2001), this cultural group is worthy of enquiry, especially, since their female counterparts have been widely viewed, in the broad literature, as both sexually vulnerable and problematic.

Moreover, in the Krobo society, like other African societies, double standards have existed for sexual behaviour, in the past granting more sexual freedom to men than women (Davis & Whitten, 1987). In the past, a Krobo girl found pregnant before undergoing her puberty rites was penalised but not the man involved (Boakye-Boaten, 2010; Osafo, Asampong, Langmagne, & Ahiedeke, 2013). Based on this, Ostrow (2011) suggests the control of sexuality for Krobo males is less stringent. I speculate a possible implication of this practice; punishing the female for early sexual behaviour but not the male increases the likelihood of CSA, as is reported in similar patriarchal cultures where gender disparities are great.

Despite various efforts to address CSA against children in the country, CSA in Ghana remains understudied. This is reflected in the current response to addressing CSA. Laws and conventions to protect children from CSA have been established at both the local level and at the global level. However, CSA still remains a problem (Boakye, 2009). Some researchers believe these instruments fail to pay attention to important cultural and social dynamics that may impinge on this type of behaviour (Laird, 2002; Twum-Danso, 2009).

As explained in Chapter Two, from an ecosystemic perspective, Smallbone et al. (2013) have argued that CSA is defined by the culture and the subculture of a community. Thus, the community may create an environment that increases or impedes the likelihood of CSA (Plummer & Njugunabe, 2009). Accordingly, the dynamics of the surrounding social and

cultural context is of great relevance to the study of CSA. For instance, a number of studies suggest that gender socialisation beliefs and cultural practices affect how males and females make sense of a CSA experience (Kia-Keating et al., 2005; Dorahy & Clearwater, 2012; Sorsoli, Kia-Keating, & Grossman, 2008). In addition, Smallbone et al. (2013) have submitted that the immediate pre-offence and offence settings (e.g., provide opportunities cues, stressors and temptations) present greater risk to the perpetration of CSA than developmental and ecosystemic factors. Therefore, understanding unique situational dynamics in which CSA is likely to occur is crucial to comprehend particularities associated with the CSA phenomenon in Kroboland.

In Kroboland, for instance, a feature of the discourse about the Krobo people of Ghana in relation to sexuality constitutes in narratives of concern for young girls who participate in dipo at an early age. Less is said about girls who do not participate in these rituals due to religious backgrounds that preach against its performance. Similarly, there is an absence of attention on male children who may, according to the CSA literature, also be at risk for CSA based on their status in the social and age hierarchy. These observations reveal some of society's taken for granted notions and ideas about normative child sexuality in Kroboland, which may have implications for the occurrence of CSA.

Despite these concerns, little research has examined the psychological interpretations of sexual experiences and the CSA experiences of both males and females in Kroboland. That is, the significance these experiences or events hold for the Krobo people of Ghana. Therefore, the current research is set to fill this gap, by exploring the diverse contexts in Kroboland to understand various cultural processes, and their unique influence on child normative sexual experiences and the range of meanings suggestive of CSA. Specifically, this current study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To understand various sexual experiences that occur in childhood and the meanings attached to these experiences among the Krobo community.
2. To understand how the Krobo people of Ghana make sense of CSA. Are these meanings the same for Krobo men and women?
3. To identify situations and practices that may enable or constrain CSA in a Krobo community.

## Chapter Five: Methodology

*There are many ways to get where you are going, and it is up to you to choose and justify the best route for your purposes.* (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 42)

### 5.1. Introduction

The key focus of this chapter, “methodology”, is what Crotty (1998, p. 3) defined as “the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods, and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes”. In the sections that follow, I describe the research process and outline decisions that were taken in the event of conducting this research study – from the choice of research design to writing up the final results. Also, this methodology chapter explains the justification for making these research decisions or choices.

By all standards, research should be designed or structured to elicit or generate knowledge that adequately addresses the research problem, and emerging questions. However, by practice, planning and designing research is by no means a straightforward matter and the same can be said for its implementation (Tamale, 2011). For example, conducting research is often a non-linear procedure that is revisited, renegotiated and revised as work proceeds and demands for change become necessitated (Creswell, 2009), as was the case in this current study.

With the need to adhere to research and professional ethics while attempting to address the research questions adequately, designing the research and subsequently its implementation was a daunting lived experience. In this chapter, I provide an account of this research process and experience. In sum, the chapter describes the entire research methodology indicating the strategy of inquiry, the research methods used (to collect and analyse data) and philosophical assumptions that underscored their application. In this discussion, I also include a description of the research setting, the sample used, participant characteristics and the research procedure. Ethical considerations and challenges, self-reflection, study trustworthiness and study limitations are also discussed.

## **5.2. Research method: Adopting a qualitative approach**

### **5.2.1. The initial phase of planning: personal influences**

In selecting a research design, Creswell (2009) names six factors that merit concern: (a) a philosophical worldview; (b) strategies of inquiry; (c) research methods; (d) the research problem; (e) personal experience; and finally (f) the audience. In this current study, various aspects of my personal experience led to identifying the research problem and formed a critical influence at the embryonic stage of formulating this study. During my early years of practice as a clinical psychologist at the Psychiatry Unit of the Korle-bu Teaching Hospital, I made an interesting observation when a 32-year-old female client was referred to the unit for treatment with a presenting complaint of low sexual desire.

The client reported no prior experience of sexual pleasure or enjoyment, although, she frequently engaged in sexual activity with her husband. As a remedy, the husband had made several attempts to change his tactics to stimulate sexual pleasure during foreplay. Yet, according to the distressed client, none of these methods seemed to have worked. In the interview, she demonstrated a lack of interest in sexual activity and ascribed a sense of meaninglessness to the act of sex. Accordingly, she disclosed that she only engaged in sex out of duty to her husband. Further questioning of the client revealed a non-disclosed history of CSA.

After this incident, I wanted to broaden my understanding of CSA so I could locate myself in a better position to identify and respond therapeutically to CSA survivors. As a result, I began to explore the literature on sexual abuse. I was fascinated by the strand of scholarship that showed that very few mental health professionals inquired about the history of CSA during a clinical assessment (McGregor, Gautam, Glover, & Jülich, 2013; Read et al., 2007; Read et al., 2006). As already mentioned in Chapter Two, some mental health professionals tend to avoid inquiring about CSA, although some CSA survivors, during clinical assessments, wished to be asked about their abuse history (McGregor, Jülich, Glover, & Gautam, 2010).

Over a period of two years (2011-2012), I focused on inquiring about the histories of CSA among psychiatry, hospital and general hospital populations during research projects with the medical students I taught. Results from these projects suggest that cases of child sexual abuse might be higher in the clinical populations compared to the general population, in particular, psychiatry populations.

Barely a week after we presented the results of this project at the annual student conference, one of the students approached me with a video showing sexual contact between two youngsters. One of them was a girl of about 8 to 10 years old, while the other looked like a toddler of about four years. The video appeared to have been secretly videotaped in a town that was partly characterised by substandard housing. The two were positioned in a locally built bathroom that seemed detached from the other housing facilities, its walls and door were made out of partially rusted iron roofing sheets, and it had a cemented floor.

In the process of bathing, the two actively engaged in several forms of sexual activity. For instance, they took turns to perform oral sex acts on each other. The girl seemed to be the one in charge, and at different times prompted the younger one to change the activity. The little boy appeared to know what to do whenever he was prompted; this suggested that the act might have been a regular activity between the two. Occasionally, the girl took a peep through a hole in the iron sheet walls to ensure they were not caught.

I was devastated by the video and could not bear to watch it in its entirety. It was a video that had gone viral on various social media platforms; the student who had shown it to me had no idea of its source. After watching this video, many questions ran through on my mind. Who took the video? Why did the video maker not intervene? Was it because nobody would believe such an incident happened? How did the two learn about sex, and the various sexual positions they had exhibited because they were very young? How long has this been going on? Are there other children involved in similar activity? How did the video maker respond to these children? What were the implications of this sexual experience, for the participants? Is this normal sexual behaviour for children of this age? How does one distinguish between normal sexual behaviour and abnormal sexual interests or behaviour?

Sandfort and Rademakers (2000) stress the need to understand child sexuality for the benefit of: parents who battle with the uncertainties that surround their children's sexuality; and addressing problems that arise with expressions of sexuality, such as incidents of CSA. Wolak et al. (2008) also recommend that mental health professionals need to be well-versed and updated with issues concerning child sexuality in order to address the concerns of both children and adults.

As a young professional in the mental health field, I was deeply concerned about my ability to work effectively with CSA survivors who originate from cultural backgrounds I am unfamiliar with and present with concerns and experiences of CSA particular to their context.

My decision to sign up for a PhD in psychology (Public Mental Health), and having been awarded a scholarship by the Graduate school at the Stellenbosch University, was an opportunity to understand the significance of CSA from a different cultural perspective, compared to the one I was brought up in and used to. In the next section, I outline the focus of this current research.

### **5.2.2. The research focus: Understandings of child sexual abuse in cultural context**

Following this personal interest, this study was developed on three broad, but intersecting topics of interest, culture – child sexuality and CSA – as is captured by the scaffolding of CSA theory, and the integrated theory of child sexual abuse, which I have already elaborated on in Chapter Two. The scaffolding of CSA framework (Gavey, 2005) incorporates constructions of sexuality to explain the occurrence of CSA in a given cultural context. The integrated theory of child sexual abuse (Smallbone et al., 2008) draws on the theories of development, predominantly the concepts of early attachment and elements of nurturance and self-constraint to explain sexual offending. Furthermore, it provides an explanation for the risk and attenuation of CSA within sociocultural systems that inevitably borders both victims and offenders, in shared parameters.

The above discussion answers the first two of three questions posed by Blaikie (2009, p.41) that establish the phenomenon under study and the purpose for its study. The answer to the third question suggested by Blaikie, which inquires “how will it be studied?” is connected to the first three points raised by Creswell (2009) as outlined in the first paragraph of this chapter. To recap, these are the philosophical worldview of the researcher, strategies of inquiry and research methods employed. Details of these factors are discussed in the sections below.

### **5.2.3. Philosophical assumptions and the stance of qualitative research**

Two major areas of philosophy, ontology and epistemology are factors to consider when selecting a research design (Greener, 2011). Ontology is concerned with asking “questions about what things exist in the world. It is about defining and cataloguing the things that exist” (Sullivan, 2010, p. 17). A realist makes ontological claims that “the world is organized into pre-existing categories waiting to be discovered. A realist assumes that the ‘real world’ exists independently of humans and their interpretations of it” (Neuman, 2011, p. 92).

In contrast, the nominalist holds “that humans never directly experience a reality ‘out there’”. Our experience with what we call “the real world” is always occurring through a lens or scheme of interpretations and inner subjectivity. Subjective-cultural beliefs influence what we see and how we experience reality (Neuman, 2011, p. 92). This position readily implies knowledge by nature is subjective and influenced by personal interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Unlike many quantitative researchers who adhere to the positivistic philosophical position – that lays emphasis on objectivity – the qualitative researcher generally pays attention to “multiple constructions and interpretations of phenomenon that are influx and change over time” (Merriam, 2002, p. 4). This philosophical stance of multiple realities is commonly adopted by researchers interested in qualitative research.

Epistemology, on the other hand, is how reality is studied. Qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand the multiple realities of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Holloway (1997, p.1) maintains that “qualitative research focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live.” There are many alternative ways of studying phenomena in this manner. To this end, various qualitative researchers hold different philosophical positions and theoretical orientations (Gray, 2004) centred on different conventions, ideologies and rules of significance (Neuman, 2011).

Creswell outlines five such qualitative research approaches (Creswell, 2007). These include narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic and case study research methods. To this list, Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie (1999) add discourse analysis, conversation analysis and social action research. Many of these methods are popularly used in the field of CSA (see Gibson & Morgan, 2013).

To date, the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) seems to be rare in the study of CSA among African researchers, although, this method seems a valuable qualitative method of inquiry (Brocki & Wearden, 2006) in psychology (Smith, 2004, 2011), for exploring various issues related to sexual abuse. For instance, in London, Connop and Petrak (2004) explored the lived worlds of male partners after their intimate partners were raped. Similarly, Back, Gustafsson, Larsson, and Berterö (2011) used the IPA approach to understand how a group of Swedish children made sense of their experience with the legal authorities following an event of CSA. Recently, Blagden, Winder, Gregson, and Thorne (2014) explored the phenomenon of “denial” among a number of sexual offenders in a United

Kingdom prison. Each of the studies above, attempted to reconstruct the world views (of the participants) towards the particular experience under study (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

In this current study, I take a middle stand between the two opposing orientations, realism and nominalism, as a critical realist. In the sense that I assume reality exists, however, it can only be accessed through the lens of the one who lived the experience at a particular moment in time and space (Forrester, 2010). In other words, I am concerned with understanding reality (sexual and CSA experiences) through the lens or perspective of another; who in the case of this study are the Krobo people of Ghana and professionals who have worked with children in Kroboland.

#### **5.2.4. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)**

As already highlighted above, IPA offers a strategy of inquiry that explores a phenomenon from an insider's perspective; in the sense that the IPA researcher attempts to provide readers with a truthful account of a participant's view on a particular event, process or experience (Smith, 1996). Playing an active role in the research process, as is the case with other qualitative methods, the researcher co-constructs the participant's world view, and does a multiple stage analyses of their speech to uncover psychological content (Howitt, 2010).

IPA draws on qualitative methods to describe the experience of a research participant (Smith & Osborn, 2007). IPA is founded on principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism. As indicated in its name, IPA "combines the rich description of a phenomenological 'core' (which aims to capture something of the claims and concerns of the 'person-in-context') with the more speculative development of an interpretative account (which considers the meaning of such claims and concerns)" (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006, p. 117). In other words, IPA involves:

1. revealing the implicit claims and concerns of a participant's world, grounded in the participant quotes which is true of the phenomenological phase.
2. giving accurate interpretations of these "claims and concerns" which is the core part of the hermeneutic phase which is an important role for the researcher to execute.

The interpretive account of claims and concerns is underscored by a double hermeneutic, where one hermeneutic strand operates by an engagement with the participant's relatedness to an event, process or activity in the world. The other hermeneutic strand

employs theoretical concepts (not directly used by the participant) that seek to accurately illuminate the participant's subjective meaning of an experience (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

#### ***5.2.4.1. Limitations and challenges of the IPA approach***

IPA methods makes a valued contribution to research; however, as with other qualitative approaches it has shortcomings that may limit the discussion of the study results. For instance, in IPA studies the data generated are specific to the accounts of those who take part in the study of interest – the sample – and not representative of the entire population under study (Jordan, Eccleston, & Osborn, 2007). Nonetheless, IPA studies contribute to the understanding of the particular phenomenon under focus (Clarke, 2009).

For complex phenomena like sexual and CSA experiences to be understood using this type of method, language is of the essence; in the sense that participants use language to communicate their experiences. Willig (2001) argues that in this act of communication the participant may fail to accurately express themselves through language. Hence, participants' accounts may not describe the reality in depth, but rather constitute constructions of the said experience. In other words, in some instances language provides only partial truths of the phenomenon, and not its full description (Back et al., 2011).

For Willig, a participant's account of an experience says more about his or her articulacy than the experience of the phenomenon itself. Therefore, Larkin et al. (2006) caution that the IPA researcher needs to be sensitive and responsive, to be able to elaborate on another person's perspective of a phenomenon. Similarly, Smith et al. (2009) suggests that in cases where the participant uses a language other than English, the researcher has to take a strong role in guiding the participant to elicit accurate accounts of their experience.

Willig (2001) also argues that the IPA method is limited by its lack of explanatory power. That is, IPA achieves a description of a participant's lived experience but proceeds no further to elaborate on its origin or why it occurs. Larkin et al. (2006), however, warn that the IPA method should not be mistaken for a simple descriptive method as is preconceived of all qualitative methods. The authors contend that such notions undermine the strength of the IPA method that explores and speaks to the experiences of its participants in depth, revealing concealed psychological content that prove germane for understanding phenomena.

As already highlighted IPA has two aims, one being to describe the participants' world, illuminating what it is like. In other words, the IPA researchers seek to make sense of the experiential claims made by its participants (Larkin & Griffiths, 2004). Secondly, it aims to situate the participants' sense making into a social, cultural or theoretical perspective, while still attempting to keep close to the participant's vivid account of their experience (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006).

Suggestions made by Smith et al. (2009) point out that IPA experiential accounts are local and therefore need to be properly contextualised within a particular cultural framework. The authors think of constructing experiences in this framework as a process of theoretical transferability and not generalisability, as expected of quantitative studies: in the sense that findings may be applicable to persons in similar contexts. Taking a cue from this notion of contextualisation, the current study integrates the aspects of ethnography with IPA. Reasons for taking this decision are explained below.

#### ***5.2.4.2. Combining methods: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and Ethnography***

Ethnography is a scientific approach with roots in social and cultural anthropology (Agar, 1997). Commonly, it is employed as a means for collecting qualitative data, but not limited to social anthropologists (Comaroff, & Comaroff, 2003). Ethnography provides a rich description of social phenomena, that is, of people's lives, daily routines, rituals and relationships in a particular cultural context (Wolf, 2007). Activities are documented by the ethnographer who commits to live among the people under investigation for an extended period of time, critically observing, listening and asking questions to make sense of the people's cultural lives (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007).

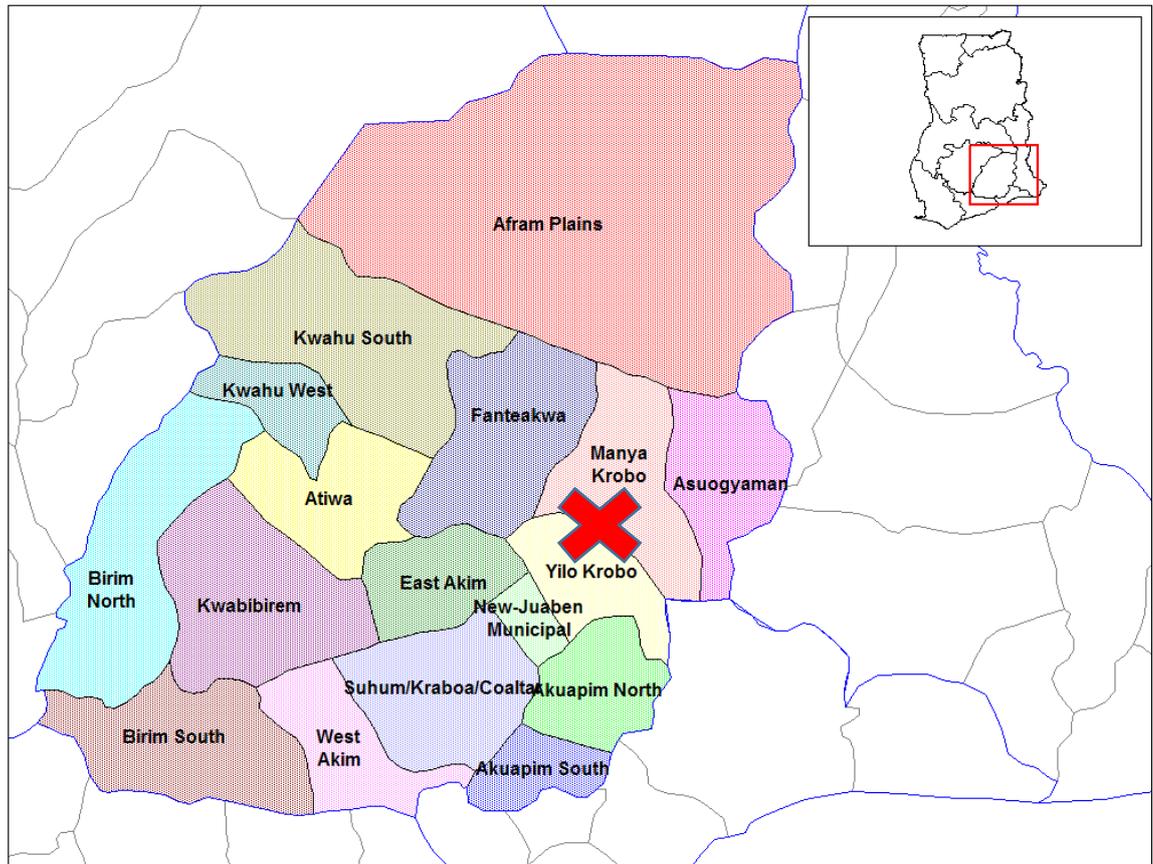
Maggs-Rapport (2000) points out that a combination of methods can tell a powerful story and at the same time, communicate the systematic and unbiased nature of the research. Further, in a discussion of combining the methods, IPA and ethnography Maggs-Rapport (2000) highlights the following advantages: (1) the researcher and the researched are empowered, and play crucial roles in the process of data collection and analysis; (2) an enriched element of description and a discursive context for wider interpretation is produced; and (3) a means of methodological and data triangulation created. In the same text, Maggs-Rapport (2000) also cautions about the weakness of combining methods, as she asserts little work has been done to validate the combination of these methods. In addition, she asserts that

there is the possibility that researchers may focus on theory, neglecting the method, seeking after meaning that does not exist, finding it difficult to achieve a balance between dialogue and interpretation.

I took note of these limitations, and consequently factored them into the analyses of data as well as took caution in the final interpretation of the study results.

#### **5.2.5. The research setting: study country and research site**

The current research was carried out in Ghana. Geographically, Ghana (formerly referred to as Gold Coast and a British colony) is found along the coast of West Africa (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2005) and shares common borders with Togo, Benin and Burkina Faso. Ghana is considered a multi-lingual country (with approximately over 60 local languages) with its official language as English. The country is divided into ten sub-regions with a projected population size of 27,043,093 people (Ghana Statistical Services, 2014). The sample for this study, the Krobo, are located in the Eastern region of Ghana, specifically in the capitals and suburbs of the Manyã Krobo and the Yilo Krobo municipality areas (Huber, 1958), Odumase and Somanya respectively, see Figure 5.1 below.



*Figure 5.1.* A map of Ghana showing the Mānyā Krobo and Yilo Krobo municipalities situated in the Eastern Region of Ghana (source: Internet, 2014)

The cross highlights the Mānyā Krobo and Yilo Krobo municipalities in relation to other metropolises sited in the Eastern region of Ghana. Members of other Ghanaian tribes can be found living within these areas. Yet, both towns remain predominantly inhabited by the Krobo people. Dangme is the local dialect spoken by the Krobo people. The capital towns of the Mānyā Krobo and Yilo Krobo states are Odumase and Somanya respectively.

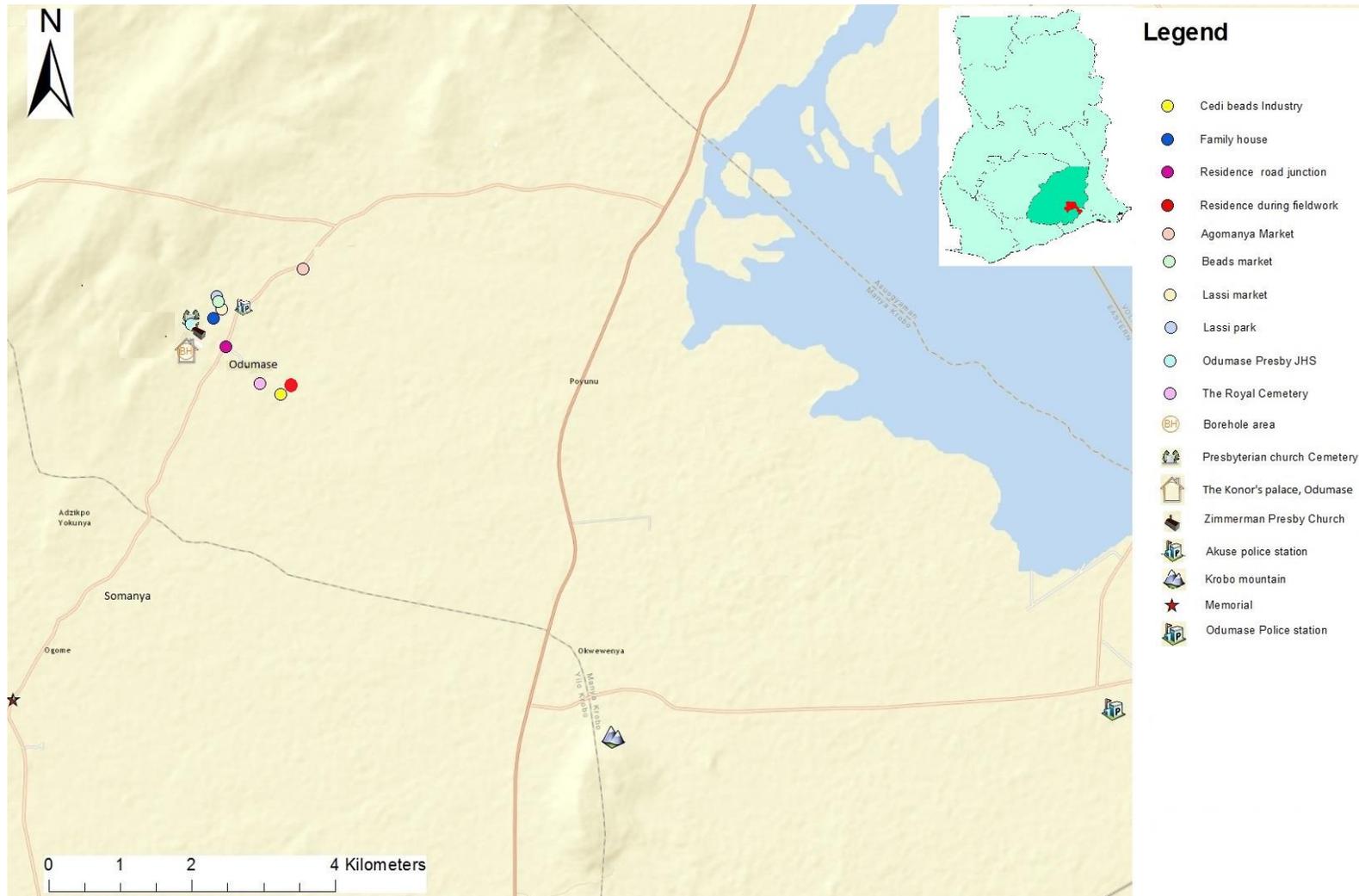


Figure 5.2. A map showing important sites within the research area, Manya Krobo and Yilo Krobo, Eastern Region of Ghana

Each Krobo State is ruled by a paramount chief, a political position among the Krobo people termed “Konor” (Huber, 1963; Kole, 1955). The Konor exercises administrative and executive power over the state, but rules in conjunction with a female counterpart known as the paramount queenmother<sup>7</sup>, “Manye” (Wilson, 1987). As shown in the diagrams below, the Konor and Manye work with divisional chiefs and divisional queenmothers respectively who head sub divisions of the Mānyā Krobo and Yilo Krobo states.

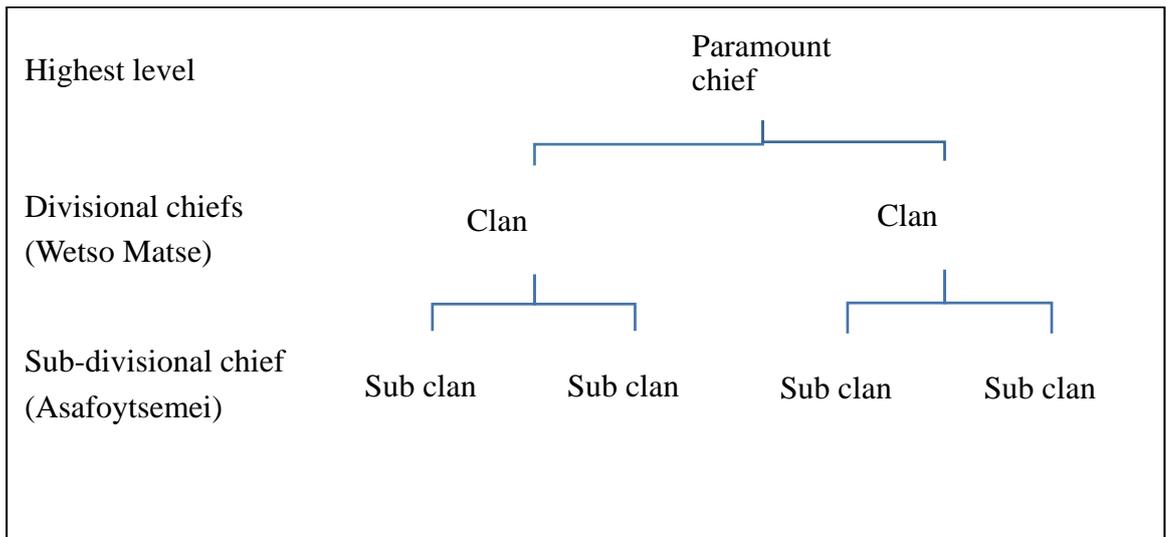


Figure 5.3. A brief overview of the hierarchical system of chiefs in Kroboland (source: Field notes 2014)

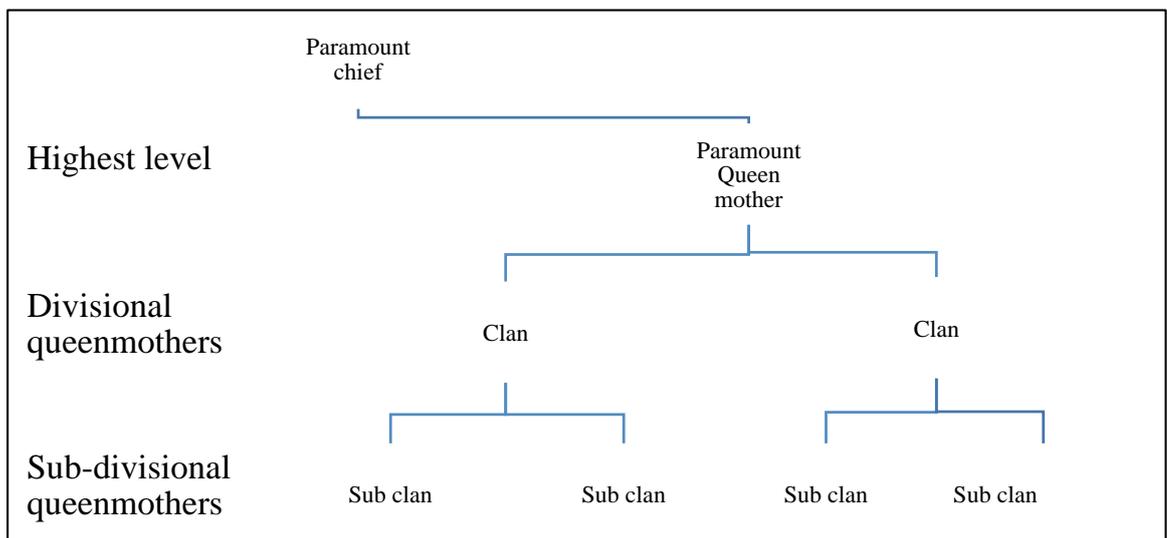


Figure 5.4. A brief overview of the hierarchical system of queenmothers in Kroboland (source: Field notes, 2014)

<sup>7</sup> The queenmother is the title given to political leaders who are female, usually selected from the royal family but are not limited to political roles.

Further divisions of sub clans form smaller family units, known as “we” which translates to mean “people of a house”. These units are usually headed by the eldest living person<sup>8</sup> in the oldest existing generation of the family (Huber, 1963).

Data from the Ghana Statistical Service (2010) indicates that Christian groupings make up a predominant part (92 – 93%) of the total Kroboland population, followed by Muslims; very few people (below 1% of people) in the 2010 population census professed to form part of the traditional religion. These figures may not truly represent people who follow the traditional religion, as Steegstra (2005) notes. For example, some Krobo people may evade being seen engaged in traditional religious activities openly, for conflicting religious reasons, as is outlined in the previous chapter which discusses the traditional and cultural practices of the Krobo.

To date, members of the traditional priesthood of the Krobo people hold a special social status, are in charge of the people’s traditional and religious life, deemed as consecrate, and act as the intermediary between the living and the ancestral world (Arlt, 2005; Steegstra 2005).

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<sup>8</sup> The eldest living person with the family unit is called “we ncketcma” (elder of house) (Huber, 1963)



*Figure 5.5.* A representation of the priesthood at the Ngmayem festival durbar<sup>9</sup>, October 2013. Photograph taken by Dzifa Attah.

For years, the mainstay of the Krobo people has been agricultural activity: farming and the trade of farm products. The Agomanya market located in the Manya Krobo municipality is one of the largest markets in the Eastern region; farm products are usually sold here. Wednesdays and Saturdays are selected market days for the sale of goods. On these days, the market place is usually a busy shopping centre. On other days, the market place is not as eventful.

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<sup>9</sup> The Ngmayem festival is an annual celebration of the Manya Krobo people that marks the entry into a new year, serves as a reunion and a celebration of the rich Krobo culture. Arlt (2005) describes this event as a reconciliation of the traditional and modern actors of the Krobo society. For example, on this rare occasion the traditional priesthood and various Christian bodies come together in one state gathering. The Yilo Krobo people celebrate a similar festival called Kloyosikplemi.



*Figure 5.6.* A sector of women selling maize and garden eggs at the Agomanya market, Manya Krobo municipality, May, 2014. Photograph taken by Dzifa Attah.

Bead making and selling are other forms of economic activity unique to the Krobo people. Thursday is usually when the bead market sited at the Laasi park in Odumase is open for business (see Figures 5.7 and 5.8 below).



*Figure 5.7.* Locally handmade beads displayed on a table, for sale at the Lassi park, March, 2014. Photograph taken by Dzifa Attah.



*Figure 5.8.* Locally handmade beads on a hanging display, for sale, March 2014. Photograph taken by Dzifa Attah.

### **5.2.6. Gaining access to the research site: Back to my roots**

Negotiating access into the Odumase Township was not entirely difficult because of my family link to the research site. My mother, by birth a Krobo, was born and bred in Odumase. While I was away in South Africa preparing to conduct this study, my mother had acted as the intermediary between the town leadership in Manyã Krobo and me. Subsequently, my Grand uncle, who was a member of the Manyã Krobo Traditional Council, acted as the “guarantor”, that is the “person who sets up the relationship between the ... [researcher] and the group” (Gobo, 2008, p. 7) under study. Although, the council showed an interest in my research work, a number of gatekeepers questioned some of my research interests.

For instance, some questioned my interest in observing the performance of the annual female initiation rites, and raised suspicion that I had ulterior motives that could potentially tarnish the image of the township. Other groups of persons believed I had a political economy

agenda, that is to use the information I gather to gain funds or money for personal interests. The guarantor had to defend my position as a student and researcher; he indicated to the council that the information collected was solely for academic purposes. But, he also stressed to those that had raised concern that, ultimately the research feedback could be of benefit to the community.

The guarantor thought it important to include Somanya as a research site as well, since it was considered a sister town to Odumase. “Getting in” to Somanya, Yilo Krobo was a gradual process, as I had no initial contact with any of the residents. Informants I had established contact with in Manyã Krobo enabled me to make contact with residents from Somanya, Yilo Krobo. Eventually, I was able to liaise with the Yilo Krobo paramountcy at the level of the paramount queenmother. Consequently, the secretary to the paramount queenmother facilitated my contact with other members of the Yilo Krobo community.

### **5.2.7. Study participants: Sampling and data collection methods**

Following the aims and objectives of the present research, the study’s unit of analysis is twofold. Smith (2007) suggests that in order to develop a more detailed and multifaceted account of a phenomenon, the phenomenon should be explored from more than one perspective. Therefore, Study Aim 1 - 2 is an analysis of childhood and working experiences from the perspective of the Krobo people and professionals who work with children respectively. Specifically, the Study Aims are to:

1. understand various sexual experiences that occur in childhood and the meanings attached to these experiences among the Krobo community.
2. understand how the Krobo people of Ghana make sense of CSA. Are these meanings the same for Krobo men and women?

The strength of this multi-perspectival method is that it would lead to a comprehensive account of the phenomena under study (see section on quality control). On the other hand, Study Aim 3 is answered by a synthesis of data from 1 – 2 and participant observation data that describes the larger unit of analysis, “the local community, Kroboland”.

3. To identify situations and practices that may possibly enable or constrain CSA in a Krobo community.

For qualitative research, Englander (2012) suggests that sampling involves a selection of participants who have had an experience of the phenomena under inquiry. Therefore, community members and professionals who work with children in the locality were the

participants for this study, recruited with the assistance of various informants using the purposive criterion sampling method, because I was interested in a particular criterion of persons. Subsequently, the snowball method was used to recruit potential participants through the networks of eligible participants. The methods used in collecting data, as well as demographic details of the study participants and study area are summarised in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: *Data collection methods and associated target group or area*

	<b>Data collection method</b>	<b>Description of target group/area</b>
1	Semi-structured interviews (24)	(a) Key informants (12) (b) Community leaders (12)
2	Focus Group Discussion (5)	(a) Female FGDs (3) (b) Male FGDs (2)
3	Ethnographic methods (a) Participant observation (b) Photographs	The Lower Manya Krobo and Yilo Krobo municipalities

#### ***5.2.7.1. Semi-structured interviews: Key informants and community leaders***

A total of twenty-four (24) semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 Key informants and 12 community leaders, as summarised in Table 5.2 and 5.3 below. During the said semi-structured interviews, the 12 key informants were asked to give accounts of their working experience with children regarding the children's sexual experiences and experiences of CSA. The aim of the interview was to allow the participant the opportunity to reconstruct the experience under inquiry and explore meanings ascribed to this experience (Seidman, 2013).

In similar manner, the 12 community members were asked various questions about their childhood, their interaction with children, and in particular children with CSA histories. In the Ghanaian context, community leaders may provide important insights about CSA based on their frequent interaction and their experience with children in the locality. For instance, Casey (2011) notes that in the Ghanaian context, some children and families may

prefer to disclose incidents of CSA to persons of high status, such as a family head, religious heads and political leaders such as a chief or queenmother, rather than to the police services.

To aid the interview process, interview schedules with a separate but similar list of phenomenon related questions and prompts were used for each group of participants (see Appendix A for a review of these interview schedules). Explaining about qualitative research, Bryman (2001) suggests that questioning during interviews may not precisely follow the interview schedule. At times, follow-up questions were asked as per response and arising issues, some of which were not included into the schedule originally.

Table 5.2: *Demographic information for key informants*

Study participant	Description of participants	Rationale for sample selection	Selection criteria for participants		Demographic details of the key informants		
	Key informants (e.g., Lawyers; doctors; nurses; social welfare workers and police personnel).	A Kenyan study of professionals working with child protection services identified many cultural practices that enhanced or impeded for CSA in different Kenyan tribes (Plummer & Njuguna, 2009).	Participant should have had at least one year of working experience with children in the Krobo municipality.	Individuals who meet the inclusion criteria but are not willing to:  (1) sign the consent form for validation.  (2) be tape recorded in the course of the interview.	KI 1	M	Lawyer
					KI 2	F	Teacher
					KI 3	M	Headmaster
					KI 4	F	Nurse
					KI 5	F	Midwife
					KI 6	F	Community Health Educator
					KI 7	M	Community Health Educator
					KI 8	F	Police personnel
					KI 9	M	Police personnel
					KI 10	M	Counsellor
					KI 11	M	Social Welfare officer
					K 12	F	Girl child coordinator

Table 5.3: Demographic information for community leaders

Study participant	Description of participants	Rationale for sample selection	Selection criteria for participants		Demographic details of community leaders		
			Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria	Community Leader (CL)	Gender (M/F)	Leadership position
	Key community members (e.g., members of the traditional council)	Traditional and religious values and norms are important for understanding CSA in Ghana (Proulx, 2012; Osafo, Asampong, Langmagne & Ahiedeke, 2013)	Participant should: (1) be Krobo. (2) have lived in the Krobo municipality for at least, the past five years. (3) be willing to participate in the study.	Individuals who meet the inclusion criteria but are not willing to: (1) sign the consent form for validation. (2) be tape recorded in the course of the interview.	CL 1	M	Government leader
CL 2					M	Traditional council elder	
CL 3					M	Chief linguist	
CL 4					M	Chief linguist	
CL 5					M	Divisional chief	
CL 6					F	Queenmother (Manye)	
CL 7					F	Queenmother (Manye)	
CL 8					F	Youth Queen	
CL 9					F	Youth Queen	
CL 10					M	Divisional chief	
CL 11					M	Divisional chief	
CL 12					M	Traditional council elder	

### **5.2.7.2. Focus Group Discussions (FGD)**

I proposed to conduct six FGDs; however, only five could be completed as planned: these consisted of three female groups and two male groups. The sixth FGD could not be scheduled as male participants aged 46 years and above were difficult to recruit and assemble in one location. In order to facilitate discussion, male discussion groups were created for specific age groups (see Tables 5.4 to 5.8 below for details). On the other hand, for the female FGD groups, the diplo status of the female participants was taken into consideration to encourage a dialogue between participants (see Table 5.4 to 5.8 below for details of these groups).

A FGD is an informal dialogue between a team of about six to 12 participants and the researcher who usually acts as a moderator, in a discussion of particular issues, of research interest (Kitzinger, 2013; Wilkinson, 2004). Smithson (2000) describes a FGD as a group interview designed to elicit views and perceptions on a designated topic, from a small number of people in a group sitting. The strength of FGDs lies in its ability to bring to the fore insights relating to complex behaviour (Jayasekara, 2012).

Palmer, Larkin, Visser, and Fadden (2010) argue that few IPA studies use FGDs compared with personal interviews, although they serve as a rich source of experiential data. Based partly on this assertion, I included FGD in this present study. The active interaction between the participants, and the participants and researcher, in its self is revealing and insightful for gaining insight into a person's experiences, views, and perceptions about a designated topic, within a particular cultural context (Helitzer-Allen, Makhambera, & Wangel, 1994). Group dynamics allowed for answers in response to questions posed, beliefs and ideas expressed by others, leading to the emergence of contradiction, opposing views, peculiarities and non-verbal information, which are all integrated into the final group account of the phenomenon under study (Acocella, 2012).

One of the most challenging aspects of data collection was organising FGDs, and the degree of difficulty seemed to intensify with an increase in age of the participants. The older the participants the more difficult it became to organise discussion groups, particularly, in the case of the male participants. For example, the 32- to 45-year-old FGD was organised only after a series of several meetings and then later postponed when a set date was agreed upon. After this, it took almost three weeks to finally reschedule it. For this particular group discussion, I started with 8 participants but by the time it was completed, only four participants remained. Two of the four who had left had indicated beforehand that they had

another engagement and would leave if the meeting went beyond an hour. But the other two left without giving reason; therefore, I took the leave of the latter two to indicate withdrawal, and thus their demographics are not included in the specified table below. Tables 5.4 – 5.8 summarise the details of all persons who took part in the Focus Group Discussions. The real names of the participants have been changed to local names commonly used in this living context, to preserve anonymity.

*Table 5.4: Demographics for the male focus group discussion I (18-31 years) (MFGDI)*

	Name	Marital status	Occupation	Age
Participant 1	James	S	Senior High Student	22
Participant 2	David	M	Electrician Apprentice	24
Participant 3	TT	S	Mobile banker personnel	24
Participant 4	Ashaley	S	Senior High Student	18
Participant 5	John	S	Junior High Student	17
Participant 6	Na	S	Pharmacist Assistant	24
Participant 7	Sammy	S	Unemployed	31

*Table 5.5: Demographics for the male focus group discussion II (32-45 years) (MFGDII)*

	Name	Marital status	Occupation	Age
Participant 1	Na	S	Driver	34
Participant 2	Matey	M	Insurance marketing officer	35
Participant 3	Nuertey	S	Mechanic	38
Participant 4	Steven	S	Teacher	37
Participant 5	TT	M	Teacher	33
Participant 6	Tei	M	Self-employed	34

Table 5.6: *Demographic data for female focus group discussions (Past dipo initiates) (FFGD**I)*

Participant ID	Name	Marital status	Occupation	Age
Participant 1	Ladze	S	Unemployed	24
Participant 2	Marku	S	JHS Student	15
Participant 3	Korkor	M	Trader	32
Participant 4	Rose	M	Housewife	22
Participant 5	Namo	S	Hairdresser apprentice	19
Participant 6	Dede	S	Unemployed	26

Table 5.7: *Demographic data for female focus group discussions (Dipo initiates 2014) (FFGD**II)*

Participant ID	Name	Marital status	Occupation	Age
Participant 1	Jane	S	Hairdresser	17
Participant 2	Theresa	S	Unemployed	17
Participant 3	Mamle	S	JHS Student	14
Participant 4	Teiko	S	JHS Student	13
Participant 5	Masi	S	JHS Student	15

Table 5.8: *Demographic data for female focus group discussions (non-dipo initiates 2014) (FFGD III)*

<i>Participant ID</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Age</i>
Participant 1	Ruth	S	JHS Student	14
Participant 2	Namo	S	JHS Student	14
Participant 3	Laako	S	JHS Student	14
Participant 4	Belinda	S	JHS Student	13
Participant 5	Mary	S	JHS Student	15
Participant 6	Mateko	S	JHS Student	13
Participant 7	Jennifer	S	JHS Student	14

### **5.2.7.3. Participant observation**

A key method of studying the way of life or culture of a group of people, over an extended period of time is what is termed “participant observation”. An important part of the data collection process, for this present study, involved me participating in and observing the community life of the Krobo people of Ghana. I was well aware that living in my mother’s family house could potentially distract my work focus, so I located a small niche stationed away from the family house. I did not have a normal routine pattern, it was largely dependent on times I had scheduled for meetings with informants to recruit participants, conduct interviews and focus group discussions.

