Through a different lens: Adolescent sexual health in the context of gender, the body, close relationships and well-being

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There is a story of a woman running away from tigers. She runs and runs, and the tigers are getting closer and closer. When she comes to the edge of a cliff, she sees some vines there, so she climbs down and holds onto the vines. Looking down she sees that there are tigers below her as well. She then notices that a mouse is gnawing away at the vine to which she is clinging. She also sees a beautiful little bunch of strawberries close to her, growing out of a clump of grass. She looks up and she looks down. She looks at the mouse. Then, she takes a strawberry, puts it in her mouth, and enjoys it thoroughly.

- Pema Chödrön

ABSTRACT

Through a different lens: Adolescent sexual health in the context of gender, the body, close relationships and well-being

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Concordia University, 2014

Psychological research on adolescent sexuality has been typified by a focus on risk, biology and female experience. The overarching objective of the current two-part study was to incorporate an analysis of gender and embodiment into our knowledge of adolescent sexuality. This goal was achieved by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from a sample of 170 Canadian adolescents (81 boys, 89 girls; Mean age= 15.82 years). Participants completed computerized questionnaires assessing self-reported gender role expectations, sexual attitudes, body-esteem, sexual subjectivity, well-being and experiences in close relationships. A subset of the sample (n = 40; 20 girls and 20 boys) was randomly chosen for participation in semi-structured interviews about sexuality, sexual relationships and sexual norms within the school culture. The quantitative data were analyzed using structural equation modeling in MPlus; the interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. In the first study, we examined how the interplay of heterosexuality and gender produces differences in socially constructed experiences of sexuality. In particular, we examined associations between gender role expectations, sexual attitudes, sexual subjectivity and emotional/social well-being. We also analyzed adolescents' descriptions of gendered norms for sexual behaviour in their school. Overall, results provided support for the gender similarities hypothesis (Hyde, 2005), however, gender differences in attitudes toward

sexual permissiveness impacted many aspects of adolescent personal and interpersonal well-being. In Study 2 explored how sexuality becomes woven into personal and interpersonal experiences of embodiment; specifically, we examined associations between sexual attitudes, body esteem, sexual subjectivity and close relationships. We also analyzed adolescents' narratives about sexual attraction, desire and pleasure. Results revealed gendered processes of sexual embodiment, namely sexual objectification and subjectification and gender differences in the relationships between sexual permissiveness and body esteem. Taken as a whole, findings provide important new knowledge toward the development of holistic sexuality development programs.

Acknowledgements

This oeuvre is the culmination of a creative process that spanned over a decade. It marks a birth, a work born of solitary contemplation, analysis, and deconstruction as well as in dialogue with countless vibrant individuals. Most will remain nameless, they are my family, friends, and colleagues - my support network, which I am deeply deeply grateful for. We are our relationships and four relationships in particular have carried me through this process. I am thankful to my supervisor Bill Bukowski for giving me the space to explore issues and ideas that are closer to my heart than they are to his, for guiding me with kindness and understanding, and for treating me like a peer. You have helped me achieve my goals and feel proud of my accomplishments, thank you. To Patrick, my life partner, who has listened, argued, understood, changed, moved, guided, followed, and loved. In some ways you have been as committed to this process as I have and without that commitment I wouldn't be where I am, which is where I want to be. Thank you for choosing every day to be by my side and for bringing me back to myself when I lost my way. I love you. To my daughter Freyja, whose very presence has demanded that I live in the present, that I determine what is meaningful and act accordingly, that I lighten up, that I play and that I know myself profoundly. You are still too young to understand the impact that you have had on my life but someday you will read this and know that you have infused my life and work with ineffable meaning and significance. You are inquisitive, imaginative, adventurous, willful, adaptable, and gentle; part of why I do what I do is so that you can develop into a girl and a woman who loves herself and feels fulfilled in her life. And to my mother, Barbara, who gave me more than she got, which is the most beautiful gift that a parent can give. Thank you.

Contribution of Authors

The following thesis is comprised of two studies.

Study 1 (see Chapter 1)

Drury, K. M., & Bukowski, W. M. (2015). Looking under rocks: Testing assumptions about gender differences in sexual subjectivity in adolescence. Manuscript in preparation.

