

‘I will not share my partner’: The ‘care of the self’ in an HIV prevention campaign

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Abstract

This article presents a textual examination and reception analysis of an HIV/AIDS poster used by the University of KwaZulu-Natal students during 2006–09. It examines how discourses construct self-responsibility for sexual health among female students. Discourse analysis, language and visual strategies are applied to reveal gender stereotypes. The article argues that an alternative discourse of femininity is used centring on female power bordering on active participation through the use of the discursive self ‘I’ in order to promote self-surveillance and individual agency.

Keywords

risk

responsibility

sexuality

self-surveillance

discourse analysis

representations

Introduction

In South Africa, HIV and AIDS has proved to be a challenge faced by many due to links with sexuality (Meyer 2013: 13). The 2006 statistics indicated that about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the global population – more than ten million HIV-infected youth aged 15–24 years - lived in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS 2006). Young South Africans were cited as being the most vulnerable, accounting for only 1% of the global population of 15–24-year-olds, but recording 15% of the world's HIV-infected in the age group (Hallman 2005). The statistics include university students. The Human Sciences Research Council (HRSC) reported that black females between 20 and 34 years old were the most at-risk population as HIV prevalence was 32.7% in that group (Shisana et al. 2009).

A growing body of literature in South Africa notes that while biological differences may contribute to HIV susceptibility, more complex social factors – sexual socialization, unequal power relations between males and females that influence their control and ability to negotiate safer sex practices – are instrumental in exacerbating HIV infection (Langen 2005; Walsh and Mitchell 2006; Shisana et al. 2009). Overt control of female sexual agency has been challenged, through being relegated to positions of sexual passivity, lack of negotiation in sex, concessions to concurrent multi-partnership, and limited access to information relating to sex and risk (Langen 2005; Barnerjee and Sharma (2007); Jewkes and Morrell 2010). Hegemonic masculinity is central to the reproduction of patriarchal power relations (Wyrod 2011: 445; Hunter 2005) whereby males measure themselves and against others' (Connell 1987) aggressive, heterosexual, bravery, sport and competitiveness trends (Connell 1995; Mac an Ghail 1994, 1996; Bhana 2005). Patriarchy is perpetuated by heteronormativity in societies and requires men and women to actively demonstrate their gender by participating in heterosex or affirming heterosexual desire (Butler 1999).

In South Africa the reconstruction of female sexuality through magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Drum* and *Bona* followed the western trend. The discourses represent female sexuality as bold, daring - the assertiveness that brings out the 'Diva',¹ especially among career and educated women (Donnelly 2001: 29).

Categories of gender and sexuality

Scholarly work seeking to understand African sexuality premises that categories of gender affect sexual practices (Hopkins 1996: 97). Gender categories based on what males and females can do regarding sexual practices pose a sexual health risk to both genders, making them vulnerable to HIV infection. Beliefs of what constitutes masculinity are embedded in sociocultural contexts of communities, thereby creating an unequal balance of power between males and females (Langen 2005; Barnerjee and Sharma (2007); Omolara 2011).

Multi-partnership is 'positioned as one element of distinct and internally coherent African system of sexuality' (Hunter 2005: 390). Hunter reveals how 'sexual networks have emerged and changed overtime and demonstrates how men's "tradition" of having multiple partners both result from and shape male power' (Hunter 2005: 390) – known as '*isoka*'. However, since sexualities are fluid, changing masculinities due to varying and changing sociocultural contexts have influenced emerging discourses that challenge and critique men's multi-partnering tendencies.

Regarding possible 'hegemonic femininity' in hegemonic sexuality, there is no equivalent notion since there is more diversity in feminine ideals, although globally women are subordinated to men (Jewkes and Morrell 2010: 3). Alternatively, there is 'emphasized femininity' that complies with women's subordination and 'resistance femininity' that is shaped by strategies of resistance

(Jewkes and Morrell 2010: 3). The notion of resistance femininity is of interest to the current study as it probes the discourse strategy that may challenge the cultural norm of complying with hegemonic sexuality and attempts to motivate resistance femininity.

Previous studies have accounted how universities in South Africa have created contexts of sexual exploration, a growing concern given the threat of HIV infection (Kunda 2009; Mulwo 2008; Shefer et al. 2012(a), especially in light of casual sex, multi-partnering, and coercive and transactional sex. At the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College, Westville, Pietermaritzburg [PMB], Edgewood and Nelson Mandela School of Medicine campuses), researchers revealed conflicting perceptions of female sexual empowerment: females seeming to be in control of their sexuality and being responsible for safe sex practices (Kunda 2009), with black male students viewing sex as a sign of achievement as concurrent sexual partnership was more popular among males than among females (Mulwo 2008), with males being incapable of self-restraint (Kunda 2009). Sex was viewed as a rite of passage to being accepted into ‘cool’ social groups where free sex talk dominated discussions (Mulwo 2008) and risk behaviour of ‘towing’, a spontaneous sexual interaction with casual partners (Mutinta 2011). ‘Towing’, though, left some females feeling humiliated, while males felt pride and contentment (Mutinta et al 2013: 132). At one other university, coercive and transactional sex was noted as influencing sexual behaviour.