My residence location was a 15-minute walk to town, so it gave me an opportunity to participate in community life on a daily basis with others who lived in the same premises, adjoining houses and the surrounding neighbourhood. For example, the house I stayed in had three other occupants, one was an uncle of mine who was the house caretaker. The other two were male senior high school students (a 16- and 17-year-old). My uncle, the caretaker had accommodated them in the boy’s quarters of this four-bedroom house to assist their families, who could not fully support them financially. In exchange for the accommodation, the boys helped to garden, clean and maintain the house surroundings in the absence of its owners who were based in Accra (the capital of Ghana) most of the time.

Thus, I had the opportunity to engage in and explore various aspects of their daily lives. The same can be said of my neighbours, especially the Ashaley family of four siblings

and four grandchildren whom all lived with their mother/grandmother, a widow, who is subsequently referred to as Aunty Rose. My frequent interactions with this family allowed me to explore the daily life experiences of being a single parent and also the event of having to look after grandchildren, as well as support the parents of these children. This helped me gain a better perspective of the family and childhood dynamics. I had other opportunities of engaging in family life, by frequently interacting with members of my extended family.

Information gathered of community life was documented in field notes. Field notes were recorded in a notebook, immediately on the laptop, or on my phone or iPad if I was out at a night event or did not have a notebook but needed to take down notes. All notes were transferred to the project folder created for the research project on my personal laptop.

#### ***5.2.7.4. Photographs***

In this study, I used photographs, videos and audio data as another source of data to document contextual data relevant to the social and psychological worlds of the Krobo people that were insightful but not always captured in speech (Basil, 2011). Images are a powerful communicative source for gathering data. At the same time, Pauwels (2008) warns that the use of photographs for research purposes may create ethical challenges. Such challenges may threaten to disclose the identity of the participants, thus thwarting the protection of anonymity (Wiles, Coffey, Robinson & Heath, 2012). The photographs I use in the final write up are edited to reduce the possibility of recognition. It is important, however, to note that photographs provide only a partial experiential account and therefore are interpreted in conjunction with other sources of data (Hinthorne, 2014).

#### **5.2.8. Data collection method: Details and challenges**

Although in the initial research plan I, the principal investigator (who is female and has a MPhil training in Clinical Psychology), proposed to collect the interview data in conjunction with a male colleague (also with a MPhil training in Clinical Psychology, and well known to the researcher) if the interview involved a male participant, plans changed in the course of implementing the study for a number of reasons cited below:

- a. I, as the principal researcher was the first to make contact with all the participants during the phase of recruitment. Establishing contact and pre-arranging interviews with some persons was often a difficult and challenging task. Due to time constraints,

committing to an interview was often a sacrifice that the participant was only willing to make at their own convenience. For some participants, this period was immediately after the interview request was made. Therefore, there was often no time to make contact with my colleague. For instance, my first interview was with a community leader, specifically, one of the chief's linguists. He was the one assigned by some members of the Mānyā Krobo Traditional council to assist me with the recruitment of study participants. We had scheduled to meet at the Konors palace in Odumase at 9:00am but he was busy when I arrived, so I had to wait. After over three hours of waiting, he finally emerged from the meeting. After explaining my study and recruitment process, he offered to conduct an interview with me on the spur of the moment. I was prepared with my interview documentation (e.g., informed consent form, interview schedule) and equipment (audio recorder) so I conducted the interview immediately.

- b. The very first sets of interviews were conducted with community leaders. Gaining access to them was often unpredictable; sometimes, without prior notice I was called upon by informants to conduct interviews.
- c. On first contact, most of the participants identified with me because of my identity as the daughter of a Krobo person. I was often considered an insider (see the section on the role of the researcher), one of their own. Unlike, me, the male colleague had no personal link to any of the Krobo states.
- d. In cases where I was considered a stranger it took longer to establish a meeting time with the potential participant. But I gained familiarity as I repeatedly pursued the participant for a suitable time. After eventually scheduling time, bringing in a third party would have made the interview process cumbersome.
- e. Although my decision to eventually exclude the male counterpart investigator from interviewing was tolerated by some participants, there was one exception I noted. This was the focus group discussion for the males aged 18 to 31 years. During the evaluation period, when I asked, "Would your responses have been different if the interviewer was male" one participant complained that I had given them the challenging task of having them explain their accounts in considerable detail. Other participants agreed and claimed that the long elaborations on group slang could have

been avoided had I been male, as they believed that a male would have understood their use of jargons better, without having to ask for further explanations.

Despite these complaints, my interaction with these male participants allowed for a context that solicited responses in more detail. Probably, if my male counterpart had conducted the interviews, the male participants may not have been open, nor would they have explained their responses in depth. So, I argue that the decision to be the sole interviewer was ultimately beneficial for the knowledge gathering process.

All of the interviews and FGDs were conducted in English. Most of the participant responses were in English but some responses were expressed in the Dangbe language, Twi language and local jargons when these modes of communication better expressed the participants' thoughts. The semi-structured interviews and FGDs lasted between 45 minutes and 2 hours. In a few exceptional cases, I recorded a 3-hour interview. All interviews and focus group discussions were recorded with an audio recorder; subsequently, narrations were transcribed verbatim and translated into English (if there was the need).

#### ***5.2.8.1. Important notes on the presentation of participant quotes***

Each quote is presented in its raw form so as not to alter the meaning the participants intended to relay. However, these quotes may contain exclamations, euphemisms and local jargons specific to the local or Ghanaian context, and therefore may be difficult to understand without additional information. Therefore, within the quote I may insert some additional information in brackets to enhance reader comprehensibility. It is important to note that the same jargon could be used differently depending on the context. For example, the same expression, "Ahh" could indicate frustration in one quote and excitement in another. In the section below, I present a table with symbols and descriptions, so that the reader can understand symbols used in the quotes

#### ***5.2.8.2. Symbols and descriptions used in participant quotes***

Stated participant quotes may sometimes contain certain symbols; for reader comprehensibility the meaning of these symbols are described in Table 5.9 below:

Table 5.9: *Symbols and descriptions used in participant quotes*

No	Symbol	Description
1	( )	Additional information
2	[ ]	Description of non-verbal gestures of the participant during the interview
3	...	Pause
4	.	Denotes end of sentence
5	.....	Interrupted during speech
6	CAPITAL LETTERS	capitalised word or phrase was mentioned in a loud voice

Each quote ends with an identifier, this may consist of a code, participant gender and method by which data was collected. If data was collected secondary to a FGD, additional formation would be provided in the identifier such as “individual interview”. Similarly, data sourced from a respondent validation interaction is also included in the identifier information.

### 5.2.9. Roles and identity of the researcher in the field

My roles and identity as a researcher shifted as determined by the social actors, who ascribed various meaning to my presence in the field. At times, I was positioned as an outsider. For instance, my nationality as a Ghanaian was often obscured by the fact that I had just returned from South Africa. In such circumstances, I was perceived as a borga. A “borga” is jargon commonly used in Ghana to refer to nationals who have traveled abroad. As Kleist (n.d., p. 1) explains, the term is associated with “successful migrants – or at least, to their appearance – through remittances, presents, cars, gadgets and Western clothing sent from the country of residence or brought back when visiting or returning.”

Because of this impression, some persons perceived me as rich, and as a result I was overcharged for various services including the purchase of beads, taxi fares and for having my hair done. For example, the same hairdo that had cost my cousin GH¢4.00 (\$2.00), cost

me twice as much at GH¢8.00 (\$4.00). When I confronted the hairdresser about this, she communicated, “but you have money.”

Again, the idea that I was a woman – of Krobo descent - who had progressed to an institution of higher learning abroad situated me in a position of importance. For instance, during the 2014 dipo festival programme held in Somanya I was invited to sit among the chiefs and queen mothers, who hold positions of high authority within the community (see the hierarchal system of the chiefs and queen mothers in Figures 5.3 and 5.4 in Chapter Five). On this occasion, I assumed the role of an insider (see Figure 5.9 below). In the picture background on the stage are a host of queenmothers and the presence of one sub chief. The arrow displayed in the picture below, points to an empty seat which I had occupied during this event.



*Figure 5.9.* A dipo girl being awarded a certificate for the successful completion of the dipo initiation rites in 2014. Photograph by Dzifa Attah.

During my introduction to the audience the master of ceremony portrayed me as a role model to the many young girls who had just completed the 2014 dipo initiation (see Figure 5.10).



*Figure 5.10.* A cross section of dipo girls seated during the dipo certificate ceremony, Somanya. Photograph by Dzifa Attah.

Although I often assumed the position of insider and sometimes outsider, some factors often relegated me to the middle position of these competing points. For example, the idea that I had not lived in Kroboland previously, in addition to the fact that my father's family lineage was of a different tribe and my command of the Dangbe (language) was not fluent.

#### **5.2.10. Data analysis**

The mode of analysis differed based on the type of data collected. Below in separate sections the analysis for each method is discussed.

##### ***5.2.10.1. The analysis of IPA data: Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions***

Using the software Atlas ti 7 (originally developed by Thomas Muhr), the audio files of all the interviews and group discussions were individually uploaded, transcribed and analysed. At this stage of the study, Smith and Osborn (2007) note that the analyst is required to interpretatively engage with the data to explore the participants' world accurately and in depth.

### ***5.2.10.1.1. Semi-structured interviews***

To achieve this using semi-structured interview data, I followed guidelines recommended by Howitt (2010):

1. Familiarising with each transcript: Since I personally transcribed the interviews I was already familiar with the data, and started to make notes during transcription, concurrently, using the memo function in the Atlas ti 7 interface to store notes. Notes relating to the data were made and subsequently linked to corresponding quotes. By repeatedly reading the transcript I began to develop what Larkin and Griffiths (2004) term first order codes, which constituted summaries of the participant's claims, concerns and understanding of the topic under study. These codes were also linked directly to the participant's quotes.
2. Preliminary theme identification: Further, second-order codes were developed; these focused on the meaning and context of the claims made by the participant, which were often relevant for the individual participants, common across the range of participants, or known psychology concepts.
3. Generating theme interconnections: emerging patterns of meaning were identified with emphasis on divergence, similarities and contradictions; later these were developed into a cluster of themes, each representing an interpretative component or concept.
4. Systematic table of themes: for comprehensibility themes were further developed by interconnecting related themes structured and summarised into a table. These superordinate themes represent the concerns of the topic in question.
5. Writing up of the analysis: the meanings ascribed to the participants' experience were written up in a narrative account with associated quotes or respondent excerpts to elaborate on the discussion of each theme (Smith, 2007). The details of the analyses are outlined in the next three chapters.

### ***5.2.10.1.2. The analysis of focus group discussions***

For the analysis of FGD data, due to group interaction and complexity, Smith (2004) recommends that transcripts are reviewed twice, once for group interaction patterns, and consequently, for personal accounts.

### ***5.2.10.2 The analysis of ethnographic data***

Field notes and photographs provided a major part of the ethnographic data. Data from here were coded and organised into emerging topics of interest using suggestions provided by Strauss and Corbin (1990) (see Chapter Six for more details).

### **5.3. Ethical considerations and challenges: concerns, dilemmas and conflicts**

The bulk of my field work involved interacting with people, adults and children alike and aspects of their private lives, thus I risked the chance of committing potential harm to the participants under study (Neuman, 2011; Patten & Bruce, 2009). Focusing on research ethics, Gray (2004, p. 73) writes, “any research that involves data gathering or contact with human (or animal) populations involves ethical considerations”. In view of that, I had the responsibility of behaving ethically towards the participants. As a principled researcher, throughout the course of the research study and up until the point of writing up, I have tried to comply with the research code of ethics and ethical considerations incorporated into the research study plan, based on the Sixth Edition Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association (APA, 2010) guidelines and other relevant academic sources. To this end, ethical considerations included issues of, but not limited to, the participants’ protection from potential risk and harm, the participant’s right to privacy and anonymity.

For example, ethical considerations and concerns were covered in the informed or assent consent form. In the case of this study, consent forms were brief, but comprehensive written documents, designed to explain: the study purpose; procedures involved; potential risks; harm and discomfort; society benefits; payment for participation; confidentiality and anonymity; participation and withdrawal; and contact information on the researchers and the ethical boards; data management and protection (see informed consent forms in Appendices C and D). In addition, debriefing sessions were organised for the participants: depending on the availability of the participant this was done individually or in a group at the respondent validation meeting.

In addition to the above, the researcher had to consider other potential concerns raised by the Ethics committees (Research Ethics Committee, Stellenbosch University) and the Ghana Health Service (GHS) Ethical Review Committee (see Appendix E for correspondence) that reviewed the current study proposal. Both ethical bodies raised such concerns given the sensitive nature of the study.

Despite having put these formal ethical processes in place, I faced a number of ethical challenges – dilemmas and conflict. As Neuman (2011) claims, “your direct, personal involvement in the social lives of other people during field research introduces ethical dilemmas”; this is not an unusual happening when researching humans. As the problems emerged, I worked through them immediately or at a later period, with counsel, guidance and direction from my supervisors, when time allowed for a delayed action. Working through dilemmas and conflict often required deliberating between the pursuit of scientific knowledge on one hand, and the rights of the people under study or other members of society on the other (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This was often a very challenging task.

For instance, during one of the interviews, whilst highlighting the importance of a female undergoing the dipo initiation rites, a participant related that her daughter’s potential mother in-law who was a Nigerian had conducted a background check on her son’s potential bride, by secretly interviewing town folk to confirm her suitability for marriage. The participant narrated that the woman had been satisfied with her investigations but indicated that it would have been a totally different story if her daughter (whose father was of a Korean origin and therefore was referred to as White) had not performed the female initiation rites:

*KI 6: My own daughter who is White (Father Asian and mother Ghanaian) I did it (dipo) for her and she married a Nigerian man and could you believe the day that they were coming to perform the marriage. The mother of the boy went out from our house to interview somebody about the White girl oooh. I will show you her picture [even though she was limping because her right leg was injured she got up to take the picture of her daughter from her bedroom] ... [Showing me the picture] now she is a surgical specialist in Korle-Bu.*

*I: Oh I know her! We attend the same church together.*

*KI 6: Oh you know her.*

*I: Yes. We attend the same church and we used to meet occasionally at work at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital*

*KI 6: Oh okay okay [smiles and laughs, and then continues to show me pictures of her daughter] so this is Korkor, when she went for her certificate in Liberia. When she was given her honorary as a professor, so I went with her, but those pictures are all with her. So I have done it (Dipo) for her [Laughing].*

I felt awkward for disclosing that I knew her daughter, but it gave me an opportunity to respect her privacy and at the same time avoid deception. It also offered the participant the chance to continue or discontinue with the interview.

In another example, my integrity and values as a researcher were literally tested by one of the participants. Although in my view, I had adequately informed the participant about the nuances of the study and had explained in some detail issues about anonymity and confidentiality, this participant appeared dissatisfied. She questioned my interview procedures. For example, she asked for a copy of my questionnaire, which I did not have because this study was purely qualitative. I explained that I had no questionnaire but rather an interview schedule. Then she interrogated my intention to record the interview for fear that the information relayed would be misused. Subsequently, she suggested I play back any of my earlier recordings so she could understand the format of the interview. Again, I explained that that would not be possible since it would be a breach of confidentiality on my part and unethical. It appeared my response had addressed her ethical concerns as she said, “now you can proceed with the interview”.

In yet another example, I had to receive GH¢10.00 (U\$3.00) reluctantly from a Chief when he pushed the money into my palms as we shook hands and bid farewell. Initially, I refused to take the money but the informant who had arranged the meeting for me indicated that I was causing an embarrassing situation by refusing a gift from a person of such high authority. Earlier on, we had completed a semi-structured interview and the chief had seemed impressed that I, being female had attained a high level of education. After the interview, he had referred to me as a daughter of Kroboland and had further offered some words of encouragement. The money was meant to pay for transportation to return home.

Although I was able to manage some of the ethical dilemmas I also made a few mistakes but quickly learnt from these experiences. I had once made an arrangement to conduct an interview with a retired police officer, without assistance from any of my informants. In previous interviews before this one, I had always relied on their guidance and assistance in recruiting participants. However, in this case I had met the person in question on several occasions; since we were neighbours, we always exchanged more than a few words any time we spoke. He had even invited me to attend his daughter’s wedding which coincidentally was being held in my house compound. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend.

On one of the occasions we met, I asked if he would be willing to conduct an interview with me. He accepted and we scheduled time to meet. On the day in question when I arrived at his home he was seated under a mango tree reading a newspaper, he asked me to join him. He beckoned for someone to pass me a chair and this was where the interview took place.

As the interview proceeded the interviewee continuously made extremely funny comments which caused both of us to laugh intermittently. Halfway into the interview, I heard an angry female voice shout, “Who is she? Who is she?”. It was the participant’s wife. She appeared extremely upset and was shouting very loudly. She did not pay heed to the pleas from her husband to calm down. My participant got upset; confused, I decided to draw closer to the woman to introduce myself to her. She later apologised and told me her husband should have formally introduced me to her before the start of the interview. She also confided that he had gone out in the morning without her knowledge and had not spoken to her since he returned, so this had upset her. I went back to my participant and he uttered “you see illiteracy.” This situation gave me a cue to end the interview immediately. After that episode I never went ahead of my informants to arrange or schedule meetings on my own. To avoid situations like this, Gray (2004) recommends that male participants could be recruited through female counterparts; for personal safety it is important to know the participant through a third party.

Because of my background as a clinical psychologist, my services were available for participants who experienced some emotional discomfort after the interviews and the focus group discussion. A few participants made use of this service.

## **5.4. High quality data and quality control**

### **5.4.1. Data sources, dependability and trustworthiness**

To establish a level of data dependability and trustworthiness, Neuman (2011) suggests “do not eliminate subjective views to get quality data; rather, for quality data include subjective responses and experiences (p. 455). Thus, the very nature of this current study design being “multi-perspectival” allows for different versions of the same reality to be discovered from different sources (Todd, Nerlich, & McKeown, 2004). Sources for this study include professionals who worked with children and community members of Kroboland. The latter

group was further divided into two distinct categories – community leaders and community members.

Data quality was also controlled when I re-engaged 27 of the participants that were involved in the study. Here, as a form of respondent validation, I conducted a brief presentation of the research findings (in summary) to the participants. This interaction was intended to stimulate further discussion on the basis of the research findings, clarify and validate participant responses. In this study another means of triangulation was achieved by supervision. My thesis supervisors, who were inevitably part of my research team, both psychologists but of different country backgrounds, in reviewing my analysis were both helpful in checking the dependability of the research results (Patten & Bruce, 2009).

#### **5.4.2. Reflexivity: A scrutiny of the researcher**

Researcher bias and subsequently, intersubjective influences with the researched and research context can potentially obliterate the participant's voice or experience in research. To overcome these nuances, Finlay (2002) admonished researchers to evaluate the research process reflexively. According to Gilgun (2008) researchers engage reflexively when they take into consideration the degree of influence they exert on research context, and vice versa. Reflexivity is a skill employed by the researcher to critically self-reflect on his or her personal views and ideas about the world and how these elements influence interpretations of the research being undertaken (Etherington, 2004). Without a reflexive pose, Flood (1999) asserts, research stands to lose powerful meaning and insight. Writing about reflexivity, Shaw (2010, p. 233) wrote:

Our job as researchers is to make sense of these stories and experiences in a meaningful way with a view to learning more about humankind and, often, to affect change, whether that be in terms of influencing policy and practice or enhancing understanding at an individual or institutional level. With this task comes responsibility and for some that alone is sufficient to necessitate reflexivity.

Consistent with the assertions quoted above, authors like Smith (2006) have encouraged the use of reflexivity in research, as it works to reduce researcher bias and increases the quality of research (Carolan, 2003; Jootun, McGhee, & Marland, 2009). With this understanding, I was reflexive by evaluating: my personal interest in the phenomena under study (see section 5.2.1.), my shifting identity, personal values and beliefs in relation to the research topic. My personal history of engaging with the field of CSA (as already

explained in an earlier section) partially led to the development of this study. Therefore, I already had some preconceptions of CSA that were overlaid with personal bias and professional values; these I had to “bracket off,” in order to truly replicate the subjective understanding of the participants I interviewed in this study.

For the predominant part of my childhood I grew up in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, on the University of Ghana, Legon campus, where my father was a lecturer in the Department of Zoology. I am the second of four children. It was only in high school that I had the opportunity to leave Accra to stay in another country region, but had little interaction with the residents of this district compared to the time spent with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds. I completed my primary education, first degree and my Master’s all on the same University of Ghana campus. Thus, I grew up with a rather narrow perception of childhood in Ghana. I first realised this in high school where I lived in a single-sex boarding house facility. Some of the other girls seemed different and behaved differently from what I was used to.

During my first university degree, learning about child development allowed for some clarity but I soon realised that theory did not always translate into reality. Working with other individuals in the peri-rural and rural areas, and subsequently street children and foster children gave me a broader perspective of childhood. For instance, some childhoods were marked with children taking up responsibility for their own survival, in the context of absent or incapable parents.

What in my living context were officially considered preserves for adults where daily activities in which many children participated in order to survive. For some of these children, early sexual experiences plus those characterised by abuse were a major part of these normative experiences. I was astonished when a 17-year-old girl was referred to the Psychiatry unit for treatment for attempting to commit suicide because she suspected her 19-year-old husband was cheating on her. They had married (traditionally) when she was 15 years and he 17 years. I struggled to make sense of such experiences especially since, in Ghana anyone below the age of 18 is legally considered a child.

As mentioned earlier in section 5.2.1., subsequently, I identified the need to understand people and gather more information about people’s views and understanding about childhood and sexuality, particularly CSA experiences from other cultural contexts. Thus, my personal background and world view have shaped the development of this research;

with this in mind I have tried to ensure that the results presented are not my own but the perspectives of my participants.

### **5.4.3. Study limitations**

For every research study conducted there are bound to be limitations due to deficiencies associated with the methods used, as is highlighted in the opening chapter. An account of these limitations is a crucial part of the research methodology discourse, and needs to be discussed as these nuances place a restraint on how the data can be interpreted. As stated in the previous section the IPA method of inquiry has certain disadvantages (see section 5.2.4.1 IPA limitations for details), alongside other pertinent issues, which include among others, concerns of sampling, the researcher-participant relationship and the discussion of a sensitive research topic.

Based on claims made by Smith et al. (2009), a major shortcoming of this current study is that the results represent a perspective of the phenomenon under study, which in this case is CSA rather than that of the Krobo population. The findings are thus limited to those who took part in the study and cannot be said to be representative (Maguire, Stoddart, Flowers, McPhelim, & Kearney, 2014) of the wider Krobo population.

### **5.5. Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I made an attempt to present an overview of how the current study was designed and implemented, from its point of inception to the final stage of writing up the text. As part of this discussion, and in line with guidelines suggested by Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie (1999), I have achieved the following in this chapter. I have provided the reader with an overview of my personal motivation, subsequent interest and engagement in developing the topic for the current research study. Here, I have also stated my theoretical and philosophical standpoint in relation to the knowledge-gathering process and consequently link this position to the selected research design and the choice of methods employed for data collection.

The participants for this study and the research context in which they can be found have been described in considerable detail. Giving this information, I provide the reader with a sense of to whom and where these research findings are applicable. To illustrate my engagement with implementing this study research process I have given concrete examples of

my encounter in the field. For example, I have highlighted my shifting position as a researcher and the many other positions assigned me by the research participants: these dynamics reveal a lot about the participants and the context under study.

The data collection and analyses procedures are also discussed in great detail. Furthermore, I have provided accounts of ethical dilemmas, conflicts and challenges experienced during field work. In various parts of this chapter, I have included reflexive moments undertaken in the course of the study and even during analysis. In addition, I commit an entire sub-section to make sense of this process of reflexivity. To conclude this chapter, I emphasised on some study limitations. The chapter that follows situates the interviewed participants in proper context to allow for a better understanding of CSA. To borrow Elliott et al.'s (1999, p. 224) words, it attempts to bring "the interviewees' experience to life".

## **Chapter Six: Incorporating ethnographic data: participant observations, visual material and the researchers' lived experiences in the field**

*Although there are guidelines in the literature, each project is unique, and ultimately the individual researcher must determine how best to proceed.*  
(Watt, 2007, p.82)

### **6.1. Introduction**

This first results chapter was not originally factored in the study plan; in fact, some readers may even argue that it is a departure from the main theme under discussion. However, the data analyses of participant experiential accounts gave rise to findings that require as much attention as the topic of focus, CSA, because they describe the enabling context for CSA as narrowly defined, or the scaffolding as Gavey (2005) would describe it. By including this chapter, on the taken for granted sights, scenarios, living and daily events recorded of residents in Kroboland, a much clearer picture is drawn for the reader to follow the context in which the experiential accounts of the participants interviewed, will unfold. This is in keeping with the theoretical approach I have taken, drawing for example on the work of Gavey (2005) and Smallbone, et al. (2008) who emphasise the importance of context in understanding CSA.

In this chapter, I present findings from the ethnographic data collected during field work. Sources of ethnographic data include interview data, field notes and visual material that provide some significance for this knowledge-gathering process. The results showed “child neglect” was perceived to be a significant problem among the Krobo people. Evidence to support this perceived neglect of children manifested in so many significant ways, that cannot be overlooked in light of the participant experiences; I report on them here.

I used suggestions provided by Strauss and Corbin (1990) to discuss ethnographic data pertaining to “perceived lack of parental care and child neglect” and other relevant findings. Thus, I will present an explanation of (a) perceived child neglect; (b) its causal conditions; (c) context; (d) intervening conditions; (e) action/interactional strategies; and (f) consequences. Different aspects of the data will be referred to, in the discussion of this concept to aid its understanding.

## 6.2. A perceived lack of parental care and child neglect

In Kroboland, the issue of parental care and child neglect was a dominant part of everyday discourse. During fieldwork, I heard different interpretations of child care that in the view of many fell short of required cultural caregiving standards. Like parents elsewhere, the Krobo parent is expected to provide an enhancing environment, for the optimal development of his or her child (Bornstein, 2012). In other words, parents have the responsibility to nurture their children in order to achieve maximum development, socially, emotionally and mentally. The same is required of guardians (i.e., relations, school) who may have to take up the parental role in the absence of a biological parent or parents.

Among the Krobo people, expected modes and roles of child care vary based on the gender of the parent. Ultimately, a parent is expected to be committed, accessible and accountable towards his or her child's upkeep. Several decades ago, Huber (1963, p. 78) highlighted on the responsibility of a father among the Krobo:

Though in the whole structure of the kin group he may occupy a subordinate position, with respect to his own children he bears considerable responsibilities and duties. Thus, he has the main financial burden of their [child's] rearing and education as well as of the customary performances during their lifetime.

In earlier decades, a male child was trained at an early age to build the capacity for taking charge, taking up financial and social responsibilities of caring for a family and subsequently, children. In a number of interviews, I was informed of a dated traditional practice of the Krobo people that was instituted to prepare boys for adulthood, marriage, as well as parenthood.

When the family deemed the male child to be of age, he was given a sheep as personal property and required to rear it. A male was only deemed competent and successful when he had learned to, and proven he could take care of the sheep placed under his tutelage. Various community leaders talked about this:

*When you get to the age 18 years, we have a tradition of err getting you a sheep for you to rear. You see women, they disturb a lot, so for you to get marriage experience your father will buy a sheep for you, a male sheep for for... then you rear the sheep for one year. If you are able to control that male sheep... at times, it will be disturbing you yah! It will be making unnecessary noise, you have to feed it when it is hungry, otherwise it would be making noise. When you are able to care for this sheep for one year, then you have attained the level of maturity and you can now marry. Then they (the family) will buy you a gun ... they (the family) will buy you a gun and they (the family) will teach you how to shoot yah! So that you go hunting yah! Then after that*

*they (the family) give you land to be farming all these things they are traditions preparing you for marriage. (CL3 male, semi-structured interview)*

*In the olden days before you will marry as a man they (the family) will buy you a sheep, and they (the family) will see the way you will look after the sheep. If you keep it well, then they can allow you to marry. (CL1 male, semi-structured interview)*

*When you are circumcised they will give you err err a sheep to keep. If you are able to keep the sheep for one year then they (the family) know if they marry for you you can keep the woman. (CL 4 male, semi-structured interview)*

In a similar vein, the role of a Krobo mother in bringing up a child forms an integral part of the early training of girls during the dipo practice. As highlighted in Chapter Four, the tenets of dipo, among other components, lays emphasis on the proper upbringing and care of children.

*The girl was given that special training for home keeping err child welfare err you know growing up in the knowledge of serving err the family, err personal hygiene, serving the family, err then getting vest in in preparing meals and taking care of the brothers, the boys at home. Then because in future she might be a mother, err she was taught you know, the work of a mother you know first aid with herbs and so on. (CL 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

To date, although the training of boys in this mode has ceased and the performance of dipo today is shorter, with little emphasis on the training component, from what I observed and heard, these requirements expected of parents have not changed. The people I interacted with were very open in their discussions about parental obligations and nurturance duties of a parent or guardians; it even came up in casual conversations without much prompting.

For instance, I recall one day on my way home from the town centre in Odumase I decided to take a different route home, so I could visit one of my neighbours, Aunt Rose<sup>10</sup>. After spending some time with her and family I headed home. As I negotiated the turn into the path adjoining the route to my house I noticed an elderly man underneath the tree shade, where he sat reading a newspaper, nearby his home. As I walked past him, I greeted and continued; immediately he beckoned for me to stop and draw close.

After a personal introduction he began to engage me in conversation. Within a matter of a few minutes, this man, a retired police officer, had gone from acknowledging the fact that we (he and I) were one family, in his own words “one blood”, to the discussion of his discontent about the contemporary care of children in Ghana, and in particular Kroboland. I

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<sup>10</sup> I referred to her as Aunt Rose because she is much older than me.

was astonished by his frankness as I had no prior knowledge of him, but in this one-time encounter his concerns about the welfare of children in Kroboland were made clear. In his opinion, the present child generation has been deprived of quality child care. He talked about how the over-all welfare of children has been compromised and taken for granted, even by educational institutions.

In one of his examples to illustrate this, he pointed out how a private elementary school sited in the neighbourhood had made no consideration for a playground in their school building plan. The school, although in operation, was an uncompleted building structure; the construction of the school still seemed to be ongoing. It was a U-shaped two-storey building covering two plots of land. The building seemed to have occupied most of the land space leaving little room for children to play. He reasoned that this was an unacceptable setting for play which he considered was an integral part of a child's healthy development and well-being.

From what I had personally seen, it was true that very few public recreational sites existed for children in these localities – besides the large public school compounds and public grounds that usually doubled as trading points. Nonetheless, play was still an integral part of everyday life for these children. When they were limited by their engagement in house chores or other child responsibilities, they negotiated this space to play and have fun, at the least opportunity. For instance, young children played on their way to and from school, to and at the borehole where they fetched water for home consumption (not all houses were connected with pipe-borne water). Some families obtain their water from service providers on a commercial basis or from the community boreholes.

I once met Philemon and Aaron, Aunt Rose's (my neighbour) son and grandson, when I was returning home from town; they were on their way to fetch water. They seemed to be having lots of fun and initially had not taken notice of me, each boy taking turns to sit in the wheelbarrow (containing the water gallon to be filled for home consumption as the other pushed along).



*Figure 6.1.* Philemon and Aaron on their way to fetch a gallon of water.

It was also not uncommon to see groups of children engaged in play activities. The borehole area adjacent to the Konor's place in Odumase was one spot where groups of children were usually found playing, in the afternoons after school. As they wait for their turn to fetch water they interacted in games or chatted with each other. On the occasions I had observed children in this area there were more girls than boys present at the well. At about the same time, boys could be found playing football on the public grounds behind the Konor's palace in Odumase.

On two different occasions, I interacted with a group of boys of mixed ages who were on hunting expeditions to catch birds: they roamed from one side of town to the other with catapults searching for prey. Other common settings for play included house compounds, house alleys and the streets. Older children on the other hand were most of the time preoccupied with friends in conversations. For those who could afford mobile phones, they browsed the internet and used social media networks (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter) to facilitate communication with friends on a frequent basis.



*Figure 6.2.* Picture of school children gathered around a friend using a cell phone during break time.

Despite evidence that suggests that children themselves created space for play whenever possible, a major concern for many in the community was that children were increasingly being left unattended to, allowed to stray away from home to play and engage with others and in certain activities with limited parental guidance or supervision. Some elderly participants noted that this had not been the case when they were children. As children, parental supervision had been strict. A common strategy used by parents and guardians at the time was to keep children preoccupied and close by:

*They (the family) trained us in a Christian way ... as... because my father was a presbyter for so long a time, so when we want to go somewhere ... then we are going to the church house [laughs] hehehee ... to the chapel and from the chapel you are going to the house or you are going to JY (Junior Youth) meeting or YPG (Young Presbyterians Guild) meeting or err the choir. Me, I was a chorister err herh so from there you come to the house and from there you are going to school. My mother will not give you the chance ... to play even she was a baker so we were all the time busy, so I don't know how to sleep in the afternoon. Hmmm, we wake up at 5:00am or 4:30am we go and bake before you go to school. (KI 5, female semi-structured interview)*

In the example below, KI 6, an elderly woman in her late 60s recounted her days spent in the dipo house<sup>11</sup> where she and other (female) relatives were kept in training, under strict surveillance for a whole year:

*We will be in a room like this [points to her sitting room] we don't go out. You don't do anything and then a bell is put around our foot and the meaning of that was when the old lady is asleep and then maybe somebody is standing outside calling you or peeping and then immediately you step out the bell will ring "clang" then the woman will get up*

CL 4 also recounted how he was closely monitored as a child:

*Because of my mother and father I had no chance to go out errr my mother's ear was very swift and she always watched my footsteps and anytime she didn't see me, you would see ... you would hear her calling errr err Phillip are you there? Just for nothing just to make sure that you haven't gone out.*

During fieldwork, some people complained about poor parental supervision. My observation of common child routine activity illuminates some of these concerns. For instance, I went with an informant, Eunice to the house of a potential participant, Korkor. It was 10:00am at the time, the house looked deserted, although one door of the several doors that faced the compound was left ajar, it was not clear if anyone was at home. As we got closer to the opened door, I could hear the sound of the TV blaring. Eunice called out for Korkor, yet there was no response. Eunice whispered to say probably it was only Korkor's grandmother who was home. Eunice persisted to call out for Korkor. Eventually, after what seemed like two minutes, a 5-year-old boy finally exited from the opened door reluctantly. He was the fourth of Korkor's five children, and it appeared he had not attended school that day and had been left in the care of his 97-year-old grandmother who was old, feeble and immobile, while the mother had gone off to run some errands.

In another case, I was going to the venue chosen for my focus group discussions when I saw a group of six children all trying to compete for space to peep through a resident's bedroom window to watch TV. I knew one of the children; he was the 8-year-old son of one of my informants, Dede. I had met him on several occasions in a diverse number of settings unaccompanied.

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<sup>11</sup> With time dipo was no longer performed on the Krobo Mountain; dipo homes became substitute locations for the performance of dipo. Dipo houses were not permanent places but were usually owned by certain reputable men in the clan whose houses were chosen to host the young girls from the clan who were due for the dipo rites.

On another occasion it was Valentine's Day. At about 9:00pm I walked around town to see how the town folk spent the occasion. While walking along the Lassi Park, I noticed three children, two boys and a girl, playing as they walked across the park. On three separate days, I also found a number of children loitering around the burial grounds long after the event had ended. In one case, which occurred during the day time, the group of children were moving through the rows of chairs which had been arranged under canopies for the guests attending the funeral function, to see what leftovers they could find.

Usually, children looked for food or scraps that could be used for play. On two occasions, groups of different children were found dancing to music that was still being played by the DJs, hours after the event finished, one of these occasions I observed late in the afternoon and the other one was late at night, at about 9:00pm. This had been a major concern for a number of adults in the community, especially after funeral events. One resident talked about this:

*When I was going to do the funeral (for my daughter) these bands men ... usually you will put bandsmen at the funeral to be playing music... and then you will see these kids around the house dancing till midnight and that should not go on. You as a leader in the community, you must tell the one who is going to perform the funeral that by 6 o'clock or latest by 10 o'clock you close for the child to go home and sleep but they (the leadership) are not doing it. In my case when it was 6 o'clock I told the band men to pack their things and go, it was enough for me. You see so every kid went away from my house where they went I don't know, but I made sure they are gone away from my house. (KI 6 female, semi-structured interview)*

Similarly, late at night, children of various ages often gathered around electronic appliances and video shops along the roadside, where televisions were often displayed to attract the attention of customers; here children usually stood at a distance to watch TV. Usually, the owners of the shops showed movies or local station programmes on some of the TV screens. On one occasion at the Somanya taxi station I saw a young girl with a baby on her back watching TV with a group of other children, at a movie shop; there were also some adults present.

As part of their household duties, a number of children had to trade food items at night. I recall seeing a young girl of about 15 years working as a waitress where she sold cold non-alcoholic beverages as well as alcoholic drinks in a popular bar at Atua. I once watched as a boy of about 13 years sold cigarettes to a customer from a home-based bar and shop<sup>12</sup>. I

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<sup>12</sup> I call it home-based because this bar was situated in a compound house.

remember how a family friend's daughter, after meeting me once, would always chase after me whenever she saw me pass by their house, requesting that I buy her something. One night as I stood watching activity at a distance from two popular night clubs in Somanya, I saw a woman who appeared to be in her 20s pass by, she was dressed wearing a skimpy top and hot pants. She was accompanied by a child (probably about 7 years old) who was dressed in similar attire; they were making their way to the club.

Claims that the care of children was partly compromised by the limited supervision of children, and by environmental and social stresses that affect the quality of care, were common. Compared to what is spoken of the past, standards of child care in current times seem to have changed to the detriment of a child's general well-being.

Like many others, the retired police officer expressed uncertainty about the future generation of children. Concluding his conversation with me, he remarked:

*I do not have too long to live but we ought to think about our children. If the end of the world does not come, then I am not sure of the fate of Ghana.* (Field notes, March 4, 2014)

By this statement, I understood his concern for the future generation, the poor state of care offered to children did not directly affect him as he was old, but it made him worry about the future of children in the society.

### **6.3. Conflicting sides: value of children versus the lack of child care**

Among the Krobo people, many parents and guardians value and take pride in their children. They demonstrated this notion by talking extensively about their children's achievements to others; this usually involved indicating their intellectual abilities, educational status or progress and their professions – if they were adults. Several decades ago, Huber (1960), during his anthropological work with the Krobo, also noted the importance the Krobo people attached to their children or kinsmen. To the extent that if a woman “bears no children it is taken as a great misfortune” (Huber, 1963, p. 139).

Indicating the importance of bearing children, CL1 told me a few stories of persons who had to divorce, remarry or take a concubine as a consequence of fertility problems:

*There was one case where a man married a woman and they had one child. The man loved the woman so much but out of nowhere the man developed a sickness. He had performed marriage rites on the woman. But the man had a sickness which made him*

*impotent. He wouldn't want the woman to go. So there was that mutual agreement between the man and the woman, [low voice] that don't go about jumping from one man to another, but find some respectable person and go to him. When there is any pregnancy I will take care of it [still in a low voice].*

*One of my cousins, George, we call him Pastor George, yes he got married as a pastor but what happened? The marriage ended on the rocks because the woman did not produce any offspring for him.*

*I know of a marriage, the man had been blaming the woman even beating her for not producing a child and the girl decided to leave. In fact, the man is a police man and has been beating the lady but the lady left and married somebody else and has produced about four children with this other person.*

The value of a child is also illustrated in how some parents and family members invest into the performance of dipo (as described earlier in Chapter Four) for their girl child. For instance, although some families struggle to make ends meet, they often sacrifice a lot of resources so that their daughters can participate in the dipo rituals:

*They (the Krobo) are peasant farmers so when it comes to that time you can see people giving out part of their lands. They give it out to people for years to lease, so that they can get money to come and do dipo. So after just spending a week to come and do the dipo and you lease your land for about four or five years [laughing] you will go back home to to your land, you know it reduces your farming capacity. (CL 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

*Somebody will tell you that I don't have money but when it comes to dipo time, she will get money for beads and cloth. Some buy kente those who have the money some also go to hire the cloths. (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

One of the girls, who had taken part in the 2014 dipo rituals, which I had the opportunity of observing, narrated how after the completion of dipo, her mother could not afford to pay for transportation from Kroboland back to Accra, the capital city of Ghana, where she worked as a hair stylist apprentice. Meanwhile, a day before, at the dipo house, the girl in question, shown in figure 6.3 below, was pondering how she was going to wear a large quantity of beads that had been handed over to her, as the beads were heavy. Her mother had already warned her that she was going to wear every single one of them, since she had rented and paid for them.



*Figure 6.3.* Girl seated close to the beads that had just been handed over to her by her mother in preparation for the final day of dipo.

It is always a general moment of pride and celebration when the maidens of the clan pass through the dipo rites successfully, particularly the sacred stone test (see picture below of clan members dancing and making merry, almost at the end of the dipo process).



*Figure 6.4.* A group of Krobo women dancing and celebrating the return of the dipo initiates from the shrine, where the sacred stone test had taken place.

Although having children in Kroboland seems highly valued, evidence regarding this assertion is conflicting, as not all parents or guardians cared for their young ones adequately. Experiences of the residents and my observations suggest that some parents left their children in the care of relatives without providing adequate funds for their sustenance and upkeep. While some relatives struggled to provide for these children, others did not adequately cater for the children placed under their care. Many residents criticised such behaviour, however, this was an unpleasant truth for a number of children living in this community. I was privy to some examples of these situations in the field; these are described in sections below.

### **6.3.1. Financial support and emotional neediness**

One Wednesday, I had an appointment to interview a counsellor at the Junior High School (JHS) section of one of the basic schools in Odumase. When I got there the students and some of the teaching staff were attending an assembly outside of the JHS classroom block. So I sat to wait under the canteen shed. The headmaster who was absent at the time, arrived later and invited me to join in the meeting. I was given a chair among the other teachers. The students had first started with morning devotion; this was followed by a session on sex education; the theme was the “dangers of sex”.

Almost at the end of the meeting, I heard a female voice from behind me say “warn your boys, I said warn your boys to stop harassing my students!” It was the headmistress in charge of the primary school section. She was directly addressing the JHS headmaster who was standing behind me. She was very angry and upset. Apparently, a 13-year-old, class 3 student had gone missing over the weekend, and eventually her family members had found her in the company of a 24-year-old JHS 3 male student. After interrogation, the family found that the boy had had sex with her. They immediately reported the case to the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU). After pouring out her frustration and calming down, the headmistress, well aware that this girl was inadequately looked after by her relatives as her parents were said to be stationed in the village, said:

*I really don't blame the girl but her family. This was someone who always came to school on an empty stomach, what did they expect her to do? (Field notes, April 2, 2014)*

Later, I was told that this 13-year-old claimed to be deeply in love with this boy and had already introduced him to her parents in the village, as a potential husband.

I heard similar stories to that of the 13-year-old student. For instance, I was supposed to have met with one of my informants, but he had to cancel our meeting time at the last minute, because a friend's daughter had gone missing for three days. He was part of the search party that had offered to assist the girl's father find her. The missing girl returned home after a week with the excuse that she had gone to visit a friend. However, the girl's father suspected she had gone to see a male friend.

According to one Divisional chief, reports of missing children were common problems brought to his attention, particularly when they not well taken care of by their guardians:

*At times, somebody will come and say my granddaughter is lost. Let's say for a week, she run away from home. For a week, that means, somebody kept her somewhere. If you are a girl and then you need something from a boy, by all means, he too will have to get something, because he is not your brother, he is not your father. (CL 11 male, semi-structured interview)*

As highlighted by Young and Ansell (2003), some families, due to poverty, struggle to take care of their children and therefore rely on relatives for assistance. For instance, Ashaley, my neighbour's son, was the eighth of ten children, and had been sent off to live with an aunt in Madina, a suburb of Accra, to reduce the burden of looking after a large

family singlehandedly. We first met when he was on the Christmas school break, so occasionally I saw him when he came to visit his family – he usually came on the weekends. On one of these visits he expressed dissatisfaction about his living situation, he explained that his aunt was not very accommodating and supportive; nonetheless, he preferred staying in Madina to living in Odumase, due to the quality of education he received in the city.