Study 2 (see Chapter 2)

Drury, K. M., & Bukowski, W. M. (2015). Through the body: Examining the role of body esteem in adolescent emotional and sexual health. Manuscript in preparation.

I developed the overall project described in this dissertation in consultation with my research supervisor, Dr. William Bukowski. Dr. Bukowski and I recruited the schools, speaking with school boards, principals and guidance counselors. We then recruited children within classrooms and obtained parental consent. Thereafter, I conducted most communications with participating principals, teachers, and children. Beyond the initial recruitment phase, I was responsible for all facets of the research in this dissertation including its design, data collection, statistical analyses, interpretation of findings, and dissemination of findings. Dr Bukowski and Dr. Jonathan Santo provided guidance and support for the quantitative analyses.

My fellow laboratory members helped fine tune the final version of the survey. I was assisted in classrooms by research assistant Claire Barnes and undergraduate student/laboratory volunteer Hayley Morgan. Claire Barnes, Alina-Mihaela Dittmann and Megan Wood transcribed and crosschecked the sexuality development interviews. Claire Barnes also helped with transferring data files and general computer maintenance. I conducted all data management, processing, and screening in preparation for analyses. Dr Diana Raufelder helped with the initial

stages of qualitative analyses. Dr. Bukowski provided feedback and consultation throughout all phases of this project. Moreover, my other committee members, Dr. Roisin O'Connor and Dr. Lisa Serbin offered feedback during a dissertation proposal meeting and also provided helpful comments and suggestions on a near-final draft of the dissertation.

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Through a different lens: Adolescent sexual health in the context of gender, the body, close relationships and well-being

Past research on adolescent sexuality has overwhelmingly been framed within a public health initiative with researchers relying on a biomedical paradigm to address social and health issues associated with sexual behaviour (see Tolman & McClelland, 2011, for review). The initiative has been one of prevention and has focused primarily on documenting factors predicting risk for pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection (O'Sullivan & Thompson, 2014). Due in part to significant psychological and health risks associated with sexual behavior, and in part to pressures specific to the North American zeitgeist surrounding sexuality, sex researchers have typically pursued studies of pregnancy, sexual transmitted infection risk, condom use, and increasingly, sexual violence in the lives of adolescents (Tolman & McClelland, 2011). While risks associated with sexual behaviour are essential to understand, they represent only a partial picture of adolescent sexuality.

The dominant discourse of prevention and risk has occluded our understanding of the complexity of sexuality by largely concealing the role of factors such as gender, race, culture, and socio-economic status. Moreover, it has yielded a body of research with an almost exclusive focus on girls and has deemed female sexuality to be problematic in all cases; so that rather than being integrated into the developing self-concept, female sexuality has historically been pathologized and presented as a negative eventuality that must be delayed as long as possible or prevented altogether until marriage. Paradoxically then, risk-centric research, predicated on protecting youths' health and well-being, ultimately "limits our understanding of normative adolescent sexual development and has hampered efforts at sexual health promotion" (Diamond & Savin-Willliams, 2009, p.481).

In recent years adolescent sexuality researchers have advocated for the disentanglement of adolescent sexuality from singularly deleterious outcomes (Ehrhardt, 1996; Fine, 1988; Thompson, 1995). They have called for a paradigm shift away from an exclusive focus on girls, risk and danger, towards a more nuanced approach to adolescent sexuality that considers gender, culture, socio-economic status and positive outcomes in theory as well as practice. A clear entreaty has emerged from the literature: adolescent sexual development should *also* be studied in context and within a positive normative framework, one that reflects our understanding of sexuality as a normal and expected aspect of adolescent development. According to Fine and McClelland (2006):

> Comprehensive sexuality education and youth development must help young women and men navigate across the dialectics of danger and pleasure. Risk cannot be severed from pleasure. They are braided, nestled inside one another. An exclusive focus on risk not only alienates, but also distorts the complexity of human relations and sexual desire. Therefore, it is naïve to educate for pleasure without attending to risk; but more perverse to imagine that teaching only about risk will transform human behavior (p. 326).