Our discourse analysis is focused on a poster for the Abstinence, Be faithful and Condom-use (ABC) advocacy campaign on UKZN campuses from 2006 to 2009. Campus HIV and AIDS Units (CHASU) sourced the poster from Khomanani (caring together), a South African Department of

Health HIV and AIDS communication brand engaged in a comprehensive approach to HIV and AIDS prevention.

Conceptual framework

An eclectic framework involving inter-disciplinary approaches, critical discourse analysis and cultural studies is employed to analyse the construction of responsibility in sexual health promotion media texts. Discourses of responsibility are constructed as strategies meant to instil, build and shape self-responsibility, which may lead to particular forms of self-discipline and self-surveillance (Lupton 1995; Roy 2008; Gagnon et al. 2010).

Post-structural discourse theory incorporates linguistic and non-linguistic features to investigate a network involving context and language analysis where the encoder and decoder produce and reproduce texts in negotiating meaning (Fairclough 1989). The theory focuses on discourse and texts, analysing how discourse is used to construct self-responsibility through a poster to promote safer sex practices.

The Foucauldian approach to discourse – ‘practices that systematically form the objects which they speak’ (Foucault 1972: 47) – informs the analysis. Language (words and images) is often used in HIV and AIDS prevention campaigns to influence behaviour change. Taking the cue from Fairclough, who defines discourse as ‘language use as social practice’ (1995: 131), shaped by social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge to manipulate text and talk, this study examines how discursive strategies are used to influence and produce knowledge power, regulate conduct and promote agency, in an HIV and AIDS prevention poster. How discourses are used to promote power and agency in printed HIV and AIDS prevention campaigns has a bearing on

attempts to transform sexual behaviour. Discourses combine knowledge and power to produce representations of any phenomenon that might be a subject of scrutiny (Foucault 1978). Hence, discourses can be used tactically as agents of control and discipline (Burns and Garvey 2004: 553). Discourses empower individuals to regulate their own behaviour and through this regulation and discipline individuals internalize conducts controlling their behaviour such that they do not need to be policed (Foucault 1978, 1980).

One of the tenets of Foucault's conception of power is that power is everywhere and resides within us (Foucault 1978). Derived from this conception is that anyone is capable of wielding power, so one can be an agent of change and control of one's existence. Hence, HIV and AIDS prevention campaigns, through imparting knowledge using tactical discourses, may empower individuals to self-regulate themselves. Due to the omnipresence of power, there is likely to be resistance, and so individuals who are subjected to some form of control are likely to oppose it. The Foucauldian power thesis implies that a complex network of power relations exists between sexualities (femininities and masculinities) and in gender relations.

Foucauldian governmentality strategy

Governmentality may coexist with health promotion material promoting best health practices. For example, print-based HIV/AIDS prevention materials such as the poster under analysis may be used as discursive agents to control behaviour and may act as an authoritative gaze over students. Similarly, magazines like *Men's Health*, *Woman's Health* and *Living and Loving* may act as the invisible gaze subliminally generating self-care of 'the elaboration of certain techniques for the conduct of one's relation with oneself' (Rose 1996: 135). Prevention campaigns identify certain behaviours as risky and use discursive strategies to persuade individuals to guard themselves

against the risk of infection or, if already infected, to avoid re-infection. The HIV/AIDS era influenced the growth of risk-related discourses constructed by the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations AIDS Program (UNAIDS), Presidential Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Messages are directed at how individuals should regulate their bodies, their sexual practices and their general lifestyles. Governmental discourses thus position individuals as active rather than passive subjects of governance (Lupton 1999: 88). Sexuality is framed within the ‘discourses of governmentality: “responsibilized citizens” through the enactment of engaging in “responsible relationships”, responsible choices’ that have been adopted from public health discourse...’ (Burchardt 2013: S497).

Foucault (1980) uses the Bentham’s architecture of the prison panopticon as a metaphor to represent governmentality and surveillance (Wood 2003; Johns and Johns 2000). The metaphor is extended to another analogy:

There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end up interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising surveillance over, and against himself. (Foucault 1980: 155).

Surveillance represents an invisible gaze over an individual inducing self-scrutiny of one’s behaviour. Print health campaigns can be likened to the panoptic gaze. Surveillance, through print-based HIV/AIDS prevention media - posters, billboards and murals proliferating in public

spaces - represent surveillance tools that gaze upon the sexual behaviour of citizens, specifically the youth, promoting sexual behaviour change. Self-surveillance may engender self-regulation in an individual by inculcating an internalized surveillance, which may culminate in some self-care akin governmentality. This is often reflected in persuasive health promotion campaigns that focus on individual responsibility rather than the collective.

A Foucauldian perspective of discourse and power allows the examination of how prevention texts are constructed as discourses and how subjects are positioned in specific relations of power and, as we show, active agents on their own behaviour.

HIV and AIDS prevention campaigns

HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns use various strategies to promote safer sex for sexually active heterosexual youth. Legitimation is one such strategy. Built on chains of reasoning, legitimation uses cause and effect within a situation to establish the need for action (Thompson 1990). For example, health messages often focus on the causes of infection to persuade people to adopt safer sex practices. In this way, intervention would be legitimated over those deemed to influence the behaviour of others. In the process of positioning subjects in relations of power, universalization specifically generalizes values of a particular society in order to strike the moral chord of an individual (Janks 1998: 199).