Finances play a major role in the quality of care offered to children; a lack of finances was problematic leading some children to feel neglected. For example, some children had their school fees paid for but received no extra allowance for basic necessities. One female participant, for instance, narrated that:

*I come to school from 6:00am to 4:00pm, nowadays we (final year students) have be closing at six and they give me 1 cedi (50 cents) to school but all the same, I have been managing it. That's not my problem but the house attire the sandals and the bra ... [sighs]. (Ladze Non-dipo Initiate, Individual interview)*

This observation of limited financial support was also evidenced by the recurrent reports of child maintenance problems at the Akuse branch<sup>13</sup> of DOVVSU. As will become clearer in Chapter Eight, some children experience very little time with their parents or guardians, compared to the time spent with others. This observation is similar to what Clark (1999) found among the Ashanti people of Ghana, during her fieldwork, as is highlighted in Chapter Four and thus, may not be an aberration from the norm.

Clark (1999) observed that Ashanti children formed stronger emotional ties with their relatives (i.e., siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles) who play active roles in their upbringing, compared to with the parents of the child. Clark (1999) posits that an Ashanti mother benefits from a special kind of mother-child bond due to the biological connection established by childbirth and the gift of life, which occurs with pain and suffering; Clark (1999) defines this bond as never-ending. Fathers, on the other hand, are usually considered as emotionally distant. Nonetheless, they are required to provide their children with financial support; this according to Clark (1999) permits the growth of a father and child emotional bond. Here, it can be assumed that money is perceived as a sign of love and commitment to a child.

This may be similar to what occurs among the Krobo, as is indicated in Chapter Eight. For some children a lack of financial support was linked to a context of emotional neediness. A remedy for this was often found among persons who offered financial support but were not

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<sup>13</sup> The Akuse branch, DOVVSU, is the Domestic Violence Victim and Support Unit of police that offers services to the people of Akuse, including other areas like Somanya, Odumase and surrounding areas.

parents or guardians of the child, some of whom later took advantage of the unknowing child who felt socially isolated by family but found solace in a supportive relationship.

### **6.3.2. Emotionally distant guardians: They don't like me!**

Lizzy, the 13-year-old daughter of Aunt Rose, my neighbour, complained about feeling unloved and unwanted at home; once she even asked if she could come and stay with me. A major reason that contributed to her unhappiness was how her big brothers treated her, she felt that her home constituted a hostile environment. Her big brother, James, had once beaten her up mercilessly for coming home late after a school function, returning in a different dress and found in the possession of money. She had worn a dress on her way out but had been seen in town wearing a short skirt. Although he claimed he acted out of concern he had maltreated Lizzy in the process. James had been very upset about Lizzy's behaviour, which according to him was suggestive of her sleeping around. Out of anger he had whipped her with a belt. Lizzy claimed that her mother was unresponsive to how she was maltreated. "They don't like me", she told me, referring to her family. That very day Lizzy packed her belongings wanting to leave home. Three weeks later, with the support of her mother, she finally moved out of home to stay with an outsider. I saw her after a week, she appeared cheerful.

It was a Saturday and I had just returned from the field. Prince, one of the boys I stayed with, was in the hall watching TV. I asked how his day had been, his response was, "it was a bad day for me". In the morning he had attended the engagement ceremony of his 72-year-old father and stepmother; he had initially refused to attend the event but his elder sister had pleaded with him. Attending the ceremony and estimating the amount of money that had been spent on the event brought Prince to tears.

Prince was in his final year of high school yet he received minimal support from his father for the payment of school fees. It was money sourced from eldest sister and personal savings from farming that served as financial support. There were days he had to skip school to earn extra money or to avoid being sacked from school because of the debt he owed. Meanwhile, his father spent adequately on his step siblings. Prince could not understand why his side of the family were not treated in similar manner.

As discussed above, for various reasons (particularly, financially related), some children as part of their childhood experienced a lack of parental care and child neglect,

contrary to the values and expectations of the Krobo tradition and society. These children's stories are not dissimilar to stories some children would tell in other contexts – many children feel disliked at home, or believe that their needs are not prioritised. But the issues have a local context, a context of deprivation and social change. Factors such as the legitimate status of children, parental divorce or separation and the demise of a parent apparently do affect the quality of care provided to children in Kroboland and may be associated with neglect. In the sections below, I engage in a discussion of these factors.

#### **6.4. Family structures affecting the quality of child care**

##### **6.4.1. The legitimate status of children in Kroboland: Nyumu bi (man's child) or Yo bi (woman's child)?**

Several weeks after closely observing family interactions of residents in Kroboland, certain conventions and rules governing the experiences of children in this area were “slowly and almost unconsciously” (Gobo, 2008, p. 13) uncovered. One factor I took for granted, up until the point of data analysis, was the legitimate status of a child, born as a Krobo.

As a child, one is identified either as the legitimate child of the father or mother, in other words, considered to be an official part of their father's or mother's family lineage. Acquiring the status of *nyumu bi* (man's child) implies that the child's parents were married at the time of the child's conception, and are traditionally recognised as man and wife. On the other hand, the status of *yo bi* (woman's child) suggests the child's parents were not traditionally married at the time of conception. If the biological father fails to claim legitimacy of the child by performing a special ceremony called *La pomi* (cutting of the string)<sup>14</sup> the woman's family claim full rights over the child. My third and fourth interviewees, both community leaders, had explained the conventions regulating the status of children in Kroboland in great detail and so have a few researchers (Huber, 1963; Steegstra, 2005) before me.

For instance, writing about the family systems of the Krobo several years ago, Steegstra (2005, pp. 49-50) claimed:

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<sup>14</sup> When a child is born out of wedlock, at birth his or her maternal family claim paternity rights, a raffia fibre with a black and white bead are tied around the baby's wrist to symbolise this. A name is also given to the child, should the biological father want to claim his child he has to perform a ritual “La pomi” to sever any ties with the child's maternal family. Cutting the string that was tied to the child's wrist at birth symbolises the separation of ties and a ritual cancellation of the name that was earlier given to the child (see Steegstra, 2005).

A woman who is not married or divorced can stay in her own family house or return to her family house. This situation is very common. Many women are either divorced or have children from different fathers without being (fully) married. In case a woman has divorced, her husband may claim any child. If he is not married to the mother, the child, even if the father is known, will be raised within the mother's family. Such children will inherit from the mother's father and are called *yo bi* (the woman's child) as opposed to *nyumu bi* (the man's child).

As was the case ten years ago, a cross section of children in Kroboland are born today out of wedlock and thus belong to their mother's family. In other words, a "yo bi" legitimately becomes the sole responsibility of the unmarried woman's father, and unavoidably forms a part of his kinsmen (Huber, 1960, p. 84).

As indicated earlier, I did not originally set out to investigate the lineage status of my participants, until it emerged as a topic of great concern to my participants. From the data available an emerging pattern suggests a number of my participants were "yo bi." For example, in the focus group discussion (FGD) of past *dipo* initiates, half of the team were *yo bi* (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: *The legal status for females who participated in the past dipo initiates' FGD*

Participant ID	Name	Child Status	Marital status	Occupation	Age	Children
Participant 1	Ladze	YB	S	Unemployed	24	nil
Participant 2	Maku	NB	S	JHS student	15	nil
Participant 3	Korkor	NB	M	Trader	32	5
Participant 4	Rose	NB	M	Housewife	22	2
Participant 5	Namo	YB	S	Hairdresser Apprentice	19	nil
Participant 6	Dede	YB	S	Unemployed	26	1

*Note.* YB – *yo bi*; NB – *nyumu bi*

Table 6.2: *The legal status for males who participated in the male 18-31 FGD*

Participant ID	Name	Child Status	Marital status	Occupation	Age
Participant 1	James	YB	S	Senior High Student	22
Participant 2	David	NB	M	Electrician Apprentice	24
Participant 3	TT	NB	S	Mobile banker personnel	24
Participant 4	Ashaley	YB	S	Senior High Student	18
Participant 5	John	NB	S	Junior High Student	17
Participant 6	Na	NB	S	Pharmacist Assistant	24
Participant 7	Sammy	YB	S	Unemployed	31

*Note.* YB – yo bi; NB – nyumu bi

Similarly, Table 6.2 shows that in another FGD three out of the seven male participants were yo bi mε (plural).

Reflecting on how widespread this phenomenon was perceived in Kroboland, one male participant commented:

*Me I think err we Krobos like this ... our mothers like snatching us from our fathers ... number one thing (its very common), yeah so we boys boys all ... err our elder brothers or sisters in this town many of us ... are hehehe yo bi mε hehehe, am I lying [laughs] eh? (Sammy, 31 years old, MFGD I)*

Sammy's comment reveals how some "yo bi's" may feel about their fathers' losing paternity rights over them. His use of the pronoun "us" and his addition of "mε" (which indicates plural) to the term yo bi, seems to imply his own status and inclusion. His use of the term "snatching" is laden with meaning. For Sammy, just like the other FGD members who concurred with his statement, this system of inheritance is problematic for many children.

Among the participants I interviewed, it was widely perceived that "yo bi mε" often lived under difficult, uncertain and mediocre living conditions compared to "nyumu bi" who are assumed to survive under stable life conditions and genuine child-parent relationships. One informant revealed that within the family hierarchy yo bi mε were considered to have a low social status:

*A woman's child actually doesn't have err the same power as the children of men in the house. (CL 1 male, semi-scrutured interview)*

While in the past, the security, upkeep and sustenance of a “yo bi” was assured by his/her mother’s family, the story is quite different today. As a result of poverty and social change, very few relatives or family members other than the immediate grandparents offer or are able to support the maintenance of these children.

Take the case of 26-year-old Dede, one of my informants who lives in Korletsom, a suburb of Odumase. She is the first of three children; at the time of fieldwork she had an 8-year-old son, “L”. Her 22-year-old sister Maamle had a 6-year-old daughter, “Y”. Both women conceived their children out of wedlock. All four of them, to date, still live with their biological mother and an 18-year-old brother in a single room located in their mother’s family house. Although not married to her daughter’s father, Maamle receives a monthly remittance for her daughter’s upkeep but this is rarely adequate, so she also depends on her mother for additional support.

Dede on the other hand receives no financial support from the father of her son, and she has relied primarily on funds provided by her mother, who sells waakye (a popular local dish made of rice and beans) in an elementary school. As far back as she could remember, Dede has received GH¢5 (\$2.50) only once from her own father, which was a contribution towards the upkeep of her son. Dede’s mother, with very little support from the father of her children, continues to provide financial support to her children and grandchildren to date. Many children like ‘L’ and ‘Y’ live in similar living circumstances. Like Dede’s mother very few receive additional support from family members; this is a source of parental stress for those affected.

It may appear that I suggest only *yo bi mε* are prone to a lack of parental care but this is not the case. Many other children who were *nyumu bi* also predisposed to levels of similar vulnerability, however, a number of participants clearly pointed out that the case of a *yo bi* was peculiar and more complex than the situation of *nyumu bi mε*. This is arguable, because findings from this present study suggest both of these groups of children might be predisposed to similar impacts resulting from parental divorce, parental separation and the demise of a parent. I will illustrate this in the discussion below.

#### **6.4.2. Parental divorce or separation**

Na, a 34-year-old man who lives in Somanya, spoke of how, until 2013, he had had a poor relationship with his father, because of his experience of neglect as a child. His parents were

separated. For as long as he could remember he and three other siblings had been brought up singlehandedly by his mother with little involvement from his dad. He spoke fondly of his mother, but held his father in great contempt as a consequence of the partial provision of care and support he and his siblings had received. He noted however that his step siblings were well taken care of, by his father.

In another case scenario, James a 22 years old man, had as a child been left in the care of his grandmother due to his parents' divorce. He attempted to explain the impact of absent parents:

*If God bless you and your mother and father are still in a relationship, it is good but if they are not having the relationship again then you are lost. Unless, you struggle for yourself, because right now, it only my grandmother that can help me but right now she too she is sick. (James, 22 years old MFGD 1)*

Similar outcomes were observed for children whose biological parent was deceased; the nuances of this are discussed in the section below.

#### **6.4.3. The demise of a parent: Guardianship a struggle for relatives**

Talking about adoption and guardianship, Huber (1960, p. 86) writes, "If a man dies, there is the customary rule that his wife and children are taken care of by a close paternal relative, usually a brother of the deceased". On one of my visits to the family house to see my great-aunt (my grandfather's cousin) just before the Christmas holidays, she appeared worried, annoyed and frustrated all at the same time. She explained that, without her knowledge, the third wife of her (deceased) brother had brought in his surviving children (two girls, a 7-year-old and 11-year-old) to spend the Christmas holidays with her. She had returned home from town that day to meet the two girls in the house unaccompanied; she was furious.

My great aunt, who for the purposes of this research I name Koryo, was the younger of two surviving siblings. Her older sister lives overseas. After the Christmas holidays the girls returned home to their mother but in less than a month, the mother returned with the girls claiming that she could no longer cater for the girls' upkeep and for that reason had brought them back to her husband's family for good. My great aunt was devastated by this outcome, considering her status as a widow and unemployed with other dependants. For instance, she was already financially supporting her brother's older children – two boys from two previous relationships – an older 93-year-old sister, and a daughter. She was concerned about how she was going to cope. It was the beginning of a new academic year for

elementary students and the girls needed to start school. Looking after four children coupled with other responsibilities was a huge burden and a lot of sacrifice; she wondered how she was going to cope, considering her current financial situation. She survived on her husband's support fund and seasonal earnings from her farm produce and sometimes support from her sister and relatives, but this was not always sufficient, given the difficult economic conditions in Ghana. It was a struggle for her.

Owing to the death of a parent, some children have been raised by: a biological parent, singlehandedly; grandparents; step-parent and biological parent. These family structures often impact on the quality of care received. For instance, while some step parents are perceived to be caring and supportive, others provide very little care to children who are not their own. A few participants (see Chapter Eight) talked about negative experiences of growing up in step families where care was not satisfactorily given.

### **6.5. Consequences of perceived lack of parental care: You sow, you reap!**

As I have tried to show above, I came across some examples of mothers who had neglected, abandoned or failed to care for their children, but probably not to the extent to which I had learned of cases that involved fathers. Supporting evidence of this was also provided by KI 8 in the statement below:

*Most men give birth (have children), even without taking care of them and then the burden lies solely on the mothers who are not doing any serious job. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

The idea of a “lack of parental care” shown by fathers seemed pervasive in the community, and this was illustrated in everyday discourses, practices and activities that exposed the struggle, the suffering and pain some affected persons had to go through as a result of the neglect they had been exposed to in childhood.

Based on shared experiences some persons affected in this manner in turn used presenting opportunities to avenge against the faulting parent or guardian. In the sections that follow I will describe how a faulting parents' or guardians' life might be at risk for possible adversity instigated by an angered child, as a result of their failure to provide adequate parental care. This current discussion is grounded in the background of an emerging livelihood practice, namely Sakawa (as explained below) among some youth in Kroboland. In

addition, I will attempt to exemplify the function of revenge by also using examples of elderly neglect.

### 6.5.1 Child neglect and emerging livelihood practices

As is the case in some other countries, Mothers' Day is rapidly becoming a time where offspring (both children and adults) in Ghana celebrate motherhood, the lives of their mothers, or other women who hold some significance in their lives. In 2014 during data collection, Mothers' Day fell on the 11th of May. It was a Sunday, my great aunt who thus far I have referred to as Koryo, indicated that she had started to receive phone calls and text messages of good wishes continuously since the early hours of the day in question.

Great aunt Koryo was overwhelmed by the appreciation shown by many on that day, and so was Aunt Maamle. In the quote below, Aunt Maamle compared the euphoria experienced on Mothers' Day to that observed on Fathers' Day; according to her, people hardly acknowledged Fathers' day.

*The men ... some [shakes head] ... it fathers on Sunday ... what do you observe? When Mothers' day was about to come, three weeks before the day eiii it was just ahhh (excitement) Mothers' Day ... Mothers' Day [expressed amazement about the hysteria created because of the celebration of mothers]. Sunday will be Fathers' Day... I only heard about it yesterday. I was asking somebody today what's the occasion he said oh! fathers me oh I don't know about Fathers' Day [whispering]and in Kroboland one thing they have against their fathers is the la pomi<sup>15</sup> because of this "la pomi". The "la pomi" issue you will have sex with a woman, impregnate her and not go (to provide) for the child so this child if you are a boy you are in your mother's house "yo bi". You become yo bi and maybe the mother will try to bring you up. If your father at that time had helped (your mother) a little you would have been better than how you are today. So when they think of those things they repay them their fathers in their same coin. It is just a few, sister (referring to interviewer), it is just a few who will say that after all it is God who judges, let me forgive.*

In her narration, Aunt Maamle identifies two extremes of a continuum of behaviour shown towards a faulting parent, parents or guardian following the experience of child neglect or care. At one end of the spectrum, the affected person may forgive the offender, while at the other end one might express gross contempt towards the wrongdoer. At this point, I will focus on cases concerned with the latter. To place this subject of revenge into

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<sup>15</sup> As described in an earlier section "la pomi" is a special ritual done for a biological father to reclaim his child legitimately, since he had initially conceived the child without performing the appropriate traditional marriage rites with the child's mother.

perspective, I will now discuss the practice of Sakawa against a background of seeking livelihoods for survival.

#### ***6.5.1.1. Life out of school: Seeking livelihoods for survival***

Paying tuition throughout elementary school is a struggle for some parents or guardians; as a result, some students drop out of school. Others continue to junior high school (JHS) but are unable to make it to the next educational level, senior high school (SHS). Most children who do not continue their education are encouraged to earn some money to support themselves and other family members. Usually, children start off by doing odd jobs, which involve low-level skills (e.g., trading, transporting food stuff for market women<sup>16</sup> and customers) (see pictures of children who work to support themselves, below).



*Figure 6.5.* Young boys at the Agomanya market, pushing their wheel barrows in search of customers on a market day (Wednesday), March 2014. Photograph taken by Dzifa Attah.

Because of their low educational status and the few employment opportunities available, when they become mature, if they have been able to accumulate enough funding, some advance by engaging in job apprenticeships that eventually lead to self-employed

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<sup>16</sup> Market women are the female traders who sell goods at the market place.

enterprises. A number of people are supported by family to take up such apprenticeships. Common apprenticeships include: painter, masonry, carpentry, electrician, car mechanic, trading, cookery, dress making or hairdressing. While a number of people gain satisfaction from doing these jobs, others do not feel fulfilled and desire for professions that are more profitable.

#### ***6.5.1.1.1. Religion and livelihoods***

Dissatisfaction with job earnings and living conditions is evidenced by the amount of time, some people in this community devote to religious practices (e.g., church deliverance services, prayers) with the intent of seeking solace or deriving some sense of hope from consultation with a pastor. I once attended service at a charismatic church in Odumase, and ended up spending almost half of my day there. I got there at about 9:00 am. A service that should have started at 9:00am only began at 11:00am and went on until about 4:00pm. Midway, I got up to leave and one church member chased after me and pleaded I return to the service, otherwise their head pastor would reproach members of the usher team; it was the church's policy to have newcomers meet with the pastor for a brief time of interaction after the church service.

Out of curiosity I returned. There was a string of church activities lined up for the service; in sum, there was bible study, a time of praise and worship and a session allocated for testimonies. The head pastor seemed to lay emphasis on the latter. One testimony was said after another and at the point when there were no willing persons to share their testimony, the pastor went round the congregation attempting to coerce members of the congregation to talk about the role of the church, in particular he and his wife, had played in helping them attain numerous life goals.

Those who gave testimonies were each rewarded with calendars; as a guest to the church I was also presented with one. I looked at the calendar, it was designed with pictures of the head pastor and his wife, elders and some of the church members; astonishingly it was dated 2013. We had just entered into the New Year of 2014 so I was surprised at the gesture of giving out an outdated calendar. But I was told by the usher that these were specially anointed calendars that had the potency to answer the prayers of those who were in possession of them. So she told me I was in luck since I had a copy. A number of people I had met and heard about were searching for similar luck to be successful in life.

For example, every Friday, my hairstylist travelled out of Odumase to attend special church services being organised by a pastor she called a powerful man of God. On these days she was absent from work, leaving her business in the care of apprentices, while she attended church service. She seemed to be impressed with the teachings of this pastor and tried to persuade me to attend church with her, as she suggested that the pastor could answer a lot of my concerns. While some consulted with pastors, it was rumoured that some persons consulted with mallams, spiritualists or traditional healers in search for answers to their financial difficulties.

#### ***6.5.1.1.2 An open secret: The practice of Sakawa***

Reflecting on life conditions and economic hardships, Sammy said:

*Nowadays the devil is using the world ooh ... erh we are in the end times ... right now diee [lays emphasis on the word now] we are in the occultic world, oh true ooh. The occultic world ... nowadays no money ... so you have to find other means.*  
(Sammy, 31 years old MFGD 1)

An example of the “other means” Sammy speaks about in the quote above is the practice of “Sakawa”. This practice is explained in detail in the discussion below.

One day as I sat at the hair salon to do my hair, a passing car’s license plate caught my attention. The hair stylist had actually placed my chair in a strategic position, so that the road activity was in clear view. Although there was a salon kiosk most customers were always seated on the veranda. Among other reasons, it was a common practice by hair stylists to advertise their hair styling abilities as well as catch up with activity on the street. The car plate was personalised with the inscription “petite waxa” a popular name in the entertainment industry. I asked who the car belonged to and I was told it was owned by one of the apprentices to “Waxa” (Waxa is a pseudonym). Waxa, I was told, is the one believed to have instituted the practice of Sakawa in Kodjonya, a suburb of Odumase. From what I had gathered from a number of sources in the Kroboland area, Sakawa is an original Ghanaian term that was first used to describe the practice of online shopping with stolen credit cards.

Currently, this term has become a household name for all sorts of cybercrime schemes. The popular ones in this area included business transactions and romance scams. The people who engaged in these scams – typically young boys, girls and young adults – usually targeted foreigners in the West by cunningly involving them in business deals or

romantic relationships over extended periods, with the intent of tricking them into parting with large sums of money. For those who indulge in Sakawa, it is a quick means to acquire wealth from rich and unsuspecting victims. A senior high student attempted to explain the logic behind the practice:

*People would say the whites robbed from our forefathers so now it was now their turn to be robbed.* (Field notes, May 20, 2014)

In Kroboland, the Sakawa practice is an open secret; most people were aware of its existence. In fact, some residents in the community could often pinpoint those who practised it. The Sakawa boys (as they were popularly termed) were usually identified publicly by the flashy and extravagant cars they drove. They often showed off publicly by changing cars, racing the roads of Somanya in competition with other colleagues and building luxurious property. I had observed a number of them, on a couple of Sundays, race up and down the town streets at Sra, the capital of Somanya amidst the presence of onlookers who were attending the night club at either the Tycoon or Memorial drinking spots.

Dede, who had been present at the salon when I had inquired about the license plate, told me she had once partnered with a boy to con an unsuspecting rich man abroad, under the pretext of initiating a love relationship and later requested money to transact some business in Ghana. She withheld from telling me how much she had received from the initiator of the ploy, but affirmed it was a lucrative venture for some youth.

Within a matter of a few years, I was told, “petite waxa” graduated from doing laundry for older boys and odd jobs to owning luxurious property. He was said to be currently erecting his own house. Rumour had it that he was in his early 20s, and in the previous year he had been refused entry into his last year of school because the headmaster had been suspicious about the source of money for his school fees, which was suspected to be blood money<sup>17</sup>.

Sakawa boys operated at different ranks. For instance, they usually start such scams hoping their chances of acquiring money would yield results on the event of luck. They spend a lot of time in the internet café or on personal laptops, randomly visiting dating sites, stealing the identity of potential suitors that fit the preferred description of their victims. One 16-year-old girl who was said to be a girl friend to one of the popular Sakawa boys, was said

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<sup>17</sup> Blood money, as understood in Kroboland, is currency acquired through devious means; this might involve the sacrifice of an animal or even human blood.

to assist him by taking over interactions that required visual or verbal communication online, typically when the victims were men. She also assisted the boyfriend when he was worn out; since the country time zones of the victims were usually different they usually worked late into the night.

As the Sakawa boys become successful in their conning scheme, I was told, they start to get avaricious. When this happens or when luck fails, they start to get desperate and advance their operations, seeking for spiritual assistance from a mallam, spiritualist or fetish priest or even alleged pastors to enable them to operate successfully. According to some sources, spiritual assistance increases the ability to easily find and persuade potential victims to part with their wealth with little persuasion or resistance. Seeking spiritual assistance is seen as a risky venture for the culprit, as assistance is granted on condition that they conduct a range of rituals.

Rituals range from the sacrifice of animal (e.g., fowl) blood, human blood or body parts (e.g., penis), sleeping with a female, usually young girls, menstrual blood, walking naked in public for a specified number of days<sup>18</sup>, sleeping in a coffin for a number of days, sleeping in a mosquito infested area. Examples of conditions under which the request would be granted include giving a share of the money received to the consultants, not being able to share the money with family members, not bathing, wearing a spiritual ring, not sleeping at night. Conditions attached to the requests were determined by the consulting mallam, spiritualist or fetish priest, some of who are located in Benin and known to be extremely spiritually powerful.

I was told some boys fell into the hands of quack spiritualists who often exploited naive persons who want to be initiated into the Sakawa practice. On another day, while at the salon I noticed a young boy who appeared mentally ill walking the streets, so I asked about him. I was told by one of the hairstylist apprentices that he was in this state because of a failed Sakawa consultation operation. Those who had been successful at this practice often served as role models for other persons who are struggling to make a living.

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<sup>18</sup> Three years ago I had witnessed a young boy walking stark naked on the roadside of one of the Accra (the capital city of Ghana) streets, he did not appear unkempt or dirty, he walked swiftly but wore no facial affect. He had some herbs hanging around his neck as well. News about Sakawa being practised by youth in various parts of the country had just become public at the time.

During a conversation, Dede did not mince her words when she indicated her willingness to indulge in cyber-fraud again:

*There was no money in the system oooo, if its (Sakawa) an easier way of making money why not?* (Field notes, March 23, 2014)

She paused for a minute after she had spoken, and later said the only thing that was stopping her was the fact that to proceed with the Sakawa practice one was often required to sacrifice the blood of an intimate family member. She rubbished the idea of sacrificing her mother as she was the reason she would engage in such a practice in the first place. But if after such a sacrifice the mother would not be available to benefit – because of the impact of the sacrifice<sup>19</sup>– she saw it as a pointless venture. Then she said if she had to, it would be a better option to use her father, since he had long neglected his role, duties and responsibilities as a father. Many like Dede were hurting due to the lack of parental care they had received in childhood and thus were willing to retaliate against the neglectful parent or relative, as is discussed below.

### **6.5.2. *If you don't plant will you reap?* Relatives who failed to support their kinsmen**

One day while at my family house, I listened to my 93-year-old great Aunt Lily complain bitterly about the attitude of some of her grandchildren, who often ridiculed her when she made requests for assistance. Her hands pointed in the direction of my cousins (the eldest was 16 years old and the youngest 7 years old); as she spoke I could hear them giggle from behind the staircase. In response to her complaint, one of them openly said that Aunt Lily was always nagging about one thing or the other. He frowned and walked off. She was very unhappy about the way she was being treated. I observed that the children's attitude towards her was a reflection of how she was being treated by other adults in the house, especially her younger sister.

Like many others, this great aunt Lily was old and frail and engaged in very little activity during the day. Most of her days were spent sitting on the veranda in front of her bedroom door, which strategically faced an active pathway. Occasionally, some of the people

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<sup>19</sup> People suspected that Waxa the instigator of the Sakawa in Kroboland had sacrificed his father in order to join the Sakawa practice. I was told Waxa's father was very ill; he had a leg problem and although he was noted to visit the hospital on a regular basis, he still had obtained no cure. People suspected that one of Waxa's father's leg had been offered as a sacrifice to enable Waxa's success.

passing by stopped to exchange pleasantries with her and then continued. If she was not on the veranda she was resting in her room.

Not too long ago, she had been a lively and active woman; unfortunately, time seems to have caught up with her. In her active years, she had been a teacher by profession and also a staunch member of the Zimmerman Presbyterian Church in Odumase. She had remained single and had no children of her own. With time she had adopted a son who lived outside of Odumase. He rarely visited; there were days when she talked about him all day long and yearned to see him. On several occasions, she had pleaded with me to send a message for him to visit. During my nine month stay he had visited only once.

Most of the time, she appeared lonely and alienated. Not too many people living in the house appeared to be fond of her. One of my uncles commented on how she had discriminated against him when he was a child. In comparison to the other children in the house she had ill-treated him; in his words she made him feel like a stranger. The younger sister to great aunt Lily, great aunt Koryo also remarked on how unsupportive great aunt Lily had been; now the tables have turned. Great aunt Koryo felt overburdened with the responsibility of taken care of her in old age, when she felt great aunt Lily did not really deserve it.

Great aunt Koryo described how her sister had generally held a bad reputation in the area. She told of a time when a group of Presbyterian church members had come to the family house to serve holy communion to my great aunt – this was a regular routine organised by the Presbyterian Church to visit the elderly who could no longer make it to the church premises, because of their old age. She said the pastor amongst them exclaimed immediately he saw great aunt Lily and expressed disbelief seeing her in such a fragile state. He had been one of her former students, who according to great aunt Koryo had ever suffered the wrath of my great aunt Lily. Great aunt Koryo ended the story by asking, “is that a good thing? She was very wicked, eiii (mentioned my great aunt’s name)”, then she sighed. Just like Great aunt Koryo a number of people I interacted with expressed similar feelings of discontent, anger, hurt and pain regarding the way some elderly ones had maltreated them in childhood.

I personally witnessed some consequences of alleged child neglect in the way some elderly persons were being cared for in their old age. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Van der Geest (2002) reports similar observations among the people of Kwahu in Ghana, where

offering care to the elderly was dependent on the care they had received from their parents as children. Feeling embittered about their earlier life experiences, some persons often reacted negatively to the offending parent in old age. That is, the quality of care these family members received from the hurt person was almost comparable to the ill treatment they had instigated to the latter.

Using the example of biological parents, one respondent explained the reciprocation process by using a popular biblical based adage:

*They have the desire to bring forth children but they don't know how to care for them so if you don't care for me ... if you don't plant will you reap huh? You sow you reap you plant you will by all means get something from the fruit. (KI 2 female, individual respondent validation meeting)*

One day I went to visit a friend in Somanya. I entered his house compound to find an old lady with her feet hanging in mid-air, while the middle portion of her body hung over a bucket, her face was squashed to the ground. She lay there murmuring for help but because she was old and feeble, one could hardly hear her utters for help. My informant's bedroom was close to the spot where she had fallen, so I called out to him to come and help; eventually I got him to help her up but he did so, reluctantly.

I had called him an hour before my arrival, and he recalled hearing a loud noise (presumably the sound that was made when she fell) when he got off the phone but because noise was a usual component of life in a compound house<sup>20</sup>, he had ignored it. This meant that for almost an hour, because that's how long it had taken me to get there, this woman had been in such an awkward position without anyone noticing, although, I later realised there had been a few others at home.

The informant personally told me that, but for me, he would have left her there. His story was no different from those of several others who felt they had been treated unfairly by family relatives throughout childhood. A week before this episode, he had told me about this woman, describing her as wicked. She was a wife to one of his uncles but had been abandoned for another woman. She had had no issue of her own. My informant, Na, claimed nobody was willing to live with her because of the way she had maltreated the children of relatives who had been sent to live with her. For a period of five years, Na could not recall the last time he had even spoken with her.

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<sup>20</sup> A compound house is a house structure with a large compound in the center surrounded by several rooms.

## **6.6. Reflections and a summary of findings**

For many children and adults alike within Kroboland, the importance of providing and being a responsible parent or guardian is a strong feature of the Krobo tradition and cannot be overemphasised. By contrast, the traditional institutions for training girls and boys into responsible and caring adults no longer seem functional. Currently, a shortened version of *dipo* is performed for several young Krobo girls on an annual basis, however, this contemporary version seems to have lost its training component, and therefore may lack the required effect for instituting good parenting skills. Unlike the past, there is currently no traditional system of training for young boys into manhood, besides what the educational and religious systems have instituted in their spaces of operation.

Traditional families and child care systems seem to an extent have given way to disorganised family structure forms of care that may exclude or marginalise children who are born out of wedlock (*yo bi*), raised by single parents, experience the death of a parent, and parents' divorce or separation. As evidenced by the study data, these disorganised family structures may have contributed to the absence of or limited child-guardian interactions, consequently, affecting the child's later interaction and relationships. As highlighted in Chapter Two, poor early attachments negatively affect the child role in relationships and the means by which they accomplish and secure their needs (Schachner & Shaver, 2004).

For example, some children in this context encountered early attachments or relationships which were not secure bases for exploration, instead they were marked by the absence or unresponsive guardians, leading to some negative outcomes as is exemplified in the history of those who are alleged to practice *Sakawa* and maltreat the elderly. As highlighted in earlier chapters, poor attachments may also have implications for the occurrence of CSA.

For instance, the data here suggest that some girls in this context are vulnerable to CSA because of the unavailability of a guardian or guardians who are physically absent or physically present but emotionally distant. Johnson (2002) suggests a lack of bonding may result in some children feeling a sense of social isolation, emotional distress and neediness drawing them to people other than their parents or guardians that provide their essential needs. This may explain why some girls go missing for days but are later found in the company of males who have often been responsible for their upkeep. Against the context of

widespread poverty, guardians seem burdened with child care, some losing their roles to potential offenders who take advantage of the child's plight. More details of these experiences are shared in Chapter Eight. Chapter Seven captures the experiential accounts of child professionals who have worked within the Krobo community for over five years.

## **Chapter Seven: Experiential accounts and meaning of working with children in Kroboland**

### **7.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents an analysis and a discussion of data on the subjective experiences of professionals who work with children and CSA survivors in Kroboland. From the data analysed, three superordinate themes emerged: current response to CSA; the psychosocial context and work impact; and personal impact. In the sections that follow, each theme will be discussed in relation to subordinate themes with illustrating quotations that capture psychological interpretations of the participant's working experience. Some of these themes seem to apply to professionals working with CSA survivors, but at the same time highlight some specific issues related to working with children in the Kroboland context. Following standard IPA guidelines, identified themes will be discussed in relation to existing psychological literature (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), concurrently.

### **7.2. Current response to CSA: Scope, mode and forms of CSA prevention and intervention strategies**

The first superordinate theme, "response to CSA", discussed in this section focuses on how participants described the nature of their work. Specifically, it covers descriptions of their target groups, their working scope and modes of operation.

#### **7.2.1. Target groups for CSA prevention and intervention strategies**

All of the professionals in this study talked about a broad range of interventions they provide to children in general. In the area of CSA, participants narrated experiences of working with the following groups of children:

1. Children perceived at risk for becoming CSA targets.
2. Children observed to be sexually active.
3. CSA survivors (both children and adults).
4. Significant others (e.g., parents, guardians) associated with persons mentioned in 1, 2 and 3.

These groups of persons are discussed by the participants in the sections below.

### **7.2.1.1. Children perceived at risk for becoming CSA targets**

Participants shared experiences of working with children they perceived to be at risk for CSA. As part of their working roles, participants targeted particular groups of children who, due to preconceived stages of (sexual) development and social and cultural concerns, were earmarked as especially vulnerable to experiences of CSA. One of such groups commonly identified in Kroboland were dipo initiates. For example, KI 12 established that as part of her work schedule, she moved from dipo house to dipo house educating the many young girls enrolled for dipo to be cautious. She expressed concern that the completion of dipo often increased the girls' sexual vulnerability exposing them to sexual risk:

*I am going round to sensitise them to be careful, it (the completion of dipo rituals) is not a (sex) license that they are being given. (KI 12, female, semi-structured interview)*

### **7.2.1.2. Children observed to be sexually active and sex offenders**

In subtle ways, as shown in the quote above, participants like KI 12 viewed any sexually active child as a sex offender, as is illustrated by KI 10's account of handling a case involving two students. The principal explained that he had chanced upon two students, male and female, having sex in one of the classrooms, after school. Even though his interrogations revealed that the boy had forcibly engaged the girl in sexual activity against her will, the headmaster's act of discipline, which involved both parties, indicates that he overlooked the fact that the girl might be a victim of sexual abuse. Instead, his reaction to the incident is consistent with the victim blame myth, where the CSA survivor is seen as a mutual and willing participant, and not a victim. Other participants, such as KI 3 reacted similarly, whenever they caught children engaged in sex-related activities. This applied even in situations where force or coercion was used by one participant to engage the other.

### **7.2.1.3. CSA survivors: Children and adults**

Aspects of the participants' work focused on detecting unidentified CSA survivors and addressing short and long-term CSA outcomes. For example, KI 8 narrated how she had played a supportive role to a distressed survivor who had delayed the disclosure of CSA for three months. Despite the passage of time, and the challenge this delay in disclosure presented – for obtaining medical evidence to substantiate the claims of the survivor – she still encouraged the survivor to persist with pressing charges. This initiative of KI 8 turned out to be successful because the culprit was eventually arrested and prosecuted.

#### **7.2.1.4. Significant others: Playing a supportive role**

As part of CSA intervention efforts, participants involved significant others (e.g., parents, guardians) to enhance their supportive roles as aids to children at risk for CSA, sexually active children and CSA survivors. One participant described an instance where she had to educate a colleague who was upset with a student for making matchstick sketches of his mother in sexual positions. She explained to her colleague, *“It is not his fault, he is telling you something, and we have to invite the parents”*. Later, she teamed up with her colleague and invited the mother of the student in for a meeting: *“in fact the day we invited the mother, she was ashamed she told me that she would never do that again ...and it has helped her.”*

As described above, these are the broad groups of persons participants usually dealt with in Kroboland.

### **7.2.2. CSA prevention and intervention: Scope and modes of operation**

#### **7.2.2.1 CSA prevention and interventions: Scope of operation**

Participants offered and implemented interventions on both a voluntarily and involuntarily basis. For instance, participants like the female school teacher who frequently interacted with children – because of the nature of their work – often initiated working with children without personal requests for help. For example, the female teacher took the initiative to address the conduct of a pupil, who had openly displayed sexual behaviour that was age inappropriate. KI 2 recounted that a female student, in the plain view of other students, had mimicked sexual postures of an aunt and her sexual partner based on a recollection of sexual scenes, images and memories:

*A girl brought the cloth that she sleeps with to school; she created a very big [loud tone] hole in the cloth and that place ... she she put her eyes. She will cover the whole head then eyes [indicates with gestures that the eyes fit into the holes] and then she will be snoring [makes noises of someone snoring] with the eyes wide open. Watching everything, as she snores they thought she was fast asleep and foolishly for them, they do foolish things and the girl comes out the following morning to say it in the school, how the aunty will do this [positions body in a sexual pose] she will sit down and raise the leg [raising leg in the air] awwoooo (covers mouth with palm)! (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

According to KI 2, the child’s behaviour revealed evidence of frequent exposure to sexual activity by the child’s guardian and her partner. Identifying the need to educate the child’s aunty to make an impact on the child’s behaviour, she scheduled a meeting.

On the other hand, the helping services of other participants like the KI 12 were sought after voluntarily. In the quote below, KI 12 cites a typical instance when this occurred:

*Two boys ... oh, a boy collected a book of a girl, and the girl was also chasing [seeking to collect] the book and then when she went to the boy's house ... the boy ... there was nobody [else at home], it was a Sunday. So the boy and a friend both had sex with the girl, and then the girl came to report to me. (KI 12 female, semi-structured interview)*

In the subsections that follow, the various modes of operation used by participants are discussed.

#### **7.2.2.2. Modes and forms of CSA interventions**

The various types of CSA intervention strategies employed by participants in this study included: educating persons at risk for CSA; correcting inappropriate sexual behaviour; facilitating legal action against CSA offenders; providing medical treatment for CSA survivors; and the counselling of CSA survivors. Some of these interventions involved formal procedures of dealing with CSA, whereas others involved informal events or activities.

##### **7.2.2.2.1: Education**

Participants commonly reported the use of education to create awareness and disseminate knowledge about CSA. Participants primarily aimed to prevent CSA from occurring by sharing CSA knowledge to inspire informed choices and safe behaviour among the various categories of persons (as indicated above). The participants articulated this goal in a number of ways:

*If at times, I hear something on the radio or the TV the following day I go, and I assemble the whole school, and I let them know that this is what is happening. Like the ... raped girl who died [attempts to recall] ... a girl who was raped not in Ghana. You [referring to the interviewer] heard about that story ... is it in India? ... She was raped and died, it can happen to you [dramatizes speech as if talking to students] so take guard and don't leave yourself lose to them or anybody to kill you. (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

*We visit schools and churches to talk about sexual offences and domestic violence issues. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

*We try to educate them (children) very seriously and err as a Christian you have to discipline yourself .. and know your weaknesses you have to be cautious. (KI 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

*I usually talk to them (children) I go and talk to them even the mothers I talk to them so that they talk to their children ... their girls because some of them too the fault comes from the mother. (KI 5 female, semi-structured interview)*

As illustrated in the quotes above, participants demonstrated their personal involvement in providing CSA education to children, as well as collaborative efforts which are executed with the involvement of other work colleagues. Participants such as KI 8 demonstrated that the scope of CSA education work cut across broad audiences by her indication that the “church” – a site that is well known to host a diverse range of persons – was one venue where information on CSA is disseminated.

In addition, participants showed that a lot of their effort was centred on children with a particularly biased focus on the female child. One participant offered a suggestion why this was the case:

*The boy child you know will not go and be pregnant with somebody so we do not focus too much on the boy child. (KI 6 female, semi structured interview)*

KI 6 reinforces the idea of sexual double standards, where a girls’ sexuality needs to be policed while expressions of male sexuality are tolerated and accepted as normal, with the justification that they are less problematic, or the consequences less severe.

For participants such as KI 12 educating girls, especially dipo initiates, was paramount, as girls were considered at high risk for CSA in general, and more especially following the performance of the female initiation rites. Referring to the last day of the dipo initiation when the dipo girl is carried on the back of a friend or relative and paraded in town, after successfully passing the virginity test, KI 12 asserted this claim:

*The recent one (dipo ceremony) we had at Kojodyna eiiii [exclaims] the boys because they are friends they want their friends among the (dipo initiates) group, they were struggling over them (the dipo initiates) to carry them eiiiiiii [exclaims]. So as soon as they (traditional leaders) finished for the girl then they start inviting all. (KI 12 female, semi-structured interview)*

Based on participant narratives, the content of education bordered on a variety of issues surrounding female sexuality, male sexual aggression and “uncontrollability”, and non-offending mothers. For example, KI 2 in her interview drew on discourses of male sexual aggression and uncontrollability when she made reference to her teachings on personal safety. In the quote below, she gives an account of how she personally teaches females to

manage CSA threatening situations, and offered tactics on how to defend against sex offenders:

*Err some girls who I taught and I told them, these men at times ... they become mad. So when they try ... you have ... [made a posture of defense] when you see that he is very aggressive ... don't force (struggle), you give him that chance ... if you can't escape, try tell him, let me direct you then you pull it (referring to the penis)! Yes and that will be the end, he can't do anything ... About 10 -15 minutes and then you will runaway yes or just try to be [appearing to maneuver] then err well err you can just shift yourself a little and then err you can hit wherever it will hit and then it will pain him and then you ran away. (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

Suggested strategies of defense and escape from potential CSA offenders demonstrated concepts of sex and body ownership, access and control as well as issues of female empowerment. Other education themes centred on child rights and legal procedures to follow after an event of CSA:

*We (the police force) normally talk about the rights of the child. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

#### **7.2.2.2.2: Lay counselling of CSA survivors**

Participants like KI 10 and KI 2 talked about how they had provided psychosocial support to CSA survivors, whom they had perceived to be experiencing some form of emotional distress in the aftermath of a CSA experience. For instance, the latter spoke about the case of a final year student who had acquiesced to have sex with an uncle in exchange for future school sponsorship. When the uncle in question failed to fulfil his proposition with the excuse that he had other financial commitments, the student, according to KI 2, showed intentions of reprisal by her expression of anger:

*Her uncle promised to ... take her ... the uncle said that err he wants her to continue to senior high school, so the uncle slept with her over 10 times and now that err she is about to go and write the Basic Education Certificate Examination .. the uncle called her and said he cannot help her ... because errr errr "I am going to look after my child" ... "I am going to look after my child" [imitates the girl echoing the words of her uncle] and I saw that the girl was angry and hurt if ... much counselling is not done hmmm she would by all means hurt the uncle. Yes ... she would do it ... because she said eiiii madam [dramatising the girl's word] "I said ... he slept with me 10 times [clapped hands] ... and he told me that he is going to use his money for his child he will see" ..... I had to speak with her. (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

Detecting that the student felt betrayed by her uncle's deceit and sexual exploitation, the teacher counselled her to prevent a negative grief reaction of retaliation.