As researchers, we need to move beyond the essential-to-understand-yet-narrow scope of risk behaviour quantification, toward an understanding of the subjective experiences that form the ground of sexual development (Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2009; Welsh, Rostosky & Kawaguchi, 2000, Florsheim, 2003). According to Dennison and Russell (2005) among others, adolescent sexuality researchers should be turning their attention to positive sexual outcomes, meaning that adolescent sexuality must not only be framed in terms of risk and prevention but also must include qualities of sexual well-being, including entitlement to pleasure, efficacy in achieving pleasure, and subjective experiences of enjoyment (Diamond, 2006; Wight, Parkes, Strange, Allen, Bonell, & Henderson, 2008).

Accordingly, the last decade has witnessed the emergence of a critical mass of empirical studies that affirms a view of sexuality as a normal part of adolescent development; however due

to its origins within the feminist movement, this research also focuses largely on girls and young women. Contrary to research agendas that problematize young female sexuality, these studies have their roots in the larger feminist project of reclaiming female sexuality (Fine, 1988, Vance, 1984). As such, they have contributed to our understanding of the developmental significance of healthy sexual attitudes, behaviours, and relationships in adolescence and how these experiences form the foundation for female sexuality in adulthood. Notwithstanding this body of research, the vast majority of studies of adolescent sexuality maintain what we believe to be a necessary albeit narrow commitment to the prevention of sexual risk taking and negative health outcomes.

This dissertation is situated amongst efforts to recontextualize adolescent heterosexual experience and reframe the study of adolescent heterosexuality (Diamond, 2006; Russell, 2005a; in Tolman 2011). The context, in the case of the current project, consists of several levels of experience including sexual experience: gender roles, embodiment, close relationships, and well-being. We were interested in examining how heterosexuality is embedded within and connected to these other aspects of adolescent experience. The interplay between gender and heterosexuality forms the bedrock of this dissertation and was examined on two levels: (1) gender differences in psychosocial experiences of sexuality and (2) how beliefs about gender roles interact with sexuality. Moreover, the following studies stress positive aspects of sexual experience, such as desire and pleasure, thereby challenging the dominant paradigm of risk-based research. We strove to extend the dominant biomedical discourse of the sexual body as object to include discussions of the sexual body as subject, or the embodied sexual body. And finally, we included adolescent boys in our studies for several reasons: (1) to shine an empirical light on male sexuality and accumulate knowledge that is nuanced and reflective of male experience; (2) to bring balance to a field of inquiry that has often overlooked male sexuality in

its preoccupation with female sexuality; and (3) to highlight the deeply interpersonal nature of adolescent heterosexuality and underscore the need for the perspectives of both groups involved in these processes.

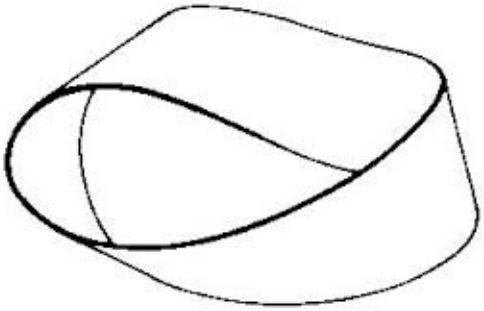
Once we acknowledge that adolescents have a right to healthy, meaningful, and pleasurable sexual experiences, we can go one step further and begin to uncover the ways in which other factors, such as gender, present and restrict opportunities for positive and healthful sexual development. In so doing, we hope to shed further light on the question of how one becomes an adult with a healthy, satisfying and pleasurable sex life. Before further description of the two studies that make up this dissertation, let us turn to an overview of the theoretical traditions that informed the psychosocial context of the current investigation.

Theoretical Framework

The development of sexuality is of course not limited to adolescence. Sexuality begins before birth and evolves and changes throughout the lifespan. Despite the current focus on adolescence, the gendered-sexuality-over-the lifecourse model (L.Carpenter & DeLamater, 2012) provides an excellent framework within which one can investigate the interplay, or mutual construction, of sexuality and gender at any point across a lifetime. The model asserts that gender and sexuality are jointly constructed within specific sociostructural contexts. In their words: "transitions in an individual's sexuality trajectory will affect his or her gender trajectory even as the gender-related transitions he or she experiences help construct his or her sexual trajectory" (L.Carpenter, 2010, p. 161). We are interested in the complex processes through which individuals' experiences of gender and sexuality mutually influence one another; the relationship between the constructs of gender and sexuality can be conceptualized as a Mobius strip (Grosz, 1994) (See Figure 0.1). Although for Grosz the body (brain, muscles, sex organs)

constitutes the inside of the Mobius strip and culture and experience the outside surface, for our purposes sexuality is represented by the inside of the strip and gender the outside. It is important to keep in mind that the inside and outside are continuous and one can move freely from the inside space to the outside space, as such the form is a helpful depiction of the current process of interest: the seamless relationship between sexuality and gender.