Two behaviour change theories have a bearing on the present analysis. Bandura's social learning/cognitive theory emphasizes self-efficacy as the central element to behaviour change. The theory is built on efficacy beliefs that centre on the ability and conviction to perform a desired health goal and belief that it would yield behaviour change and positive results. The model has a

bearing on the poster 'I will not share my partner...' as the assertion alludes to recognition that a problem exists and the individual may be able to tackle it by believing in their ability to act and ensure success. The AIDS Risk Reduction Model (ARRM) emphasizes emotional influences and interpersonal processes that encompass three stages: (1) an individual's recognition and labelling - i.e. recognizing that there is a problem and categorizing the problem; (2) an individual's commitment to change; and (3) an individual's action taking (Catania et al. 1990). Behaviour change is possible only if an individual recognizes the need, the reasons and has the ability to act in order to effect the change that he or she desires.

This article investigates the discursive strategies used in the poster 'I will not share my partner...' as persuasive measures to safer sex behaviour among UKZN students.

Figure 1: Poster 'I will not share my partner'. Source: Author.

Methodology

The article evaluates discursive strategies used to construct the poster, particularly how and what discourses (risk and empowerment) are reflected in it, as well as exploring how the image and language address gender differences. The analysis interrogates representations of femininity – using Norman Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis framework (text as discourse; discourse as text; and discourse as social practice). Reception analysis through Focus

Group Discussions (FGDs) of purposively and snowball sampled students (Howard College, PMB, Nelson Mandela School of Medicine and Edgewood) was applied to assess how readers negotiated meaning. The campus samples included a diverse group in terms of race, gender and level of study. The demographics per campus are as follows: Howard College, six postgraduates aged 20–23 years, three males and three females (mixed races); PMB, eight undergraduates aged 18–23 years, four females and four males (seven blacks and one Indian); Nelson Mandela School of Medicine, six female undergraduates aged 18–23 years (all black); and Edgewood, seven female undergraduates (all black).

FGD sessions were semi-structured using open-ended questions with no predetermined hypothesis, which conformed to phenomenological enquiry.

Steps

The first step entailed an analysis of linguistic and visual elements infused in Fairclough's 3rd dimension. The second step was a discursive analysis of underlying meanings arising out of discourses attached to 'work in context' (Janks 1998). The examination of how participants positioned themselves regarding the poster was also examined. Reception theory examined how participants positioned themselves in terms of dominant, negotiated or oppositional reading (Hall 1999: 515). Step three explored sociocultural practice, where conditions of production that may have influenced the design of the poster as well as constructions of discourses and ideologies were considered.

Textual analysis (Fairclough's 3rd Dimension)

The caption 'I will not share my partner' establishes the general intent of the speaker to ascertain her degree of commitment to the literal signification of her words through the explicit obligational modality 'will'.

Linguistic breakdown of text

With the pronoun 'I', the subject establishes the first-person narrative and assumes agency to address females who may identify with the female-represented participant. The construction of representations of the viewer and the represented participant (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996) (the image) through feminist discourse is implied by the declaration itself. The 'I' asserts authority over female sexuality, in which the represented participant wishes to utter preferences. The absence of the second personal pronoun 'you', which establishes relational deixis (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996), does not address the reader directly. However, the reader is implicitly implored to follow the example set by the authority bestowed upon the represented participant (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). This hails a persuasive strategy for safe sex adoption, similar to Bandura's social-cognitive theory of self-efficacy and modelling. The 'I', first-person pronoun is uttered to suggest conviction in what the represented participant believes. Self-efficacy is embedded in the 'I' and indicates the belief that the female image has within her capacity the choice to condemn multi-partnering. The represented participant implicitly challenges the interactive participant to emulate her intention; thus the modelling attribute applies. The reader is drawn into evaluating the benefits attached to taking the same stance of adopting the proposed safer sex strategy. The stance the represented participant proposes to take is consistent with the ARRM response efficacy in which

she considers whether adopting abstinence or refusing multi-partnership will reduce the risk of HIV infection.

‘Will’ is an explicit obligational modality of truth (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 128–29). The modality of truth establishes the degree to which the woman commits to the proposition. The modality choices used in this text can be perceived as the process of texturing self-identity. Modality is ‘important in the texturing of identities, both personal (“personalities”) and social, in the sense that what you commit yourself to is a part of what you are’ (Fairclough 2003: 166).

‘Will not’ introduces prohibition. Share, the transitive verb, creates power of agency for the speaking subject. The possessive adjective ‘my’ indicates ownership. ‘Partner’ is constructed as owned by the speaking subject. Effectively, the ‘partner’ is separated from a reciprocal relationship and cannot respond to the assertion. The pronoun ‘I’ and modal will not are in the interactive participant’s domain of control. ‘Partner’ may connote a male in a heterosexual domain or woman in a same-sex domain. The socio-sexual relations are not clearly defined here. But the tendency is for one to assume that ‘partner’ may connote the opposite sex, probably because research on sex being the agent of HIV and AIDS has been skewed towards heterosexuality.