Similarly, KI 10 who also doubles as a counsellor in a school and church narrated the cases of two adult CSA survivors. He described them as single ladies with strong aversions towards sexual activity and men in general. Connecting the single statuses of these women and their conditioned responses of aversion he identified the need to counsel them:

*I have two cases now ... I am having two cases now... right now, that a lady this lady will not look at the face of a man she is now a seamstress, they are both seamstresses they are all working they are in this town. You see that psychological trauma ... so you see I am now trying to explain things to them. For them .. for them having sex with man they say eiii Daa (father) can I do it, they say yieeee<sup>21</sup>. Daa (father) because of the experience, how they were hurt in the past ... about almost 15 years back. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

But for these two participants, KI 10 and KI 2, the discourse on resulting psychological problems was largely absent from personal accounts of the working experience. This raises questions about the extent of CSA awareness and the knowledge of possible psychological outcomes among the helping professionals.

#### **7.2.2.2.3. Punishment of Children: Co-offenders and Offenders**

A number of participants reported that they had personally observed children display inappropriate sexual behaviour that required correcting. Usually, when children were found indulging in sexual activity they were considered to be sex offenders needing correction. For example, without any consideration for how the sexual act occurred, KI 3 narrated how he had disciplined some children in his neighbourhood after he found them engaged in an imaginative game (popularly termed as Mama and Dada), that involved sex play:

*What I did was I just took a cane, and I whipped them ... after whipping them ... when they stopped. I said I brought them up ... so I called the parents to discipline them (the children). The mother put ginger and opened the this thing ... and put it there [referring to the vagina] and the boy too they ground pepper and the used to do this [illustrating the mixture being rubbed on the penis] and since then they stopped so this is an experience. (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

KI 3 used the cane and the children's parents used a mixture of hot spices, ginger and pepper to intentionally inflict pain on the child's body, and particular parts of it – the vagina

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<sup>21</sup> Yieeee is an expression that lays emphasis on the difficulty faced by the CSA survivors to engage in sexual activity because of the history of sexual abuse.

and penis. Caning was done to deter sexual intercourse from reoccurring and the latter effected to condition the sex organs with repulsion. The corrective methods used by KI 3 and the children's parents are child rearing practices used by some persons in Ghana, to correct misconduct among children.

Koramoa, Lynch, and Kinnair (2002) noted that in some West African communities, methods like those described above are used to cause overwhelming pain to an offender with the intention of reinforcing good behaviour. While caning is usually employed in homes and school settings, the use of hot spices is normally implemented at home (Kyei-Gyamfi, 2011). Again by making reference to his involvement in nurturing the children, he acts on his social responsibility as a guardian and issues punishment without parental permission. Additionally, he partners with the children's parents to play a supporting role in his intervention to prevent re-offense.

Other participants like KI 10 reported similar accounts of using punishment. He recounted how he demoted two senior prefects of their leadership positions after he had caught them having sex:

*I asked them what happened and the girl said when I went away the boy told her that she should help him to close the classroom windows. Hmmmm, so in the process of closing the windows, he tried to force her and lo and behold she could not raise any alarm because she feared that if she should (attempt to shout) hey hey people will come around. So she just kept quiet. So I asked the boy and he said yes so I said you have disgraced me. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

The counsellor's description of the CSA scene and his action of demoting the prefects raises issues of leadership, responsibility and implications for passivity shown during a sexually abusive act. His decision to demote the girl prefect although she was the victim in this circumstance partially reflects an endorsement of the victim blame myth. Although he had acknowledged that she had been forced to have sex, he acted on the belief that responsibility for the act should be shared.

KI 3 recounted a similar case where he had had to suspend a group of boys from school for two weeks, based on their intent to rape an accused boy's girlfriend in revenge, as the accused was alleged to have slept with a girlfriend to one of them.

#### **7.2.2.2.4. Facilitating legal action against CSA offender**

Participants talked about playing facilitative roles in helping survivors pursue legal action against the offenders. As a contribution to pursuing the prosecution of offenders, KI 5 reported making referrals to the police station. She also provided some preliminary evidence to support prospective medical reports:

*When they come, I refer them (victims) to the .. the police station to go and take a police form it is a criminal case. I write a letter attached and send it to the hospital. So that ... errr they (the offender) can see we are serious about what he has done we don't like it. (KI 5 female, semi-structured interview)*

KI 2 also recalled a number of cases she had expedited to assist CSA survivors seek redress for their experience:

*Two... three people, I took them to Akuse Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit ... yes you can't be in town and be doing that oh! [frowned face ]. (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

Although participants may have partaken in or implemented some of the interventions discussed above, they often expressed dissatisfaction with some of the methods, and also experienced various dilemmas in their execution and implementation. Details of this are discussed below:

#### **7.2.2.3. Concerns, conflicts and dilemmas: CSA prevention and interventions strategies**

Some participants raised concerns about the implementation of some interventions used to address sexual offending behaviour; others further questioned their efficacy in addressing the survivor needs. Participants like the KI 8 talked about common work conflicts and dilemmas they faced when pregnancy resulted from the CSA experience. Often, survivors are not in a position to support the upkeep of the child on their own:

*If there is pregnancy and we send the person to court maybe you will be jailed and after jailing him who ... we (the police force) have been thinking about who will take care of the pregnancy. If the parents are not well to do, we don't send the person to court. Unless you the parent we ask you and you are ready to take care of your child. Because, we don't even want the pregnancy to be aborted so if it is not aborted who will take care? We will enforce that you (the offender) take care of the girl. If you fail it is then that we will send you to court. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

KI 8 talked about the dilemma of choosing between incarcerating an offender or foregoing that option so the maintenance of the expectant mother and child could be provided by the offender. Weighing the options, the police officer mentioned that providing for the mother and child would be difficult to implement if the offender is imprisoned. Therefore,

without going to court the offender's sentence is redefined as a mandatory monthly remittance to the survivor; failure to comply could result in going on trial. KI 8 believed that the consequences of defaulting served as a motivation to the offending party to comply, and also to deter the survivor from having an abortion. Although KI 8 felt some guilt for negotiating with the law, in her defence she suggested that it was done in the best interest of the expecting survivor.

On the other hand, participants like KI 6 expressed dissatisfaction with survivor-offender negotiations such as the one described above. She believed that such terms and conditions encouraged rather than deterred offenders from committing sexual offenses, as echoed in the quote below:

*You see the men don't care there is no law abiding them. You see as at now that when somebody impregnates you and does not take care of you. You can take the one to the social welfare so forth and so forth. Even the law abiding them does not hold properly because you will be walking up and down and you don't achieve anything. (KI 6 female, semi-structured interview)*

KI 6 complained that in cases where the offender defaulted the terms negotiated, the survivor ended up being frustrated by the number of times they had to report the offender's breach of terms to the police. Similar sentiment is expressed by KI 9:

*You have a daughter somebody impregnates her you take the person to court and they say care for it for six, seven years he will pay one month three month shuuuuu [an expression to emphasis his annoyance]! He won't give them money again these are the problems. (KI 9 male, semi-structured interview)*

Participants KI 6 and KI 9 claimed that CSA responses failed to address the needs of pregnant survivors. Rather than resolving the perceived threat to welfare, they believed such negotiations compounded living conditions for the mother and child.

In a similar vein, KI 11 expressed concern about the changing standards for correcting sexual misbehaviour observed among children, when he said:

*Formerly it was not so... they will cane you they will whip you, but now a teacher cannot cane a school child the thing make bassa [everything is messed up]! (KI 11 male, semi-structured interview)*

Changing standards of discipline were linked to the effects of international influences on traditional child rearing practices. In particular, the concept of child rights is seen to draw on principles not always in congruence with local beliefs and practices. The KI 1 asserts this

when he made mockery of the human rights campaign and then reflected on the loss of traditional methods of controls:

*Now when the teacher whips then the parents come and ask ... teacher why have you whipped my son? hehehehehe [claps] they say human rights human rights hehehehe hahahahaha so Maa [referring to interviewer as a mother] these are the things, we are disorganised, and many things are getting loose...hmmm ... the controls we used to know they are lost .. (KI 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

KI 10 also raised concern about how sexual education was delivered to children by unqualified persons:

*We have the (sexual education) books here most of the books so this time its part of sex education is part of our curriculum ... but how many teachers can teach ... the thing is most of the teachers don't know ... because they are also victims these young young teachers so they can't teach it. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

Despite the concerns, conflict and dilemmas that might arise in using these methods a number of participants identified that they had been able to assist a number of persons.

#### **7.2.2.4. Successful CSA interventions: Some evidence of improvement**

Beyond the difficulties experienced when working with children, some participants talked about how their work input had yielded successful results:

*Upon what I told them, the girl took her pant and they (the girl and family) reported the boy. He was writing his final exams when he was caught ... they went straight to arrest him. (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

*But now I think is better than when I started working here. (KI 4 female, semi-structured interview)*

*Like I said things have changed a bit since we have sent the message into the communities. So it was not so serious like before. (KI 6 female, semi-structured interview)*

*This time because of our education (on CSA) when there is a defilement case even when you report it to the chief he will tell you to send it to DOVVSU. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

*When we take them through counselling, then they become okay. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

### **7.3. Contextual factors impacting on work experience**

In this study a number of contextual factors, both interpersonal and situational, produced powerful effects on the participants' experiences of work.

### 7.3.1. The working context

The participants worked in a context that held various competing values, attitudes, beliefs and norms about children, child nurturance, sexuality and issues of social control. Findings of this study showed that the participants' own set of beliefs and attitudes at times reflected conflicting notions of who is defined as a child. For instance, some participants described the "Krobo child" as modernised, underprivileged and sexualised. Details of these are discussed below.

#### 7.3.1.1. Current worldviews of children: Competing ideologies

##### 7.3.1.1.1. The "Modernised Child"

Generally, participants viewed children as resistant to parental control and good counsel. They complained bitterly about the ill-mannered attitude of children and compared them to children of their own generation. This was reflected in the many ways participants empathised with parents in Kroboland:

*Some they (children) don't respect their parents [clears throat] when they (the parents) tell them (the children) stay at home, they (the children) don't listen. Some (girls) go to town to see the men over .. they (the girls) go overnight and come back in the morning to prepare for school. (KI 5 female, semi-structured interview)*

*Some of the children are so deviant that when they come to the house, they don't stay in the house they move outside you tell them not to and they don't listen. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

*These days your own daughter ... your own daughter, tell her to come and do this for you, and she will tell you .. you are abusing her rights. There was nothing like child rights in those days the only child right was to feed you, that's all! (KI II male, semi-structured interview)*

These participants continuously made reference to their own upbringing experiences and perceived that the children of this generation behaved in intolerable ways, foreign to what existed in their childhood era:

*We were caned at school and then trained to do things, this is not the case now. Hmm they (children) are so free to do anything that they want, go out and associate themselves with anybody. (KI 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

*You see when it is night you for be for (in the) house, but madam (referring to researcher) if it is night go to this town and see. Go to bars, you will see boys attending school sitting at drinking bars. Can their education go on? It can't go on? Formerly, when we were attending school we feared even to go to the market. (KI 9, male, semi-structured interview)*

*These days growing up in town is becoming something which err is err ... I personally, I talk about it because certain things coming into the society are unacceptable ... and the girls are also copying blindly. Like err these days they (the children) go to these clubs and those days you will not do that who are you? (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

For these participants, the status of being a child seemed to have changed over the years. Against the background of altering social patterns, participants described children as individuals contending for the status of an adult. This was largely because children were seen as independent as well as engaged in certain activities that participants considered a reserve for adults. The lawyer explained this happening as a consequence of modernity, as shown below:

*We are getting modernised these are some of the things that are happening the children are exposed to so many bad things. (KI 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

*A man putting on (wearing an) earring is it proper? We say human rights is that our culture? (KI 11 male, semi-structured interview)*

*You see this western education too is doing us good as well as harm, so what they read and see especially on the television and other things is making them (the children) crazy. (KI 2 female semi-structured interview)*

But at the same time, a number of participants empathised with some children and reasoned that they sometimes behaved adult-like, because of the poor living circumstances and economic conditions they had to endure, on a day to day basis. As a result of these influences, some participants perceived many of these children as underprivileged.

#### **7.2.1.1.2. The underprivileged child**

Participants perceived many of the children they worked with as underprivileged given that many families struggled financially to support their members, as explained in the quotes below:

*In those good old days where they lived in the farm and the communities were very small ... you live within the village and you get almost everything that you want ... food was not a problem. You live on the proceeds from the cocoa, yam (food crops) and so on, now it is not like that. (KI 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

*The diminishing land size for the farming purposes and then the increase in population you know it also decreases revenue. (KI 6 female, semi-structured interview)*

*Some of the parents too are poor so they cannot sponsor their girls for completion as the government has proposed. (KI 12 female, semi-structured interview)*

As a result of poor living circumstances, K 10 viewed the prospects of an underprivileged child furthering his or her education after Junior High School (JHS) as unpromising:

*Our only problem is the parents don't have much premium in the Kroboland. Yes, so that affects the learning trend, that when the child completes Junior High School then that's the end. So in err err after JHS one and two the child will try to become an automatic, premature adult. In the sense that the child is preparing for the world, in the sense that after JHS [Junior High School] three he ends it there. So why can't I prepare myself with life. Life! Adult life! Premature adult life! So that when [echoes the thoughts of children] I get to that end by all means I will not move forward because my brothers and sisters are in the house some are truck pushers [convey market loads on a manual truck from one location to another to earn some money]. Others are in the market and moving on the streets. So if that is where I am also going to end up then maybe err at JHS one, let me prepare for adult life. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

Participants talked about how some parents preferred to prepare their children for adult life right after Junior High School, due to economic hardships and the subsequent benefits they may receive from their children's working efforts. This appeared to be a reality for a number of children in Kroboland:

*They [the parents] think that whatever the teachers are teaching them will not help the children. (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

As a result, parents or guardians may encourage their children to secure part-time jobs whilst in school in order to look after themselves:

*The boys they normally don't come to school, especially on Wednesdays – market days. Wednesdays and Saturdays they go and work. That is if they don't have money they have to go and help somebody carry the the head pan err do mason work. They will go and do boy boy [odds jobs] they will go and work for the mason and the mason will give them this thing (money) per day ... so the boys too they have a problem. (KI 9, male semi-structured interview)*

*The boys too you see the boys they engage themselves in some minor work like err excuse me to say they become the drivers mate. They say I want to become a driver err herh so even class six why don't I stop and be the drivers mate. So that err by age 20 I would also become a driver and then take care of myself and maybe the future family. So you see that the boys too they engage themselves by truck pushing and driver's mates. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

Due to the lack of financial support and an unstimulating environment, some participants reported that a number of children give up, losing hope about the prospects of advancing their education causing some to drop out of school to focus on work:

*Once a boy who was, say about 7 or 8 yeah ... told me, I don't see the point of going to school, in any case, I will end up as a driver's mate. (KI 4 female, semi-structured interview)*

Some participants noted that in times of desperation, some children engaged in transactional sex in order to pursue their education. One participant explained:

*Some of them (children) especially the girls that where they get the means to supplement that of their parent, have you seen? As I told you from the onset the parents are not fully prepared for the education of their wards, the child sensing this danger maybe that's why they start early sex. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

K 12 recounted the story of Peter, who was brought up singlehandedly by his mother; when his father deserted the family, he struggled to see himself through school:

*Sometimes, he has to abandon school for one week go and work after getting that money then he will resume back to school which is very bad sometimes I felt pity for him which I think if there is any help he should at least get some help ... I told him even if he does not want to go to school at least for Basic Education Certificate Exam Certificate (BECE), he should at least have that, so that anybody can help him from any angle. He is very intelligent, but there is a big problem at home. Sometimes, he can abandon school for about one week. Just searching for money to pay his fees or buy some books... Hmmm, later there was a lady he met ... even older than him but she forced him to have sex with her because Peter had nothing and the lady was providing for him. (KI 12 female, semi-structured interview)*

Participants viewed underprivileged children as susceptible to the exploits of persons of higher authority and privilege, particularly, male teachers:

*There was a case when erm errrrr a teacher lured a girl ... he told the girl buy me erm waakye (local dish of boiled rice and beans) and I will be in the house ... bring it. The child innocently errr bought the waakye and sent it to the teacher, and the teacher said this to the girl, do you know that you are beautiful, and I have made up my mind to marry you when you complete school. (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

*An incident occurred at the Presby school recently oh. Errrrrrr the teacher he took the girl and aborted the pregnancy, and the parents wanted to ... even they came to report the case to me, but later they redrew the case hmmmmmm. (KI 12 female, semi-structured interview)*

*You see some men, excuse me to say, don't respect themselves ... even look at these teachers, teachers go in for students who they teach. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview).*

As a result of sexual misconduct, K10 questions the qualification of some male teachers who are required to teach sex education at school. As shown in Chapter Six, due to prevailing family and living circumstances, and the absence of good parental guidance, some children engage in inappropriate livelihoods as a means to survive.

### **7.2.1.1.3. The sexualised child**

According to the participants, some features of sexual maturation also give children a false sense of adulthood:

*The moment they start having the menses they feel they are women.* (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)

*Because they have grown ... pubic hair they (the children) think they are grown.* (KI 6 female, semi-structured interview)

The kind of clothing and ornaments some children wore often roused concern from some participants:

*Today when we went to the field it was so nasty ... nasty you will see girls with this "I am aware"(indecent clothing that reveals your underwear) I mean which is bad!* (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)

*People exposing themselves they say (call it) dressing, in those days we didn't do it. It is only the White man who will allow the wife to go nude totally nude and say we are going to beach.* (KI 11 male, semi-structured interview)

Some participants appeared upset and expressed their displeasure about the way some children dressed. They believed this sexualised way of dressing was an element of borrowed western culture. KI 2 indicated this when she made reference to how Krobos used to dress in the past:

*You know Krobos, we normally cover ourselves the cloth that is what they were using in the olden days they dressed nicely in their cloth (a single piece of cloth that was tied into a knot at the neck and made into attire). The same cloth doubled as a cover to keep one warm at night), kaba (a traditional blouse) and cloth but now they put on these short, short dresses.* (KI 2 female semi-structured interview)

A major argument in addition to the one made above was that children assumed adults' roles due to their involvement in early sexual experiences and practices. This according to the participants starts off when children are exposed to sexual activity:

*I think in this area ... err me what I have seen is err a lot of exposure to sexual activities. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

*The child can sleep in a different room all girls .. all boys in one room, but here we are ... you know already, we all sleep in one room with about 10 children and the father and you (referring to a mother) ... and they see it (sexual activity). (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

*From my experience, I have realised that the children some start (sexual activity) at the age of 7 yes yes [low voice], they have been doing it in the house, you see. They have been doing it in the house. Within their house, they start it from their house before they come to (start attending) school so at the age of seven they start. Even some 6 but I will peg it at 7. They have been doing it ... you see ... err what brought about all these things is that most of their parents they sleep in the same room with their children. (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

Children are believed to learn vicariously and imitate sexual behaviour as demonstrated in the quotes below:

*They practise err normally it is those who are in the single room with their parents and then they see actions going on – they try to practice. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

*You see children are bad maybe you will think the child is asleep. Maybe the children will close one eye and will see what is happening. (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

*The parent they don't monitor the movement of their girls, they go out in the night to err funerals or any concert they watch videos there they learn how to indulge in sex. (KI 6 female, semi-structured interview)*

Again children were viewed to be more sexually experienced compared to adult generations:

*The children here you looking at them as children, but your husband or boyfriend at home if you don't take care a child will take your husband from you! They are not children! They are people who are strong these are some of the kids we are having it here. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

*Sometime ago a girl from my school some man befriended her and she went to the man, so when the man had sex and finished with her, oh is that all you can do? The girl asked the man that is that all you can do ho [this word emphasises the girl's disappointment in the man's sexual performance]! I thought you will do something better is that all that you can do and always you are worrying me, a school girl said that ooh! (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

*Above 10 (years), they are grown, sexually grown than the two of us, its true oo, these kids ... JHS, what they can do! (KI 4 female, semi-structured interview)*

In all, the participants believed they worked with a complex group of persons who were subject to the nuances of modern life and social change that dissipated the quality of child nurturance and care known of the past. Working with children who were thought to progress into adulthood at a rapid rate is indeed a challenging experience for many of these participants.

### 7.3.2. Situational context: Places, times, seasons and events

In this study, participants highlighted the precipitating roles particular times and places played in putting children at risk for CSA. The wet (raining) season, annual festivals (i.e., Ngmayem and Kloyosikplemi<sup>22</sup>) and Christian religious celebrations (i.e., Easter and Christmas) were commonly cited as risky periods where potential sex offenders and victims are in proximity:

*When it is around their (the Krobo) festival time that is October to November, Odumase is October and Somanya is November, so within that period you see more cases (being reported) coming in. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

*Usually around their (the Krobo) festival time, you hear a lot of case like that. I think the last weekend in October, people come from the village to town for the festival and you see the young girls walking around and stuff... you hear it but nobody comes to the hospital. (KI 4 female, semi-structured interview)*

Participants expressed concern about these times, as they related the migration of people (both visitors and natives of Kroboland) into the Somanya and Manya Krobo municipalities to participate in the annual festivals, with problems of CSA:

*We have our unique festivals during those activities people will like to come down maybe to participate and they (leadership) will even advertise it, and that people should come we want more people to just to come. We want strangers to come and then have a feel of our culture. Yes, and when they come [clap] then the intention of the festival is eroded hmmm the beauty of the festival is eroded because before they leave things hmmm unpleasant things might have happened. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

During these periods, participants noted that situational opportunities are created for CSA to occur. KI 7 expressed this when he mentioned that:

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<sup>22</sup> Ngmayem and Kloyosikplemi are annual festivals celebrated by the Krobo people from Manya Krobo and Yilo Krobo respectively.

*During our festival, we had about 9 cases at the time we were doing the survey, if it is late and you are going to the Krobo mountain if you don't take care you will be raped. (KI 7 male, semi-structured interview)*

Participants attributed a perceived increase of CSA cases to the effects of crowding, isolation – since the mountain was located at the outskirts of town, the availability of potential CSA targets, and the presence of potential offenders during these festivities:

*It is around it is around the time err err when people come and this err this noise all over this bashing (playing music loudly) here and there, and err and people can go out, dance and do those things around that time err herh it appears that the police stations have more of these cases and then ... around the Ngmayem festival. (KI 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

*Within that time a lot of cases are reported, especially when they are climbing the mountains and then it's night and they are returning; most boys are on drugs and when they see you and the things they have been wearing and other things it attracts them so they have been doing that. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

*You see err when it comes to the time of this err festivals both Yilo and Manya ... in Kroboland you see that visitors, strangers normally come to the town to fill up the the town. They go to this jam they say night jam. At times, they go there and they encounter those problems, I mean strangers having sex with them and they (the strangers) are not identified yes they are not identified, most of them. They buy drinks for them and they are drunk. Yes and they have sex with them and they can't identify them that is why we have some pregnancies ... teenage pregnancies that the child no matter the force the pressure they put on this child she cannot mention (identify) or will never mention the the boy. Not that it is intentional, but then she can't identify she can only recollect that something happened ... Yah! They (the girls) can't tell you it is Kwame or Kweku (male names). (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

*They celebrate their migration from the mountain to this place or something. It's like that's their annual festival so those in Manya Krobo, Somanya is Yilo Krobo. So those in the Manya krobo, they come so you have a lot of people. (KI 4 female, semi-structured interview)*

Similarly, participants highlighted that Christian religious festivities, particularly, the Christmas season which follows almost directly after the Krobo festivals are also linked with environmental stresses that accentuate the number of CSA occurrences:

*On the Kroboland, it is mostly the festivals and these days you see we have replaced most of our festivals with conventions church convention, err Easter convention, also strangers come to the town they will come to the park for the convention and they come from maybe the north so by all means, we will have some strangers and humans as we are when they come they are not angels ooo before you are aware by all means before they leave you will hear of some of these cases. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

As with the festive activities described above, the headmaster also cited other settings and occasions like the cemetery and sporting activities that create a facilitative context for CSA:

*We were having err sports at Lassi park, the other side (using his fingers to point in the other opposite direction) I don't know what happened, some boys dragged some of our school children to the cemetery here and had sex with them. Some boys from the cemetery are wee smokers, I don't know what happened they were able to lure them from the park to the school here and had sex with them. (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

K 12 also notes that other environmental irritants like changes in temperate weather conditions contribute to the occurrence of CSA. She remarked that high incidents are likely to occur “*during the major season from from March to August err herh the the weather hehehehehe [laughs] the weather is a little bit err cold err herh it's a little bit cold [low voice]*”.

#### **7.4. Subjective experiences of working with CSA survivors in Kroboland**

Engaging with CSA survivors posed particular challenges for professionals. Professionals are predisposed to a variety of experiences due to the nature of their work; for instance, the participants discussed moments of empathetic engagement with CSA survivors, working difficulties characterised by periods of secrecy, interference and resistance, as well as victimisation. Participants also expressed a need for support to be able to achieve their work goals. These phenomena collectively defined the professionals' lived experiences in the Kroboland context.

##### **7.4.1. Empathetic engagement with CSA survivors**

Working with these groups of children frequently exposed the participants to disturbing situations, horrifying scenes and stories of CSA which were potentially troubling conditions to deal with, even as professionals. As a consequence of working in this context, participants indicated a continuum of emotional responses. For example, KI 2 expressed anger when she empathetically engaged with CSA survivors by reflecting on the perceived harm done to the children involved. She made particular reference to male teachers who sexually abused children, positioning them as parents with children of their own. She questioned the morals in harming a child:

*Sometimes, I ask myself, teachers, you have a girl .. you have a small girl and you would not like ... this small to spoil, but you have gone in to spoil somebody's child who is in SHS (Senior High School) .. what do you think you are doing? ... God will punish you ... you will get a punishment if you don't get it somebody will do it to your child ... and herh [laughs cunningly] yours will be worse. (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

In a similar manner, KI 5 questions the morals of CSA offenders, particularly offenders who are biologically related to the survivor, she further expressed satisfaction when sanctions are legally enforced:

*For me, I like to report to the police, because when we don't do that the man will go and do it to another girl again ... but when we go to the police station, and forms are given and warning are given then the man will think [points to the head] ... Maybe it's your grandchild, come and buy food for me and then you force and rape 10 years, 8 years, 12 years. It is not good! (KI 5 female, semi-structured interview)*

KI 1, a lawyer by profession described feeling overwhelmed by events of CSA involving under age children. He remarked:

*I think err it's a good thing I didn't have the chance [laughs awkwardly] to handle them. I can't I can't describe how I will feel err I ... very wild ... and then emotions will ... even the way I will talk will err I don't know ... maybe emotions will come out from ... much on my side I will not be able to present a reasonable ... a very detached argument. (KI 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

The lawyer's narrative shows how survivors' experiences of CSA may potentially impact the emotional worldviews of professionals who work with sexually abused children. CSA experiences can impair one's objectivity and ability to provide survivors services competently. Nevertheless, professionals do not always empathise with the sexual experiences of survivors, especially older individuals who were viewed as compliant victims.

For instance, the same female teacher who had empathised with a student after the revelation of repeated episodes of sexual abuse by an uncle, at a point also blamed the survivor:

*I told her it is your fault because I have been telling you always in school, if something of that nature happens you come and report him to me, we will arrest him ... then you kept quiet, then it means you consented to it. (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

KI 3 also expressed similar sentiments when he talked about the case of a teacher who had sexually abused a student:

*The girl that I am saying that the teacher had an affair with, the girl came to school alright, the news just came hmm hmm hmmm mmm [humming like a bee to suggest gossip] she came to the school the next day and she was playing, as if nothing happened ooh! They (survivors) don't have any problem. (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

#### **7.4.2. Feeling frustrated**

In subtle ways, the KIs talked about how they often felt a lack of control in their working environment. For example, as professionals working in the Krobo context they explained how efforts to assist CSA survivors were often frustrated by a lack of CSA disclosure, due to cultural problems of collective shame and stigma:

*They will hide it (cases of CSA) from you as the frontline staff they will not tell you, unless someone tips you, but they ... they won't do it! (KI 6 female, semi-structured interview)*

*Around here because they (the Krobo) feel they are related so they don't want to report ... and the stigma ... so they don't want to bring it out for anybody to know hmmm. (KI 4 female, semi-structured interview)*

*Normally, they do not want it to come to light. (KI 12 female, semi-structured interview)*

*You know rumours are in the community hmmm hmmm [humming like a bee] and that is how I get to know. (KI 7 male, semi-structured interview)*

From the participants' experiences, assistance or support regarding CSA was often avoided or intercepted, especially when the CSA event concerned an intrafamilial relationship:

*If the person (sex offender) is a stranger, they (the survivor's family) will follow up to the police station. Hmmm they will go and report and come and take you to the the police station. (KI 5 female, semi-structured interview)*

*As for that di333 (laying emphasis on the enthusiasm of the family to report) they will run 20 of them to report you. (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

*If you are a stranger and you do it (perpetrate CSA), how they will treat you, you will never do it again. But if you are a relative and you do it they will take it as a house matter. They will sit on it and then settle the thing but if you are a stranger ... they will send you to the police station. If you go and redraw the case at the police station ... the amount of money you are going to spend it is not a small thing. (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

Participants noted how intrafamilial forms of CSA were considered a private issue to be settled between the families of the survivor and offender. CSA interventions governed by

families, KIs explained functioned to avoid the embarrassment and shame CSA could potentially cause these affected families, if its occurrence were made public. However, this desired privacy surrounding such forms of CSA limited the KI's engagement with the case, positioning them as outsiders. Consequently, the limited working influence they had over intrafamilial CSA cases caused a sense of frustration.

During the interviews, some KIs expressed how their services were often restricted by the collective interests and directives of the families.

*They will say [dramatised in an authoritative voice] ooh the the man is our relative so we want you to (medically) treat the girl and we go home to sit down and settle the matter. (KI 5 female, semi-structured interview)*

*We (a victim and KI 12) reported the case to the police for medical examination. Then the parents came in ... though it is not allowed, but the way the parents were behaving they settled the matter and it died. Hahahahaha he hehe [laughs awkwardly]. (KI 12 female, semi-structured interview)*

The distress of dealing with survivors who had common kinship ties with the CSA offender was often overpowering for the participants, as proven in the quotes below which highlight a sense of helplessness:

*They don't complain! the mothers they ... and I ... [long pause] I don't have anything to do [raises hands in the air in frustration]. (KI 6 female, semi-structured interview)*

*You can't force the person so if the person doesn't come you there is nothing you can do. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

KI's attempted to describe this overwhelming experience by underscoring the strength of solidarity that exists among the Dangme tribe of Ghana – whom the Krobo form a subgroup. For instance, KI 10 likened the social cohesion found among the Krobo to similar behaviour observed among the Akan people of Ghana, who are expected to be loyal to their kin in and beyond the nuclear family:<sup>23</sup>

*You see Dangmes, we are such that we live in the nuclear family and then ... here we don't practice the extended because e wofa bi<sup>24</sup> and still we say we are one so when it comes to such cases ... we will say we are from one family. Maybe the same clan you*

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<sup>23</sup> The Akans are the largest ethnic group in Ghana, and the only clan that adopts a matrilineal kinship system, which involves commitment, obligation and responsibility to the extended family on the part of members.

<sup>24</sup> e wofa bi means uncle's child, this phrase refers to the matrilineal system of inheritance where a child's uncle is the guardian and not the child's biological father.

*see, the same clan you see, then they just settle the case amicably at home. (KI 10 male, semi-structured interview)*

In the quote above, another participant of Dangme descent but not a Krobo used the terms “we are one”, “one family” and “same clan” repetitively to reinforce the degree of solidarity that exists among the Krobo people. By combining and making reference to the words “web” and “chain” another participant further illuminated the complex social network of interdependency that participants have to contend with:

*You see here the people are web chain you see they relate they are interrelated so the moment that you are saying that you will sending them to the police station you will see that on the way somebody will intercede. Oh I beg you, he is my relative let us bring it to the house and see what we can do. (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

*The suspect moves very fast to see families and then so they beg (plead) then ... they (the survivor’s family) will say ooo then bring this amount of money. (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

The continued reference to these kinship descriptions in the participants’ speech demonstrate how problematic these connections were for the professionals interviewed.

Again some KIs in this study expressed frustration when their roles as professionals were unacknowledged by families affected by CSA. The experience of nonrecognition left participants feeling undervalued. In relation to this, one participant said:

*You will hardly hear parents reporting [waving his index finger back and forth in the air] yes it is only when you hear of a parent reporting this thing maybe ... when that parent is at loggerheads with the opposed parent. (KI 11 male, semi-structured interview)*

Correspondingly, other participants felt their role was valued only when the survivor’s family were displeased with out-of-court settlement terms. Not being acknowledged until things did not work in favour of the affected party irritated participants as is illustrated in the quotes below:

*They don’t report it ... they don’t ... they don’t report it! They normally try and settle first if the settlement is not going well ... then they come. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

*Because err the boy the boys will be jailed for between 5 years and 25 errr herh so they pleaded and they paid the expenses and the ... the family specified the things they wanted and forgot about it? Hmmm. (KI 12 female, semi-structured interview)*

Situations like the one described above often demoralised the participants. During the interviews, some participants attempted to preserve their self-image by using various defense

mechanisms. In other words, participants unconsciously sought to enhance their emotionally injured (working) self-image because of their perceived sense of devaluation. For example, KI 6 made social comparisons that on one hand positioned herself inferior to others when she mentioned, “*they will rather settle it with a chief*”. But by contrast she situated herself at par with other professionals in the child protection field when she rationalised that other professionals in the child protection field experienced similar frustrations. Here KI 6 provides meaning that reveals a shared experience that is expected in such a working context.

In another example, when KI 8 was asked to give an account of any sexual abuse case, she responded by wanting to distance herself from cases that made her feel incompetent, while appealing to talk about cases that were associated with some success:

*(Long pause) hmmm I normally want to talk about cases that we have sent to court and then cases that we got the suspects. Some of the cases will come, but you will trail them aaah (over an extended period of time) you won't get them. In that case, we cannot send the person to court because the docket will be lying down until we get the person. And here it is very common when they come to the police station and you issue them with a medical form and if you don't follow them before you realise they will go home and settle the case with the other parties and you won't get them again. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

As presented above, the hindrances of events (of CSA non-disclosure, family interference, noncompliance with the legal process, delayed reporting of CSA cases at hospital among others) that were disruptive to the participants' working goals frequently created a sense of frustration for participants. Emerging patterns from the data show that a sense of frustration forms a crucial part of experiencing powerlessness in the working context of these professionals.

### **7.4.3. Feeling victimised**

The professionals in this study talked about how their working roles had often put their lives at risk. Despite their good intentions to help persons affected by CSA, participants reported being confronted, threatened and stigmatised by agitated persons:

*When we see that children are so much sexy or flirts in the school, and we invite their parents but the way they will come and talk to us. You will see that you will blame yourself of inviting the person. (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

*When you are passing they will be insulting ... the woman (wife of the offender) and in the house will come and insult me ... one time they were insulting me so I had to*

*sneak across any time am passing their house. that one ... it is verbal abuse. (KI 7 male, semi-structured interview)*

*The moment you go and reveal the secret then you are the bad person rather ... eiiii they will start pointing fingers at you " she was the one who went to report it, our brother was sent to prison". (KI 2 female, semi-structured interview)*

*When she became pregnant and we asked of the errr one who impregnated her, she pointed to that man, that boy too is also like HEY [in loud voice] if we come there with that case he will slap us [laughs uncomfortably] hahahahaha. (KI 12 female, semi-structured interview)*

One participant stated how his life was endangered spiritually as a result of him helping a CSA survivor to seek legal justice and treatment against HIV/AIDS. He said, “*In one case ... They (the offender) nearly killed me but not in the physical but err they tried to harm me not physically but spiritually*”. Explaining further, KI 7 talked about experiencing a strange skin sickness, a development he attributed to the exploits of the sex offender.

Negative reactions towards their work often left some participants feeling persecuted. KIs who were from other ethnic backgrounds felt an increased sense of frustration and helplessness as is illustrated in the following quote:

*At times, they bring it (the case) to the house and find some compensation, like err two hundred Ghana (\$53) or three hundred Ghana (\$74) or whatever one point five (\$40) or something like that. That is, they compensate the family, and they leave it because they feel that they are err relatives, so it does not matter. So err if you are a stranger like this you don't have anything to do [whispering] you have to keep quiet. (KI 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

#### **7.4.4. Working with CSA survivors: A need for support**

Participants talked about how they were often overwhelmed by the needs of the children they worked with, who often demanded assistance beyond their expertise, and workload that often exceeded the strength of available resources. In their narratives, they expressed the need for psychological and structural support for their clients, support that was often taken for granted in their discourse.

##### **7.4.4.1. A need for psychological support for CSA survivors**

As discussed above, only a few participants like KI 10 and KI 2 recognised a rarely identified need of psychological support for CSA survivors in Kroboland. To add to this list of persons, KI 8 highlighted the inadequacy in her expertise to help clients who experienced

psychological distress after the event of CSA. She stresses the need for support from qualified persons to help CSA survivors with the healing process to recovery:

*Sometimes you see them after defilement, you see that the person is down, you don't know what to do, so you need someone to encourage the person, so she comes back to her normal self. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

#### **7.4.4.2. Personal resources: loss, need and support**

Some participants often encountered personal experiences of loss as a result of working with CSA survivors. KI 8 explained the nature of working with CSA survivors often required working overtime:

*It is very tedious sometimes you close, after closing immediately you reach the house they will come and call you and you have to come and attend to the person, so you have to come to the office. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

KI 10 also explained that he once had to sacrifice and travel impromptu, over a distance of approximately three hours from Tafo to Somanya to resolve a case of CSA; he recalls, *"I told them to wait, and I came all the way from Tafo"*. A few participants talked about the kind of strain working with CSA survivors caused on their personal finances:

*When we are ready to go to arrest someone the car is somewhere, so we have to go by our own vehicle from our own pocket. (KI 9 male, semi-structured interview)*

*The burden lies solely on the mothers, who are not doing any serious job and then that makes them poor they don't sometimes at least they don't even have food to eat. They come here, and you have to give your own money to them for transportation and other things. (KI 8 female, semi-structured interview)*

In the police personnel's estimation personal expenses could be minimised if *"there should be more personnel and experienced people to work with, most people are there, but they don't know what to do, so we need experienced people to join us to work and more logistics"*. KI 8's suggestion echoes the need for additional support to complement the working efforts as well as lessen the personal distress of professionals who work with CSA survivors.

## **7.5. Chapter summary**

In this chapter, the KIs provide a description of the categories of persons they work with who include children, as well as adults. Additionally, they outlined their modes and scope of operation which involve both prevention and intervention efforts. They described various

concerns, conflicts and dilemma's they often faced while working with children but also highlighted some achievements. Further, the KIs described the context in which they worked as complex; here they laid emphasis on the nature of children they dealt with, referring to them as modernised, underprivileged and sexualised. A major concern and challenge for these KIs was the fact that children lived short childhoods, lacked good parental care, and were forced to take up adult roles and responsibilities, this complicated their working efforts. For these KIs certain locations in Kroboland (e.g., the Krobo Mountain), periods (e.g., annual festivals, Christmas and Easter) and seasons (e.g., raining season) in the year were perceived to contribute to the increased vulnerability of children to CSA. According to the KIs these factors were linked to migration, crowding, low parental supervision and the availability of potential offenders and victims in the same place. Furthermore, KIs spoke about the horrifying CSA stories, plus the problems of secrecy, interference and resistance they had to deal with, particularly when the case concerned related families. Some KIs shared experiences of being devalued and victimised. Additionally, some KIs narrated how their expertise was often limited, to work more effectively; they expressed a need for support. The KIs lived experiences of working with children in Kroboland presents one side of reality, in relation to culture, childhood, sexuality and CSA. In the next chapter, I present the version of the Krobo people.

## **Chapter Eight: Child care experiences, sexual development and experiential accounts of child sexual abuse**

### **8.1. Introduction**

In this results chapter, the lived sexual and CSA experiences of the Krobo people are presented and discussed in detail below. As explained in Chapter Five, to ensure representativeness across the Krobo social strata, in this present study participants were selected based on their leadership or non-leadership status in Kroboland. Further, for community members, age and gender were taken into consideration. In this same category, if female, one's diplo status was also an important selection criterion.

The discussion below draws on the following data sources:

1. Five focus group discussions (FGDs), two with women and two with men (none of them community leaders).
2. Semi-structured interviews conducted with twelve community leaders (CL), four females and eight males.

For clarity and comprehensibility, emerging themes and sub-themes on childhood, sexual development, and relevant child care experiences are presented first, followed by personal accounts of CSA. Where appropriate the accounts of males and females and related themes are presented separately. To ensure anonymity, identifiers and not the real names of the participants are indicated in the text or stated at the end of each quote used. In the concluding section, I present a discussion of unexpected but relevant study findings.

### **8.2. Culture and the experiences of childhood**

Results from the current study reveal that in the same cultural context, accounts of childhood are experienced and understood in multiple, but sometimes conflicting ways. In the sections below, participants provide details about cultural variations in these childhood experiences and ascribe various meanings to these accounts. As illustrated below, accounts of being a child in Kroboland highlight a string of important issues related to dependency, responsibility, respect and reciprocity, plus, gender roles and socialisation.

### 8.2.1. You are underage: Immature and dependent

For participants like CL 4, the experience of childhood is delimited by one's embeddedness in a particular time frame: *"If you are below 18 years that means you are underage."*

Corroborating the above notion in almost similar words, Ashaley a participant of MFGD I maintained, *"Below 18, you are underage."* This period talked about by the participants is consistent with provisions of the United Nations (UN, 2016) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) concept of, who is a child. According to this international instrument, from 0 – 17 years of age, one is assumed to be a child. The end of the 17th year coincides with the minimum legal age (18 years old) ratified for adulthood and marriage in Ghana.

In general, marriage served as an important point of reference when participants spoke about their experiences of "being a child". CL 2 for example claimed that:

*Up to that stage of marriage whatever you are ... you are considered a child because you are still under parental care, aha!* (CL 2 male, semi-structured interview)

For CL 2, as illustrated in the extract above, a child is a developing individual dependent on others for care and survival, until the point at which one attains marriage.

Traditionally, dipo was the institution concerned with teaching mature skills to young girls transitioning from childhood to womanhood. Dipo training when completed successfully implied that the participating female was no longer a child, but a woman eligible for marriage. As illustrated in the quote below, performing dipo was the condition that provided a change in the identity of a krobo girl:

*Unless you undergo dipo you are still considered as a child and this this notion ... if she has passed through the dipo rituals aha then err she can go unto marriage at any time ... then she ceases to be a child.* (CL 4 male, semi-structured interview)

Similarly, for boys transitioning to become men, as indicated earlier in Chapter Six, the institution of marriage served as a marker and site of independence, autonomy, responsibility and maturity, an arena not intended for minors, who are considered immature and dependent.

In their narratives, some male participants likened their experiences of childhood to a state of dependency. CL 10 explained that:

*Where a young boy broke of free, quite early erm he might want to establish a family, and that makes a difference then you cease to be a child. Otherwise, you grow up with your parents for many years.* (CL 10 male, semi-structured interview)

As explained by this participant, the state of dependency ends when one establishes his or her independence from parental care. Indirectly, the participant uses the establishment of a family as a point of departure from childhood and argues that a continued reliance on one's parents, although one may have matured, is analogous to childishness:

Talking about adulthood, one male participant stated that:

*When the person is from 18 upwards ... that is where the person is matured ... So over there [at this stage] he does understand ... things for herself or himself.* (Tetteh, 24 years old, MFGD I)

Dependency is closely associated with immaturity, a lack of knowledge and resources. As one participant noted, “A child doesn't have anything ... doesn't know anything” (CL 5) and thus is not self-sufficient. Hence the continuous need for support and guidance from others. As such, some participants both male and female relayed that as part of their upbringing and care – as described in Chapter Six – they were strictly monitored as immature individuals and placed under a lot of surveillance:

*When you are not mature yet to care for yourself, they keep you at home all the time they will keep you at home and supervise your activity.* (CL 4 male, semi-structured interview)

*He (father) was protecting us by sending you (on errands) and timing (monitoring the time it took) you (to return) and if you delay and you come, he punishes you!* (CL 7 female, semi-structured interview)

Consequently, children who challenged the status quo and engaged in activities reserved for adults, such as staying away from home until late and indulging in sexual activity, were argued to have defied social boundaries. These individuals were commonly described as disrespectful and disobedient children who dared to compete with adult authority or refused to succumb to parental control.