Figure 0.1. Mobius strip.



A biopsychosocial perspective emphasizes an integrative approach that includes, biological, psychological, and socio-environmental factors. Ehrhardt (2000) proposed a transactional or interactional model of human sexual development, "which posits a continual and progressive interplay between the organism and the environment" (p.5). The fact that biology plays a central role in human sexual development is well understood and documented; it is our contention that sexuality is derived from the functions of the physical body but gains meaning through an interplay with the individual's surroundings, thus giving the individual the opportunity to determine his or her own identity and his or her own sexuality (Larsson, 2002).

Our approach embeds the individual within a psychosocial context and draws on several traditions: social learning theory, gender schema theory, social script theory, body objectification

theory, embodiment theory as well as attachment theory. What these theories have in common is that they either directly address the issue of gender differences in sexuality or postulate a set of processes that lend themselves to predictions regarding gender differences in sexuality (Hyde & Oliver, 2000). Taken together, the theories allowed us to address (1) the *context* of the current investigation (gender roles, body esteem and close relationships) as well as (2) the *interplay* between heterosexuality and gender that is at the heart of this dissertation. Despite it only addressing the psychosocial components of adolescent sexual experience, we believe this framework to be the most appropriate for the subject matter at hand; future collaborations would allow for the integration of biology into what is known about the psychosocial underpinnings of adolescent sexual development.

The context: Gender roles, body esteem, and close relationships.

Gender roles: Social learning theory. *(*Bandura, 1977, 1986; Bussey & Bandura 1999; Mischel, 1966). Although Bandura's original writings did not address the issue of gender, Mischel (1966) applied principles of social learning theory to understanding gender roles and gender differences in behavior. The theory suggests that humans learn behaviors through observation and imitation. Behaviors that are rewarded are more likely to be repeated, whereas behaviors that are punished are less likely to be repeated. According to cognitive social learning theory, gender differences in behavior are created because boys and girls observe different behaviors in same-gender models and are reinforced and punished for different behaviors. In particular, boys and girls learn gender-appropriate behaviors because they are reinforced for gender role-consistent behaviors and punished for gender role-inconsistent behaviors (Mischel, 1966). In addition, boys and girls prefer to imitate same-gender models, which further increases their attention to gender role-consistent behaviors. Cognitive social learning theory suggests that

boys and girls do not need to be directly rewarded or punished in order to learn which behaviors are appropriate to imitate. Instead, they may learn appropriate gender role behaviors simply by observing the rewards and punishments directed toward other same-gender models. Finally, boys and girls internalize these standards for gender appropriate behavior and regulate their own behavior in accordance with gender norms.

Gender roles: Gender identity theory. (Martin & Halverson, 1981). Gender is a salient and ubiquitous characteristic of our social environment and has been characterized as "the most visible and dramatic subdivision within our species" (Weisgram, Bigler, & Liben, 2010). The dichotomous category male/female is one of the first and probably the most obvious characteristic children learn to parse their social worlds in a meanningful way. The emergence of gender identity (around 3-4 years old) and growing understanding of the stability of social group membership affects children's motivation to learn about gender, to gather information about their gender group, and to act like other group members (Ruble & Martin, 1998). This motivation involves the child's deliberate efforts to learn about a social category that s/he is actively constructing from information in her/his social world (Martin & Ruble, 2004). In other words, children's recognition of the social significance of gender motivates them to learn about gender norms, to integrate these norms into their self-concepts and in so doing adhere to their culture's social constructions of gender.

Research evidence suggests that infants have knowledge of gender categories, or schemas, and use this information to parse the world into meaningful parts (Martin & Ruble, 2004; Poulin-Dubois, Serbin, Kenyon & Derbyshire, 1994). From a very young age, children identify their own gender and gender group and develop a belief system regarding the behaviors that are consistent with being a girl or boy or woman or man (Ruble & Martin, 1998). As such, it

has been argued that gender schemas play a significant role as organizers of gender development (Martin & Fabes, 2001). It is our contention that gender schemas also function as important organizers of sexual development; in Study 1 we tested this assumption via a cognitive link between attitudes about gender norms and attitudes about sexual norms.