In terms of ideational meaning, the clause is transitive: it signifies a process of a particular individual. Interpersonal meaning is derived from the declarative, which is categorically authoritative. The writer-reader relationship is realized through the writer telling the reader in no uncertain terms – and someone being told of a declaration. Regarding the textual aspect, the theme or topic of the clause is about the represented participant, the female who transforms and transfers power to other females, though agency is assumed of the represented participant (Fairclough 2003).

'Ngoba... likusasa ngelami' literally means 'because ... tomorrow/the future is mine'. This is a self-reflection about sex, the future and a responsible lifestyle. The declaration addresses Zulu female speakers. Here, the linguistic text appeals to the modern woman's consciousness and begs the question 'How about you?' The intersection of image and text is, however, incongruous as far as sex as an act is concerned; the kitchen background and the lone figure without a partner do not suggest a sexual relationship.

'Sex can lead to HIV/AIDS; I don't want that in my life'. The represented participant explicitly declares the consequences attached to engaging in sex. 'Can' suggests possibility and probability, yet leaves room for other outcomes, thus acknowledging chances of HIV not being contracted. She declares, 'I don't want that in my life'. The phrase 'don't want' has a high degree of modality as the firm declaration attests to a knowledge claim of truth (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). The language is declarative, yet challenging, and permits no ambiguity, realized through the gaze that focuses directly and intently on the viewer.

Visual Text – The picture and categorical themes (Schoeneman et al. 2002) allude to a modern self-assured and independent woman. The categorical anchors are death/life, victim/perpetrator, and feminine empowerment, with an aura linked to glamour (face made up, an accessory on her wrist, the type you are more likely to see on a magazine cover): a young idealized assertive woman who has a socially positive outlook and who deliberately chooses not to engage in a sexual network. The modern woman is unfazed by the domestic role. However, the linguistic and visual codes may still be contradictory, as there is a mismatch and has potential for mixed messages, for an assertive female may not condone and agree with the traditional norms attached to gender roles that prescribe domestic duties to women.

Visual configuration of the image addresses the viewer by acknowledging and addressing them with the visual 'you' (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996) that is realized through the participant's direct gaze. The participant's gaze, somewhat cold but direct, demands the viewer to enter into an imaginary relationship with her. Relations of power are drawn out, inviting the viewer to relate as an inferior to a superior. The visual configuration of the poster seems to want to 'form a pseudo-social bond of a particular kind with the represented participant and thus defines the interactive participant' (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 123) that in this instance is the female. This has the potential to exclude other viewers, who in this case are males, as the female image seems to demand an imaginary relationship with other females, in which they should fight a common cause of demanding monogamous relationships. Visual modality is accentuated with vibrant and strongly saturated colours Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) of blue and black in the background that illuminates the represented participant to make her stand out imposingly.

Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) two-value relation is applied here; the female image faces the viewer directly; the perception given is that she is making a demand to be recognized and the words uttered are making a firm statement that should be recognized.

Discourse practice level (Fairclough's 2nd Dimension)

Female power

The caption 'I will not share my partner' legitimates intervention by the female over the male to restore fidelity [critical mode of operation ideology] (Thompson 1990). This is achieved by the conspicuous absence of a man in the picture. 'I will not...' phrase uses declaration, which tends to be authoritarian, where assertion of feminist power is infused in the statement. Power is embedded

in the statement and may reflect language used in public discourse, introducing and reflecting the way some public health campaigns use female power to discuss sexual health issues in order to influence safer sex practice, thoughts and actions. This suggests the poster relies on the female to influence the male domain to make conscious decisions on safer sex practices. The text categorically uses the female image to establish a social identity for an empowered female. The text thus gives 'voice' to the female who represents self-discipline and self-control, one who is capable of learning to resist temptation. Power and agency is bestowed upon the female image (represented participant) to pursue the goal of persuading the addressees (interactive participants) to denounce multi-partnering and perhaps even sex. Bestowing power upon the female to assert herself echoes the writings of Adichie in her two novels, *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a yellow sun*, aptly described by Ikediugwu (2013): 'Adichie creates female characters that stand firmly on their feet, exist as individuals, measure up with men and look at them directly in their faces: tell them the things they do and assert their rights as human beings' (2013: 5).

Participants at two campuses commented on the significance of the image of a carefree modern woman, who portrays her sexuality as celebrating her femininity. They supported the allusion to assertiveness that should be embraced by females:

... this woman in this picture, she is saying she is not going to share her partner, meaning to me that she at any point in time where she realises that her partner is cheating on her, she's going to walk away. Because she believes it's her future and that she in a way that other people to copy her to do as she would do. This is an image of a carefree modern

woman who wants to assert her sexuality, but is not ready to take nonsense from anybody.

(Nelson Mandela School of Medicine female, participant 6)

... women have to assertive and stand up for their rights. Gone are the days when a woman was expected to do as the partner says. Sex should be negotiated as it involves two people.