“Stubborn” was a common term used by the participants to describe themselves when they rebelled against adult authority and did not conform to standards required of children:

*Children, we can be stubborn. I will not tell my mum this is where I am going, me, sometimes, if I am going to Accra (the capital city of Ghana), I'll just tell my mum I'm coming (without saying) and then I go without permission.* (Dede, 26 years old, FFGD II)

*I lost my grandmother in JSS ... so I became very stubborn. I parted with my conscience, after the death of my grandmother. I didn't understand anybody else then. In the past when you want me to do something for you, you have to tell my*

*grandmother to tell me because probably, I will even insult you. But, if you tell my grandmother to tell me, I will obey. So since my grandmother was not there .. hmmm. My grandmother hindered much of my bad character I was trying to put up .. I respected her.* (Na, 24 years old, MFGD I)

*I completed Yilo Krobo Secondary School (YIKROSEC) in (19) 98 ... from 95 to 98 I was very stubborn in school .. I referred to two other secondary schools after YIKROSEC because I was very stubborn.* (Matey, 35 years old, MFGD II)

### 8.2.2. Limited rights and privileges

Despite the fact that Ghana was the first country to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Ame, Agbenyiya, & Apt, 2011), participants indicated that being a child within the Kroboland context was qualified by a restricted set of rights and privileges. Article 12 of the UNCRC framework recognises children as social actors with the authority to participate in decision making processes that affect their lives (Manful & Manful, 2014). However, in practice, this social positioning of children is somewhat in contradiction to local practices that give children little decision power in matters that concern them (Cobbett et al., 2012).

To illustrate this, one elderly participant argued that a child should be entitled to very few rights, besides access to food, a basic stipulation:

*In those days, education was not a (child) right, now, it's a right so we shall now add it. So (the right to) education, (basic) clothing and shelter these three thing, only these three things should be a child's right (entitlements). Now, if you discipline your child, there is a law asking your child to send you to court look at all this!* [Expressed anger] (CL 2 male, semi-structured interview)

In contestation with conceptions of the UNCRC (UN, 2016) about corporal punishment, another elderly participant related that:

*Now, if you want to punish a child, they say no .. human rights!* (CL 11 male, semi-structured interview)

Corporal punishment forms an integral part of traditional childrearing practices in Africa; this is highlighted in the discourse of older generations that compares the nature of their childhood in the past to what occurs with the modern generation of children. However, in recent times the literature on corporal punishment (Alhassan, 2013) indicates alternative measures to traditional corrective practices that have been rendered ineffective and harmful to a child's well-being.

Dede was one participant who spoke about the harmful effects of corporal punishment based on personal encounters with her father who used this type of corrective measure, as a major mode of discipline. She explained:

*He (father) used to beat me ahhh (for a long period of time), I will even fall sick. He (father) will go and buy medicine and I will say I won't take it and he will be like you will die oh and then I say, let me die, if I die, people will say look at the man who killed his daughter, there he goes. (Dede, 26 years old, FFGD II)*

The expression “ahhhh” is a local expression commonly used to lay emphasis on carrying out an action over an extended period of time. In her statement above, Dede, implies that her father used to beat her excessively, to the extent that it later impacted on her health. Although, Dede's father often attempted to make her feel better by providing medication, she reacted indifferently.

Subsequently, Dede began to rebel against her father's form of discipline by exhibiting behaviour that exceeded the intensity of what brought about discipline in the first place. She rebelled until he changed his corrective method:

*At a point, he (my father) told me point blank, I'm of age and he can't continue to beat me so now he will just be talking to me. If he talks and I don't hear (listen), it is up to me ... So the moment he said that, then me too, I put a stop to all the bad things I was doing. (Dede, 26 years old, FFGD II)*

Besides the generational conflict over what rights children should be entitled to, as briefly established here, a significant number of participants were also concerned about their rights being undermined by limited emotional, financial and social support from their parents, extended family or guardians. They linked these outcomes to disorganised family structures characterised by single parenthood and parental divorce or separation. These concerns are discussed in section 8.4. in more detail.

### **8.2.3. Child responsibilities and mutual expectations**

As is highlighted in Chapter Four, the African child is typically trained to acquire social competence and participate in social responsibility as part of cultural life (Nsamenang & Lamb, 2014). As such, child responsibilities and duties formed a vital part of the participants' childhood experience. As children, participants carried out various domestic chores, ran errands and engaged in sibling care as part of their shared responsibilities within the context of widening social relationships:

*I sweep. (Marku 15 years old, FFGD 1)*

*I look after my young siblings. (Belinda 13 year old, FFGD III)*

*I tidied the room up and bathed for my younger siblings ... and then I sent them to school before I go to school. (Ruth 14 years old, FFGD III)*

*I used to help my mother in the kitchen. (Masi 15 years old FFG II)*

As participants carried out obligations as children, they also expected mutual benefits from their guardians and significant others. For example, in their narratives, participants strongly criticised guardians who fell short of their social obligations and expectations (see section 8.4.1.) towards them. The argument of these participants is consistent with the African worldview of reciprocity within the context of wider social relationships. These results seem to corroborate the findings presented in Chapter Six.

In Chapter Six, I presented participant observation data based on personal interactions and observations of some older kinsfolk who experienced neglect by younger generations. In addition, other participants expressed a desire to punish an elderly person for his or her earlier act of poor caregiving or child neglect. For some of the participants in this current study their guardians had once been punitive, hostile and generally unsupportive of their care. In effect, the affected participant – the offended child – spoke of the intention to subject their guardian to similar ill-treatment in response to their failure to commit to parental duties.

#### **8.2.4. Being a child never ends**

In relation to an older person, being a child is regarded a never-ending social experience (Twum-Danso, 2009). In the present study, two participants spoke clearly about this:

*As long as I can give birth to you ... you are a child, even you (referring to the interviewer) ... you can be my pinkin (child) ... yes! (CL 3 male, semi-structured interview)*

*Although, I was working after training college and earning a salary but ... I was still treated as if ... a child yes a child! (CL 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

According to these participants, an individual, no matter his or her age, would always remain a child in relation to an older person, and thus is treated as such, in the company of elders. In the company of elders, the older ones remain senior, the youngest in the group is treated like a child.

### 8.3. Forming a gender identity: Equality and subsequent differential childhood experiences

A few male participants spoke of early life experiences, where they interacted with individuals of the opposite sex without attaching any importance to the fact that they were of a different gender. Talking about their early social experiences with the same sex, one male participant related that:

*You also treat the girl as a boy.* (CL 2 male, semi-structured interview)

CL 1 also explained that:

*When you are young, you don't even care about having your bath together with your sisters. But it gets to a point when those (body) features would want to develop they (girls) would want to separate themselves from you physically you know.*  
(CL 1 male, semi-structured interview)

With time, participants talked about how they increasingly became aware of gender differences due to observed body changes and social experiences of differential treatment.

#### 8.3.1. Physical growth and appearance

As mentioned in the quote above, some participants became aware of gender differences based on observing their own maturing bodies, the bodies of others or the reaction of people towards these developing bodies, particularly individuals within their immediate family environment. Fourteen-year-old, Namo said:

*Due to the development of the ... our hormone changes come ... like the pubic hairs on our private parts.* (Namo 14 years old FFG III)

Reflecting on his own childhood experience, CL 12 mentioned that:

*Nobody will tell you, it's natural it will get to a point when your sensitive parts will feel something and from there you will get to know you are not a boy anymore you are a man.* (CL 12 male, semi-structured interview)

Comparing the sexual maturation of the opposite sex to himself, another participant said:

*You know... naturally as girls, you see them developing natural physical structures err... physical projections on the body which, you the man may not have.* (CL 1 male, semi-structured interview)

Other participants watched and learned about gender differences owing to the reaction of the opposite sex, towards them:

*My mother used to wash my clothes but she stopped the day she found my pants stained with semen [giggles]. (David, 24 years old, MFGD II)*

*On my birthday when I was 15 years my mother stopped washing my pants and that day I stopped wearing pants, I started wearing boxers[grins]. (Ashaley, 18 years old, MFGD I)*

Changes in body appearance raised concern for some participants. One 13-year-old participant noted that at a point, she felt embarrassed about her changing body to the extent that she used to bathe<sup>25</sup> without taking off her panties in the process. Other participants recounted the following:

*There was this lady who used to bathe me ... at a certain age I told my mother I did not want her to bath me anymore ... It made me feel uncomfortable. (Sammy, 31 years old MFGD I)*

*As I was growing up to some age, I said no! ah nobody should see the thing (referring to his penis). (CL 12 male, semi-structured interview)*

Participants indicated a stage where the discovery of a changing body, whether by self or by another individual led to frantic efforts of initiating or maintaining personal boundaries, establishing privacy and forming a new identity.

### **8.3.2. Differential treatment: Establishing and enforcing gender norms**

As is the case in other African settings, differential treatment is obvious in the way boys and girls are nurtured to learn about their social roles and place in society. Introduction to simple household tasks is gender related. CL 2 explains that:

*Initially, you were treated the same – you slept together, you know that brothers and sisters slept together in the same compound or room until they considered you were grown enough. (CL 2 male, semi-structured interview)*

*The boys were given the type of training suited for boys err climbing the palm tree for instance, err hunting hmm setting traps for game errrr and they were made to assume err the role of protector of their sisters aha err err if any any nonsense roused about the boys were sent out to find out the cause and if if necessary fight it out fight it out err defend er and protect their sisters. You were brought up with err the feeling that you*

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<sup>25</sup> Within the Krobo locality young children bathe in the house compound often visible to public view. Older children and adults bathe in the shower cubicles which are usually enclosed and located out of public view.

*were the stronger err person you must grow tough and take care of the family when your father was no more and so on this was how the boy was brought up err again ... well there was big pressure on the boy to go to the forest. (CL 4 male, semi-structured interview)*

*My father was a farmer and so he chose to go with me to the farm you know he taught me a lot of things. (CL 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

*I grew up under a grandfather err who was a farmer and so I did farming work under him. (CL 11 male, semi-structured interview)*

At a certain stage of development, children begin to segregate themselves from the company of the opposite sex or tend to affiliate closely with the same sex. As the participants subtly revealed, sex segregation occurs largely due to the enforcement of social norms and performances of masculinity and femininity that sanction gendered subjectivities. Boys and girls usually mirror same gender parent or guardian patterns. Illustrating this in simple terms, one elderly participant stated that:

*We move with the boys and the women move with girls. (CL 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

As is illustrated by the former quotes, male participants learned how to behave differently from their female counterparts observing and modelling same sex siblings, peers or adults. Correspondingly, male respondents engaged in activities related to the anticipated role of breadwinner, protector role and sexual activities:

*I started working with a brother who was a mason when I was in JHS to earn money. (Na, 24 years old, MFGD I)*

*I helped to protect the family's interest, in the form of protecting the farming lands that we had. (CL 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

*I used to fight for my sister even though I was not that strong [laughs.] (John, 17 years old, MFGD I)*

Some male participants talked about how they shadowed older boys; this involved the completion of certain tasks, some of which involved observing and reporting the interests of the opposite sex. Nuertey, for example, usually spent time with his seniors, some of whom played football. During football matches, his role was to look out for girls who showed or expressed an attraction or interest towards the players. According to Nuertey:

*Using that method, they (the older boys) could easily pick a woman that very day and whatever will happen is between the lady and that my brother I will never know, I will*

*be there walking ... but through that I also learnt something from them.* (Nuertey, 38 years old, MFGII)

One male participant narrated that:

*By 12 years, I was err should I put it this way I was an intermediary what we locally call betweener for the big big big guys in the area. I had the confidence to go and convince the ladies for them (the big guys).* (Steven, 37 year old, MFGD II)

Subsequently, male participants talked about how they modelled after what they observed of their older siblings:

*When I was about 10, 12, 11 years ... those that led me as senior brothers they were doing it (having sex) and then I also wanted to copy but my first time of having sex with a lady, what you call sperm hmmm (what make a woman pregnant) I didn't even have it.* (Matey, 35 year old, MFGD II)

At the same time, male participants placed emphasis on their participation in masculine related activity in childhood; some deliberately distanced themselves from female activities:

*My sisters, since they are ladies and it is traditional with the community that when you are lady and your mum sells, you have to help your mum sell. But that of a guy, you don't see something like that. So my twin sister sells with my grandma but I don't.* (Na, 24 years old, MFGD I).

Female participants, on the other hand, talked about how they learned to engage in domestic chores by assisting their mothers with household responsibilities. They usually helped to cook, keep the house clean, trade and sometimes did farm work with their mothers, which led to the development of responsible and nurturing behaviour.

Some participants related that gender identities that usually did not conform to social norms or societal expectations were frowned upon, and censured as a deviation from the norm:

*If you are a girl and you are seen kicking a ball outside they would just laugh at you that kind of noise that you will experience, you will not feel like doing it again for the second time.* (CL 1 male, semi-structured interview)

One female participant, CL 9, who was considered a tomboy recalled how she was teased by her peers:

*Some (people) from my childhood ... some even said I am a hermaphrodite ... yes, that's why I am like that ... they said I was very aggressive.* (CL 9 female, semi-structured interview)

As children, participants received differential treatment because of their given gender. However, both male and females recounted being exposed to similar experiences of economic hardships, limited child care and parental support. Accounts of these are presented in the section below.

#### **8.4. Experiential accounts of economic hardship, limited child care and parental support**

Economic hardship and limited or lack of access to parental support creates adverse conditions for the development of children, which may in turn thwart their sexual, social, and emotional development. According to the interviewees in this current study, the effects of these factors may have contributed to subsequent problems of poor sexual development and sex offending, forming and sustaining interpersonal relationships and emotional problems. A discussion of these issues is presented in the sections below.

##### **8.4.1. Experiences of caregiving**

Poor or limited caregiving because of parental death, divorce or separation was a common theme in the participant narratives. For instance, the death of a biological parent resulted in difficult times of adjusting to the said parents' absence. Because of death, some parental roles were not sufficiently achieved by the sole efforts of the surviving parent, alternative guardian or guardians. Unfulfilled parental roles compromised a child's development. For example, some participants grieved about the loss of the deceased parent, in addition to the reduced amount of support they received and the resulting impact this negative situation had on ones' early life goals, as is illustrated in the following quotes:

*I lost my daddy. As a result, I couldn't write the 'A' Level (exams) till date [shakes her head]. (CL 7 female, semi-structured interview)*

*During my infancy, I lost my my father ... my mother is in the room [points towards an adjoining door] ... errr and so I found it difficult to pursue my education. (CL 2 male, semi-structured interview)*

Fourteen-year-old, Laako lost her mother when she was a toddler; up until the time of the interview, she still felt the impact of her mothers' absence, despite the fact that her father was alive. She stated this during the individual interview:

*When I see my colleagues talking to their parents ... or having something in common with their parents ... mtchew (a sigh of frustration) then I feel sad ... even though my*

*father is there (available) but ... I like my mother I would prefer to stay with her ... rather than my father.* (Laako 14 years old, FFGD III)

For Laako, observing other child-parent relationships and related events (e.g., Mothers' Day) seemed to trigger off a sense of grief and sadness:

*When, we are celebrating Mothers' Day I feel sad.* (Laako 14 years old, FFGD III)

The absence of a parent or parents caused some participants to feel a sense of alienation, and at times bouts of loneliness. For instance, during his parents' four-year separation, one male participant for instance expressed feeling a sense of emptiness. Like Laako, the absence of his mother had created a vacuum in his life:

*It was very boring. It was very boring to ... you know when you are even back from school and your mum is not in the house and it happens to be your dad only, there is no joy in the house.* (Na 24 years old, MFGD I)

In a similar fashion, other participants whose biological parents were alive during childhood, subtly described their relationship with a parent or parents as impaired, emotionally or physically aloof. This was common in family contexts where parents had lived apart from the participant owing to events of divorce, separation or a prior relationship that did not result in marriage. To this end, some participants criticised certain child-parent relationships.

Sammy, for instance, expressed anger in reaction to his parents' divorce and its perceived effects on his life. Reflecting on his own childhood experience, in MFGD I, Sammy expressed anger towards mothers who brought up their children in the absence of their fathers and who in the process had to toil hard to make provision for their children:

*Sammy: If you will divorce, you have to give the kids to the father you see.*

*Na: That is the right thing ...*

*Sammy: ... but you will carry the kids. Maybe ... you have 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 ... 6 boys, and maybe you bring us here no work our father is there doing nothing, idle! The money he will be getting, he will just send it to another girl and be using it bassa bassa (indiscriminately) and you (the mother) will come and suffer. Maybe JHS (Junior High School), SS (Senior High School) you can't (afford to) put (enrol) us ... you start to tell us oh you have grown go and look for a job ... we all ... we have become redundant ... we are suffering.*

James, in response to his experience of parental neglect, uttered sarcastically:

*I don't care! If you want to take care of me, you can come, if you don't want to take care of me, take care of yourself, save the money for yourself and if you grow (old)*

*keep that money if you die use that money use that money to hire someone to read your ... life history (tribute) for you. Hmmm that's how my policy is, me am simple. (James, 22 years old, MFGD I)*

Aggrieved by his experience of parental neglect, particularly directing his frustration at his father, James indicated that he would not consider restoring his relationship with his parents now that he had started to earn some good money. He explained that:

*If your father is to come to your life now, he will get the benefits more than the benefits you will get. (James, 22 years old, MFGD I)*

James said that his father had not been involved in his care, nor had he invested enough resources towards his caregiving, thus he did not deserve to enjoy the benefits he currently generated from the operation of a small-scale phone accessories shop.

Some participants brought up by a single parent acknowledged the supporting role of one parent while holding the other parent in contempt. For instance, one female participant spoke about how she was unable to participate in the female initiate rites – dipo – at the time she had desired to, because her mother could not afford to pay the dipo participation fee. According to her, she had never received financial support from her father. Therefore, she had to work and save, over time, in order to assist her mother to pay for the cost of participating in the dipo ceremony. She was angry with her father when he attempted to restore the strained relationship given the nature of suffering she had been through, a condition she attributed to his absence:

*My father came in to say that he had not looked after me but pleaded for forgiveness. But, I told him that he did not assist my mother to look after me and after we have toiled to make money he is now showing up. When my mother had suffered to bring me up to this stage, he is now begging for forgiveness humph [Angry tone]. (Namo, 19 years old, FFGD II)*

Other participants backlashed at their parents, as they had to explore the world on their own, with limited or no help:

*My father is not responsible! ... it's my mum who is taking care of me! (Ladze, 24 years old, FFGD II)*

*Our parents too ... our fathers too, they don't even care, they don't even care about their male child, they don't even care for them. (Tetteh, 24 years old, MFGD I)*

In one rare case, a mother was identified as the faulting parent:

*When I was delivered, my mother deserted me! Humph ... she left me with my dad ... It was my dad who took care of me. (Rose, 22 years old, FFGD II)*

Similar to the earlier statement, the expression “humph” reveals a sense of deep-seated anger and disdain towards an unsupportive mother and the acknowledgement that her father had single-handedly fulfilled his duty as a parent.

As depicted in the quotes above and below, the absence of one parent often projected a sense of incompleteness, and a yearning that was not always compensated for by the availability or involvement of the remaining parent or the availability of an alternative parental figure. Some participants complained about problems associated with alternative parental figures.

For instance, some participant spoke of alternative parental figures who were aged and unable to provide adequate supervision and limited financial support:

*Grandmother doesn't have enough (money) and she is also weak.* (James, 22 years old, MFGD I)

*When we go out, we play a lot, we are guys, we pluck mangoes around, we play football, we can even come in the night because mum and dad is not there. You also sleep on your own; you don't sleep together with your grandma. You just go to the room when you like they (grandma) doesn't even check whether you are in the room or not.* (Na 24, years old, MFGD I)

Similarly, Laako spoke of the lack of an emotional bond between herself and stepmother:

*We stay with this our step mother, even though the food we eat is not our problem but the way err herh [finding it's difficult to talk about the issue] but the way she was not talking to us like erm... daughters and like maybe son ... hmm it's not good.* (Laako 14 year old, FFGD III)

In other cases, however, alternative parental figures such as stepmothers, aunties, and grandmothers were acknowledged as fulfilling the void created by the absent parent:

*For me, my stepmother was was good to me ... yeah ... Some maybe (are) wicked but this woman [shakes his head] ... because maybe for school, when we are going to school she will give us money school fees and everything ... oh like our own mother .. yeah so that woman (laying emphasis) di33 she is good.* (Sammy, 31 years, MFGD I)

*I am staying with my step mum but she treats me as her own daughter and I love her too.* (Jennifer, 14 years, FFGD III)

*Me, in life my (biological) parents didn't help me, people from other places helped me more than my parents, yeah!* (James, 22 years old, MFDG I)

As indicated in the first two quotes above, support given by these alternative parental figures seemed to match up to the participants' expectations of appropriate caregiving. Here,

in a sense the type of caregiving received is described as natural. In the participants' words, the caregivers treated them like their "own", in the same manner a biological parent is expected to typically care for his or her child. Although, it is expected that biological parents would be supportive of their children, James noted that in his experience this was not the case.

#### **8.4.2. Caregiving outcomes: development and vulnerability**

For participants, caregiving experiences led to various reported behavioural outcomes. For the purposes of this study, in this section I will focus on sexual development experiences.

##### **8.4.2.1. Sexual development: Parents are too scared to teach us sex education**

According to participants, few parents acted as a good source of information on matters concerning sex:

*After the child is growing up, the parent has to be teaching the child sex education because that one helps a lot. Some of us weren't taught. All they will tell you is "if you go you will get pregnant" but they will not tell you what is there that if you go there you will get pregnant. If you know, why would you go there and go and do it. (Dede, 26 years old, FFGD II)*

*Our parents are unable to discuss sexual matters with us. They won't advise you, they won't monitor you but when you get yourself into trouble they stress that they spoke to you but you did not listen. (Ladze, 24 years old, FFGD II)*

*They talk to us when we are adolescents that oh Ashaley ... keep your penis in your pants! Now you are an adult and you can impregnate a girl. (Ashaley, 18 years old, MFGD I)*

*Some of our parents are not well educated about how to talk about sex that's another problem. (Korkor, 32 years old, FFGD II)*

Some participants said they gained education about sex and their sexuality via relations with older siblings or peers:

*Yeah it's like I got to know (about sex) when I was in school. Friends and classmates have normally been saying things about friendship, dating, sex and those things ... so I got to know from there. (Ashaley, 18 years old, MFGD I)*

*It was a boy who taught me everything. (Jane, 17 years old, FFDG I)*

*I am learning from my sisters. (Mary, 14 years old, FFGD III)*

*You know is natural ... I learnt from my old folks indirectly.* (CL 12 male, semi-structured interview)

Dede, the eldest child of three, and a mother of an 8-year-old child said:

*I wished I had an older sister or brother like I'll be happy. Because that sister or brother will talk to me and let me know a lot. A boy can tell me "herh" don't follow boys because boys are bad. They can do this to you. They will lie to you. All the things they will be saying "if you have a sister, she will tell you that", "if you do this, you will get pregnant" ooh. No boy would ... like it would have been good, but I didn't have one.* (Dede, 26 years old, FFGD II)

As the participant narratives show, some parents are not comfortable with discussing sexual matters with their children and prefer to shift such responsibility to religious bodies and academic institutions. However, as indicated by the participants, poor communication about sex is limiting and not adequate for children to understand, embrace and manage aspects of their emerging sexuality in socially appropriate ways.

In reality, the participants suggested a sequence of sexual exploration that starts first with premature exposure to sexual activity. For instance, as children some participants lived in shared housing properties with other extended family members, which limited the amount of personal space a nuclear family could own. Therefore, some participants shared restricted sleeping spaces, such as a single bedroom room, with their parents and siblings.

Under such sleeping arrangements, some participants said they witnessed the sexual activity of their parents, out of curiosity, they actively observed:

*Oh me, I'll be peeping then small time (frequently) I'll hear (moans) so I'll stretch myself and pretend I am asleep and then peep again.* (Dede, 26 years old, FFGD II)

*Yeah you have to read (watch) them ... read (watch) them so whenever I see what they are doing it (having sex) then I will start stretching ... hehe I was a stubborn boy.* (Sammy, 31 years old, MFGD I)

From observing sexual activities, some participants progressed to experimenting with certain aspects of the sexual behaviour they had observed:

*Sometimes, if you are watching them, you too, you too, you will be imagining things like ok, this and this. This is where you are learning it from so you too you go and practice it with somebody.* (Dede, 26 years old, FFGD II)

Accordingly, Sammy indicated that at the age of seven he was sexually active, and engaged his cousin in sexual activity. Feeling embarrassed about his past sexual experimentation experience, Sammy said:

*Hmmm ... it is a problem ooo, I practised on my family sister (cousin). I went to take my father's porno(graphic) film and we put it inside (the video deck) we were watching together. I had my intentions and she too ... she agreed the film was going on ... we are all in the mood and it tasted good (was pleasurable) then. (Sammy, 31 years old, MFGD I).*

Similarly, CL 8 narrated a scenario that was directly reported to her; this incident involved children from the same family background:

*They were kids, seven and eight ... both kids so I don't think the small boy would warn the small girl not to say anything about what they are doing. They don't have any knowledge about what they are doing. But they did it. I think the small girl's mother has been (having sex) doing that thing in the presence of the small girl. That's my thinking, so they copy the thing from their parents. Because age seven and eight, where did they learn it from ... from TV, from where? (CL 8 male, semi-structured interview)*

Beside parents' sexual activities, pornography was identified by the participants as another common source of sexual exposure for the children. With the advent of modern technology, this could be easily accessed from various forms of media, particularly the Internet and the television:

*Watching these pornography films, how to make love, how they kiss. So it's like so like as far as you watch it ... you begin to practise it. (Ladze, 24 years old, FFGD II)*

Once, after watching a pornographic movie, James recounted that, *"I felt like having sex with someone ... I felt pains (some discomfort) on me."*

Participants like Sammy, Matey and Steven argued that sexual experimentation was a common phenomenon practiced by children, even though in early childhood they had little sexual knowledge and understood less about sexual practices. Children typically advanced from sleeping with their parents to sleeping in a bedroom usually assigned to all the younger children who resided in a family house. Shared sleeping arrangements often created a context that facilitated intimacy and sexual experimentation between related children, same-aged or older.

From the data, some participants seemed to suggest a sexual experience pathway that operated in a pattern involving older female children who sexually pursued younger boys who in turn experimented with girls who were much younger.

In this regard, 31-year-old Matey, whose first sexual encounter lasted over a period of two years, with an older sister, emphatically stated that:

*If you did not jump into bed with somebody, somebody has jumped into bed with you before. Like my cousins I was talking about earlier, they could even be asleep, and I would do it to them because one trained me out of that and I also, did it to the younger one. (Matey, 31years, MFGD II)*

Participants like Steven tried to distance themselves from talking about early sexual experiences, but freely talked about the sexual experiences of other children they had grown up with, in the community:

*You know in my area naughty things have been happening you will see an elderly sister sleeping in the same room with a cousin or a brother. Hmmm just luring the brother or the cousin into sex and let me quote “licki ma se ma mi” [lick my private part] “tafri ma se ma mi” [suck my private part] “yen ni sey” [Do it this way]. (Steven, 37 years old, MFGD II)*

*There is a small boy in our school, he is in class two he and two other girls who live in my area have been doing those things (having sex) in the bathroom one of the girls will stand at the door and the boy and the other one will be inside. When they hear that someone is coming then they pretend as if they were playing busha busha (sound of the gun) police and thieves. (Ruth, 14 years old, FFGD III)*

*There are no children in this world oooh! Recently, a class one boy was caught in the bush (pointing outside) asking a small girl in kindergarten to suck his dick. (Dede, 26 years old, FFGD II).*

Using a broader cultural framework to explain family living conditions and its influence on early sexual exposure, Tei related that:

*The way we live in Africa right, you don't live with your parents alone, you live in an extended home, where you have other young boys, young girls ... you understand so disciplining one child becomes difficult because if your mum is giving you good discipline ... the other party might not ... the other child might expose you to pornography at a tender age. (Tei, 34 years old, MFGD II)*

At an early phase of development, children experimented by participating in sex play with their siblings, cousins and friends, a game activity popularly termed as Mama and Dada, in the Ghanaian context:

*In Kindergarten ... we have been playing some kid games, Mama and Dada. (Ashaley, 18 years old, MFGD I)*

The participants explained that sexual experimentation involved less intrusive sexual relations, which included self-stimulating sexual behaviour and other interactive sexual activities:

*Saturdays when the ladies go to the market, we pick out their panties from the drying line and we go like [makes several thrusting movements] as if we are fucking the babes. (Matey, 31years, MFDG II)*

*I will call myself a father and I will name someone I like most as mother and we will say our kids are these one [point to other participants]. We will send them to school and after they go, we will be having sex. Hmm but that is not normal sex but hmm something like sex. (Tetteh, 24 years old, MFGD I)*

*They will just ... they will just lie on top of each other and pretend to be kissing. Its like your dick will be up then one, two, three [makes sounds pam pam demonstrates body movement with hand movements]. But there is no inserting there is nothing like that. (James, 22 years old, MFGD I)*

Adult reaction towards children's sexual behaviour often conveyed mixed messages; here content was frequently harsh, uneducated and puzzling. This adversely affected how participants gradually conceptualised, understood and behaved concerning their emerging sexuality, sexual desires and feelings:

*I was told by my grand mum, sex is a sin If ... you should be caught (indulging a sexual act) hehehe it looks funny and sometimes we go catching some of our siblings doing it (having sex) ... we report them when you report them. Oh you will even pity yourself for reporting them because the beatings, very ugly ... you the one who reported will be beaten. (Na, 24 years old, MFDG I)*

*The nature of our training that particular life is sin there were other boys, two other boys who were brought up together with me. So by the nature of the training my aunty gave to us this kind of boyfriend girlfriend relationship, you would hardly see us involved. (CL 1 male, semi-structured interview)*

*My mother told me that we hehehehe [laughs] we shouldn't allow the men hehehehe the boys to touch us, why? Because, they will impregnate us. (CL 9 male, semi-structured interview)*

Adult reactions to a child's growing sexuality often left the children in a state of confusion; sometimes misinterpretation with regard to sexuality led to an experience of fear and panic. Some female participants gave accounts of this experience when they spoke about their understanding of sexuality and pregnancy.

#### **8.4.2.2. Policing female sexuality: I don't want to become pregnant**

The fear of becoming pregnant was a major concern for many female participants during their childhood. The manner in which society perceived the female child, as a sexual danger to

herself, the male gender, the integrity of her family and the community was key in constructing this state of fear:

*They say that if you are doing that menstruation thing and you get ... contact with a boy you can become pregnant ... so that makes me very afraid, because I don't want to become pregnant. (Mary, 15 years old FFGD III)*

The participant's use of the expression "they say" implies that the discourse about menstruation, relations with the opposite sex and conception was common. At puberty, participants described how they were made to understand that getting pregnant before marriage or undergoing the passage of rites, *dipo*, was forbidden in Kroboland, with grave consequences for defaulters as well as the families involved. Many of them were frequently reminded of this notion, often in fear-provoking ways. For instance, Jane said:

*When, I was young it is like they said err if you don't perform dipo too and you got pregnant they will banish you out of the community, me when I was young that thing frightened me a lot. (Jane, 17 years old, FFGD I)*

*My mum will say if you err if you try any (sexual attempt), you will get pregnant so don't do it. So, me I am careful. (Mateko, 13 years old, FGD III)*

According to some female participants, older females, such as mothers usually reinforced this sense of fear by virtue of the information they offered, which in effect caused a sense of panic in some cases, but also prompted them as girls to take precaution:

*She (my mother) always has stories, telling us if you don't go through the initiation and you become pregnant you will be banished, err all these things were in our ears so we took care of ourselves. (CL 9 female, semi-structured interview)*

*I told my friends "my mother says when a man holds your hand you will be pregnant so for me I am staying away from the men". (CL 7 female, semi-structured interview)*

As indicated in the last quote and emphasised previously, participants spoke about how they were sometimes deliberately misinformed or disregarded when they tried to inquire or speak with an adult about issues of sexuality.

*They used to tell us that it is an angel who impregnates our mothers so that if you got to know that it is a man who has sex ... Allah! Hehehe your mother yeah you just feel that you are shocked because your mom told you that it is God who put the baby inside the womb but that is a fucking lie... (John, 17 years old, MFGD I)*

Similarly, CL 6 described how she wanted to impress her mother by sharing the news that she had just reached menarche, however, when she made the disclosure, her mother

responded sarcastically by saying, “*‘and so what?’ She never sat down to tell me something*”, said CL 6.

One participant, CL 12, a parent of two children at the time of the interview, indicated that, “*I was raised not to talk about it (sex) in public*”. In the literature (see Chapter Three), this is a common revelation made by parents; talking about sex and sexuality with children is an uncomfortable event for them, sometimes parents do not feel competent enough to counsel their own children on sexual matters. For the participants of this current study, however, understanding one’s sexuality in childhood is of importance, as it is intrinsically linked to subsequent sexual problems, related to sexual vulnerabilities and socially inappropriate ways of expressing sexual desires and wishes.

#### ***8.4.2.3. A lack of financial support: Seeking money, love and care***

The absence of a parent, linked to being born out of wedlock, death, separation or divorce had economic implications for some participants whose financial needs were limited or unmet. In the context of poverty and food insecurity, participants worked as children to supplement what they received from their parents or guardians in order to survive the harsh realities of reduced or no financial support:

*I: So how did you survive in such situations?*

*Sammy: Unless you are wild (determined).*

*I: Where wild means?*

*Tetteh: Unless you are having an extra job ...*

*John: Unless you like working like me.*

Being “wild” as described by Sammy required strong will and self-determination as employing alternative sources of livelihood was often challenging and unpleasant work for children.

For instance, John, a participant of MFGD I, was in his final year of JHS at the time of the FGD. Coming from a large family of 11 he had to do manual jobs or sell ice-cream over the weekend to help his mother, who also had the extra responsibility of looking after three grandchildren. Similarly, Na who had lived with his grandmother due to his parents’ separation, initially did not have to work like his twin sister, however, when his grandmother died things took a different turn:

*I had to start doing things on my own. I had to join some people of this town, especially the masons. I got a friend who is a painter to teach me how to paint ... that was when I started working. (Na, 24 years old, MFDG I)*

Correspondingly, Laako narrated that she ran chores for a neighbour to earn some extra pocket money to cater for her personal needs, since she received minimal financial support and material supplies from her father and stepmother. She explained:

*I even used to work for a certain man at our place, he is a tipper (truck) driver. So on Saturdays or weekends I would wash his clothing for him, cook for him and fetch water for him. (Laako 14 year old, FFGD III)*

Interviewees like Jennifer did not personally engage in work but identified with the suffering of their peers. Jennifer talked about a classmate who had to sacrifice school time to work at the market on Wednesdays – the township market day:

*I know of a boy in the class, the dad is a pastor, he is having parents but they are not the real parents ... the dad did not take good care of him, he (the boy) will go to the market and go and push wheel barrow before he will get the money to come to class so Wednesdays like this he will not come to school [low voice]. (Jennifer, 14 years, FFGD III)*

Initially, Laako, lived apart from her father, after the death of her mother, like the boy described by the participant above, she had to skip school to trade for her aunty, whom she lived with at the time:

*My aunty had a store so erm Saturday and Tuesday is a market day at that place. So maybe Tuesday I will not go to school and I will sell for her and my father realised that was not helping me so he has to ... let my mother (aunty) bring me back here (Kroبولand). (Laako 14 year old, FFGD III)*

As is illustrated above, poor economic conditions pressured some participants to seek for an alternative means of financial support to obtain personal needs, as well as support other family members.

#### **8.4.2.4. Searching for love, intimacy and care**

A lack of emotional care and support was of great concern for some participants deprived of such relations during childhood, partly due to a lack of parental involvement or a parents' absence. These participants related that they sought to satisfy their emotional needs through establishing alternative interpersonal relationships:

*She knew of the passing of my grandma so I told her, "Mary, I lost the only one I love as you know. I lost her and I'm (going astray) blowing into the town as you can see. I*

*know that is the reason why you didn't want to (be) friend me, but Mary, I want to look (be) like you. I want to be reserved like you; I just want to be like you so please accept me". (Na, 24 years old, MFGD I)*

In the absence of affection from her father and step mum, Laako found solace with an older boy in her locality, who had taken a keen interest in her welfare. Like other participants in similar circumstances Laako spoke happily about how she benefited from this relationship:

*He has been telling me I should stay away for boys and advised me on how boys behave. Like when they see you for the first time they will pretend they like you ... when time goes on they will sleep with you and leave you. (Laako 14 years old, FFGD III)*

Jennifer had a similar experience with an older boy, in her case, he gave her guidance on aspects of her growing sexuality and personal hygiene:

*He told me I should stay away from boys .. I should take care of myself, bath twice a day .. and when you get to some stage .. you experience some changes like menstruation and stuff and those things .. I did not know, he taught me and the rest ... hmmm. (Jennifer, 14 years, FFGD III)*

For Na, his friend Mary supported him with material needs such as foodstuffs during snack breaks at school:

*When I go to school, she's a very good girl so whatever you ask her, she'll give you. Her mum sold provisions (groceries) close to my school. So I like biscuit, you know. When she gives me drink, I can do with it for the first (school) break. Those days Kalyppo (brand name for fruit juice) just came around so when she gives me one Kalyppo and biscuit, I can take that in the morning, and it helped me to manage my money, yeah. So she became my friend. (Na, 24 years old, MFGD I)*

Ladze also received luxury items such as a phone: "*He bought this phone for me*", she said excitedly. For these participants mentioned above, they valued the assistance and the benefits they received from their friendships. Some of the help and benefits, they believed, was actually their parents' responsibility.

The data also revealed that some participants found it difficult to establish and maintain social bonds. In evidence of this, some participants expressed a disliking towards friendships that involved the same sex:

*With ladies, they are gossips ... they are troublesome, so me I love (being with) boys from my infancy from school. (Dede 26 years old, FFGD II)*

*If you talk to them ... about your problems or something too they will go and tell another friend and the other friend too will be making fun of it. (Jane, 17 years old, FFDG I)*

After narrating an incident of how a peer had stolen a friend's laptop that was in his possession, James concluded that:

*Girls have more sense than guys ... guys can be wicked!* (James, 22 years old, MFGD I)

Strikingly, findings on the outcome of some social relationships were often contradictory to what some participants reported above. From participant narratives it was evident that the opposite sex often controlled the participants by taking advantage of their emotional and financial neediness, and low social status – regardless of their gender. Subtly, a number of participants were manipulated to accomplish, or attempt to accomplish selfish sexual needs in socially inappropriate ways. In the sections that follow, participants share their experiences of such social relationships against a backdrop of CSA.

## **8.5. CSA survivor stories**

In total, nine natives of Kroboland (four females and five boys) indicated a personal history of CSA and narrated personal accounts of the event. Two out of the four girls recounted two separate incidents of CSA committed by different sex offenders. All the female cases and half of the male cases were either one-time or short-term experiences. However, one out of five males experienced CSA, over an extended period of two years. As will become apparent in the discussion below, similar sexual events characterised as sexual abuse by female participants were not recognised as such by their male counterparts.

### **8.5.1. Personal assets or cues of sexual vulnerability**

Consistent with the professional narratives in Chapter Seven, both male and female participants in the sections below highlight how certain gender attributes and behaviour qualities conveyed a sense of pride and esteem, as personal assets. At the same time, however, these generated cues of sexual vulnerability that seemed to contribute to their experiences of sexual abuse.

### 8.5.1.1. *Young and beautiful: A source of esteem but sexually risky*

The data seemed to suggest that females are largely evaluated by societal impressions of beauty, a pattern some females also end up perpetuating. In line with this, one older participant commented on her physical attractiveness in childhood:

*You know I was so beautiful; I know myself [smiling] so men were harassing me but with this little bluff in me they could not have me. (CL 7 female, semi-structured interview)*

From the interview data, receiving positive evaluations for meeting societal standards of beauty as young girls was an important source of pride, one that bolstered a sense of self-esteem.

Nonetheless, as two participants with a history of CSA in this current study indicate, such measures of beauty can also create a position of increased sexual risk. Ladze reveals this understanding in the abstract below while trying to explain why her auntie's husband may have been sexually attracted to her:

*It is like, I was growing fat, I can even say I was being more beautiful than my auntie so it's like anytime my auntie is not in the house this man will try to touch me. He would be saying I have become big ooh and he would be asking me ... eii so do you have a boyfriend or not? He would tell me ... I'm beautiful. (Ladze, 24 years old, FFGD II)*

In sharp contrast to the growing body of literature, that highlights the slender body as the global ideal (Brewis, Wutich, Falletta-Cowden, & Rodriguez-Soto, 2011), Ladze uses the images of a “fat” and “big” figure to vividly describe the concept of physical attractiveness. These descriptions are consistent with notions of beauty in some African localities “where fat is a mark of beauty” as Simmons (1998, p. 1) rightly captures in an article title.

Similarly, referring to females in general, Dede conceives that the young feminine body has a powerful effect on the sexual behaviour of the opposite sex; playing the role of a male in this quote, she reinforces the idea of male sexual aggression which is largely internalised, accepted and expected, even by females:

*Some of them ... I am talking about these small small girls, they too, they are beautiful ooh ... seeing their thighs alone will even make you cum, so me if I'm a guy ah I would pursue them. (Dede 26 years old, FFGD II)*

In this statement, Dede echoes and enacts gendered norms about male and female sexuality that in effect scaffold sexual abuse. However, at other points in her narrative, using

herself as an example, she reveals how female safety is often jeopardized by male sexual aggression, a manifestation she strongly contests and condemns. Other female participants with no history of CSA or attempted CSA share similar concerns about their personal safety, which was often enhanced by the existing community layout and infrastructure.

#### **8.5.1.2. Dangerous places: Living with the fear of being raped**

In all three female FGDs, certain public sites (e.g., cemeteries, parks and sporting fields) were tagged as sexually risky for females in Kroboland. Among these, the cemetery was commonly cited as a dangerous zone lurking with potential sex offenders:

*There are some boys smoking there [pointing in the direction of the cemetery] with girls doing all sorts of bad things in that cemetery, every evening every day or night they are there. (Ruth, 14 years old, FFGD III).*

Some female participants living in Odumase were preoccupied and anxious about their personal safety as some of them traversed the cemetery route to and fro, on a daily basis. They worried about the possibility of being raped, as is illustrated in the extracts below and therefore adopted various safety strategies to protect themselves:

*Sometimes you feel very scared like they are going to catch you and beat you up, so when you are walking there you walk in a hurry or you run. (Ruth, 13 years old, FFGD III)*

*So .. it's like this time, when you are passing you must be careful. Sometimes if they see that a new person or a new girl has come to town or this area and the person is passing they will call ... force the person and rape the person if it's a girl. (Belinda, 13 years old, FFGD III)*

Ladze described a recent event of a young girl who she suspected may not have been familiar with the terrain:

*It's like those in the cemetery over there (points in the direction of the cemetery), it's like they have studied her and they know that she is not from this town. But it's like, I don't know where she went before she was coming back at that time and they started running after her, so it's like they took her phone and she took her slippers and she was shouting all the way to our place. (Ladze, 24 years old, FFGD II)*

For these girls, the cemetery is conditioned as a site of fear. Safety precautions taken when plying this route and the knowledge they had of the offenders and their mode of operation illustrates the magnitude of angst they associated with this setting.

### 8.5.1.3. Targeting boys: Good boys versus trouble makers

As indicated in the extracts below, male participants talked about how a range of positive attributes, such as physical attractiveness, innocence, good behaviour, and oddly socially inappropriate behaviour seemed to physically attract older females towards them:

*One day, I was passing and the lady called me to come, and I went and she told me that am a fine (handsome) boy, but ... I don't normally like talking, am quiet and she loves the way I am, she asked can we be friends? (Ashaley, 18 years old, MFGD I)*

*She was my senior in school and I respected her very well, I respected her. So one day ... she just came to me and told me, how I respect she likes it so she want me to .. give her my contact (phone number), so I gave it to her. (John, 17 years old, MFGD I)*

According to the participants' accounts, males targeted by older females did not always possess positive attributes. For James, who described himself as a known menace in school; it was his ill-mannered behaviour that appealed to a senior female, who later became his friend and mentor. Given his notorious history, he mentions his surprise at the senior's intent of wanting to become friends:

*I was like wow [Expressing surprise]! How this girl came ... and was concerned about my life, she said we should be friends and I said okay ... before I knew it, the next day I got to realise she was in my house. Yes, we were best friends, but we didn't tell each other that we love each other actually ... but I learnt a lot from her she changed me she changed me ... (James, 22 years old, MFGD I).*

One participant in MFGD II suggested that when one gained a level of intimacy with an older female, a certain standard of behaviour needed to be maintained by the male to sustain the interest of the female in question:

*You need not to dirty yourself again, you have to be neat all the time you have to be clean, all the time you have to be gentle, so that when this sister sees you, she will really appreciate you. No matter what, something good has to be said about you at all times. (Steven, 37 years old, MFGD II).*

*If I spot a girl nor (immediately) I start to dress well. If am going out and this my slippers is dirty I have to wash it ... if my dress is dirty is I have to wash it. Because my sister advised me that if I am going to ... befriend a lady she will just start watching from your [points at toes and moves pointed finger systematically to head] to your hair so because of what she told me, I dress neatly. (Sammy, 31 years old, MFGD I).*

According to the experiences of some male participants, maintaining innocence and a lack of sexual knowledge was key to sustaining a sexual relationship with an older girl:

*When she saw I was growing (maturing), she put a stop to it ... when I go closer then she sacks me. (Steven, 37 years old, MFGD II).*

*When they (older girls) get to know that your eyes are open like it happened in the Garden of Eden you see some of them ... they will start giving excuses as if they did not know what they were doing ... they will start saying it's the devil, they are afraid that they will be exposed so they leave you. (Steven, 38 years old, MFGD II)*

As illustrated in the quotes above, when an older female discovers that the child is becoming mature and knowledgeable about the implications of sexual behaviour, the senior may begin to fret about possible exposure, hence their decision to cease all sexual relations.