Body esteem: Objectification theory. One aim of the current investigation was to demonstrate some of the ways that the body is implicated in heterosexuality, both as object and as subject. What follows is a brief discussion of two theories, one addressing the body as object, and the other the body as subject. Objectification Theory (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997) weaves together feminist theory, cultural analyses of the female body in Western cultures and women's mental health; it posits that:

> Bodies exist within social and cultural contexts, and hence are also constructed through sociocultural practices and discourses…This theoretical framework places female bodies in a sociocultural context with the aim of illuminating the lived experiences of girls and women who encounter sexual objectification…The common thread running through all forms of sexual objectification is the experience of being treated as a body (or collection of body parts) values predominantly for its use to or consumption by others…Sexual objectification occurs whenever a woman's body, body parts, or sexual functions are separated out from her person, reduced to the status of mere instruments, or regarded as if they were capable of representing her (Bartky, 1990). In other words, when objectified, women are treated *as bodies* – and in particular, as bodies that exist for the use and pleasure of men (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997, p.175).

Our culture is saturated with patriarchal heterosexuality. One marker of this according to Karen Horney is "the socially sanctioned right of all males to sexualize all females, regardless of age or status" (Westkott, 1986). This sexualization takes many forms, from sexual harassment and violence to sexualized evaluation, primarily through gaze, to media representations of the female body. These evaluations may influence women's life outcomes, as studies have shown that physical attractiveness is more strongly linked to social and economic outcomes for women than for men (egs. Marlowe, Schneider, & Nelson, 1996). In an effort to maximize social

desirability, girls and women may monitor and shape their appearance to increase their physical attractiveness. As such, a central tenet of the theory holds that the pervasiveness of sexual objectification gradually socializes women and girls to internalize an observer's perspective on their own bodies; that is they come to see themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated based on their appearance. This psychological phenomenon, termed self-objectification, represents a form of internalized self-consciousness characterized by habitual monitoring of the body's outward appearance.

The authors of the theory further argue that self-objectification, although socially and economically adaptive, leads logically to a number of negative behavioural and experiential consequences. In particular, high levels of internalization of an observer's perspective lead to negative emotional states, with an increase in both shame and anxiety about the body and appearance because few women can match current societal beauty ideals. Indeed, Wolf (1991) argues that the ideal female body is a myth, unrealistic and virtually impossible to attain. Furthermore, the ideal stands in stark contrast to girls and women's lived experiences of their developing, changing and aging bodies. Also, because constant self-consciousness and monitoring require cognitive resources, they can lead to a decrease in awareness of internal bodily states or disembodiment. Finally, objectification theory argues that the accumulation of these experiential consequences combine to put some women at increased risk of developing three particular mental health disorders namely, eating disorders, depression and sexual dysfunction – conditions that are experienced disproportionately by women (American Psychiatric Association, 2007). Objectification theory provides an excellent framework for the current research in that it illuminates sociocultural pathways that implicate the body, sexuality and well-being; it provides a window into how a normative and ubiquitous social process, sexual

objectification, might negatively affect our relationships with our bodies and in turn our sexualities.

Body esteem: Embodiment theory. According to Tolman, Bowman, and Fahs (2014), embodiment refers to the "experience of living in, perceiving, and experiencing the world from the very specific location of our bodies" (p. 760). Fundamentally rooted in social theory, embodiment theories and studies provide insight into how bodies are not simply natural, organic objects, but also exist within social structures of power; structures that imbue bodies with meaning and significance. Embodiment epistemology locates sexual bodies in phenomenology, or the ways in which a person apprehends and experiences their sexual body. This orientation toward the body departs significantly from the traditional approach of the natural sciences, which considers the body an organic object, defined by biological rather than social functions and processes. Embodiment theory proposes a useful reframing of the mind-body binary and suggests that it is possible to "locate consciousness and subjectivity in the body itself" (Young, 1990, p.161) through two distinct processes: *being embodied* and *embodying the social*. *Being embodied* refers to an experiential awareness of the feelings and sensations within one's body, which reflects our corporeality (Grosz, 1994). Merleau-Ponty (1962) described the lived body as a "body-subject", meaning that the body itself is capable of genuine experience. That is, our bodies themselves are sources of knowledge and meaning rather than simply existing in the service of our minds. Alternately, *embodying the social* refers to the ways our particular social and historical contexts become woven into our bodies; in short, human society places demands on its members in the form of discourses and norms, which become internalized and embodied through a process of socialization (Bartky, 1990; Foucault, 1978). These norms and discourses form and inform our bodily feelings and behaviors and they constitute the phenomenology of