(Howard College female, participant 1)

In our culture (in Zambia), which is African yes, women are believed to have no say in matters of sex, but I believe as an individual, that in order to curb the spread of AIDS we need to empower women to say no to multiple sexual partnerships and demand fidelity of their partners. (Howard College male, participant 3)

I wish there were many men who think like you. Here in KZN, men, Zulu men, rule their women. That is why you see people on campus having several girlfriends and it seems the women let them, but the women mind! This poster is sending a good message to the sisters to stand up for their rights, yes! (Howard College male, participant 4).

These responses made by both males and females indicated that there are males who value female assertiveness. The female participants appreciate a self-assured, confident female who can stand her ground. Male participants' comments contrast with hegemonic notions of masculinity. Such discourses of negotiation could indicate that notions of gender inequality – entrenched in dominant constructions of femininity and masculinity – can be challenged in contexts such as universities, possibly influenced by the cultural and racial diversity of students. Further assertions from another campus linked the image to a new evolving femininity, being nurtured by female education and career prospects.

Nowadays females are becoming more independent more and more choose be and do what they want, they can choose to use condoms or abstain. This is because of education. I would like to continue saying, we have to take responsibility. Now we do things and we shift the blame, I think there should be time where we think, yah I have done this, am responsible for this, I cannot shift the blame and say my partner cheated on me, you take responsibility to put yourself first then you hold yourself accountable for it and stop this thing of blaming the society, we should start taking responsibility, and stop shifting the blame. (PMB female, participant 4)

A few cited examples of the cosmopolitan environment, with its glamorous and trendsetting magazines that encouraged a new kind of woman, who oozes confidence, self-reliance, independence and sexual power, a woman who would choose to abstain, be faithful or even engage in multiple partnerships, and furthermore who can choose her own sexual identity.

You see modern life influences women. They see all these magazines that are glamorous and show glamorous women and most want to be like what they see in the beautiful pictures. Yes some women want to be modern. And everyone has the right to choose a sexual lifestyle that suits her. (PMB female, participant 5)

Yes, I agree. You people must be given the freedom to choose. But they should make informed choices. I believe women should also have the power to direct their sexual lives.

If the man does not agree with the woman regarding being faithful, then she has the choice to leave. (PMB female, participant 4)

The argument is consistent with Mythen's (2004: 28) assertion that 'contemporary self-identities are constructed mobile entities which cannot be dissociated from individual choices'. This translates to empowerment that enables making a choice, and in this case if the partner cannot be influenced to change behaviour then one would quit the relationship and avoid being bound to infidelity. The poster received a negotiated reading from the few participants.

Thompson's (1990) critical mode of operation of ideology of legitimation strategy is reflected in 'sex can lead to HIV/AIDS', I don't want that in my life'. The statement uses the cause-and-effect argument in order to establish a need for action. In this case, action required of the viewer is to denounce multi-partnering (alluded to earlier) and possibly sex (since it can be a risky endeavour) as it can result in HIV and AIDS.

Representations of sex as risky

Sex is positioned as risky and inherently underpinned and problematized in the message. Risky sexual cultures negate HIV prevention campaigns' endeavours (Shefer et al. 2012a, 2012b; Masvuwure 2010; Kunda 2009; Mulwo 2008).

The campus environment was cited as influencing risky behaviour:

I wonder how a poster like this can influence people to change; you know sexting? People text messages of sex and send pictures of themselves, naked to lovers and or boyfriends. Already there is too much sex on campus. People just look at a poster like this and pass. It

doesn't mean anything to them. Haibo, it seems as if AIDS is forgotten on campuses! The life is like it is different from back home in the rural areas. People are always busy on Fridays and Saturdays-partying, having sex. (PMB Female, Participant 1)

That's why we need posters like these to remind us. (PMB female, participant 2)

By reflecting on their lived experiences, the students analysed the risky sexual behaviours that are prevalent on campus. The university is represented as a sociocultural context in which high-risk youth sexual activity takes place (Leclerc-Madlala 2002: 21). The discourses emanating from the exchanges reflect the reality of the sexual culture on campuses. By legitimating female intervention, the poster was, however, criticized by some who decried the notion of relying on women to be responsible for HIV/ AIDS prevention. This is substantiated by Macleod and Durrheim: 'Women as primarily responsible for prevention remains as a theme despite the paradoxical acknowledgement of their lack of sexual and economic power within relationships' (2002: 8). This theme was reinforced by some Howard College FGD participants:

Well as much as the poster aims to empower women to stand up for their rights and I agree with that. It seems to me that too much responsibility is placed on women to be responsible for safer sex practices. (Howard College female, participant 1)

Yes, men are not usually addressed by HIV/AIDS material to be responsible for safer sex practices. I mean yes, there might be some material out there that

persuades men to be faithful or practise other safer sex behaviours, but I have not seen any. (Howard College female, participant 4)

'I will not share my partner,' borders on territoriality that translates into the declaration of ownership of the sexual partner and unwillingness to share him (implication of gender) by the represented participant. The statement places responsibility on the female to control her partner's behaviour. Some female participants contended that women should not be held responsible for the process of ensuring sexual safety, arguing that partnership is about sharing responsibility and mutual understanding. Yet another female participant at Edgewood campus echoed the sentiments above:

I would agree, just as the times advise on AIDS, a woman is usually there, even if people are gonna come out about their status its usually women, like there, that women, I find it very rare that you'll find a guy on a poster saying 'I discovered my status in this here and wada wada, I'm dying', it's usually always women, it's always pregnant women sometimes, it's always about women. Even on radio, it's always women, why can't it be male, some are there but... (Edgewood campus female, participant 1)