### 8.5.2. Understanding experiences of CSA

All the male CSA survivors with the exception of one case reported that their experiences of CSA involved penetrative sex. For the female CSA survivors, however, only one account resulted in penetrative sex, the rest (3) involved attempted CSA incidents with varying degrees of physical contact CSA (see Table 8.1 below).

Table 8.1: *Description of the CSA survivor, gender, type of CSA and description of offender*

	Type of CSA	Brief description of sex offender
<b>Female CSA survivor</b>		
1.	Penetrative sex	Undisclosed Male
2.	Contact CSA: touching Attempted CSA	Aunt's husband, Male Acquaintance
3.	Contact CSA: touching and fondling breast, Attempted CSA	Male co-tenant, Male Acquaintance
4.	Attempted CSA	Male Stranger
<b>Male CSA survivor</b>		
1.	Penetrative sex	Female senior in JHS
2.	Penetrative sex	Female senior in SHS
3.	Penetrative sex	Older female co-tenant
4.	Penetrative sex	Older female co-tenant

### ***8.5.2.1. Attempted CSA experiences: Fighting against the perpetrator***

#### ***8.5.2.1.1. Avoidance and safety***

Two out of the four female CSA survivors, Laako and Ladze, who had experienced attempted CSA by a male acquaintance, shared a somewhat similar account. They both had had a prior non-sexual relationship with the sex offender, each receiving some kind of benefit from the sex offender during the course of friendship. For example, Laako was largely dependent on the sex offender for various forms of material resources, including money, food and other material items, as well as emotional support. Ladze also received some material benefits but the most significant mentioned was a mobile phone.

During the course of the friendship, the male acquaintances showed further interest in the survivors, which was later accompanied by an unexpected request for sex. The girls expressed surprise and contempt at their acquaintances' requests for sex. For example, Laako said:

*When he started demanding that I should have err ... he wanted to have sex with me that place (at that point) haha [sarcastic laugh] that place (at that point) I hated him. (Laako 14 year old, FFGD III)*

During the interview, Ladze continued to express resentment towards the male acquaintance who attempted to have sex with her, she stated sarcastically:

*I know people that are even buying houses for people and at the end of the day they are not even worrying them (for sex). (Ladze, 24 years old, FFGD II)*

In their attempt to prevent sexual activity from happening, the participants used avoidance strategies that epitomised the female body as sexually undesirable and a site of potential embarrassment. For instance, the girls drew on discourses surrounding the concept of menarche, however, their individual response to the CSA attempt was quite different.

Ladze was 17 years at the time, raised single-handedly by her mother in a supportive family environment and was less dependent on the male acquaintance. She spoke about how she had assertively turned down the gentleman's requests for sex. On one occasion, however, realising that her sense of control was under threat and that the offender might pursue his quest with the use of force, she reacted by drawing on the discourse of pollution – that

portrays the female body as contaminated and sexually undesirable – to protect her vulnerability:

*A certain day, he told me that he is in (at home), and so I went there. This guy said he wanted to have sex with me, and I said oh no! It will not come on. So it's like, he wanted to force me, and I told him, I'm even having my menses so that stopped him. (Ladze, 24 years old, FFGD II)*

Laako was 12 years old when this incident of attempted CSA occurred. When Laako was eighteen months old, Laako's mother passed on. After a few years of living with her father and step-mother, she moved to reside with her auntie (mother's sister). Eventually, due to maltreatment, she returned to settle down with her biological father and step-mother. She complained bitterly about the lack of a strong attachment bond with her primary caregivers; besides the attachment she had formed with her grandmother – who was located far off in the village – and the male acquaintance who had later attempted to sexually exploit her. Considering the attachment role the boy played in her life, she spoke of experiencing an internal conflict as she struggled to make a decision about his sex request:

*He said he wants to have sex with me before he leaves (for senior high school) because when he leaves I will forget him but I also refused to do that. I told him I will think of it so when I came to the house ... that morning I was thinking about that, even food kraa<sup>26</sup> I didn't eat I was thinking about that ahhh (for an extended period) but that time too I was 12 years I didn't see (I had not started) my menstruation, so I was afraid that maybe ... maybe when I did that thing (have sex) I will become pregnant, so that was the main thing I put my mind on but err let me say that prevented me from doing it because like the way he is providing the things for me. If like errm I have my menses maybe erm I will ... I will agree. (Laako 14 year old, FFGD III)*

As is documented for many young girls in the general CSA literature, Laako spoke of the difficulty of refusing the perpetrator's request for sex, especially after considering the kind of assistance she has received from him in the past. She felt obligated to act mutually since he had fulfilled several of her personal requests in the past.

Ladze also talked about experiencing similar confusion when her aunts' husband tried to make sexual advances towards her. Ladze spoke about how she often felt helpless at being unable to influence his sexual gestures towards her and at the same time not able to report the problem to her Aunt, for fear that the outcome would affect their marriage. Below, Ladze briefly explained her dilemma:

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<sup>26</sup> *Kraa* places emphasis on the fact, it was even difficult for her to eat a basic need for every person.

*I didn't want to break ... their marriage. I didn't want to say something to break my auntie and my uncle's (marriage)... So it's like I called my mum and I told her this is what my auntie's husband is doing but I don't know what to do. (Ladze, 24 years old, FFGD II)*

As a resolve, sometimes Ladze took to taking walks in the neighbourhood, just to avoid the possibility of being alone with him.

#### **8.5.2.1.2. Resistance and loss**

According to the female participants with a history of CSA, failure to yield to the demands for sex often led to the loss of perceived friendship and associated benefits. For instance, Laako stated that based on her unwillingness to give in to the offenders' sex request, *"he stopped giving me the things he has been providing for me and the money, all of the advice he had been giving to me"*. The same participant recounted how in another encounter, she had lost the opportunity to earn extra money from a neighbour; she used to assist with house chores for a fee. This occurred when she lodged a complaint to her father who rebuked and eventually sacked the neighbour – a tenant in their house – for making sexual advances towards his daughter. Reflecting on her loss, Laako questioned:

*Now this man was sacked ... who will give me this money to be added to my money for school? ... humph nobody ooh. (Laako 14 years old, FFGD III)*

Similarly, Ladze angrily narrated how her friend had demanded for the return of the phone he had purchased for her, *"Ahh ... so this guy told me that I should wait for just 5 minutes ... ahh, 5 minutes this guy called, he is in my house, I should bring the phone"*.

In the same way, Korkor dramatised how a stranger who had earlier bought her a bottle of soda at a night club asked to be compensated, after she refused to have sex with him. When he started to verbally and physically assault her as a result of her refusal to succumb to his request, she questioned him:

*Korkor: I said ah did I force you? I was seated and you brought it to me. I was seated and you brought me the coke.*

*Man: Kwasia (stupid) when you were hungry you wanted to drink pepsi!!! If you won't go (to bed with me) give me the money.*

*Korkor: I should have given him 1000, 1000 paper (an equivalent of \$0.26 dollars) but now he was requesting for 2000 (an equivalent of \$0.52).*

Korkor talked about how she was charged twice the cost of pepsi before he let go off her in a physical struggle. *“He said if I give him 2 (money notes) of the 1000s he would leave me alone”*.

Based on female participants’ lived experiences, CSA encounters could progress from sexual attempts that could be intercepted by avoidance strategies, although not always successful, to instances of forced sexual activity. For instance, the resistance to the offender’s sexual demands could potentially result in a violent encounter and subsequently the experience of a loss of some kind. In Dede’s case for instance, the refusal to succumb to requests for sex led to the offender forcibly satisfying his sexual desires. Following this violent experience, she highlighted in her own words, the loss of her virginity and sanity (see section 8.5.3.2. on Anger and undisclosed pain for details). On the other hand, male participants experienced the event of CSA differently, as is illustrated in the section below:

#### ***8.5.2.2. Male child sexual abuse: Scholarship not sexual abuse***

Male participants usually did not perceive the act of having sex with an older female as abuse. For a young boy having sex with an older woman was perceived as male privilege and an affirmation of one's heterosexuality and manhood. “Scholarship” is a popular concept recognised within the Kroboland that sums up the opportunity of establishing sexual relations with the opposite sex without being the one to actively initiate this process. According to CL 1, it is termed scholarship because the beneficiary acquires certain relationship privileges from females which other males may have to work tirelessly to achieve. Traditionally, in African cultures like Kroboland, it is considered the man’s role to initiate sexual interest in a female. Thus, as has been described in similar MCSA studies, the male participants in this current study found it a source of pride and honour when the roles reversed. As young boys, they came to comprehend this knowledge gradually, as they grew and interacted with other sexually experienced males.

Tei, for instance, spoke about this way of learning when he narrated his first sexual experience, which involved an older female co-tenant. He related how this 18-year-old girl had attempted to have sex with him at the age of 14. He had rejected her advances. In response, his male counterparts condemned his resistance to her sexual advances. To justify his inaction, he explained that, *“I was young; I didn’t know anything concerning sex but my friends at school said ah they have given you scholarship and you didn’t utilise it”*. Other

participants who were aware of this understanding of sex education by an older female share their sexual experiences, in the next few paragraphs, briefly:

*One day she called me ... to come and I went to her place, and she was trying to behave so rude ... hmm, she loved to touch me and then ... talk to me like a fiancé and things, and I also asked her that why is it that ... she is trying to behave in such a way. She said that it is nothing, but she just admires me most, so she wants to be always having fun with me. So I thought ... oh okay. Since then, we began to be lovers, she comes to me and what happened, next was nice (Ashaley, 18 years old, MFGD I).*

For Ashaley, in the initial stages of this sexual encounter as described above, he hints a sense of discomfort about her sexual advances, but after her established sexual interest, he willingly accepts the idea. He further makes claims that they became “lovers” to suggest his active participation in this affiliation.

Similarly, the following interview extract is a brief account of John’s sexual encounter with an older female senior, during JHS:

*John: She came, I was there ... we were talking ... before I realised, I don’t know what happened she was kissing me bassa (aggressively) ... before, I realised I have had sex with her.*

*I: How did you feel about this experience?*

*John: I was the happiest man on earth!*

Like Ashaley, in this excerpt, John seems to suggest that the senior instigated, guided and controlled the sexual experience, with him only coming to a conscious awareness of his actions later, after the encounter was over, thus suggesting he had little influence over the experience.

James, as is illustrated below, highlights how his sexual encounter with a female senior in school was an extraordinary educational experience. Especially since he had previously shown little interest in sexual activity, in contrast to what is socially expected of most boys his age or younger:

*She was like 18 years going to 19, and I was 14 going to 15 ... and she was the girl who broke my virginity ... It’s like she wanted to show me something about sex ... because as for me like that I was stubborn ... I didn’t like doing those things, so [Speaking in twi] ɔpe se odi me adwene ba fie (she wanted to keep my mind focused). (James, 22 years old, MFGD I).*

Apart from Tei, who had little tutelage on the implications of being sexually active with an older female, the other four male participants including Matey give the impression

that they were elated about their sexual experiences. Nonetheless, participants in the interview subtly revealed other aspects of this sexual experience that indicate adverse outcomes that they took for granted, at the time (see section 8.5.3.4). Chiefly, one striking observation Matey made during the MFGD I, was their growing understanding of sexual intercourse practices, and how egocentric these practices seemed.

### **8.5.3. CSA Outcomes**

The data indicates that following the CSA incident, participants viewed themselves, the offender, in one case the co-offender, and the world differently. In other words, the participants described that the experience of CSA influentially caused a change in one's thoughts, feelings and behaviour towards people and life in general. A discussion of this is presented in the sections below.

#### ***8.5.3.1. I don't expect you to do this: Distrust and disappointment***

As is well established in the CSA literature, some female victims had an existing relationship with the offender, and thus expressed shock at the turn of events. For instance, Ladze and Laako expressed disbelief, coming to the realisation that the people they had previously trusted, respected or loved tried to take advantage of them sexually. Following the attempted incident of CSA involving her auntie's husband, Ladze expressed her disappointment as if talking directly to the offender, by saying, "*I don't expect you to do this!*" She gave her reason for this statement:

*That man (auntie's husband) that I am talking about if my auntie ... if my mother is not there, she is my mother... so you ... just imagine! Your wife's daughter? You are not supposed to be doing such a thing. (Ladze, 24 years old, FFGD II)*

Laako who initially experienced the male acquaintance as nurturing and loving still found it difficult to come to terms with his demands for sex, "*I don't know what happened to him*", she maintained during the interview. Similarly, after reflecting on the attempted CSA encounter with a total stranger, Korkor viewed that the friend she had accompanied to the club was responsible for the offenders' sexual expectations. She viewed that without her knowledge, her friend may have set her up; she felt betrayed and regretted her decision to accompany her friend in the first place. Feeling betrayed since then, Korkor disclosed that she had resorted to keeping a limited number of friends.

### **8.5.3.2. Do you think I'm all right? Anger and undisclosed emotional pain**

In the initial part of the FFGD II, Dede firmly said she had no experiences of SA. Yet, later as the other participants shared their personal encounters of CSA, she unconsciously gave an account that suggests to date, she may continually suffer from cognitive intrusions following a horrifying CSA experience. When the participants were asked to talk about CSA consequences she responded:

*Me, persey, the person who broke my virginity is not my boyfriend. It's not my boyfriend and he will never and can ever be my boyfriend [speaking angrily]. But he has done it!!! Since then, I find it hard, even to have sex with a guy. If a guy is coming on me I'll be pushing him. It's like it is hell to me. Until now now now now kraaa... [pause] it is just that sometimes ... I try to just put it behind me, but if it gets to the time (for sex), I can just push you away ... go ... then I'll tell you it's ok let's stop it here. You yourself, do you think I'm alright? You can see that this girl, she is having a mental problem but I know the reason why I do that it. (Dede 26 years old, FFGD II)*

In this excerpt, Dede expresses a deep sense of emotional pain. Further, she disassociates herself from the male acquaintance who sexually abused her, while expressing deep contempt towards him. Further, she links subsequent intimacy problems, a developed sexual aversion towards men in general and a poor state of mental health to her past history of CSA.

Similarly, several months after the incident Laako is still in deep despair as she finds it difficult to acclimatise to the loss of her relationship and companion. She expresses a new outlook on her impression of the opposite sex:

*They are all like that because the way this boy loved me paa (excessively) and he promised not to do this to me paa (excessively) now ... he is demanding this ... I am afraid of boys. (Laako 14 years old, FFGD III)*

Like Dede, following the CSA event Laako developed an aversion towards the opposite sex. In response to the CSA incident, they like other participants adopted various maladaptive ways of coping, such as the development of selfish feelings, wishes and desires.

### **8.5.3.3. Developing selfish feelings and desires: Exploiting relationships**

Losing love, money, material needs and good counsel created a void in Laako's life; she noted this in the following statement:

*Nobody is giving me anything again, so I made up my mind that ... err like... I made up my mind that I will friend another one (male friend). (Laako 14 years old, FFGD III)*

As is illustrated above, Laako describes contemplating reentering into a similar relationship which could come with comparable consumer benefits. A child's sexuality may develop in a developmentally inappropriate way if one is exposed to sexual activity prematurely or in a socially inapt fashion (Finkelhor & Browne, 1985). In Laako's case, at a point, she began to reason that in exchange for friendship with a male, she is likely to receive some kind of personal benefit or reward.

In a similar manner, Dede compared her body to a commodity, and stated how she would manipulate any man who dared to express sexual intent, when she was not interested:

*Me, if I don't like you, I won't take anything from you. But if I say I don't like you and you still want to pressure me, then me too I'll pressure you. Ah, I can call you. B3 (after all) you said you to you want it ... it's me that you want. So me to, I'll be giving you the procedures. Oh I need this. You'll buy it for me, I'll take it. Me and you, we can go out. Me, I can come and be in your room, sleep with you on the same bed, but Massa (Master), unless you rape me, and you can never and never rape me because I'll say "Oh! I thought you were a gentleman. I never know that you never respected yourself like this". All the things that I'll be saying will make you even feel shy of yourself. So that you will rather make yourself a gentleman in front of me, you'll sleep but in this sleeping that you are sleeping you are not sleeping in peace, you are sleeping in pieces because you are suffering. (Dede 26 years old, FFGD II)*

Some selfish wishes and desires later translated into sexual problems, as is illustrated above and in the section below.

#### **8.5.3.4. Sexual problems: Experiential accounts of sex offending and intimacy deficits**

Matey, one of the four male participants who reported a history of penetrative sex with an older girl, divulged that at a later date, he sexually abused two others. For instance, Matey cited having forced sex with two different females who were younger than him. One of the CSA victims was blood related, a niece and the other a non-relative and a junior from school:

*I had sex with my own sister's daughter due to these things (an early sexual exposure with an older girl) ... my own sister's daughter [shakes his head indicating remorse].*

*There was a girl... I will say I raped the ... hmm at YIKROSEC (Yilo Krobo Secondary School) ... the girl. I went to the girls dormitory the girls had all left .. for the dining hall. I was the bell boy as at then ... nobody happened to have come out when I rang the bell but I could hear noise, so I went to the bathhouse and there was a lady bathing. She poured water on herself ... as she poured water on herself she saw me coming so*

*she was holding her breast like this ... [covered chest area] then I went to her ... I watched, and watched and watched. I watched her ... I removed my charger (penis) and I made love with her ... just like that hmm. (Matey, 31years, MFDG II)*

During the interview, Matey reflected on his sex offending behaviour, and linked it to his sexual debut and subsequent sexual relations over a period of two years. A series of events, he described as rewarding, but at the same time self-centred because it often involved manipulation in exchange for sex. Some male participants revealed that sexual activity with a senior female facilitated the receipt of basic material resources, such as food, as well as affirmed their heterosexuality and manhood. However, participants like Matey recognised how he was used as a safe substitute for sex in the place of an actual boyfriend who was not readily accessible at the time; the girl in question desired to have sex:

*You see what happens is that sometimes our elderly sisters they may have boys in town right, maybe she is on heat (feeling horny) ... but cannot get access to that boyfriend as at that time, you understand? So the young ones around will have to satisfy her. (Matey, 31years, MFDG II)*

Against this backdrop, some participants like James, subsequently learned to manipulate others who were dependent (such as younger children) in need or in want of a particular resource they owned, in exchange for sex. In evidence of this, James stated that:

*They (the young girls) like indomine (a rice noodles brand), me I am having the luxury to buy you indomine, I will buy you indomine and have sex with you, thats the deal! (James, 22 years old, MFGD I).*

Below, some male participants describe subsequent sexual experiences which reflect sexual desires and attitudes that did not take into account the feelings of the female involved. Tei, who was criticised by his peers for rejecting the sexual advances of an older girl (see background in section 8.5.2.2.) proceeded to have sex with the latter's younger sister, when the older girl indicated a loss of sexual interest after rejection. He stated, "*I got her small sister when they (referring to females) are in the mood you can easily get them!*"

As a result of their early sexual exposure with older females many of the MCSA survivors developed misogynous beliefs about what is essential and sexually desirable for females, without necessarily verifying with the females, themselves. For instance, in one sexual encounter, Ashaley concludes that his partner was an active participant of the experience because she was silent and did not object to his advances:

*She didn't panic about me doing anything, so she also likes it. If she has to be panicking about what I have done, that one ... maybe I can say that she doesn't like me. But she was silent. She didn't say anything, so she likes it! ]*. (Ashaley, 18 years old, MFGD I)

Similarly, in the extract below, James talks about how he persuaded a young girl to accept his love proposal, despite her young age. He further expresses his sexual intention but indicates that he was unable to proceed upon realising she was a virgin:

*Me and the girl we started talking ... I proposed to her and she said she is too young I still forced the girl ... and she said okay. So like two weeks later, she just came to my house to come and visit but she didn't allow me but ... I wanted to have sex with her ... but she said she is a virgin so when I was touching the girl ... you see that the thing (penis) is not going I tried, and I saw that she is a virgin the hole is too small ... so I was afraid.* (James, 22 years old, MFGD I).

In a similar case, James described how he stopped half way when he discovered that another girl he had forcibly engaged in sexual activity was a virgin. He explained, “*If I have started and I see that you are a virgin I will stop*”. James’s explanation suggests virginity may be a protective factor against penetrative sexual abuse. For James sex with a virgin is linked to the evidence of possible bleeding, torn hymen and physical injury which is often a strong enough basis to cause an arrest for sexual abuse. Even if the underage girl consented to sex, James viewed that the girl’s family could easily charge for CSA, thus he simply avoided sexual relations with virgins.

From the male narratives, it seemed that virgins were held in high esteem; the opposite is however felt for non-virgins:

*If she is into it (sex) before then fine, but maybe she is a virgin that means you have spoiled everything. Yes you have spoiled everything because the thing you are coming to do to her ... master it is not easy.* (Sammy, 31 years old, MFGD I)

As is illustrated in the above quote, other male participants like Sammy questioned the sexuality of non-virgins, whom most disregarded and perceived as promiscuous, branding non-virgins as always in readiness for sex. As a grown man, Matey thinks that his early sexual contact with an older female is partly the reason for his insensitivity towards his partner’s sexual needs and desires, a problem he associates with many other men.

#### **8.5.3.5. *I have gone through a lot: Experiences of change and personal growth***

Some participants processed the experience of CSA as a trying event. For example, a number of female participants showed the evidence of difficulty, in their attempt to come to terms

with CSA associated loss. The statement below captures an aspect of Laako's struggle to cope:

*I found it very difficult because when he said he will not provide all my needs again and he will not be friends with me again ... erm err he will not like to set his eyes on me hmmm. (Laako 14 years old, FFGD III)*

The expression "hmmm" is a way of Laako communicating a deep sense of struggle and despair which seems difficult to explain in plain words. In spite of this difficulty, over time Laako, like other victims, found meaningful ways of coping with the CSA impact due to personal effort or as a result of support from significant others.

For instance, Laako suggested that she had become a good confidant for a young female relative who was struggling to deal with the guilt of having an abortion after being impregnated by a male relative. Interestingly, Laako further expressed the interest of being in a helping profession; specifically, she communicated the ambition of wanting to become a nurse. Additionally, Laako made a decision to rely on the remittance she received from her older brother, for her this was a safer financial option. Correspondingly, Dede talked about the efforts she had made to safeguard and advise her little sister against behaviour that may put her at risk for getting pregnant. To this end, she stated emphatically that, *"I've realised my mistake"*; with concern she further expressed, *"so I don't want it to happen to her"*.

Matey, who was sexually abused by an older female at the age of 13 over a period of two years, relates a sense of remorse for his subsequent sex offending behaviour, as is captured in the statement below:

*What can I say ... what I have done to my to my own sister's daughter it hurts me sometimes when I see people move out with small girls ... it hurts me. (Matey, 31years, MFDG II)*

In this quote, he expresses a sense of regret for his behaviour towards an underage girl and for that matter his own niece. Observing other males who are involved with minors is often a disturbing experience for him; according to him it causes a sense of despair, he explains:

*I have now gotten to know that what I did was wrong. So as I grow I keep thinking about it. You are not the only person I am talking to about this issue. (Matey, 31years, MFDG II)*

Taking on a new identity, Matey indicates a transformation that is detached from his history of sex offending. He speaks about adopting responsible behaviour and how he currently offers motivational advice to his male peers and younger girls:

*I sit with brothers sometimes I sit with younger girls. I tell you charley (friend) don't think all is lost. I can see most of them they have given up in life. (Matey, 31 years, MFDG II)*

Korkor also adopted self-protective strategies to avoid appearing vulnerable. For instance, she made several life changes in relation to her personal safety after she was sexually harassed when accepting a bottle of pepsi from a stranger. She made a cautious decision to be independent. For instance, she decided to avoid places associated with risk, “*that was the beginning and the end of my going to that place (the club)*”; she announced this during the interview. Again Korkor tried to prevent situations related to neediness: “*whenever I am going out, I use my own money*”. Finally, she claimed that she restricted her social interactions to that which occurred within her home and her siblings’ home, which appeared to be her identified safe spaces.

### **8.6. Unexpected “results”: Experiences in the field**

I was uncertain where to position this particular section, because I am reporting here on something I had not anticipated. I chose to report it at this stage of the write-up, because researchers are cautioned not to overshadow the import of the voices they research. Having achieved this goal by presenting the participant voices in the preceding chapters and sections, I now discuss my own lived experiences of researching CSA in Kroboland. In this section, I provide a reflexive account of my research interactions with the opposite sex and finally centre on personal experiences of sexual harassment in the field.

While conducting fieldwork in Kroboland I was confronted with subtle forms of unwanted sexual overtures, such as sexually related compliments, requests for hugs, dates and suggestive comments such as, *‘I have a big bed you know’*. In addition, I received unexpected gifts from some men, for example the bottle of non-alcoholic wine, a man had sent me via my cousin. Mügge (2013) categorises the aforementioned examples as “bearable instances”. As the term suggests, such occurrences although intimidating were not too challenging to tolerate. In contrast, touching and the receipt of sexually explicit messages from some of my participants and informants were events I viewed as unbearable. Like other researchers before me, these were events I had to bear in order not to disrupt my research

agenda. I write about one of these experiences in the article “Researching sexuality” (see Appendix F).

As highlighted by Mügge (2013), the sexual harassment of female researchers during data collection is far from a new phenomenon. Research ethics are usually inclined towards ensuring the safety of the participant, thus potential problems that may affect the researcher in the field are typically overlooked (Ross, 2015). To my knowledge, gendered risk in field work is not discussed in the Ghanaian CSA literature. Elsewhere, some brave female researchers (Green, Barbour, Barnard, & Kitzinger, 1993; Tsing 2005; Wilkinson, 2006) have talked about sexual harassment experiences during fieldwork, albeit for different reasons.

For instance, in a research article on the youth and community radio in Knowsley, United Kingdom, Wilkinson (2016) demonstrated how aspects of her personality and appearance impacted on the formation of research relationships during her PhD research. Relatedly, Ross (2015) speaks about gendered risks associated with field work. Using her own research experience as an example, Ross shares protection strategies and ways to evade risk when conducting research. In a reader on African sexualities, Gune and Manuel (2011) discuss their research work experiences in the light of the competing ethics they faced while collecting data. In this text, the researchers raise questions about whose ethics should be prioritised when conducting research; those of the researcher, the participant or the professional body to which the researcher belongs.

In this section, I take this conversation further, by extending discussion beyond the usual discourse on ethics, safety and codes of practice and reflect on how my experience in the field yielded relevant information for the production of knowledge in the field of sexual abuse. I argue that in many ways this information offered rich data and additional insight for points already raised by the current study participants. In other ways, my personal experience exposed aspects of sexual abuse that have not otherwise been made visible to date in this context or remain too controversial for publication. Citing particular examples, in the next few sections, I talk about my shifting positions in the field, using frames of references such as age, gender, socio-economic status and sexuality, as drawn upon by the current study participants.

As stated in Chapter Five, I was in the field for a period of nine months. Although for the majority of the time I conducted participant observations, interviews and FGD on my own, I spent a large proportion of my time interacting with the residents of Kroboland on a

daily basis. Dede, a participant as well as some other informants, helped me negotiate my way in the research site. My research interactions led to the exploration of various settings within Odumase and Somanya, so I could better understand the context and circumstances in which the study participants had encountered their lived experiences.

The local bar was one of such milieus that predominantly came up during the interviews. During some of the interviews with the key informants, two local drinking spots, Tycoon and Memorial were cited as a big nuisance to the community. Among many reasons, key informants talked about how children could be found loitering around these areas late at night, especially over the weekend but in particular, on Sundays. Curious about why these places were named as a menace, I took the trouble to observe night activity in these locations for myself, on three different occasions.

#### **8.6.1. At the bar: An admirer from a distance**

After a month of data collection in Kroboland, I sat with one of my informants, Dede, observing ongoing activity at the Memorial drinking spot. Across the street, I could also see the activity at Tycoon, which is sited right opposite Memorial. Each spot had an enclosed bar as well as an outside area with arranged chairs and tables, and some space left as the dance floor. There was music blaring from both places, but each spot was lifeless; we had arrived too early. By 10 pm, however, the atmosphere had changed, the place was jam-packed with people carousing. Drinking, dancing and revelry usually spilled over into the street, causing traffic congestion. There was a lot to see at these spots, the latest dance moves, fashion and cars in town. This was where a large number of the youth, some alleged to be involved in “Sakawa” showed off their wealth by the display of flashy cars. These youths would race up and down the street, screeching their car wheels just to attract bystanders’ attention. Dede explained that observing night activity at these places was a usual source of good entertainment on Sundays.

At Memorial, besides the presence of adults and teenagers, I spotted a few young children in the company of their guardians. A woman held a baby in her arms as she chatted merrily with her companions. Across the street, I saw a young boy six- or seven-years-old dancing the night away in the midst of middle aged women. I also saw a number of teenagers, some in pairs, others in peer groups, lurking around in the dark alleys close by these two areas. I was informed that the bar owners usually tried to prevent under age persons from

patronising the bar. I had personally observed the bar owner with a cane, which he used to ward off under age children from his bar premises. Despite that measure, I observed that a few brave teenagers visited the bars to buy drinks. That night, I sat observing a group of female teenagers pass on and share a box of Don Simon alcoholic wine. One of the girls who seemed to be the leader of the group confidently went into the bar to get some more drinks, while her peers waited for her at a distance. On my second night, which was during the dipo season, I identified a few young girls who had just completed their dipo initiation. I could easily identify them from the way their hair had been shaved<sup>27</sup>.

Within two hours after our arrival, with no form of introduction, a middle aged man approached us. He mentioned that he had been sent by his “boss” to find out what we (Dede and I) wanted to drink. Just as I was about to decline the offer, Dede excitedly requested for a beer and asked for a non-alcoholic malt drink for me, as I do not drink alcohol. The man went to the bar and returned with the bottles opened. Although I was concerned that the bottles had not been opened in front of us, it was the least of Dede’s worries. She drank her beer in no time, and sensing my reluctance she later asked to drink my bottle of malt. To date, we still do not know who sent those drinks.

Based on the experience described above, as I was writing up my analyses, I could relate to some experiences shared by the study participants, for example, Korkor’s account of attempted CSA which involved a stranger she had met at a bar (See Chapter Eight). Korkor had accepted a drink from a stranger thinking that it had been sent on behalf of the friend she had accompanied to the bar, only to later realise that in exchange for the drink the man was demanding sex. The stranger attempted to force her to go home with him and this led to a physical confrontation. Fortunately, she was rescued by a bystander but had to pay compensation for accepting the drink but refusing to give sex. Narratives by some male participants in this study indicated that they habitually expected sex in exchange for the support, assistance and luxuries they provided young girls. One male participant in this study compared this expectation of exchange to an investment venture.

All three cases of attempted CSA involving females in this current study were linked to the sexual demands based on long term exchanges or apparent investments of some kind. In these cases, the participants were at risk for exploitation as a result of having had their

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<sup>27</sup> On the third day of dipo, as part of ongoing rituals the girls have their hair shaved off to represent their departure from childhood and their rebirth, as a Krobo woman.

desires, wants and needs satisfied through the assistance of the said perpetrator. In my own experience, my status as a single and “rich woman” also placed me at risk for exploitation as I seek to demonstrate in the section below.

### **8.6.2. A single woman from a world of wealth: A target for exploitation**

The taxi driver had just taken the last turn on the untarred road leading to my residence in Odumase. As soon as I pointed out where I would get off, the taxi driver turned to look at me and said:

**Taxi Driver:** Wow, is this where you stay?

**I:** Yes.

**Taxi driver:** Eiii (expressing surprise) then you must be rich.

**I:** No, I am not rich, I don't own this house.

**Taxi driver:** Are you married?

**I:** No

**Taxi driver:** I love you, it would be really nice to come and stay with you.

I felt it odd that he would express an instant interest in me, based on the assumption that I was “rich” in his terms. Sex researchers, Gune and Manuel (2011) talk about how the anthropologist is often perceived as a foreigner with economic wealth and power. What was more striking in this instance was the fact that the taxi driver was married; according to him, his marriage would not be a problem if I were also interested. I was appalled by his utterances, but as a protection strategy, I had learned under such circumstance to keep my emotions under control and not to openly express disgust to anyone.

Earlier on in this chapter, I mentioned how some male participants talked about how interactions with female newcomers were usually a site for asserting masculinity. However, newcomers who frustrated their efforts in an arrogant way were at risk of subsequent harm. I was told how in previous years boys had ganged up to purposefully hurt girls with a history of humiliating boys, in their effort to turn down intimate relationship requests, via gang sex. Thus, like other females who lived in this context, over the few months I stayed in Kroboland I learnt a few basic rules and codes about how to avoid the wrath of an interested man. As soon as the taxi driver stopped, I quickly got out, paid and hurriedly walked into the house, hoping that I would never see him again, but alas I saw him several times after. Odumase is a

very small town, thus it is almost impossible to dodge anyone. There were times I deliberately avoided sitting in his taxi, on other occasions I didn't have a choice because he was the only taxi driver available to take me home.

As I read through the transcripts, I could relate this personal experience with the taxi driver to the context of cybercrime in Kroboland, where the affluent from overseas, through the assistance of technology are usually exploited for wealth as a result of associated vulnerabilities. Among other activities (see Appendix G), the perpetrators of cybercrime typically engage rich, single men or women or people involved in unhappy marriages, in what are termed love relationships. The "love relationship" is a means to extort money from the rich and vulnerable. As indicated in Appendix G, young males mostly in their 20s usually mastermind these activities in pact with young girls. The girls are often exploited and persuaded to use their sexuality as a resource to acquire quick wealth, if the target is male. In return for their participation, the girls receive a fraction of any monies acquired from a victim. Dede, my informant, told me she had personally been a part of such a deal in the past. For her, the bait to indulge in cybercrime was the money she desperately needed.

### **8.6.3. I am the contractor in charge of this road construction: Setting the bait for vulnerable girls.**

**Man:** Excuse me?

**I:** (I stopped and turned to see who was trying to draw my attention).

**Man:** Good evening madam, please are you married?

**I:** You don't know me, what a question to ask (looking puzzled).

**Man:** Well, I am the contractor in charge of this road construction and I have been seeing you around town.

At that point, realising that I needed to be careful with my utterances, I decided to end the conversation with the excuse that I was running late for a meeting which in any case was true. After I left him, I mused over why he had been boastful about his position as a contractor, then it struck me, Dede always raised the question, "Can he pay?", whenever, a man expressed interest in her. For her, the ability to provide financial support was a major consideration in the choice of an intimate partner. As already explained above, certain needs,

desires and wants, such as wealth placed young females at risk for CSA; my encounter with Paul further deepened my understanding of this view.

During data collection, I met a number of generous people, particularly men who were friendly and eager to offer help with networking, even without my asking, Paul was one of them. I met Paul who worked with the multimedia industry, during the Ngmayem and Kloyosikplemi festivals. He was very instrumental in the initial stages of the data collection, facilitating my contact with many community members. He frequently travelled in between Accra (the capital city of Ghana) and Kroboland; one day on his way back from Accra, he surprised me with a box of pizza. The cuisine found in Kroboland was usually local, very few restaurants sold foreign dishes. In all excitement, I accepted the box of pizza; however, our association was short lived when moments after eating the pizza, while having a conversation he had started to make sexual advances at me, and he got upset at my rejection.

I was really upset about his behaviour and the fact that I had to dissolve friendship ties with him, and in the process lose a valuable asset to my research. However, this particular incident gave me a broader understanding of similar experiences I heard about while in the field. One day while at my regular salon in Odumase, a taxi passed by. The hair stylist got upset at the sight of the driver and started to complain bitterly. She explained that when she was a teenager, this taxi driver had once declined to accept her taxi fare. Overtime, they had become friends. At a later date, he had bought groceries for her, she cooked and they ate together. She said that was a big mistake, because later he began to harass her for sex and when she refused, he sought to embarrass her by spreading false rumours that she owed him money. As a result, she took a decision to pay off the earlier debt (3 GHC [\$0.80]); although she had handed him a 5 GHC note, he had vehemently refused to give her change.

This incident reminded me of the notions of compensation, exchange and investments as discussed in the earlier section. The driver's behaviour as described by the hair stylist seems consistent with the ideas of some male participants in this study who claimed that providing the needs of females was not a problem as long as they received sex in exchange. The hair stylist related that despite the payment the driver still seemed to hold a grudge against her, and to date still insulted her at every opportunity he got. She cursed him and said, "God will pay him back, when we are young these are some of the mistakes we make". Within the Kroboland context, money, emotional care, and support required or wanted by girls served as bait and placed them at risk for CSA. Citing the example of a 16-year-old boy

who had to frequently sleep with an older woman to be able to continue his education, a key informant suggested that boys may also be a risk for SA due to genuine needs such as poverty.

#### **8.6.4. Don't pretend you don't like it: Women and sex research**

One interesting thing I learnt from one of the older female participants was the fact that culturally a male may not necessarily express interest in a female openly. To quote her exact words, she said. "a Krobo man will not come and tell you that he loves you". I learnt that love or interest was expressed in covert ways. It was a Saturday, I was seated outside the family house chatting with my cousin when a taxi drove by; the driver looked in our direction and smiled. It was a gentleman I had once spoken to briefly, he had stopped to ask who I was, since he had been noticing me around. In all that was the only real conversation, we ever had. Apparently, he had been asking my cousin questions about me but when we met in person, we would greet each other and continue in our separate ways.

The driver drove off but returned in a few minutes, this time on foot. He stood at a distance and beckoned for my cousin to draw near to him. He gave her a bottle of non-alcoholic wine to be delivered to me. That was the last I saw of him. Before, I could even tell her I did not want it, she had already popped the wine cork, she poured herself a cup of wine, laughed and teased saying, "this is cheap wine". Still sipping on the wine, she concluded that he must have fancied me but may have been tongue-tied. The idea that some men may covertly express their interest in sex through the offer of gifts was not always understood by the female participants. It was a notion some of them came to understand often in the aftermath of attempted CSA.

Silent expressions of attraction as performed by males is problematic. Men often assume that women will communicate their availability in indirect ways as well. As was illustrated in the previous chapter, female sexuality is generally obscured or suppressed. In fact, some participants suggested that within this context, a female covertly expresses her sexual wants and desires via her mode of dressing, warm reception and response to sexual cues. I was told by a few participants of the older generation that in the olden days young girls were identified by the kind of traditional dresses they wore and by a particular type of hairdo. These features powerfully communicated messages of sexual deterrence. In contemporary Kroboland, in addition to one's dress code, participants highlighted that a

female's non-virginity status, response to sexual cues and warm reception were some indicators of a female's sexual interest and sexual availability.

I found that in my own case, researching about sexuality may have raised suspicion and question about my sexuality and suggested to some study participants the idea that I was sexually available. The nature of the study, the questions I asked, the continuous probing and my keen interest during the interviews may have created a false impression of my interests. I reached this conclusion when I received sexually explicit messages from two of my participants, weeks after they had been interviewed.

To date, I still remember how horrified I felt when I received the first sexually explicit message. It was a video. This video contained live images of what I can best described as beasts mating. It had been sent by Uncle Raymond<sup>28</sup>. I was disgusted by the content, without watching it to the end I deleted it. At that point, I began to question why he had sent me such a video. I could not make sense of his intent. Akin to what most females with a CSA history in this current study had done when confronted with similar sexual suggestions by people they revered, I silently repressed my frustrations and decided to ignore the message. Analogous to some child-perpetrator relationships documented in the child sexual abuse literature, the age gap between uncle Raymond and me was large. The fact that he was almost 10 years older and a community leader gave him privilege that a female and a stranger to the community did not possess.

Weeks later, he sent another message via WhatsApp. This time it was a picture of a monster bent over a naked young girl in black high heels in a sexual position with what seemed like sperm dripping from the monster's genitals<sup>29</sup>. I decided to confront the participant via text; his response also by text was, "do not pretend you do not like it." By virtue of being a single young educated woman with an interest in sexuality, I seemed to have conveyed to him and some other men a strong interest in sex. As a result, my own sexuality was deemed questionable. I must have created quite an impression because even after exiting the field I still received pornographic videos from another older participant. Personally, these research experiences were shocking because both persons had shown interest in my study and

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<sup>28</sup> I hesitate to refer to him without the "use" of uncle because he is old enough to be considered my father.

<sup>29</sup> At that moment, I tried to analyse the picture content, the beast for me embodied his way of emphasising that despite the kind of power I possessed as an educated female and researcher, the male was relatively still more powerful than me. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to undertake a detailed analysis of the pornographic materials sent to me. It is however interesting that the monster porn field draws on tropes of archaic aggressive hypermasculinity, similar tropes which are commonly reproduced in relation to Black male sexuality.

had personally devoted a lot of their time in connecting me to several of my study participants. Just like the case of some of my female participants, I faced a dilemma and did not know how to react towards these men, afterwards. A key finding in this study is that many children are unsure how to react when they receive sexual propositions from well-respected persons in the community.

The anger, the shame and embarrassment that arose from some of these field encounters links well with what many sexuality researchers (Ross, 2015; Zurbriggen, 2002) have previously reported while conducting similar research. Despite the experience of negative emotions, by reflecting on these experiences as a single female researcher, I acknowledge how my place in the research setting tells a powerful story about the context of Kroboland and its custodians. In this section, I have shown how the researcher's experience in the field is a useful resource through which the experiences of the study participants can be made known and understood in some depth.

## **8.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has shown a backdrop of childhood against which participants learned about their emerging sexuality. For some participants, viewing parents' sexual activity, watching pornography and observing older peer interactions with the opposite sex was a starting point for sex education. For a number of these participants, who were male, sexual interaction proceeded with experimentation usually with a child relative who shared a common sleeping place. Others trialled with peers in the neighbourhood or with school mates, via sex play games.

A revealing pathway by some male participants was that their actual sexual debut involved an older sexually active girl. In turn, some advanced to sexually experiment with much younger girls. Some of these sexual relations, particularly those involving males, were characterised by subtle manipulation by trusted persons, but until reflection during the interview, were never considered as abuse. For instance, one male participant, Matey after disclosure about early sexual relations with an older girl during MFGD I, said "now when I think about it I can even say that that sister she raped me".

For female participants with a past CSA experience subtle manipulation if not successful often risked escalating into an aggressive sexual encounter, as evidenced in one case. Unlike male participants who perceived similar sexual activity as gratifying and

pleasurable, sexual experiences for female CSA victims seemed confusing and disappointing. Associated anger, hurt, emotional pain and a sense of betrayal characterized a few of these experiences. In the aftermath of these sexual experiences, a number of participants, both male and female, developed a range of selfish feelings, wishes and desires, which placed them at risk for becoming a repeat victim and/or a potential CSA offender.

A few participants presented the evidence of a struggle to overcome CSA related issues related to trauma and subtly, in their account of CSA hinted the need for help. But also contradictorily, some suggested a move away from the role of a CSA victim by indicating the evidence of personal growth and development. Finding ways to help themselves and safeguarding others not necessarily in relation to sexual abuse but against harm in general, formed an integral part of this positive adaptation process. Other means described by participants included the experience of respite and healing through spirituality and locating safer or healthier options of financial and emotional support.

## **Chapter 9: Discussion, implications, recommendations and conclusion**

### **9.1. Introduction**

In a prolonged whisper, during one of the interviews, a female participant highlighted her view that some adults struggled to live what she termed “healthy sexual lives”, as their partners lacked the expertise on how to satisfy their sexual needs and desires. She strongly linked this outcome to emerging problems of infidelity. Other participants’ stories related the problem of unsatisfactory sexual lives to issues of premature exposure to sexual activity and inappropriate sexual practices occurring in childhood. Some participants in this current study actively engaged in sex experimentation and sexual relations in childhood. Some of these experiences were aggravated with various elements of abuse, including coercion, manipulation, trickery and physical aggression.

These findings among others answer relevant questions about the cultural scaffolding of CSA within Kroboland, as well as highlight a range of possible risk and protective factors, specific to this context. In the next sections, I give a summary of the study results and engage in a discussion of these findings. I use the current study aims and the literature reviewed in Chapters Two, Three and Four as a guide for discussion.

The primary aim of the present study was to understand the meaning of CSA in the context of the Krobo people of Ghana. Specifically, in this study I sought:

1. To understand various sexual experiences that occur in childhood and the meanings attached to these experiences among the Krobo community.
2. To understand how the Krobo people of Ghana make sense of CSA. Are these meanings the same for Krobo men and women?
3. To identify situations and practices that may enable or constrain CSA in a Krobo community.

In this concluding Chapter, I also offer a reflective stance as a co-participant in constructing the participants’ lived experiences, and also highlight my own experience in the research field. As a last point, I discuss implications, recommendations and limitation associated for the Kroboland.