embodiment (Bartky, 1990; Bordo, 1993, 2000; Young, 1990). In sum, embodiment theories situate the person within their body and in so doing elevate the body to a level tantamount to the intellect. Embodiment, or the subjectification of the body, could be understood as an antidote to objectification: in so far as objectification leads to feelings of *dis*embodiment, embodiment theories seek to reverse this process and resituate individuals within their bodies. Therefore, in order to best understand adolescents' relationships to their sexual bodies, one must investigate both processes.

Lindemann (1996) deftly wove social influences into an understanding of the material, physical body, by theorizing distinctions between *objectified*, *experiencing*, and *experienced* bodies. The *objectified* body is the visible, physical body that moves through the world. The *experiencing* body is the sensory body, experiencing the environment through the five senses; this phenomenological body has also been described as being in a specific sociocultural context or a *body in situation* (Young, 1990). The *experienced* body is our cognitive sense of our own bodies, for example, our understanding of our own pleasure or pain. Tolman, Bowman and Fahs (2014) applied Lindemann's account to a social psychological analysis of sexuality and remarked: "we can understand the objectified body as the one onto which all societal presumptions (e.g. requirements of masculinity and femininity) are projected. Sexual desires as well as pleasures, therefore, can be understood as experienced within the body itself" (p. 761). A final conception of embodiment is in the idea of intersubjectivity, that is, that the body is experienced in relationship to or with another person. Taken together, embodiment theory acts as an effective bridge over the mind-body divide and gives rise to questions such as: how do we connect the body as a material, biological entity to the body as a social entity? And, how do we understand the individual in relation to the social world via the body?

Close relationships: Attachment theory. Attachment theory was proposed by Bowlby (1973, 1980, 1969/1982) in a series of germinal texts entitled Attachment and Loss, and then later operationalized by Mary Ainsworth in a series of experiments. At the heart of the theory is an innate set of psychological processes called the attachment behavioural system. Attachment theory states that in infancy, the quality of an attachment relationship depends on the interactions between the infant and caregiver, and especially the extent to which the child perceives the caregiver as a source of security and support. If a young child's attachment figure proves to be generally available, sensitive, and responsive to the child's signals of distress, the child develops secure working models of self and attachment figure and generally enjoys a psychological state called felt security (Sroufe & Waters, 1977). Later in development, securely attached children characteristically perceive themselves as lovable and competent and others as sensitive, consistent and responsive to their needs. Conversely, insecure children perceive themselves as not lovable, incompetent and others as insensitive, inconsistent, rejecting and/or unresponsive to their needs. These mental representations, or working models of self and other affect an individual's beliefs, expectancies and behaviours in close relationships (Bowlby, 1982).

Ainsworth conceptualized attachment qualitatively, her observations of infant-mother interactions lead to a categorical model of attachment styles: secure attachment and two types of insecure attachment, anxious and avoidant (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978). An anxious attachment style is characterized by abnormal levels of fear about abandonment and/or rejection, while an avoidant attachment style is characterized by elevated levels of discomfort with closeness and avoidance of intimacy. A secure parent-child attachment relationship has proven to be central to social and emotional development throughout the lifespan (Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986). Moreover, attachment styles have been shown to be relatively stable from

infancy to young adulthood (Waters, Hamilton & Weinfield, 2000). In 1987, Hazan and Shaver proposed that attachment theory be extended to the realm of adolescent and adult romantic/sexual relationships. Almost three decades of research have shown that overall Bowlby's conceptualization of the attachment system is applicable to adolescents as well as adults (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2013). The current investigation was particularly interested in the ways in which sexual subjectivity, or one's experience of being sexual, impacts close relationships, especially in terms of one's comfort with closeness and anxiety about abandonment.