Nonetheless, one other participant suggested that power is thrust upon the individual to take responsibility for own actions, and thus it is time that individuals start taking responsibility for their own actions. The participant perceived the poster as advocating self-reflection, self-surveillance and self-care. The statement alludes to Foucauldian governmentality of sexual behaviour and risk-taking:

We have to take responsibility. Now we do things and we shift the blame, I think there should be time where we think, yah I have done this, am responsible for this, I cannot shift the blame and say my partner cheated on me, you take responsibility to put yourself first then you hold yourself accountable for it and stop this thing of blaming the society, we should start taking responsibility, and stop shifting the blame. (Edgewood campus female, participant 3)

Although the image was applauded, a few participants expressed negativity regarding some HIV and AIDS prevention material that enhances the notion that it is the female's responsibility to promote safer sex practices as evidenced by the poster.

The image was thus received with mixed reactions, some negotiated readings and a few oppositional readings.

Technology of sex

Technology of sex as a strategy of disciplining the body is used as a measure for discipline and regulation (Foucault 1978: 119). In sexual relations, one individual or both enact power relations. In this case, the female image asserts power over an intimate relationship. The assertion of not accepting multiple concurrent partnerships and even opting for abstinence prevails and comes out as a counter-discourse to the normalcy created of female passivity regarding female sexuality, dismissing a prevailing stereotype that relegates females to sexual passivity.

Sexuality permits the techniques of power to invest in life. The poster alludes to sex as being undesirable insofar as it causes HIV and AIDS, which ultimately may result in death. In addition, according to the speaking subject, sex is taboo, and the speaking subject assumes dominant power over sexual decisions and hence a 'right of power over life' (Foucault 1978: 55). What can be drawn from the image is that 'sex can dominate us, a secret which seems to underlie all what we are, that point which enthrals us through the power it manifests and the meaning it conceals and which we ask to reveal what we are and to free us from what defines us' (Foucault 1978: 155). Sex is deployed as a political technology of life with relevance to disciplining the body, thus disciplining the self.

Gender and sexuality

The statement 'I will not share my partner' intimates a relation between gender and sexuality, exemplifying cultural questions of power and control where female identities are embodied in cultural/feminine/sexuality practices - the woman being empowered and to choose to denounce unfair sexual practices. The social constructions of gender, based on sexual roles that have been created in our society, are such that females cannot be in charge when it comes to sexual issues (Campbell et al. 2005; Walsh and Mitchell 2006; Barnejee and Sharma 2007). 'I will not share my partner' represents a metaphor of gender empowerment as this statement is mediated through a female. Besides portraying an empowered female, the statement 'I will not share my partner' reveals female discourse of risk avoidance where women are "portrayed as the passive victims of risk than as active risk takers' (Lupton 1999: 161). The campaign uses the notion of passive female sexuality to paradoxically infuse power through a gendered theme.

The assertion 'I will not share my partner' is perhaps linked to the weak legal position of women and lack of resources, which relegates them to being dependent on male family members (Campbell et al. 2005). This relegated position disempowers women, rendering them unable to negotiate conditions of sexual practice, which is discriminatory (Campbell et al. 2005). An example of one event that may be deemed disempowering is virginity testing² in some communities, as it impugns women for the spread of HIV despite their minimal control over sexual relations. Issues of responsibility become increasingly a woman's domain and not something that is negotiated.

The message was read against the prevailing socioculture of sexual power being vested in males and not females. Interestingly, both males and the majority of females in the PMB FGD did not find the image compelling as evidenced by the excerpts that follow.

It's more like, when you say 'will not share my partner', it's like you are talking about something that doesn't have its own mind. Like, 'I will not share my cup'. Whereas, if you talk of your partner you talk of someone who can make his or her own decisions to go somewhere else regardless of whether you want to share him or you don't want to. (PMB male, participant 5)

Further oppositional reading is reflected in the participants' view of the message being possibly illusionary to imagine that one could influence one's partner.

In our culture, in the African males are the ones who decide on sexual issues or to use a condom or not; In the African context we don't cheat, polygamy has been practised before.

(PMB male, participant 6)

So you see the guys know that African women have no say in sexual relationships. The men enjoy, as they can have a lot of girlfriends and there is nothing wrong with that. They have to show their friends that they are real men! And the women have to accept that! Now we have a poster like this, with a woman wanting to push her luck! Women know that they share sexual partners. (PMB female, participant 2)

The discourse positions females as capable of managing themselves and their male partners, thus assuming the power of taking responsibility, Foucauldian governmentality, over sexual behaviour choices. This induces 'some kind of individualist, self-managed solution passing as female empowerment' (Gardner 2007: 545). Invariably, the statement positions male as 'risk perpetrator' and female as 'victim' and also creates implied binaries that resonate with Derrida's binary positioning. 'I will not share my partner; Sex can lead to HIV/AIDS' displays a deployment of sexuality that engenders a continual extension of control. Foucault defines this process of disciplining oneself and of policing one's own body as a process of compliance with social norms, 'a deployment of alliance built around a system of rules defining the permitted and the forbidden' (1978: 106). The assertion 'I will not share' my partner challenges social expectations of masculinity and femininity (which are more tolerant of men than of women), driven by patriarchal hegemonic masculinity that constructs females as passive. Thus, it is a radical declaration against the cultural norms and suggests self-responsibility, self-surveillance and self-discipline. The

underlying sense of sharing a partner is a representation of power vested in sexuality. The representation in the poster of responsible femininity recognizes that sexuality issues should shift towards self-identity and self-respect.