## **9.2. To understand various sexual experiences that occur in childhood and the meanings attached to these experiences among the Krobo community**

With the exception of sex experimentation which was a common activity for both genders, I found that reported sexual experiences in childhood were not comparable for males and females. Drawing on early sex exploration activities, the results from this current study showed that as children, participants were not always ignorant of matters concerning sex and sexuality in childhood. With regard to children, sexuality researchers, Yarber, Sayad, and Strong (2013, p. 160) have argued that “children become aware of sex and sexuality much earlier than many people realize. They learn to disguise their interest rather than risk the disapproval of their elders, but they continue as small scientists – collecting data, performing experiments, and attending conferences with their colleagues”.

Consistent with this notion, some community members in this current study referred to similar information gathering activities. For example, participants described secretly observing and learning different forms of sexual behaviour from a varied number of sources, including parents, siblings, peers (older or same age), musicians and movie celebrities. This finding is consistent with concerns raised by some key informants in Chapter Seven about young children acting out inappropriate sexual behaviour, due to early sexual exposure. Some participant experiences involved sex exploration and experimentation events, organised around interactive or play activities, held in secret.

Growing up, some community leaders and members learnt to accept that discussing information related to sex with some adults was problematic. For instance, for some participants, adult reactions to their involvement in sex experimentation potentially led to moments of embarrassment and regret, some of which involved acts of reproach or punishment. The disapproving attitude of some adults often discouraged participants from having open discussions concerning their interest, curiosity and fascination about sex and their emerging sexuality.

Consistent with this finding, some KIs in their interviews as presented in Chapter Seven, talked about their response to children’s sexuality. Via KI accounts poor responses to children’s sex experimentation and sexual victimization were revealed. Some responses reflected societal bias about gender, which, for instance, encouraged male sexuality and identities while suppressing the idea of male vulnerabilities and the existence of male victimisation. These findings may partially explain why some male participants in this

present study divulged that sex with an older female was a common way in which they asserted themselves as men. Sexual relations with a senior seemed to suggest an experience that held thrilling, exciting and pleasurable memories, which for these boys was a narrative worth bragging about, as it translated a sense of influence, autonomy and control to others. However, for a few older male participants, as adults, this same sexual experience is later reanalysed as problematic, erroneous, exploitive and abusive.

In the case of females, negative social reactions to activities surrounding sexual development partly led to the suppression of female sexuality and further, female victimisation. Although, to some extent some females welcomed the sexual attention they received from others, as an affirmation of their desirability, elements of sexual gratification, pleasure or desire were missing from early sexual accounts narrated. Early in childhood, female participants learned to suppress expressions of their sexuality and perceived their bodies as objects, dangerous and a threat to themselves and others. They came to accept this notion and to perform and reinforce it in their day-to-day interactions. But, in some instances the female participants strongly contested this, as evidenced by the competing feminine narratives which condemned misogynous ideas about females.

Significantly, in this study, the female participants spoke about how they lived in a world that frequently associated their sexuality with vulnerability, danger and menace, which for them created a sense of fear and panic. For instance, the fear of becoming pregnant and experiencing sexual abuse for some females was an everyday reality, reinforced by cultural norms and social practices.

In sum, the highlights of reports of Krobo childhood sexual experiences suggested that:

- (1) Sex experimentation is a shared, probably common, experience between peers, but also a secretive part of childhood.
- (2) Sex with an older female seemed to form a major life milestone for some young boys; notwithstanding the sense that it was socially inappropriate, it was complemented by a sense of pride that as young boys they had been rendered virile, sexually attractive and desirable. Despite these gains, in later life, a proportion of older men viewed such experiences as exploitative, manipulative and abusive.
- (3) Girls grew up in a context where they frequently experienced both wanted and unwanted attention drawn to their sexuality. Though they avoided talking about how

they felt sexually attractive and desirable, the theme of desirability was dominant in their accounts of CSA.

### **9.3. To understand how the Krobo people of Ghana make sense of CSA. Are these meanings the same for Krobo men and women?**

In this study, some of the female participants with past experiences of CSA reasoned that they were sexually vulnerable because they had fresh young bodies, which were erotic and desirable. This understanding was also corroborated by the accounts of some female community leaders, against a backdrop of their childhood experiences, although none in this study directly reported any incident of SA. Other related factors that created a reported context of vulnerability included family backgrounds associated with broken ties (e.g., caused by events of separation, divorce, children born out of wedlock), poverty and inadequate caregiving.

In turn, female participant narratives seemed to suggest a link between these factors of vulnerability and themes of emotional and financial neediness which engendered problems of additional risk for CSA. For instance, some female participants with a past of CSA believed that the kind of support and assistance (e.g., social, emotional, financial, and material, etc.) received from older men when they were in need, later formed a basis for a sponsors' sexual overtures.

For some of these females, the offender had formerly been respected and viewed as trustworthy. Because of the nature of the former relationship and their state of dependency on the offender, these victims felt confused following the event of CSA or attempts of CSA. Female participants spoke of how they struggled to deal with CSA, based on the fact that they had limited power as children. Further, they described being unsure of how to react towards the offender. In some of the encounters described, females covertly expressed disappointment, mistrust and anger towards the abuser.

Furthermore, female participants adopted different ways to protect themselves from the potential offender, who usually formed an integral part of their immediate social environment. To escape sexually advances, some females downplayed individual factors that created a vulnerable context in the first place. In this regard, when they sensed risk, they found a temporary means of portraying their bodies as undesirable, by drawing on the discourses of menstruation, pollution and contamination. To some extent, the participants

reported that this kept the offender away, but further resistance to the offender's sexual demands over time often resulted in negative consequences such as the participant experiencing some kind of loss.

Different forms of loss were described. For example, the participants noted that their failure to comply with sexual demands led to the withdrawal of various types of support and privileges. Some were asked to return material items they had received. In one rare case, the offender, a stranger to the victim, had demanded compensation. According to the females with a history of CSA, resistance to demands for sex infuriated the offender, and further placed them at risk of a violent CSA encounter. In the one case of female CSA that involved penetrative sex, the victim reported losing her virginity and, for a time, her experience of herself as sane.

Reflecting on their experiences of CSA, female participants expressed a deep sense of emotional pain, anger and hurt. In the aftermath of CSA, some talked about how they had subsequently developed a generalised aversion to sex and towards the opposite sex, as well as selfish feelings and desires towards others. At the same time, following the event of CSA some of these female participants described experiencing aspects of change, positive growth and development.

For male participants, besides youthfulness and physical attraction, they noted that good behaviour, and, strangely, socially inappropriate behaviour seemed to draw the attention of older females. Unlike their female counterparts, male participants usually welcomed the attention and sexual invitations from older girls. For them, sex with an older woman was a life learning experience, an affirmation of their heterosexual attractiveness, desirability and proof of virility. As young boys, these kind of sexual encounters gave the participants a sense of pleasure, excitement and achievement.

The study results, however, revealed that as male participants grew up and became sexually mature and started to initiate sexual encounters on their own, they began to feel that their attractiveness as a sexual partner to an older woman waned. At what they regarded as sexual maturity, many were rejected by older female partners. The male participants further reasoned that taking sexual initiatives may have caused the older female partner to fear the event of possible exposure, hence their act of rejection.

Despite the initial excitement associated with early sexual experiences, some older male participants (in the MFGD II) later disclosed that sexual experiences with an older

female were often manipulative, exploitive and abusive. They believed that such sexual experiences led to subsequent problems of sex offending and intimacy deficits. Two out of the five male participants with a history of CSA revealed that they had sexually victimised others, in the aftermath of CSA. Modelling older females, who had abused them, they learned maladaptive ways to manipulate, coerce and exploit younger girls to satisfy their sexual desires. Nonetheless, one of the two men talked about how he had changed and taken on a new identity. He distanced himself from a history of sexual offending and explained how he had become a responsible person, by his action of offering advice to others who had the desire to give up on life.

#### **9.4. To identify situations and practices that may enable or constrain CSA in a Krobo community**

Collectively, lived experiences of CSA and accounts of working with persons with a past of CSA described by the participants revealed some factors that created a context of vulnerability to CSA, as well as a context of protection against CSA.

##### **9.4.1 Child sexual abuse risk factors**

###### ***9.4.1.1. Community level: Places, times and seasons***

The current study results indicated that as a community, Kroboland is characterised by various communal places, events and activities that periodically heighten the probability of children and potential sex offenders interacting in shared space in the absence of a guardian. From the narratives of the female community members, isolated areas, particularly the cemetery, usually hosted gangs, and posed a danger threat to them.

The key informants and community leaders, on the other hand, cited remote areas (i.e., the Krobo Mountain, sports fields, etc.) that were often crowded at certain times and seasons of the year, as risky spaces. For instance, as part of activities during the traditional festivals held in October and November, the Krobo people take a pilgrimage to their ancestral home – the Krobo Mountain (see Chapter Four) – this usually attracts the participation of many adventurous youth. Similarly, for the purposes of other festival activities large numbers of people migrated from the surrounding villages, neighbouring towns and other country regions to Somanya and Odumase, the capital townships, to take part in the week long celebrations.

Similar patterns of migration occur during the Christmas holidays in December, the Easter break and diplo rituals in March/April. Interestingly, some key informants conveyed that it was during these festive events and the raining season<sup>30</sup> – which usually start in May/June – that high rates of CSA were reported.

#### ***9.4.1.2. Family level factors***

##### ***9.4.1.2.1. Housing facilities and living conditions***

Data presented by the community members indicated that sharing common sleeping quarters with parents, opposite-sex siblings and relatives may engender some amount of sexual risk for children. For instance, this kind of sleeping arrangement seemed to facilitate the observation of adult sexual behaviour; it also fostered intimacy, and further risky sex experimentation between children.

##### ***9.4.1.2.2. Family background***

The results suggested that children who originated from low-income households, large family sizes, families with poor social relations and broken homes may be associated with a risk for CSA. According to the participants with lived experiences of CSA, such living conditions as listed above created a vulnerable context for the occurrence of CSA. The participants identified that some sex offenders took advantage of these harsh living conditions to coerce, manipulate, trick and exploit them, when they were in need of financial, emotional and physical care.

Receipt of support from the offender and the existence of social ties between the offender and victim, before the experience of CSA, often functioned as a trap for the victim. CSA victims often had to contemplate and negotiate values of respect, responsibility and reciprocity, in response to the sexual demands of sex offenders. Not acquiescing to CSA demands potentially put them at risk for forced sex.

##### ***9.4.1.3. Individual level factors***

Results from the current study showed that cultural norms about childhood, age expectations, sex and sexuality, gender roles, norms of respect, responsibility and reciprocity affected the participants' vulnerability to CSA. Participant ideas of these standards and expectations were

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<sup>30</sup> In Ghana the rainy seasons are usually April to June and August to September

guided by standards of living in Kroboland, some of which participants gradually adopted and contested as they interacted with the world.

#### ***9.4.1.3.1. He was older than me: The hierarchical positioning of children***

Showing disapproval to an older person is abhorred in the Krobo context as is the case in similar African cultures. Children are brought up to respect and obey their elders, as is inferred from the participant narratives. By the norm, even when in the wrong, the adult maintains honour and superiority; this standard creates an awkward situation for the child. Accordingly, the data suggested that some female participants struggled to disclose the wrongdoings of the said sex offenders because of this understanding of unconditional respect. For these participants, CSA disclosure was also a problem for fear that it would destroy existing social relations and networks between the victim and the sex offender.

Although I am an adult, my own experience of being sexually harassed (see Chapter Eight) during fieldwork in Kroboland, gave me first-hand insight into what some participants with a history of CSA suffered. Similar to a child, I held a complex but low social status within this study context. For example, my status inconsistently shifted between a stranger and an identity as a Krobo (See Chapter Five). In one of the incidents as described in the article “Researching sexuality” (see Appendix F), I was more than ten years younger than the offender. In this setting, I held no position of authority; indeed, I had limited power in relation to the offender. The offender on the other hand held a critical leadership position and as a matter of fact had assisted me to recruit a number of my research participants. Although I am an empowered professional adult woman with international experience, I felt unable to act assertively in the context of my having been sexually harassed. I did not wish to break social norms (that was not my role), but more crucially I believed that claiming my rights openly in regard to the harassment would jeopardise my study. In this respect I could identify with participants who feared that aspects of their livelihood and credibility as community members could be damaged by disclosure.

#### ***9.4.1.3.2. Fresh bodies: Youthfulness and physical attractiveness of the child***

The results in this study show that in Kroboland, CSA has relevance for both genders. Irrespective of gender, the flush of youth may put children at a heightened risk for CSA. Strikingly, the results suggested that older females may have a preference for younger

masculine bodies. According to some male narratives, older girls were attracted to their appearance and physique. It was rumoured in Kroboland that older men were sexually weak in bed compared to the younger boys with youthful and energetic bodies. In support of this assertion, some participants reported that older men actively purchased sexual aphrodisiacs to keep up with the stamina of their female counterparts. To explain this, the male participants explained that in their youth, men had to exert a lot of energy to satisfy the sexual desires of older females they were involved with at a young age. They claimed sexual activity with an older woman was hard work; that at times it drained and overexerted their energies.

In the same way, data from this study suggests that similar attributes of youthfulness and physical attractiveness placed females at risk for CSA. The results indicated that a youthful female body was enticing, erotic and desirable, often drawing unwanted attention from peers or older individuals.

#### ***9.4.1.3.3. The lone child: Neediness and reciprocity***

The results showed that childhood for some participants had been a lonely phase of life. As children, some participants felt a sense of emptiness and craved to receive quality care (i.e., physically, financially, emotionally and mentally) from their parents. However, the problem of an unavailable and unresponsive parent or guardian at times caused a sense of neglect that was often overturned by the role of other persons. Some of whom expected sexual favours in return. The findings indicated that child indigence often created a situation of risk for CSA.

#### ***9.4.1.3.4. She likes it! Lost innocence and non-virgins***

According to the narratives of some male participants with a history of sex offending, female non-virgins may be more vulnerable for CSA within the Kroboland community. The results indicated that non-virgins are presumed to be loose women and readily available, even when they indicate they do not wish to have sex. Virginity is considered an important element of female innocence; thus preserving virginity carried significant value for female identity in Kroboland. For the Krobo people virginity personifies chastity, anything short of this virtue portrays the female Krobo as promiscuous, corruptible and readily available for sex.

As evident in the data provided by some key informants in Chapter Seven, children are regarded as asexual. Thus, when they are found to have a history of sexual activity they are termed premature adults; since it is presumed sexual experiences are reserved for

adulthood. Consistent with this understanding, children associated with any form of sexual experience were branded immoral and undisciplined. The narratives in this study suggest that once a girl is not a virgin, it is commonly believed that the girl enjoys sex or is particularly interested in sex.

As related in the previous chapter, I received unwanted sexually explicit messages from two male community leaders on four separate occasions. I presume that beside the fact that I was a woman, my interest in studying sexuality may have conveyed the wrong impression about my personal desires, yearnings, and fantasies. Hence, the men assumed to have the authority or insight to know what my sexual preferences were, without my having discussed these.

On another occasion, before I conducted MFGD II, I recall being engaged in a conversation with one of the participants who kept raising his hands as he spoke. In the process his hands brushed against my breast. Immediately, I gave him a very stern and disapproving look; instantly he apologised. Seeing that he appeared remorseful I imagined it had been an unintended gesture. But later during the FGD, I found out that males used various tactics such as surreptitious touching which appeared accidental to identify a girl's level of interest in them as well as in sexual activity. In the same vein, the loss of virginity seemed to be another indicator or measure that communicated that a girl was available or was an avid participater in sex.

#### ***9.4.1.3.5. I was the happiest man on earth! Asserting masculinity or male vulnerability?***

Social expectations about heterosexuality, masculinity and ideas of manhood created male vulnerabilities, making them susceptible to abuse, which contrary to the views communicated by their female counterparts, they commonly experienced as pleasurable. For them, such sexual experiences are a rite of passage or a scholarship to the experience of manhood. But at the same time, the results showed that these dynamics create a context of vulnerability, which female sex offenders usually took advantage of, to satisfy their own sexual needs. While at the time these incidents of early sex may not have appeared traumatic for the boys, it does not mean that harm may have not been caused. For instance, narratives from older males in this study showed that psychological concerns related to the event of CSA eventually emerged.

#### ***9.4.1.4. The world wide web: A hidden risk***

With the advances in technology and the expansion in the ecology of human communication, some participants highlight the risk the internet may pose for children. For instance, the practice of cybercrime (Sakawa), which may involve the exploitation of female sexuality for monetary gain. Additionally, the use of android phone applications such as Whatsapp to send sexually explicit messages, as personally witnessed while collecting data in Kroboland, may be a major source of CSA risk.

### **9.4.2 Child sexual abuse protective factors**

#### ***9.4.2.1. Good caregiving practices***

Insights from this present study showed that the older generation believed that close-knit family network systems offered proper care and protection to children. Monitoring and supervision of child activities, plus consistent and responsive childrearing practices were highlighted as important. To a large extent, participants condemned parental neglect, many believing that proper caregiving reduced the possibility of privation, the need for emotional support, affection and care from external sources.

#### ***9.4.2.2. Regulating sexuality***

Older generation participants talked about strategies used by their guardians to allow for minimum interaction with members of the opposite sex. According to these participants, their guardians had carefully watched and supervised their everyday activities. Traditional customs like the dipo training system formed an essential part of this regulatory context for many young females, but with time, dipo arguably seems less influential in controlling sexuality. However, some values underlying this practice according to the participants are still considered important.

For instance, the current study results indicated that the preservation of virginity is one protective factor that could prevent the occurrence of forced sex in some instances. According to some male participants, when a girl maintains her virginity it is evidence that she is chaste. The proof of female chastity discouraged some offenders from perpetrating CSA, for fear that they may injure a sexually immature and virtuous girl.

Another reason why virgins seemed protected from CSA according to some male participants, was the fact that sex with a virgin, whether consensual or forced, potentially left

substantial evidence that could be used to prosecute them. Elsewhere, Wood (2003) highlights that offenders can be extremely guarded in perpetrating acts of CSA in order to avoid possible retribution.

#### **9.4.2.3. Sexuality education**

Sexuality education at school and during religious events organised for children, according to the participants, helped to promote healthy decision-making about sex. Although, some key informants believed that not everyone in charge of socialising a child qualified to teach sex education. Education about sex and sexual development was a major concern for participants, such that some wished it could be an integral part of their upbringing as children. In hindsight, some participants wished that they had received more knowledge about sex at an earlier age. Further, a few older participants advocated for the active engagement of men in sexuality education, since they were presumed to form a major part of the sex offending group.

In sum, the results of this IPA study clearly highlight the critical importance of understanding the cultural context in which behaviour occurs. Specifically, the study findings make sense of child sexuality by analysing the lived experiences of a sample of the Krobo people and key informants who had a working history with children in Kroboland. Further, the results contextualised meanings ascribed to CSA within the Kroboland milieu, and also revealed the surrounding circumstances that bring this phenomenon to life, as well as factors that hinder its occurrence. Additionally, based on my own lived experience in Kroboland, this research work draws a strong connection between the occurrences of CSA and SA, plus, it created a space for thinking about children's daily realities, and ways in which we can help to improve the development of a healthy sexual life.

## **9.5. Discussion**

### **9.5.1. Scaffolding of CSA: Age, gender and insecure attachment outcomes**

Consistent with related studies (Sikweyiya & Jekwes, 2009; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006), the data from the current study shows that experiences of CSA originate from the exploits of influential individuals, adults or children, who may use various tactics (grooming, coercion, manipulation and force) to engage a child in sexual activity. In the Krobo context, an influential person generally denotes someone who has authority over the child as a result of

their: position of seniority; family ties, availability (psychologically and physically); protectiveness and responsiveness towards the child, when in need. Where female children are concerned, as is observed of other patriarchal settings, the male gender becomes an additional defining feature of influence in Kroboland.

Altogether, the data showed that within the context of Kroboland themes concerning: a lack of parental care and child neglect; financial and emotional privation; prior relations of trust and respect; values of responsibility; reciprocity and gender norms seemed central to the experience of CSA. These findings are consistent with Smallbone et al.'s (2008) integrated theory of sex offending, which theorizes that CSA is fashioned into reality based on a number of complex person-situation interactions; details are discussed in the paragraphs below.

#### ***9.5.1.1. Childrearing environment, insecure attachments and CSA outcomes***

In spite of the fact that community level factors appeared crucial to the scaffolding of CSA, for the community members in this study, issues of child neglect at the family level assumed a high level of significance, in creating child vulnerabilities and creating opportunities for CSA to occur. The extent of child neglect in Kroboland seemed grave. Given its significance to this current research work, there is a whole thesis Chapter devoted to a discussion on the lack of parental care and child neglect, and related themes (See Chapter Six).

As is established in the literature, early attachments are central to a child's healthy development, with these patterns of interaction forming the basis for the establishment of meaningful relationships. The assumption I would like to make here, as various researchers (Cicchetti, 1989; Sroufe, Egeland, & Kreutzer, 1990) have espoused, is that children with a history of neglect are more likely to be exposed to CSA vulnerabilities and CSA offending trends. Smallbone et al. (2008) for example suggested that insecure attachments intensify a child's vulnerability to CSA and likewise inhibit impulse control in an offender. Consistent with this assertion, Papalia, Olds, and Feldman (2006) also posited that poor caregiving may facilitate the inability to protect oneself and the formation of poor interpersonal relationships which lead to poor behaviour outcomes. These authors strongly posit that a child is unlikely to develop a sense of security when he or she lacks "sensitive, responsive [and] consistent caregiving" (Papalia et al., 2006, p. 214).

In this current study, participants gave various accounts of poor caregiving experiences in childhood. Typical of these accounts were dysfunctional family systems,

physically absent, emotionally distant parents or guardians who were insensitive and unresponsive when the participant was in need of information, finances, comfort, support or protection. In support of these findings, some CSA studies (Ibrahim, Jalali, Al-Ahmadi, & Al-Bar, 2008; King et al., 2004) have suggested that single parenthood, parental separation and divorce are common background related characteristics of CSA victims.

Some participants in this current study described feeling lonely, rejected, sad and angry about a lack of financial resources, unresponsive parenting, and pending child-parent conflicts. Previous research (Breiding et al., 2011; Collings, 1991) on CSA and family level risk factors has demonstrated that parental rejection, low apathy and poor child-parent relations may foster social isolation, emotional distress or neediness in children (Johnson, 2002). Thus, affected children may become passive, submissive and more susceptible to responsive individuals outside of the family context (Smallbone et al., 2008). This assertion may explain why some participants with a history of CSA were susceptible to non-familial persons who prior to the CSA event had shown them affection, comfort and protection.

An alternative explanation is that children, as a result of being raised in an unpredictable, disorganised, strict and challenging family environment, may have developed limited critical thinking skills or poor executive function skills, which in turn affect their extent of social adaption (Kostolitz, Hyman, & Gold, 2014). Consistent with this assertion, in this present study, key informants and community members raised concerns about dysfunctional family environments where the intergenerational transmission of insecure attachments was marked. In the interviews, some participants revealed that some children were left to model earlier generations who themselves were inexperienced, emotionally immature and had poor social adaptive functioning skills.

#### ***9.5.1.2. Non-disclosure: Low status, childhood sexuality and CSA***

Consistent with the broad CSA literature the findings in this current research demonstrated that in Kroboland, child sexuality is complicated with constructions of who is defined as a child. The results from this current study indicated that children, both male and female in Kroboland, may be vulnerable to CSA because of distorted ideas about positions of seniority associated respect, responsibility and reciprocity. As some Ghanaian authors (Boakye-Boaten, 2010; Twum-Danso, 2009) have explained, these values are socially communicated, internalised and later reinforced by children, both male and female, quite early in life.

Therefore, without the interference of external influences as expressed by some older community members in this study, cultural practices that uphold the ideals of seniority are persistent. Writing about Ghanaian childhoods, Twum-Danso (2009) noted that as long as an individual is found in the company of elders, he or she still remains a child. This may account for why as a Ghanaian adult I also struggled to find ways to confront and disclose the activities of the leader who sexually harassed me via sending sexually explicit messages, as did participants in similar situations of abuse. In line with the above findings, previous studies have indicated that as with sexual abuse in general, where elders are involved, problems of silence and non-disclosure become eminent (Fontes & Plummer, 2010). These results highlight how certain offenders become shielded by cultural norms of respect and loyalty. This is another reason why it should not be taken for granted that males may also experience various forms of sexual abuse.

#### ***9.5.1.3. Competing with masculinities: Girls becoming targets***

Findings of this research show that boys and girls were both identified as individuals still developing. In the course of development, physiological differences and differential treatment created a distinction between the genders, and instigated the emergence of female and male identities. In this study, females were exposed to additional CSA vulnerabilities, because of their given gender. For instance, females who identified as: (1) non-virgins; or (2) new entrants to the community; or (3) challenging masculine supremacy were named as potential targets for sexual abuse, based on data from the MFGDs.

Analysing the male narratives, interaction with these categories of female created a space and opportunity for young boys to assert their masculinity and authority. Findings from this study demonstrated that non-virgins were treated as deviations from known female standards and norms. It is possible that non-virgins were assumed to act on a par with men because of their presumed interest in sex. According to the existing literature on SA, forced sex is one way in which males re-assume control over females. Consistent with Cossins (2000), CSA constitutes a site for alleviating powerlessness, and re-establishing male authority and power.

Similarly, new entrants to the community were described as naive about the affairs and routines of the community; their unfamiliarity or strangeness as a newcomer drew unwanted attention to them. I experienced something similar during the period I stayed in

Kroبولand, people noticed I was new to the community, some to affirm or confirm their suspicion would boldly approach and ask questions about me. The results showed that boys used interaction with new immigrants as a site for competition with other males, in order to establish their power and control. The new female entrants were expected to be passive and submissive thus when they act contrarily, they automatically become additional competition, a challenge or an insult to male authority. The boys explained how forced sex was one way to re-establish their sense of authority and control in such circumstances. Similarly, the data showed that some males went to the extent of sexually harming a girl because of her close association with another male who was an identified target due to an unresolved dispute.

### **9.5.2. Community reactions to CSA: Continuous trauma for females**

At community level, the data analysed indicated the extent of harm that CSA experiences may have caused to other female participants who perhaps have not directly experienced CSA, but live in the community and thus has observed or witnessed it. According to the results, a large number of female participants expressed a sense of fear about commuting along certain parts of the neighbourhood – they marked as dangerous – plus, the possibility of becoming a victim of abuse. The presence of danger and threat to safety engendered by some identified places, especially the cemetery, may have contributed to this sense of fear, causing for some girls a state of unrelenting anxiety, almost analogous to the concept of ongoing trauma.

Ongoing trauma (Cohen, Mannarino & Murray, 2011) or continuous traumatic stress (CTS) as first termed by Straker and the Sanctuaries Counselling Team (1987), currently expounds the daily realities of a number of people, living in a variety of contexts characterised by the constant presence of threat. The notion of CTS draws upon the seminal work of Straker and colleagues conducted in the wake of South Africa's post-apartheid period (Straker, 2013). CTS originated in the transition from apartheid to democracy based on a context of ongoing violence; on a daily basis in South Africa, violence persists and continues to oppress, deprive, and marginalise the masses in various forms. CTS remains a relevant area of study in South Africa and elsewhere (Kaminer, Eagle, & Crawford-Browne, 2016).

### **9.5.3. Covering up: family shame and maintaining integrity**

No cases of incest were reported by the participants with a history of CSA. Reasons for this absence in the data is unclear. However, a few participants talked about other people's experiences of incest, and how families dealt with such cases to avoid humiliation. As part of dealing with CSA at the family level, the results highlighted that families may make efforts to maintain family integrity by concealing facts about the event of CSA. From the experiences of key informants, this finding is more likely when the perpetrator is related to the victim. Studies done in other communities indicated that justice and the wellbeing of the affected child becomes secondary to maintaining family integrity. Jewkes et al. (2005) noted similar findings in a combined study of two Southern Africa countries. At the risk of experiencing reduced financial support, becoming stigmatised and disrupted, families in this study ignored reports of CSA.

On the other hand, a stranger may not escape consequences for committing CSA in Kroboland, particularly when it involves penetrative sex. According to a number of key informants, financial compensation to the family is one means by which offenders seek absolution for the harm caused.

### **9.5.4. Mental health needs of the CSA survivor: Disruption of the self and sexuality**

As per the key informant narratives, the mental health of CSA survivors in Kroboland was a concern. This is an important aspect of the survivor's experience that is often overlooked or poorly addressed because of limited expertise. Consistent with what is established in the literature (Dhaliwal et al., 1996; Putnam, 2003), the participants in the present study marked CSA as one of the most unfortunate, often unexpected and devastating events that an individual can experience in childhood.

According to some researchers (Finkelhor, 1979; Paolucci, Genuis, & Violato, 2001), central to understanding the meaning and experience of CSA is the notion that sexual abuse is a major disruptive event for children. In the current study, some female participants with a past of CSA expressed feeling a sense of betrayal resulting from the (CSA) actions of a person they were acquainted with, particularly in the case of the participant who was 12 years old when the incident occurred. CSA research (Molnar, Buka, & Kessler, 2001; Vilenica, Shakespeare-Finch, & Obst, 2013) has demonstrated that the extent of disruption may be

extensive, particularly when the incident of CSA involves the unexpected betrayal of a familiar or trusted person.

The impact is believed to be more pronounced for those in early childhood compared with the experiences of adolescents (Putnam, 2003). Among other studied reactions to CSA, Finkelhor and Browne (1985) have written about “betrayal”. According to these theorists, a victim feels a sense of betrayal because a significant other or trustworthy person has caused unexpected harm. This outcome, according to the current study results, brought about grief reactions concerning the self, the loss of a significant other and associated benefits.

Correspondingly, some female participants with a past of CSA in the present study developed a sense of distrust towards the offender, became withdrawn, and later showed intimacy deficits. Other female responses to betrayal included the expression of disappointment, undisclosed anger and pain, and the development of selfish feelings and desires. Consistent with these current study findings, previous studies (Alaggia & Mishna, 2014; Grossman et al., 2006; Lisak, 1994) have examined CSA lived experiences and have found betrayal as a common response to CSA committed by a trusted person.

On the other hand, for male participants, pleasure was inappropriately associated with sexual relations at an early stage. Although it is generally believed that sex with an older female may cause little harm to male children, the results from this study suggest contrary evidence. For instance, offending, sexual and intimacy problems were common problems faced by male CSA survivors. Other studies (Lisak & Ivan, 1995; Sigurdardottir, Halldorsdottir, & Bender, 2013) involving MCSA survivors also seem to support this finding.

#### **9.5.5. Positive growth and development**

Disruptions to life caused by events, such as CSA may necessitate the fundamental rethinking of personal life goals in its aftermath. As part of the adaptation, in the event of a potentially life threatening situation, Shelley Taylor’s (1983) explained that people:

Search for meaning in the experience...attempt to regain mastery over the event in particular and over one's life more generally, and an effort to enhance one's self-esteem—to feel good about oneself again despite the personal setback. (Taylor, 1983, p. 1161)

In this current study, some survivors found meaningful ways to make sense of the CSA history by reclaiming control over their lives, while making positive change to various aspects of their lives. Take for example, Laako who took to helping her cousin deal with a similar CSA situation, and further aspired to become a nurse. In similar vein, Matey who had a combined past of CSA and sex offending talked about how he had taken up the responsibility to help others who were miserable about life. Grossman et al. (2006) suggested that engaging in altruistic behaviour is one way in which CSA survivors are able to make sense of what happen to them through action.

## **9.6. Conclusion**

### **9.6.1. Study implications and recommendations**

The following text entails a discussion of study implications and recommendations for the people of Kroboland. Given the findings of this study, there is a need to first increase the level of community awareness about CSA in Kroboland. As part of creating awareness, it would be important to highlight issues related to: (1) child neglect; (2) child sexual development; (3) gender inequalities; and (4) age hierarchies which seem to foreground the scaffolding of CSA in Kroboland. A good CSA intervention for children in Kroboland should be directed at specific problems associated with these underlying themes.

#### ***9.6.1.1. Overcoming child neglect: Strengthening family bonds and resolving existing parent-child conflict***

Sex offenders in an early study by Elliott, Browne, and Kilcoyne (1995) revealed that their victims were easily targeted because they were children from disturbed family backgrounds, had low confidence, were lonely and negligent in trusting others. The voices of some CSA survivors in this study indicated the same, the implication being the importance of early life experiences and subsequent insecure attachment styles, and how the problem of CSA may also be indicative of a much larger issue, child neglect, which needs to be dealt with seriously. This understanding of child neglect as a major problem is consistent with concerns raised by Oates (2015) in a discussion of child protection and maltreatment types, including CSA. A recent study (Kidman & Palermo, 2016), involving 13 sub-Saharan African countries, including Ghana, found that paternal absence and not maternal absence heightened the risk for CSA among females.

In this present research, parental (paternal or maternal) absence, death, separation and divorce were but a few important indicators of child neglect. However, what was striking about the results was the pre-dominance of paternal absence in the stories of many participants. Therefore, the concept of paternal absence may be a timely and important area of research, in relation to CSA. Even though some participants spoke angrily about their fathers and treated them badly in old age, it is possible that some families could benefit from a peace building programme, where existing parent-child conflicts could be resolved to promote a healthy family environment.

According to the participants, many family systems in Kroboland have experienced rapid transformation over the years due to problems of unemployment, urbanisation and migration. In spite of empathising with parents because of harsh living conditions, children still desired to be loved and cared for adequately. Parents need to be held accountable for the upkeep of their children, but at the same time may require some instruction on good parenting skills to be up-to-date with children's demands. A major part of children's current demands is centred on how to deal with their emerging sexuality, age and gender hierarchies.

#### ***9.6.1.2. Sexual development: developing sexual competence***

Given the study findings about sexuality, one clear need of the Krobo child is to become a competent sexual being. Writers like Levine (2002) have put forth that sexual exploration in itself is not harmful to children. However, it is the circumstances under which sexual growth occurs that can be detrimental to a child's wellbeing. For instance, Robinson (2008) pointed out that certain welfare practices may jeopardise the primary intent of child protection, particularly those that resonate the ideas of the stranger predator discourse, childhood innocence and purity. In this current study, for instance, participant voices echoed that silencing and downplaying a child's concern for understanding sexuality may frustrate their efforts to become competent sexual beings.

Participants highlighted that it is often believed that the delayed performance of diplo at an older age or sexual education given to teenagers serve as deterrents to early sexual activity. However, findings from this current study indicate that these strategies, although vital to regulating sexuality, may be achieved at a point when harm may have already been done to a child's sexual development. In Chapter Eight, participants revealed that early exploration and sex experimentation starts early in childhood. As indicated in the previous

chapter, some of these experiences do not occur in a healthy context; participants note that this aspect of childhood development may be overlooked. It would therefore imply that the Krobo guardian needs to pay more attention to their children's sexual growth and needs at an early age.

In view of this, there is need for further research on normal sexual behaviour among children in Kroboland. It is important to be able to identify specific healthy sexual behaviour among children in order not to complicate a child's normative sexual development with symptoms of abuse. One good way to start within this local setting may be to directly explore people's lived experiences of sex play or sex experimentation (Mama and Dada activities, as the participants popularly called it) in childhood.

#### ***9.6.1.3. Online-facilitated child sexual abuse***

Drawing on my own experience of sexual abuse during fieldwork and the evidence of ongoing cybercrimes that involve the sexual exploitation of children, it can be said that guardians need to take their cue from Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Ybarra's (2008) warning about the emergence of online-facilitated CSA. Because of its exploitative nature it forms a special category of CSA. Further, the receipt of unwanted sexts, for instance, may be an unidentified problem among child phone users. Since the youth in Kroboland were frequently engaged with their phones, I suggest a study that explores CSA facilitated online experiences among older children in Kroboland who own various communication devices, should be conducted. This may hold potential relevance for the current generation of children.

#### ***9.6.1.4. Gender equality: Female and male empowerment***

One of the unique contributions of this study is that it brought to the forefront the issue of male vulnerability and showed how the Krobo male child may also possess limited power, comparable to their female counterparts. In the light of this finding, I want to re-emphasise the need to be mindful of gender differences. Prior to the onset of CSA and in its aftermath, these differences need to be acknowledged and prioritised for prevention and intervention purposes. For instance, the data shows that in response to temptation, sweet-talk or persuasion from older females, young males engage in sexual activity as an opportunity to fulfil dominant male norms. Given the opportunity, Moore, Madise, and Awusabo-Asare

(2012) noted that men may accept the chance to assert masculinity via sexual activity. However, the desire to fulfil and prove virility via sex seems to create a context of risk for male children where older sexually matured females are concerned. Persuasion and temptation were predominant themes running across the male narratives, therefore, these are important concepts worth exploring in the light of the need to understand the phenomenon of MCSA much better.

Again the study brought interesting revelations about how females who challenged the dominant gender expectations, and in the process male authority, become specifically targeted as sites for exercising, maintaining and perpetuating male power. Sex that involved abuse, humiliation or embarrassment was one way by which males tried to regain power over an overly assertive or influential female, or a male counterpart in conflict with them. These findings may reflect the pervasive problem of male insecurity and vulnerabilities. Masculinity and gender related norms fuel inner conflict and tension as boys aspire to prove their membership as men.

In this current study, one of the male participants talked about how he was condemned by his male counterparts for rejecting a sexual invitation from an older girl; in response to the pressure, he forcibly had sex with the older girl's younger sister. At an early age, males need to be taught how to talk about and deal with these inner conflicts, emerging fears and pressures to conform to the masculine ideal. An avenue has to be created for males to discuss such difficulties and struggles comfortably. In support of this, Jewkes, Flood, and Lang (2015) contend that gender transformation requires joint effort from females, who take for granted the role they play in maintaining male norms in relationships and via socialisation practices.

#### ***9.6.1.5. Specialised services for child sexual abuse***

There is an additional need to advocate for specialised services, particularly, mental health services. Social workers, medical and police services seemed available. But, as seen from the data, CSA victims presented with various emotional and behavioural problems that may require specialised psychological training and expertise. Taking their cue from researchers like Alaggia and Millington (2008), child professionals should be trained to recognise basic signs of abuse, caringly inquire about a child's sexual history, and know how to make

referrals to mental health professionals. Particularly when the child presents with CSA related problems such as the display of age inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Official organisations working in this area, such as the Department of Social Welfare and the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit receive few resources, due to low budget allocation by the Ghana government; in this regard non-governmental organisations have had to complement Government services (Amoakohene, 2004). Thus, there is a need to build a CSA workforce capacity based on available human resource in the community. During the interview evaluation feedback, a number of key informants already involved in CSA prevention (e.g., identifying vulnerable risk groups, working with sexually active children, CSA survivors and guardians) were willing to volunteer and advance their services to address problems associated with CSA. Given the current study findings, existing services may require upgrading to meet particular concerns raised by the participants in this current study.

### **9.6.2. Study's contribution**

As I highlighted in the methodology chapter, the concern for healthy child sexuality and sexually satisfying adult lives partly contributed to the origin of this current study. The discussion of sexuality is considered a private, sensitive and sometimes offensive issue. Yet, because of its relevance to phenomenon like CSA, it is increasingly becoming a difficult subject to ignore. Analogous to sexuality, talking about CSA is not only a daunting task for the CSA victim to divulge, but it is also a difficult topic for the health professional to inquire about (see Chapter Five). The difficulty some health professionals face when probing about a client's history of CSA raises important issues about the various meanings people ascribe to CSA experiences.

The crux of the current study, to understand different meanings associated with CSA, is an effort in response to this growing concern about varied interpretations of CSA. The attitude of survivors, witnesses and professionals towards CSA raises recurring questions about how CSA is understood and in what context this understanding of CSA unfolds. As various authors have put forth, if CSA is not well understood in an everyday life context, victims may not receive adequate assistance to address the impact of CSA and its emerging consequences. Accordingly, previous research studies, particularly in the West have sought to understand the scaffolding of CSA in various cultural contexts.

The African scholarship on child sexuality and CSA, however, is predominantly based on South African samples. Other countries in Africa seem to be lagging behind in research, although the global literature often marks Africa as one of the continents worst affected by CSA. The current study, therefore, contributes to the growing body of research from Africa, and holds particular relevance for Ghana, especially, the people of Kroboland. Among other points, the present study to my knowledge is the only research that has explored meanings ascribed to sexual and CSA experiences among a particular ethnic group in Ghana.

Further, to my knowledge it is the first study on CSA in Ghana that incorporated the researcher's own experience of sexual abuse to make sense of the data analysed. My personal experience of receiving sexts<sup>31</sup> from two older men (in leadership positions) deepened my understanding of female CSA survivor experiences and the range of reactions they revealed. This first-hand experience challenged my thoughts about how we respond to the concerns of children who have experienced sexual abuse and how our negative reactions or inaction could result in re-victimisation. Again, this present study is the first of its kind in Ghana to highlight a range of possible psychological (positive and negative) outcomes in reaction to CSA.

This study also adds to existing CSA knowledge in Ghana by linking the scaffolding of CSA to the larger problems of poor sexual development, child neglect, underlying dysfunctional family systems and other criminal tendencies. For instance, it highlights how some youth in Kroboland may be negotiating aspects of their sexuality and that of others, by adopting illicit means of livelihood, such as cybercrime to survive (see poster presentation on "Traces of Global Inequality and Poverty: Emerging livelihoods in Ghana involving sex and crime" in Appendix G).

### **9.6.3. Limitations**

The findings of the current study presented with several limitations. One study limitation lies in the fact that the IPA approach required participants to talk about their experiences of childhood, work and CSA experiences in retrospect. A concern here is that with time childhoods are subject to memory loss. For example, memory loss may potentially lead to a distortion of events or the reinvention of experiences of the phenomenon during recall. I factored this limitation into the interpretation of the study results.

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<sup>31</sup> An electronic message that is sexual in content, it could be presented as an image, video or text.

Similarly, because IPA relies on the ability of the participants to speak about their experiences, the study results may be limited by the choice of words, people used to describe their lived experience. Spoken words can be limiting in the sense that they may fail to accurately capture the full expression of the experience, its nuances and subtleties. Moreover, during an interview, a single account is told versus the many other versions of the same phenomenon. Therefore, consistent with other IPA researchers, I do not assume that these findings directly accessed the participants' pure experience; on the contrary these results only provide a single account of this truth.

Generally, IPA studies are usually designed for small samples, however, this was a multi-perspectival study, hence, the final sample size was quite large. It is a shared concern that the quality of the phenomenon under study may be compromised if the sample size is large. In this study, however, the data was collected and analysed based on two separate units of analyses, working and childhood experiences and presented as such in Chapters Seven and Eight respectively. Moreover, data on childhood experiences was obtained by FGDs which provided a rich source of experiential data from a combination of personal accounts and group interaction (Palmer et al., 2010). Group dynamics allow for nuances and subtleties of a person's experiences to be accessed (Acocella, 2012; Helitzer-Allen et al., 1994).

Like any other qualitative study, it is argued that IPA is limited because it provides a description of a participant's lived experience but it does not give a causal explanation for the phenomenon under study (Willig, 2001). However, consistent with Larkin et al.'s (2006) explanation about IPA and its methodology, I chose the IPA method for this research not because I wanted to access cause, but rather I wanted to provide an in-depth understanding of child sexuality and CSA, as well as reveal hidden meanings about these phenomena that may not be readily apparent to the participant.

The sampling of participants for this study was purposively and conveniently done to include a cross section of key informants, male and female community members and leaders. Therefore, the data reported here covers only a sample of the Krobo population, and a section of people who work with children within the region. Due to the qualitative nature of this data, I remain cautious not to generalise the results beyond the sample of individuals who participated in the study. To this end, I sought to contextualise the data in a particular cultural context, via the use of ethnography so that the findings can be applicable to persons in similar cultural contexts. For example, these results may still be of value to children who present

with similar background characteristics, as did the participants interviewed. Maggs-Rapport (2000) points out that a combination of IPA and ethnography can tell a compelling and unbiased story about the phenomenon under study.

#### **9.6.4. Concluding remarks**

As discussed above, this study provided context-specific information about the Krobo child and traced CSA to its origins. The harm caused by CSA points to the importance of early childhood experiences and the processes critical for shaping secure attachments and later relationships. Running through the participant narratives were strong images of child neglect, painful memories of parental absence and harsh living conditions which existed contrary to traditional values of childhood and child care. Therefore, it becomes valuable for the Krobo society to think critically about children and how they can be made vulnerable through child-guardian relationships or resilient against problems of CSA. As children, the participants strongly desired for their guardians to be an active part of their childrearing experience. For the sake of a child's healthy development and that of generations to come, this is a call the Krobo guardian needs to take seriously.