The Interplay: Social script theory. (Abelson, 1981; Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Social scripts are culturally supported ways of being in a given situation, for example in a restaurant or on a bus. In an attempt to address the gendered nature of sexuality and preserve the inherently social and interpersonal nature of these processes, researchers have applied social script theory to sexuality. Social Scripting Theory (Abelson, 1981) provides an interesting social-cognitive lens through which to explore the ways in which gender and sexual development interact. The theory rests on the assumption that people follow internalized scripts when constructing meaning out of behavior, responses, and emotions. Abelson (1976) described a script as "a coherent sequence of events expected by the individual, involving him either as a participant or an observer" (p. 33). Scripts are cognitive models that people employ to guide and evaluate social and sexual behavior; they guide behavior both interpersonally and intrapersonally. The production and maintenance of social scripts is described as follows:

> Social scripts are communicated through the examples displayed by members of the culture who have already adopted the scripts as well as through mass media depictions of how people act and react in particular situations. Also, the very structure and the institutions of a society contribute to the formation of scripts. Societal scripts specify the appropriate objects, aims, and desirable qualities of [social] interactions. They also

> provide individual actors with instruction as to the appropriate times, places, sequences, and so forth with regard to [social] activity (Wiederman, 2005, p. 496).

Playground scripts. Through observation, Thorne and Luria (1986) explored the segregated gender arrangements of middle childhood as contexts for learning adolescent and adult sexual scripts. Their focus was "on how the gender-specific contexts of middle childhood may help shape the sexual scripts – the social relations and meanings associated with desire – of adolescent girls and boys" (p. 180). Their findings were in line with what Gagnon & Simon (1973) had originally suggested: that two strands of sexuality are differently emphasized among adolescent boys and girls. According to their observations girls emphasize and learn about the emotional and romantic aspects of sexual development before the explicitly sexual. The sequence for boys is the reverse: commitment to sexual acts precedes commitment to emotion-laden, intimate relationships and the rhetoric of romantic love. These differences are not always easily resolved and are thought to underlie the tension that persists between the scripts of adult men and women.

In elementary school life, sexual idioms function to construct and maintain gender segregation: "gender-marked rituals of teasing, chasing, and pollution heighten the boundaries between boys and girls" (p. 187). According to Thorne and Luria (1986), these rituals also convey assumptions which get integrated into later sexual scripts: "that girls and boys are members of distinctive, opposing, and sometimes antagonistic groups; that cross-gender contact is potentially sexual and contaminating, fraught with both pleasure and danger; that girls are more sexually defined (and polluting) than boys" (p. 188). They maintained that because children's sexual knowledge is fragmentary and distinctly different from that of adults, scripting in same-gender peer groups may be more about gender than sexual orientation. In this sense, at this age, children are learning about masculinity and femininity rather than sexuality per se,

although heterosexuality is embedded within these concepts. Boys are learning from boys about pornography, rule transgression, and homophobia, and girls are learning from girls about romance, intimate relationships, popularity, and appearance. Thus, girls and boys transition to adolescent sexual intimacy from different and asymmetrical gender subcultures, which promote different sexual meanings. As such, they bring somewhat different needs, capacities, and types of knowledge to their burgeoning heterosexual relationships, making these spaces of 'coming together' difficult to negotiate.

Sexuality in Adolescence: Some of What we Know

How we conceptualize sexuality, sexual development and sexual processes organizes what questions we do and do not ask, how we interpret our data and what knowledge is and also is not generated about the development of human sexuality (Foucault, 1978). For example, in the case of adolescent sexuality, females have been labeled 'at risk' thereby granting experts permission to investigate, scrutinize, manipulate and make improvements to their sexualities; the burden of responsibility and change always lies with the individuals deemed disordered and in need of help. Dominant cultural messages portray male sexuality as natural, normal and healthy or in other words, not in need of modification or amelioration; not surprisingly, it has enjoyed a comparatively unexamined existence resulting in very little empirical knowledge about it. With this in mind, let us turn to some of what we know about adolescent sexuality in the domains of interest, namely, gender role expectations, sexual attitudes, sexual subjectivity, and well-being.