Interdiscursivity

The text can be linked to intertextual chains alluding to female sexual liberation. 'I will not share my partner' could be taken as negating what could be taken as having been said in some other texts. 'This negative first sentence presupposes the proposition' (Fairclough 1992: 121) that, in some contexts there may have been an allusion that females are likely to condone sharing a partner. 'The text carries a special type of presupposition that may work intertextually' (Fairclough 1992: 121) by incorporating popular feminine speech in order to contest and reject the status quo. The text may be a snatch of other texts such as Eve Ensler's (2007) *The Vagina Monologues*, which attempts to address female sexual abuse in a different way by dramatizing the issue. The text may be linked to this discursive frame albeit not in an explicit way. This could perhaps be a 'postmodernist approach offering a stylistic variation for females to construct sexual identity as they choose' (Gibbon 1999: 107).

Social practice

The Khomanani Campaign aims to reduce new HIV infections and increase treatment, care and support for those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. This campaign involves wide-ranging use of mass media, public relations and social mobilization. It is managed by the Khomanani Communication Consortium (KCC) on behalf of the national Department of Health (DOH).

The social context from which and for which the campaign is situated is mixed culturally and racially. The KZN province is populated by people of mixed race, blacks, Indians and English. UKZN campuses are populated by different ethnic groups. Women in Zulu culture are not as liberated as the poster suggests. The text precludes issues of gender domination, particularly regarding sexual choice and sexual matters. In the male-dominated social context, issues of sex are mostly dictated by men. The dissimulation process at work here is to disregard power relations in the domain of sexual practices and assume females have control over matters related to sex and their bodies (Janks 1998).

Discussion

The text constructs a counter-discourse that elevates females to sexual authoritative power that deviates from heteronormativity, the cultural norm that facilitates male sexual power over females. The counter-discourse contests sociocultural norms that are built on notions of masculinity and femininity, which in turn create unequal power relations between men and women, in which gender roles prescribed for women demand a submissive role and sexual passivity (Barnejee and Sharma 2007; Jewkes and Morrell 2010). The text proposes sex as ‘a potentially negotiable experiential basis of our relationships to others’ (Clatts and Mutchler 1989: 108). The declaration ‘I will not share my partner’ contests the norm that males are decision-makers regarding sexual behaviour choice and suggests it is necessary to challenge heterosexual stereotypes of feminine sexual passivity. Furthermore, the text subtly proffers mutual recognition for partners to engage with each other regarding sexual behaviour choice in a sexual relationship as this would anchor mutual respect and particularly self-respect (Clatts and Mutchler 1989: 108). Such a proposition factors on the regulation of sex and its negotiability being important for maintaining ‘received

categories of individual identity and sanctioned structures of social relationships' (Clatts and Mutchler 1989: 108).

The lexical meaning of 'I will not share my partner' and 'I don't want that in my life' read together introduces mixed meanings: feminized discourse 'emphasizes self-care that encourages self-discovery and positions women as "at risk", hence the need to engage in auto-surveillance' (Gardner 2007: 541, 543). Self-care induces self-discipline, a Foucauldian notion of taking care of the self. Subliminal implication depicts males as 'at risk' or blamed as a 'risk taker' and depicting the female as 'risk victim'. Accordingly, the text somewhat identifies an 'at risk' population discerned in females.

'I will not share my partner; sex can lead to HIV/AIDS, I don't want that in my life' in the poster seemingly introduces regulation of normative sexual practices among university students. The message implies that if one engages in sex then one should not be sharing a partner. An ensuing problem that could arise is that students may rebel against the message, feeling stifled by rules that regulate even sexual relationships.

The poster (Foucauldian panopticon, the poster enacting surveillance over university female students in the hope that it will inculcate internal surveillance) of a female taking an assertive role in sexual matters introduces the notion of problematization of conventions applying to negotiating condom-use or when and who chooses to have sexual intercourse. Traditionally, men dominate sexual relationships and choices of safer sex practices, with females being socialized into being passive sexual subjects. The problematization of conventions has its basis in contradictions subsumed within traditional gendered subject positions (Fairclough 1992).

The text introduces an alternative to feminist discourse, to the problematization of females regarded as inferior in sexual relations. The discourse alludes to the changing social order and sexual relations in the twenty-first century. The text thus offers a new and creative way in which females are persuaded to 'adapt existing conventions in new ways, and so contributing to discursive change' (Fairclough 1992: 96). Perceived as a discursive event, the text could be an example that contributes to the transformation of female and male sexuality practices through 'hegemonic struggle and may therefore try to resolve the dilemmas through innovation' (Fairclough 1992: 97). 'I' is used as a technique to produce knowledge that pre-empts power that would potentially regulate conduct and promote agency - the discourse being used as a technique of governmentality that would eventually produce self-surveillance. The poster represents an invisible gaze over females (and hopefully their partners) and other viewers to induce self-scrutiny. Ultimately, socio-cognitive processes will be innovatory and contribute to discursive change depending on the nature of the social practice (Fairclough 1992), which in this case would be the patriarchal hegemonic sexual relationships that seem to dominate sociocultural contexts in South Africa and on UKZN campuses.