The issues raised in this dissertation go beyond issues of Kroboland alone. In many parts of the majority world, there is evidence of very rapid social and economic change, commonly, but not exclusively, associated with urbanization. New technologies, and the internet in particular, have transformed the world, but may have had a more profound effect in contexts, like Kroboland, which are remote from global centres of power. My study was conducted in a peri-urban area unfamiliar to most people on earth but people's lives there, and their sexualities, are profoundly affected and shaped by global technologies. My research participants (as I was, as a researcher who was sexually harassed) are vulnerable because of their isolation and their dependence on social networks which at times are ambiguously both nurturing and abusive. At the same time, part of what is making abuse and antisocial behaviour very difficult to police and manage in this rural African context (such as Sakawa and, with reference to this dissertation, its role in shaping local sexualities) is global interconnectedness. When Gavey (2005) and other researchers point to the local social scripts and cultural scaffolding of sexual abuse, their words take on a new and different meaning in a globalised world. Globalization and communication technologies have eliminated issues of distance in some ways (people in Kroboland are watching the same pornographic videos as

are people in Uzbekistan), but the issue of distance and remoteness remains as real as ever for people who will never travel from their ancestral home regions to the rest of the world. This dissertation has explored cultural issues regarding CSA but at the same time it has raised more fundamental questions about how to understand culture in the contemporary world (Kirmayer & Swartz, 2013; Swartz, 2008). These questions lie beyond the scope of this dissertation, but the data presented here give a flavour of the complexity of the issues at stake.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A: Interview schedules**

#### **Semi-structured interview schedule prompts**

##### **Key informants**

1. Tell me what is it like working within the Krobo community?
2. What kind of cases that involve children come to your attention? Tell me more about cases of sexual abused children. How prevalent are such cases in the municipality?
3. How are such events interpreted by the local folk?
4. What are the common signs that indicate sexual abuse?
5. How are these cases resolved?

## **Semi-structured interview schedule prompts**

### **Key community leaders**

1. Can you tell me what makes you a Krobo?  
Prompts: What is it like? How do you feel?
2. What was your childhood like? Tell me about some typical childhood experiences.
  - a. How do children relate with other people?  
Prompts: friends (female/male), siblings, father, mother, uncle, aunties?  
Can you tell me more about that?
  - b. Has childhood changed?
3. What kinds of problems do children face growing up in this community?
4. What does sexuality mean to you? At what age is this assumed to begin?
5. What does the expression of sexuality towards a child mean for you?
6. From your experience, under what circumstances is Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) most likely to occur in this community?
7. From your experience, under what circumstances is CSA most unlikely to occur in this community?

### **Focus Group Discussion**

1. What makes you a Krobo? What is it like to be a Krobo?
2. What was your childhood like? Tell me about your experiences as a child?
3. What is childhood like for Krobos? Tell me about some typical childhood experiences as a female/male?
4. Have things changed over time and in what ways?
5. Which pictures are of significance to you and why?
6. What does sexuality mean to you? At what age is this assumed to begin?

### **Case Studies**

1. What is your opinion about these case studies?
2. How does the Krobo man/woman make meaning of such experiences?
3. From your experience, what kinds of situations facilitate the occurrence of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in the Krobo community?

## **Appendix B: Case studies for focus group discussions**

### **Case study 1**

An 89-year-old ex-convict has been jailed seven years by the Sogakofe Circuit Court for defiling his 12-year-old granddaughter. The accused, one Nutogoh defiled the primary six pupil at the community cemetery. They both lived together with other family members at Agave-Ziwoenu. Before convicting and sentencing the accused, the presiding judge, Nene Mate-Teye narrated the entire case.

He said the facts as given by the prosecution indicated that the incident happened on October 22, 2011. On that fateful day, the accused asked his granddaughter to go with him to the cemetery to locate the grave of his dead son. But while at the cemetery, the accused suddenly grabbed the victim and forcibly had sex with her while he covered her mouth with his hand to prevent her from shouting for help.

When the victim's older sister who is the second witness in the case arrived at the scene looking for the girl, she found her grandfather wearing only his shorts. She then inquired from her younger sister what had happened and she narrated the entire ordeal to her. She subsequently reported the incident to their mother who also informed the assemblyman of the area.

The Tefle police was then informed and the victim was given a medical form to seek treatment at a hospital while the accused was arrested. After investigations and evidence from the medical report confirming the girl was sexually abused, he was charged and duly arraigned.

Prior to sentencing, Nene Mate-Teye lamented the spate of rape and defilement cases in the area and hoped that the community and all stakeholders would be more vigilant to ensure the trend was reversed. He then sentenced Nutogoh to 7 years in prison with hard labour.

[Source: myjoyonline.com (2012)  
<http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/crime/201207/91145.php>]

### **Case study 2**

A Ho Circuit Court has sentenced a 26-year-old chainsaw operator to a total of 19 years imprisonment with hard labour for defiling two school girls aged 15 and 10. The accused person, Divine Sewornu, pleaded guilty on the charge of defilement and was sentenced on his own plea.

The prosecutor, Chief Inspector Joseph Afayizu of the Volta Regional Police Headquarters, said Sewornu was married to the mother of the 15-year-old girl. Chief Inspector Afayizu said although the couple did not live together, Sewornu visited his wife frequently.

Unknown to his wife, whenever Sewornu visited, he sneaked into his stepdaughter's bedroom at night to defile her and warned her not to tell anybody otherwise he would stop looking after them. Chief Inspector Afayizu added that this had been going on for a while until one

day in July when his wife attended a funeral at Ziavi in the Ho District. The stepdaughter, who was frightened by the ordeal, invited her 10-year-old friend to spend the night with her. The prosecutor said that night, Sewornu went to her room and had sex with the two of them, after which he offered the 10-year-old girl 30 pesewas.

The following day, the second victim left for her house and reported her ordeal to her uncle. Chief Inspector Afayizu said after that, Sewornu continued to have sex with his stepdaughter until she informed her father who, together with the mother of the 10-year-old girl, reported the case to the police at Dzolo Gbogame.

The judge, His Honour Mr. Richard Kogyapwah, did not hesitate in passing the sentence on him. Mr. Kogyapwah sentenced Sewornu to 10 and nine years in prison respectively to run concurrently. Meanwhile, the Volta Regional Police Commander, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCOP) Alex Bedie has expressed concern about the spate of defilement and rape cases in the region. DCOP Bedie said statistics indicated that most of the victims were aged 10 to 15. He said between January and June this year, 93 cases of defilement had been recorded as against 136 cases last year. The regional commander, therefore, appealed to the various law courts to deal swiftly with such cases to serve as a deterrent to others.

DCOP Bedie also asked parents to report such cases promptly to the Domestic Violent and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service.

[Source: myjoyonline.com (2012)

<http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/crime/201208/92468.php>]

**Appendix C: Consent forms**

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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

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**Key Informants Consent Form**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Dzifa Abra Attah (BSc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology), from the Psychology Department at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. The results from this study will contribute to my doctoral thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because your expertise as a .....will be valuable to the research topic.

**1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

My research is designed to understand how sexuality and child sexual abuse are conceptualized in the Krobo municipality area.

**2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, your participation will be required on two different occasions. The first time will involve an interview on the subject matter. The second will involve a meeting to validate your opinions expressed in the interview. Both events will be audio taped, transcribed and analysed. Both events are expected to last for a minimum of an hour.

The interview will be scheduled at a time and place that is convenient for you. Subsequently, you will be invited to attend the validation meeting with the other participants.

**3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The questions being asked during the interviews are sensitive in nature and may make you feel uncomfortable. If at any point you feel some discomfort and wish to stop being interviewed, you are free to do so.

You are also entitled to receive free counselling services to help you deal with any emotional difficulties that may arise as a result of this interview or validation meeting. This service will be provided by the researcher and co-researcher who have MPhil training in Clinical Psychology.

**4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

This research is not designed to benefit you directly but information gained in this study will go a long way to give up-to-date information on how child sexual abuse is understood and thus improve preventive measures in the country.

**5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

There will be no remuneration for participating in this study. However, your transportation cost to and from the validation meeting venue will be reimbursed to you. You are free to withdraw or stop responding to questions at any point in time without any penalty or loss of rights.

**6. CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain anonymous and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Anonymity

will be maintained by using a unique number (code) to identify you rather than your actual name. Similarly, in the text of published work pseudonyms will be used with no reference made to your actual name. Recorded data will be kept and stored on my personal laptop under strict regulation. A separate computer account will be created and password protected. Hard copies of transcription notes, field notes and photographs will be kept under lock in a personal safe. Data collected from this study will be shared with only my supervisor and other appropriate academic staff at the University.

The findings from this study will be used solely for educational purposes. The final dissertation will be publically available through the University Library. Subsequently, the researcher will publish a number of scholarly articles from the study results. However, no reference will be made to you.

After a period of 5 years, hard and soft copies of transcription notes and other data related material (e.g., photographs) will be destroyed and completely deleted from the laptop respectively.

## **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You are at liberty to choose to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without facing consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

### **7. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

#### **Principal Investigator:**

Dzifa Abra Attah (Bsc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology)

Email Address: [dzifaattah@yahoo.com](mailto:dzifaattah@yahoo.com)

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#### **Primary Supervisor:**

Professor Leslie Swartz (MSc (Clin Psych) PhD (Psych) Cape Town), Professor of Psychology at Stellenbosch University.

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Telephone Number: +277 824593559

#### **Local Supervisor**

Dr. Angela Ofori-Atta (Bsc Psychology/Zoology (University of Ghana) PhD (University of British Columbia) Senior lecturer at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Ghana Medical School, University of Ghana, Legon.

Email Address: [angela.oforiatta@gmail.com](mailto:angela.oforiatta@gmail.com)

Telephone number: +233 202015050

### **8. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development, Stellenbosch University. **In Ghana, you can contact Nita Coffie [nitadzy@yahoo.com; 233 302 681109] of the Ghana Health Service – Ethical Review Committee at the Research & Development Division, Ghana Health Service**

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT**

This to certify that the research has been explained to [me/the subject/the participant] by [ ] in [English/Twi/Ga-Adangbe/Other] and [I am/the subject is/the participant is] in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to [me/him/her]. [I/the participant/the subject] was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to [my/his/her] satisfaction. *I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.* I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Subject/Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature/ Thumbprint of Subject/

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Participant      Date

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the research study to \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the representative*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [English/Twi/Ga-Adangbe/Other] and [no translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of

Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date



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**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY  
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

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**Key Community Leaders Consent form**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Dzifa Abra Attah (BSc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology), from the Psychology Department at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. The results from this study will contribute to my doctoral thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because your individual input will be valuable to the research topic.

**1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

My research is designed to understand how sexuality and child sexual abuse are conceptualized in the Krobo municipality area.

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If you volunteer to participate in this study, your participation will be required on two different occasions. The first time will involve an interview on the subject matter. The second will involve a meeting to validate your opinions expressed in the interview. Both events will be audio taped, transcribed and analysed. Both events are expected to last for a minimum of an hour.

The interview will be scheduled at a time and place that is convenient for you. Subsequently, you will be invited to attend the validation meeting with the other participants.

**3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The questions being asked during the interviews are sensitive in nature and may make you feel uncomfortable. If at any point you feel some discomfort and wish to stop being interviewed, you are free to do so.

You are also entitled to receive free counselling services to help you deal with any emotional difficulties that may arise as a result of this interview or validation meeting. This service will be provided by the researcher and co-researcher who have MPhil training in Clinical Psychology.

**4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

This research is not designed to benefit you directly but information gained in this study will go a long way to give up-to-date information on how child sexual abuse is understood and thus improve preventive measures in the country.

**5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

There will be no remuneration for participating in this study. However your transportation cost to and from the validation meeting venue will be reimbursed to you. You are free to withdraw or stop responding to questions at any point in time without any penalty or loss of rights.

**6. CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain anonymous and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Anonymity will be maintained by using a unique number (code) to identify you rather than your actual name. Similarly, in the text of published work pseudonyms will be used with no reference made to your actual

name. Recorded data will be kept and stored on my personal laptop under strict regulation. A separate computer account will be created and password protected. Hard copies of transcription notes, field notes and photographs will be kept under lock in a personal safe. Data collected from this study will be shared with only my supervisor and other appropriate academic staff at the University.

The findings from this study will be used solely for educational purposes. The final dissertation will be publically available through the University Library. Subsequently, the researcher will publish a number of scholarly articles from the study results. However, no reference will be made to you.

After a period of 5 years, hard and soft copies of transcription notes and other data related material (e.g., photographs) will be destroyed and completely deleted from the laptop respectively.

## **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You are at liberty to choose to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without facing consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

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Dzifa Abra Attah (Bsc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology)

Email Address: [dzifaattah@yahoo.com](mailto:dzifaattah@yahoo.com)

[18119204@sun.ac.za](mailto:18119204@sun.ac.za)

Telephone Numbers:

Ghana: +233 233066565

South Africa: +277 90856423

#### **Co –Researcher**

Seth Asafo (Bsc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology)

Email Address: [sethogh@live.com](mailto:sethogh@live.com)

Telephone Number: +233 244598402

#### **Supervisor:**

Professor Leslie Swartz (MSc (Clin Psych) PhD (Psych) Cape Town), Professor of Psychology at Stellenbosch University.

Email Address: [lswartz@sun.ac.za](mailto:lswartz@sun.ac.za)

Telephone Number: +277 824593559

#### **Local Supervisor**

Dr. Angela Ofori-Atta (Bsc Psychology/Zoology (University of Ghana) PhD (University of British Columbia) Senior lecturer at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Ghana Medical School, University of Ghana, Legon.

Email Address: [angela.oforiatta@gmail.com](mailto:angela.oforiatta@gmail.com)

Telephone number: +233 202015050

### **8. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development Stellenbosch University. **In Ghana, you can contact Nita Coffie [[nitadzy@yahoo.com](mailto:nitadzy@yahoo.com); 233 302 681109] of the**





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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

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Focus Group Discussion Consent form

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Dzifa Abra Attah (BSc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology), from the Psychology Department at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. The results from this study will contribute to my doctoral thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because your individual input will be valuable to this group discussion.

**1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

My research is designed to understand how sexuality and child sexual abuse are conceptualized in the Krobo municipality area.

**2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, your participation will be required on two different occasions. The first time will involve you taking part in a focus group discussion with other persons from your locality. On the second occasion you will be invited to attend a validation meeting with others who also participated in the study. Both events will be audio taped, transcribed and analysed.

Each event will be scheduled at a time and place that is convenient for all in the group to meet. It is expected that both events will last for a minimum of an hour.

**3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The questions being asked during the interviews are sensitive in nature and may make you feel uncomfortable. If at any point you feel some discomfort and wish to stop being interviewed, you are free to do so.

You are also entitled to receive free counselling services to help you deal with any emotional difficulties that may arise as a result of this interview or validation meeting. This service will be provided by the researcher and co-researcher who have MPhil training in Clinical Psychology.

**4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

This research is not designed to benefit you directly but information gained in this study will go a long way to give up-to-date information on how child sexual abuse is understood and thus improve preventive measures in the country.

**5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

There will be no remuneration for participating in this study. However, your transportation cost to and from the meeting venues will be reimbursed to you. You are free to withdraw or stop responding to questions at any point in time without any penalty or loss of rights.

**6. CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain anonymous and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Anonymity

will be maintained by using a unique number (code) to identify you rather than your actual name. Similarly, in the text of published work pseudonyms will be used with no reference made to your actual name.

Everybody who participates in the focus group will be asked to keep the discussion confidential, although I cannot fully guarantee they will keep it confidential. However, all data recorded during the discussion will be kept and stored on my personal laptop under strict regulation. A separate computer account will be created and password protected. Hard copies of transcription notes, field notes and photographs will be kept under lock in a personal safe. Data collected from this study will be shared with only my supervisor and other appropriate academic staff at the University.

The findings from this study will be used solely for educational purposes. The final dissertation will be publically available through the University Library. Subsequently, the researcher will publish a number of scholarly articles from the study results. However, no reference will be made to you.

After a period of 5 years, hard and soft copies of transcription notes and other data related material (e.g., photographs) will be destroyed and completely deleted from the laptop respectively.

## **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You are at liberty to choose to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without facing consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

### **7. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

#### **Principal Investigator:**

Dzifa Abra Attah (Bsc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology)

Email Address: [dzifaattah@yahoo.com](mailto:dzifaattah@yahoo.com)

[18119204@sun.ac.za](mailto:18119204@sun.ac.za)

Telephone Numbers:

Ghana: +233 233066565

South Africa: +277 90856423

#### **Co –Researcher**

Seth Asafo (Bsc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology)

Email Address: [sethogh@live.com](mailto:sethogh@live.com)

Telephone Number: +233 244598402

#### **Supervisors:**

##### **Primary Supervisor**

Professor Leslie Swartz (MSc (Clin Psych) PhD (Psych) Cape Town), Professor of Psychology at Stellenbosch University.

Email Address: [lswartz@sun.ac.za](mailto:lswartz@sun.ac.za)

Telephone Number: +277 824593559

##### **Local Supervisor**

Dr. Angela Ofori-Atta (Bsc Psychology/Zoology (University of Ghana) PhD (University of British Columbia) Senior lecturer at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Ghana Medical School, University of Ghana, Legon.

Email Address: [angela.oforiatta@gmail.com](mailto:angela.oforiatta@gmail.com)

Telephone number: +233 202015050

**8. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development, Stellenbosch University. **In Ghana, you can contact Nita Coffie [nitadzy@yahoo.com; 233 302 681109] of the Ghana Health Service – Ethical Review Committee at the Research & Development Division, Ghana Health Service**

<b>SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT</b>
--------------------------------------

This to certify that the research has been explained to [me/the subject/the participant] by [ ] in [English/Twi/Ga-Adangbe/Other] and [I am/the subject is/the participant is] in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to [me/him/her]. [I/the participant/the subject] was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to [my/his/her] satisfaction. *I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.* I have been given a copy of this form.

---

**Name of Subject/Participant**

---

Signature/ Thumbprint of Subject/

---

Participant      Date

<b>SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR</b>
----------------------------------

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the subject/participant] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the representative]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [English/Twi/Ga-Adangbe/Other] and [no translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

---

Signature of Investigator

---

Date



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**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**  
**PARENTAL CONSENT FOR WARD TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

---

Focus Group discussion

Your child has been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Dzifa Abra Attah (BSc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology), from the Psychology Department at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. The results from this study will contribute to my doctoral thesis. Your child was selected as a possible participant in this study because your child's input will be valuable to this group discussion.

**1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

My research is designed to understand how sexuality and child sexual abuse are conceptualized in the Krobo municipality area.

**2. PROCEDURES**

If you give permission for your child to participate in this study, your child's participation will be required on two different occasions. The first time will involve your child taking part in a focus group discussion with other persons from your locality. On the second occasion your child will be invited to attend a validation meeting with others who also participated in the study. Both events will be audio taped, transcribed and analysed.

Each event will be scheduled at a time and place that is convenient for all in the group to meet. It is expected that both events will last for a minimum of an hour.

**3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The questions being asked during the interviews are sensitive in nature and may make your child feel uncomfortable. If at any point your child feels some discomfort and wishes to stop being interviewed, your child is free to do so.

Your child is also entitled to receive free counselling services to help her deal with any emotional difficulties that may arise as a result of this interview or validation meeting. This service will be provided by the researcher who has MPhil training in Clinical Psychology.

**4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

This research is not designed to benefit your child directly but information gained in this study will go a long way to give up-to-date information on how child sexual abuse is understood and thus improve preventive measures in the country.

**5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

There will be no remuneration for participating in this study. However, your child's transportation cost to and from the meeting venues will be reimbursed. Your child is free to withdraw or stop responding to questions at any point in time without any penalty or loss of rights.

**6. CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain anonymous and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Anonymity will be maintained by using a unique number (code) to identify your child rather than her actual name. Similarly, in the text of published work pseudonyms will be used with no reference made to her actual name.

Everybody who participates in the focus group will be asked to keep the discussion confidential, although I cannot fully guarantee they will keep it confidential. However, all data recorded during the discussion will be kept and stored on my personal laptop under strict regulation. A separate computer account will be created and password protected. Hard copies of transcription notes, field notes and photographs will be kept under lock in a personal safe. Data collected from this study will be shared with only my supervisor and other appropriate academic staff at the University.

The findings from this study will be used solely for educational purposes. The final dissertation will be publically available through the University Library. Subsequently, the researcher will publish a number of scholarly articles from the study results. However, no reference will be made to your child.

After a period of 5 years, hard and soft copies of transcription notes and other data related material (e.g., photographs) will be destroyed and completely deleted from the laptop respectively.

## **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your child is at liberty to choose to participate in this study or not. If you give permission for your child to take part in this study, your child may withdraw at any time without facing consequences of any kind. Your child may also refuse to answer any questions she does not want to answer and can still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw your child from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

## **7. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

### **Principal Investigator:**

Dzifa Abra Attah (Bsc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology)

Email Address: [dzifaattah@yahoo.com](mailto:dzifaattah@yahoo.com)

[18119204@sun.ac.za](mailto:18119204@sun.ac.za)

Telephone Numbers:

Ghana: +233 233066565

South Africa: +277 90856423

### **Co –Researcher**

Seth Asafo (Bsc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology)

Email Address: [sethogh@live.com](mailto:sethogh@live.com)

Telephone Number: +233 244598402

### **Supervisors:**

#### **Primary Supervisor**

Professor Leslie Swartz (MSc (Clin Psych) PhD (Psych) Cape Town), Professor of Psychology at Stellenbosch University.

Email Address: [lswartz@sun.ac.za](mailto:lswartz@sun.ac.za)

Telephone Number: +277 824593559

#### **Local Supervisor:**

Dr. Angela Ofori-Atta (Bsc Psychology/Zoology (University of Ghana) PhD (University of British Columbia) Senior lecturer at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Ghana Medical School, University of Ghana, Legon.

Email Address: [angela.oforiatta@gmail.com](mailto:angela.oforiatta@gmail.com)

Telephone number: +233 202015050

### 8. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your child’s participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your child’s rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development Stellenbosch University. **In Ghana, you can contact Nita Coffie [[nitadzy@yahoo.com](mailto:nitadzy@yahoo.com); 233 302 681109] of the Ghana Health Service – Ethical Review Committee at the Research & Development Division, Ghana Health Service.**

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT**

This to certify that the research has been explained to [me/the subject/the participant] by [ ] in [English/Twi/Ga-Adangbe/Other] and [I am/the subject is/the participant is] in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to [me/him/her]. [I/the participant/the subject] was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to [my/his/her] satisfaction.

*I hereby consent voluntarily to have my child participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.* I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Subject/Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Thumbprint of Parent/

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Date

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the research study to \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the representative*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [English/Twi/Ga-Adangbe/Other] and [no translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix D: Participant assent form



### PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM



**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:**

Culture and Child Sexual Abuse: A study of Krobo municipality, Eastern Region of Ghana.

**RESEARCHERS NAME(S):** Dzifa Abra Attah

**ADDRESS:**

Department of Psychiatry  
University of Ghana, Medical School  
College of Health Sciences  
Korle-Bu,  
Accra, Ghana

Department of Psychology  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
Stellenbosch University, Main Campus  
Private Bag X1, Matieland 7602  
South Africa

**CONTACT NUMBER:**

Ghana +233 233066565  
South Africa +27790856423

What is RESEARCH?

**Research is something we do to find new knowledge about the way things (and people) work. For example, we use research projects or studies to help us find out more about disease or illness. Research also helps us to find better ways of helping, or treating children who are sick.**

What is this research project all about?

My research is designed to find out how child sexual abuse is understood in the community you live in.

Why have I been invited to take part in this research project? You have been invited to talk about this topic because you are a Krobo and you know your culture better.

**Who is doing the research?**

My name is Dzifa Abra Attah, a Ghanaian learning at the Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

**What will happen to me in this study?**

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to take part in this study two times. The first time you will be asked to chat with other people from your community. The second time you will be invited for a meeting with other people who also took part in the study. The meeting will be done to make sure I understood what had been talked about in our group chat. I will record what is being said during the group discussion and meeting so I can remember what was said during those times. These meetings will take as long as an hour.

**Can anything bad happen to me?**

The subject of child sexual abuse is a sensitive one. Talking about it may make you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. If you feel this way during the discussion or meeting you are allowed to inform your parents. The researcher can help you deal with such bad feelings that may occur as a result of the study.

**Can anything good happen to me?**

The research will help us professionals understand how child sexual abuse is understood by the community so that we can plan to prevent it from happening in the first place.

**Will anyone know I am in the study?** No one will know you are taking part in this study apart from the other members in the group discussion. But everybody is expected not to talk about what has been discussed with anybody after the discussion and meeting. In order that no one can identify you by

name you will be given and called by special numbers instead of your real name.



**Who can I talk to about the study?** You can talk to the following if you have any questions about the study.

**Principal Investigator:**

Dzifa Abra Attah (Bsc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology)

Email Address: [dzifaattah@yahoo.com](mailto:dzifaattah@yahoo.com)/[18119204@sun.ac.za](mailto:18119204@sun.ac.za)

Telephone Numbers:

Ghana: +233 233066565

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**Co –Researcher**

Seth Asafo (Bsc Psychology, MPhil Clinical Psychology)

Email Address: [sethogh@live.com](mailto:sethogh@live.com)

Telephone Number: +233 244598402

**Supervisors:**

Professor Leslie Swartz (MSc (Clin Psych) PhD (Psych) Cape Town), Professor of Psychology at Stellenbosch University.

Email Address: [lswartz@sun.ac.za](mailto:lswartz@sun.ac.za)

Telephone Number: +277 824593559

**Local Supervisor**

Dr. Angela Ofori-Atta (Bsc Psych (Ghana), PhD (Canada) Senior lecturer at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Ghana Medical School, University of Ghana, Legon.  
Email Address: [angela.oforiatta@gmail.com](mailto:angela.oforiatta@gmail.com)  
Telephone number: +233 202015050

**What if I do not want to do this?**

You can refuse to take part in this study even if your parents have agreed to your participation. Also you can stop taking part in the study at any time without getting in trouble.

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?

 YES NO

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

 YES NO

Do you understand that you can pull out of the study at any time?

 YES NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Child/Thumb print

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix E: Ethical approval letters and permission letters



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### Approved with Stipulations New Application

02-Jul-2013  
Attah, Dzifa DA

Proposal #: HS936/2013

Title: Culture and child sexual abuse: A case study of Krobo District, Eastern Region of Ghana.

Dear Ms Dzifa Attah,

Your New Application received on 03-Jun-2013, was reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities) via Committee Review procedures on 27-Jun-2013.

Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: 27-Jun-2013 -26-Jun-2014

#### Present Committee Members:

Beukes, Winston WA  
De Villiers, Mare MRH  
Horn, Lynette LM  
Newmark, Rona R  
Somhlaba, Ncebazakhe NZ  
Van Wyk, Berte B

The following stipulations are relevant to the approval of your project and must be adhered to:

#### 1. RESEARCH PROPOSAL:

**COST- BENEFIT CONSIDERATIONS:** The research focuses on sexuality against the backdrop of child sexual abuse. Both these topics are considered to be a sensitive in the Ghanaian Krobo community in which the research will be conducted. The very real risk in addition exists that some of the research participants may find participation in the research traumatic because of their involvement in child sexual abuse [either as victim or as perpetrator]. The researcher argues that child sexual abuse cannot be accurately understood when it is isolated from the current and historical socio-cultural context in which it occurs. The manner in which sex and sexuality is interpreted in a specific community has to influence the community's interpretation of and response to child sexual abuse. A more penetrating understanding of the interpretation of male and female sexuality and its role in child sexual abuse hold the promise of deriving initiatives that could reduce the incidence of child sexual abuse. In addition research might initiate a dialog in the community that extend beyond the focus groups and the research that might help to bring debilitating sexuality beliefs to the collective consciousness and through that insight to constructively transform the interpretative structure and the behaviour that it guides. The community is in a sense the victim of its own interpretation of sexuality. The REC therefore is of the opinion that although the study requires substantial psychological investment from participants and from the community, and that the study holds significant ethical risks, the potential benefits warrant these investments and risks.

The researcher is requested to comment on the aforementioned risks and opportunities in a note to the REC.

#### 2. INFORMED CONSENT

2.1 The researcher prepared comprehensive and thorough informed consent formulations for [a] key informants and [b] key community leaders. A parental consent formulation has been prepared to obtain parental consent for minor female research participants taking part in the focus group discussions. Informed assent will be obtained from the latter participants. No separate informed consent formulation has been prepared for adult focus group participants. The key community leader informed consent formulation will seemingly be used for this purpose. The researcher is requested to confirm this interpretation in a note to the REC.

2.2 The researcher indicates that those members of the Krobo community that are literate are able to read, speak and understand English. The informed consent/assent formulation will be read in English to those that are not literate. A translator will be on standby to translate the English to those community members that are not sufficiently fluent in English. The REC finds the arrangement acceptable with regards to interviews with key informants, key community members and with regards to the focus groups. The REC is, however, somewhat concerned whether this system will work with regards to obtaining parental consent. The researcher is requested to reassure the REC in a note.

2.3 The informed consent form states that free counselling services will be provided by the researcher and co-researcher. The contact details of the co-researcher should therefore be added to the relevant sections of the informed consent form.

2.4 The researcher acknowledges that the very real risk in addition exists that some of the research participants may find participation in the research traumatic because of their involvement in child sexual abuse [either as victim or as perpetrator]. The researcher has contingency measures in place in that she offers her own service as a qualified clinical psychologist [and those of her co-researcher [also a qualified clinical psychologist]. This risk and the availability to counseling is acknowledged in the informed consent and assent formulations. Normally it would be ideal to have independent counseling services available [as well]. This is, however, not a realistic condition in this case.

## 2.5 PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

The researcher acknowledges that participants involved in the research might be interrogated by community members not involved in the research [but possibly part of the problem] to divulge what has been discussed during the interviews or the focus group sessions. The researcher will remind participants to resist such interrogations and not to divulge what had been discussed. Exactly the opposite could, however, also be argued. Talking out might have emancipator value in that it might facilitate a dialog in the broader community that might help to bring debilitating sexuality beliefs to the collective consciousness and through that insight to constructively transform the interpretative structure and the behaviour that it guides. When viewed from this perspective the question should be asked whether some form of community feedback should not be arranged? Please comment.

## 3. INSTITUTIONAL PERMISSION

3.1 The research will approach the traditional council of the Krobo community to inform the council of the intended study [REC application form, p. 7]. As dictated by local custom bottles of schnapps [or its money equivalent will be offered as a sign of respect. Should the council not rather be asked whether they will permit the study to be conducted in their community? This seems important given the sensitive nature of the topic? The request to conduct the study could be motivated in terms of the argument presented under point 1 above. The researcher is requested to comment in a note to the REC.

3.2 Letters of permission to conduct the study are still outstanding from the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection as well as the Krobo Traditional Council. These letters must be submitted to the REC before the research can commence. However the REC acknowledges that the agreement with the Krobo Council may well be oral rather than written and this is acceptable.

### 3.3 OBSERVATION OF INITIATION RITES

The researcher plans to observe one or more of the initiation rites through which young girls are initiated into adulthood. The question is whether the researcher requires explicit permission from the participants and/or from the community to observe and record the event? The promoter and the researcher acknowledge the relevance of the question. They argue that the community council allows these rites to be open to the public and that even tourists are allowed to attend. It could, however, be argued that the intention and motivation of the researcher is different to those of the public and tourists. The intention of the researcher is to generate knowledge and ultimately change events in the community. These rites are ceremonies held by the community. The council is the custodian of the community. The REC would therefore argue that when seeking permission to conduct the research in the community explicit permission should also be sought to attend and observe the rites for the purpose of the research.

3.4 This collective discourse can, however, easily become destructive instead of constructive. This is, however, where the primary ethical risk lies. Once the qualitative data is collected the researcher will withdraw. The discourse she initiated in the community could, however continue without her professional guidance. This underlines the importance of the need for explicit [informed] community council permission. This line of reasoning suggests that the council should not only be informed about the potential benefits but also of the individual and collective risks.

## 4. Interview schedule:

The acronym CSA is used in the interview schedule. The REC suggests that the term is written out in full when used the first time

Please provide a letter of response to all the points raised IN ADDITION to HIGHLIGHTING or using the TRACK CHANGES function to indicate ALL the corrections/amendments of ALL DOCUMENTS clearly in order to allow rapid scrutiny and appraisal.

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number (HS936/2013)** on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218839027.

### Included Documents:

Permission letter  
 Research proposal  
 Informed consent  
 REC Application  
 Interview schedule  
 Letter to REC  
 budget  
 case study

Sincerely,

Susara Oberholzer  
REC Coordinator  
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)



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**Approval Notice**  
**Stipulated documents/requirements**

29-Oct-2013  
Attah, Dzifa DA

**Proposal #:** HS936/2013

**Title:** Culture and child sexual abuse: A case study of Krobo Municipality, Eastern Region of Ghana.

Dear Ms Dzifa Attah,

Your **Stipulated documents/requirements** received on **13-Aug-2013**, was reviewed by members of the **Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)** via Expedited review procedures on **13-Aug-2013** and was approved.  
Sincerely,

Susara Oberholzer  
REC Coordinator  
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

GHANA HEALTH SERVICE ETHICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

*In case of reply the  
number and date of this  
Letter should be quoted.*



My Ref. :GHS-ERC: 3  
Your Ref. No.

Research & Development Division  
Ghana Health Service  
P. O. Box MB 190  
Accra  
Tel: +233-302-681109  
Fax + 233-302-685424  
Email: nitadzy@yahoo.com

29<sup>th</sup> January, 2014

Dzifa Abra Attah,  
Department of Psychiatry  
University of Ghana Medical School  
College of Health Sciences

**ETHICAL APPROVAL - ID NO: GHS-ERC: 07/11/13**

The Ghana Health Service Ethics Review Committee has reviewed and given approval for the implementation of your Study Protocol titled:

**“Culture and sexual abuse: a case study of Krobo Municipality, Eastern Region of Ghana”**

This approval requires that you inform the Ethical Review Committee (ERC) when the study begins and provide Mid-term reports of the study to the Ethical Review Committee (ERC) for continuous review. The ERC may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the study during and after implementation.

Please note that any modification without ERC approval is rendered invalid.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the ERC within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

You are requested to submit a final report on the study to assure the ERC that the project was implemented as per approved protocol. You are also to inform the ERC and your sponsor before any publication of the research findings.

Please always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence in relation to this approved protocol

SIGNED.....  
PROFESSOR FRED BINKA  
(GHS-ERC CHAIRMAN)

Cc: The Director, Research & Development Division, Ghana Health Service, Accra

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN**



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MINISTRY OF GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In case of reply the  
Number and date of this  
Letter should be quoted

Your Ref. No... *So.c/c. 21/001/01*  
Our Ref. No.....

P. O. BOX M. 273  
MINISTRIES  
ACCRA

Tel.: 0302-223425

31<sup>st</sup> July, 2013

**Dzifa Abra Attah**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**Stellenbosch University**  
**Private Bag X1**  
**Matieland, 7602**  
**South Africa.**

Dear Ms. Attah,

**RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KROBO DISTRICT AREA**

We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Your proposal to conduct the research entitled "Culture and Child Sexual Abuse: A case of Krobo District, Eastern Region of Ghana" has been reviewed and approved. We gathered from your letter that you intend to carry out your research by conducting interviews, taking field notes and observing the Initiation Rites Ceremony.

However, we advise that you secure permission from the Krobo Traditional Council to enable you proceed with this study. Granted that permission is sought from the Council, we have no objection to you conducting this research project over the stipulated time period (September 2013 to May 2014).

Your proposed study is an area of crucial importance to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and therefore we support your effort and will like to urge you on with this research. Upon completion of your research, this office will be glad to receive a copy of your final work.

We wish you success with your research work

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

**HELENA OBENG ASAMOAH (MRS)**  
**AG. DIRECTOR**

**MINISTRY OF CHIEFTAINCY AND CULTURE**  
**MANYA KROBO TRADITIONAL COUNCIL**  
**EASTERN REGION**

In case of reply the  
Number and date of this  
Letter should be quoted

Tel. No. ....  
Our Ref. M.K.T.C./001/V.1/93  
Your Ref. ....



Traditional Council Offices  
P. O. Box 4  
Oduamse-Krobo

Date.....July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013.....

DZIFA ABRA ATTAH  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
STELLENBOCH UNIVERSITY  
PRIVATE BAG X1  
MATIELAND, 7602  
SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Ms. Attah,

**RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KROBO MUNICIPALITY AREA**

With reference to your letter dated May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013, The Manya Krobo Traditional Council writes to confirm that you have been granted permission to access the Manya Krobo Municipality area for your research project entitled: 'Culture and Child Sexual Abuse: A case study of Krobo Municipality, Eastern Region of Ghana.'

Per your request you are allowed to conduct focus group discussions and interviews with key informants and community members of the Manya Krobo Municipality area. In addition, you are granted permission to take field notes and observe the puberty rites ceremony. Finally, we suggest that, you modify your title to reflect the current status of the Manya Krobo area which is now a MUNICIPALITY and not a DISTRICT. However, we request that your research methods comply with **good ethical practice**.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,

  
EUNICE TOTTIMEH  
REGISTRAR

## Appendix F: Researching Sexuality

RESEARCHING  
SEXUALITY

Psychology researcher *Dzifa Attah*, who was confronted with unsettling sexual harassment while researching abuse amongst children in Ghana, shares her personal account

It is about 3:00 pm. "Bing, bing," my cell phone vibrates. It's a text message from Uncle Raymond, one of my research informants. He had helped me recruit a number of study participants for a research project on sexual abuse amongst children in Kroboland, eastern Ghana, where I was doing fieldwork for my doctoral studies in public mental health.

I was waiting for information about an interview I'd been trying to set up, so rushed to check my phone.

But the incoming text message had nothing to do with my research. It was a sexually graphic video. I was shocked. Why would he send me that? Immediately, I deleted the message and decided to ignore it. After that incident, I felt some uneasiness anytime I was around Uncle Raymond, not knowing his real motive for sending such a message. He, on the other hand, appeared unaffected, acting as he usually did whenever we interacted in person, in a very formal and respectable manner.

A few weeks later, he sent another sexually explicit text message. This time, I confronted him.

"Do not pretend you do not like it," he responded.

I felt angry and humiliated, and wanted to give him a piece of my mind. I struggled to control my emotions, but at the same time felt conflicted about the fact that social norms meant I should respect him, because he is much older than me. As with people from many other African cultures, traditionally, Ghanaians are

expected to respect older people, with no questions asked. But culture is silent on what one should do when an elder behaves inappropriately. I was also worried that if I reproached him, it could affect the progress of my fieldwork, since he held a central position in the community. In the end, I tried to calm down, and remained silent.

This happened while I was collecting data for my doctoral research in an area of eastern Ghana where three municipalities merge. Using individual and group interviews from many sources, including child sexual abuse survivors, I was exploring the cultural context and everyday life circumstances of the Krobo people. I was also interested in the experiences of sexual development and sexual abuse in childhood.

A major finding was just how much child sexual abuse survivors were ashamed of what had happened to them. And, because they are children, in this community they have low status. This means it is very difficult to challenge sexual propositions made by older peers or adults, and they can easily be bullied into keeping silent about their experiences.

I could now identify with some of these survivor experiences of abuse, given my personal knowledge of sexual harassment by a man who was some ten years older than me. Even though in my case, the harassment occurred via text messages, I felt vulnerable and disturbed that I had been treated in that way.

When the incident first occurred,

I viewed it as a personal event and unrelated to my research work. My first reaction was to confide in a few peers who turned out to be unhelpful and rather caused me to question my sexuality. I felt victimised all over again.

I began to feel embarrassed about the event and decided not to talk about it again, until my research supervisor began to probe further about my fieldwork experience. Due to his genuine concern and approach, I felt I could discuss the matter of the sexual harassment. He was non-judgmental, a good listener, and counselled me each time it became necessary. His support provided me a sense of catharsis.

This taught me that a researcher should not take for granted the need for personal safety and support, no matter how trivial it may seem to others. These issues should be important considerations in preparing and planning for research of all kinds. One should not lose sight of the fact that research really is "just a job", as social researchers Elizabeth Kenyon and Shiela Hawker explain in their overview of how lone researchers need to manage their safety while in the field. The safety of the researcher, they remind us, is more important than accessing data. I thought that this was important to bring to the attention of other researchers. ↩

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*Dzifa Abra Attah is completing her doctoral studies in public mental health at the Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. ✉ dzifaattah@yahoo.com*

## Appendix G: Power point presentation: Traces of Global Inequality and Poverty: Emerging livelihoods in Ghana involving sex and crime



**Traces of Global Inequality and Poverty: Emerging livelihoods in Ghana involving sex and crime**  
Dzifa Attah<sup>1,2</sup> Leslie Swartz<sup>1</sup>, Angela Ofori-Atta<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Stellenbosch University, South Africa <sup>2</sup>University of Ghana Medical School, Legon



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**INTRODUCTION**

The first Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) targets poverty reduction, yet to date the wealth disparity between 1st and 3rd world countries remains evident.

Wealth is a source of social status and prestige. Thus when people are unable to achieve monetary success, via legitimate means they may resort to criminal behaviour in order to achieve their goals.

This background highlights particular concern for children living in less advantaged neighbourhoods associated with high levels of poverty. Since children from here, may inherit poor opportunities from parents who lack social and cultural capital.



Living in a less advantaged neighborhood or inheriting few opportunities from parents does not necessarily determine that people would use illicit means to achieve monetary success. However, it may increase the chances that one would do so, as he or she compares himself or herself to others who have good opportunities and financial support.

**KEY THEMES**

**A lack of parental care**  
This was evidenced by limited emotional, financial and social support from existing parents, extended family or guardians. Partially an outcome of disorganised family structures characterised by single parenthood, the death of a parent, and parents divorce or separation.

**Socialisation and subsequent income generating activities**  
Children play gender related roles, and assist parents to trade at a very early age.



Fig. 2. Thirteen year old girl cooking an evening meal for the family



Fig. 3. six year old boy assisting mother to sell charcoal

As they grow older, children are expected to work to support themselves or supplement the family's income. For example, Wednesdays was noted as a good time to make some money working at the market, thus some students sip school.

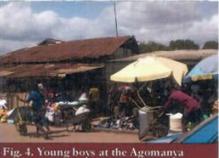


Fig. 4. Young boys at the Agomanya market, pushing their wheel barrows in search for customers on a Wednesday



Fig. 5. Eight year old girl selling at the Agomanya market

Some participants wished to further their education. Yet, few participants were hopeful this would become a reality, as they could barely afford to pay for tuition. Starting to earn money after basic school seemed a better option. But at the same time well paid job opportunities are scarce.

**Frustration and psychological strain**  
Some youth expressed uncertainty, anger and frustration about their future. *If God bless you and your mother and father are still in a relationship it is good but if they are not having the relationship again then you are lost. Unless you struggle for yourself. (James, 22 year old male, student).*

Some choose to engage in illicit means to generate money to attain equal achievement with others. Cybercrime (SAKAWA) is a quick wealth generating source for some youth. One participant for instance reasoned that *"There is no money in the system oooo, if its (Sakawa) an easier way of making money why not?" (Marley, 31 year old male, unemployed)*

**CONCLUSION**

The trend of cybercrime and accompanying forms of transactional sex is worrisome.

Consequently, it indicates a problem that transcends beyond the borders of this community with implications for the wider global community.

The list of the victims includes persons in some contexts overseas where wealth is thought to be amassed.



**RATIONALE**

In this presentation, we seek to illustrate how some youth in a less advantaged community negotiate aspects of their sexuality and that of others, by adopting illicit means of livelihood to survive.

**METHODS**

This presentation is drawn from a larger qualitative study of child sexual abuse conducted in Yilo Krobo and Manya Krobo (a merger of two municipalities popularly called Kroboland).

Data was drawn from two sources: semi-structured interviews held with twelve professionals who worked with children. Plus, eleven community leaders and five focus group discussions.

**SETTING**

Approximately, 24,9185 residents live in Yilo Krobo and Manya Krobo municipalities located in the Eastern region of Ghana (Ghana Statistical service, 2014). Both places are inhabited predominantly by the Krobo people.

**IMPLICATIONS**

This research brings to light the taken for granted effects of wealth inequality. Thus measures should be taken to:

- Strengthen cybercrime laws
- Implement parenting skills training programs
- Implement poverty reduction programs that focus on children
- Alternative ways of achieving prestige and status need to be identified and enhanced.

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**CYBER CRIME AND RELATED ACTIVITIES**

<b>Type of activities</b>	(1) Credit card theft (2) victims are persuaded to part with huge sums of money under the pretext of business transactions or (3) love relationships.
<b>Targets</b>	vulnerable people situated in wealthy countries
<b>Mode of operation</b>	Activities usually occur online. Mostly spear headed by males in partnership with young female girls. The latter are often exploited and persuaded to use their sexuality as a resource. Particularly, if target is male and the transaction involves a love relationship. In return for their services, they receive a fraction of any money received.
<b>Perceived potential or risk</b>	Internet users, emotionally and financially needy girls, young children (some offenders need to perform frequent blood rituals or sacrifices to support the success of their criminal activity. Blood could be acquired from unsuspecting children found loitering about in town).