The producer of the text anticipates a female audience assuming that females belong to the social domain where they are likely to offer solidarity regarding shared meanings and thus interaction would be conceived through common ground (Fairclough 1992). 'The capacity to exercise social power, domination and hegemony includes the capacity to shape to some significant degree the nature and content of this "common ground", which makes implicitness and assumptions an important issue with respect to ideology' (Fairclough 1992: 92). The anticipation of solidarity may, however, be met with opposition by women who engage in multi-partnering in search of sophistication and believe that in so doing they are asserting themselves and are establishing

themselves in sexual parity with men (Leclerc-Madlala 2003). Furthermore, a male readership may also be anticipated, though not addressed directly, through being attracted by the female image in the poster. Other addressees, 'who don't constitute part of the "official" audience but also known to be de facto consumers' (Fairclough 1992: 80–81), could be university CHASU coordinators, lecturers, administration staff, 'and each of these positions may be multiply occupied' (Fairclough 1992). The text may thus invite debate, which it did in FGDs.

Our analysis of the focus group responses reveals that the dominant discourse encoded by the image communicates that by taking charge of sexual responsibility, females could influence the achievement of safer sex practices (abstinence and be faithful frames). It emerges that the text displays a site of competing discourses as polysemic interpretations were drawn from its reading, through both CDA and FGD participants at Howard College (mixed demographic profile, both gender and ethnic), Edgewood (all females) and PMB (mixed; females and males) campuses. The text effectively revealed to readers the layers of discourses and representations at play: deployment of sexuality, representations of femininity, representations of masculinity and sex as dangerous/sex as taboo.

The negotiated readings, mainly from female participants, may have been influenced by their self-directed liberated selves. The interactive participant (image of the modern woman) was perceived as a role model, legitimizing how modern women should perceive and conduct themselves by defying all odds, particularly hegemonic heterosexuality norms that are built on gender inequality. Also, contradictory discourses of masculinity emerged. On the one hand, responses alluded to and confirmed existing dominant constructions of hegemonic discourses of male sexual agency, and on the other introduced a deployment of this power that is shifted to females. This shift in power

alluded to deployment of sexual negotiation, shared sexual power and agency, some of which was attributed to existing sexual cultures of materiality and consumerism.

The negotiated readings suggest that some participants linked the words with taking care of the self and that making an informed choice of influencing sexual agency by females has positive gains. This accords with Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, believing that changing one's behaviour will yield positive results.

The oppositional readings drew on how sexuality is perceived in culture, the female being sexually subordinate and expected to be sexually passive. It also exposed how too much responsibility is placed on women to ensure sexual health even though this is culturally almost impossible. The overall social context of the participants may have influenced the FGD's readings as they drew on how sexuality is perceived in their (African) culture, the female being sexually subordinate and expected to be sexually passive.

Conclusion

The poster revealed layers of discourses and representations at play in the text: deployment of sexuality, representations of femininity and risk discourse alluding to sex as being taboo and dangerous.

The poster displays a site of competing discourses as polysemic interpretations (Hall 1999) were drawn from its reading, both through CDA analysis and through FGDs held at Howard College (mixed demographic profile, both gender and ethnic), Edgewood (all females), PMB (mixed; females and males) and Nelson Mandela School of Medicine.

Some safer sex promotion materials do reflect some form of discourse representation constituting some social identities, which were used as a way of attracting the target audiences' attention in order to persuade them to possibly emulate their strategies. Although mixed responses emanated from the interpretation of the poster, it is quite clearly indicated that the linguistic text fosters discourses of security and self-empowerment (Rose et al. [1996] 2006). The underlying meaning emanating from the Foucauldian responsibilized discourse used in the text such as this one alludes to ability to embrace agency by actively participating in own surveillance of sexual behaviour.

Since meaning is never fully realised and there is no final meaning as interpretations never produce a final moment of absolute truth but meaning that breeds endless meaning (Derrida 1981), the study does not claim to have found the ultimate solution for the design of print-based prevention campaigns but perhaps a beginning of another conversation that will generate further dialogue.

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Notes

¹ Popular culture expression used to describe self-empowered and assertive women.

² Virginity testing is a cultural practice among the Zulu, where young female's genital parts are checked by elderly women. Young females lie on their back and are subjected to inspection, either visually or poked with fingers to check whether their hymen is intact. This practice has been a subject of controversial debates over the years, with traditionalists (mostly elderly women) lauding it as a powerful measure against HIV and AIDS, while some oppose it as a gendered response that constitutes a form of denial that diverts attention away from the need to explore, speak about

and do something regarding what many (including virginity testers themselves) deem as a persuasive lack of male sexual responsibility' (Leclerc-Madlala 2001: 548).