Gender role socialization. Girls and boys are taught radically different lessons about their sexuality and sexual lives. Girls' socialization emphasizes sexual passivity, the value of participation in and maintenance of interpersonal relationships (Breakwell & Millward, 1997; Brown & Gilligan, 1992) and romantic partnerships as the contexts for sexual expression (Fine,

1988; Thompson, 1995); boys' socialization emphasizes sexual agency and the ability to pursue sexual opportunities with female partners whenever they may arise. It is not surprising then that empirical data as well as conventional wisdom have long supported the notion that women experience less frequent and insistent desires than do men. In general, women report fewer spontaneous sexual urges (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994), fewer purely sexual fantasies (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995), lower rates and frequency of masturbation (Leitenberg, Detzer, & Srebnik, 1993), and less motivation to seek or initiate sexual activity (O'Sullivan & Byers, 1992). Although the majority of this research has focused on adults, some evidence suggests that these differences are also observed in childhood and adolescence. For example, regardless of sexual orientation, boys become aware of their sexual interests and impulses several years earlier than girls do (Knoth, Boyd, & Singer, 1988; Savin-Williams & Diamond, 2000), and boys report more frequent sexual arousal. Boys also report their sexual desire to be more intense and distracting as compared to girls (Knoth, Boyd, & Singer, 1988). Some researchers attribute these differences in experiences of sexual desire to established sex differences in testosterone levels. Others have argued that cultural factors are equally if not more important and highlight the "powerful social forces that restrict female experiences of desire by casting girls in the role of "sexual gatekeepers" whose primary task is to fend off boys' sexual overtures in order to guard themselves against pregnancy and STDs" (Diamond & Savin-Willimas, 2009, p. 490).

In a study of adolescent girls, Tolman (1999) explored the links between conventional beliefs about femininity, engaging in stereotypic feminine behaviors and sexual health. The results suggest that "conventional femininity ideology may function as a barrier – and, conversely, that critique of femininity ideology may offer a booster – to adolescent girls' sexual

health" (p.137). Meaning, that conventional beliefs about femininity are associated with (1) lower levels of sexual agency, (2) higher levels of conventional conceptions of romance, defined as girls identifying and meeting boys' needs, including their sexual desires, and encouraging girls to seek and maintain these relationships at the expense of their own needs and desires, and (3) lower levels of sexual self-concept, which is defined as an individual's evaluation of her own sexual feelings and actions. Thus we see that in adolescence, adoption of traditional gender ideologies impedes healthy sexual development.

In her ethnographic exploration of masculinity "Dude, you're a fag", Pascoe (2007) spent a year and a half observing, interacting with and interviewing students at an American high school. These are two of the central themes in her analysis of masculinity, sexuality and gender identity within this context. She found that processes of *repudiation* were central to a masculine sense of self: "boys at River High continually repudiated femininity, weakness, and, most importantly, the specter of the "fag"" (p.157). Furthermore, "more than femininity, more than powerlessness, more than childhood, the abject nature of the specter of the fag required constant, vigilant, earnest repudiation" (Ibid). The power of the label lies in its ability to render any boy unmasculine, thus we see that a very fundamental aspect of masculinity is heterosexuality. She also found that processes of *confirmation* were central to a masculine sense of self, these rituals confirmed the associations between masculinity, heterosexuality and dominance: "in public contexts, which is where manifestations of compulsive heterosexuality occur, boys tended to close off, hide, or otherwise deny emotional attachments to girls. Instead, many boys physically and verbally harassed girls sexually" (p.159). In this way, "boys invested in and reproduced meanings of masculinity characterized and constituted by eroticized male dominance and sexualized female submission" (Ibid).

It is not difficult to imagine the harmful effects of this construction of masculinity, to female identities, to homosexual identities, and perhaps most importantly and most often overlooked, to male identities. Initial research in the area of gender roles and sexuality suggests that beliefs about acceptable gender-based behaviours have a far-reaching impact on adolescents' enactment of heterosexuality. Said another way, sometime during late childhood or early adolescence 'femininity' and 'masculinity' become distinctly sexual constructs and one's beliefs about the constructs, as they apply to self and other, shape how one transitions to sexual adulthood.

Sexual attitudes. Although people tend to believe that the genders differ notably in their sexual attitudes, a recent review of meta-analytic studies has shown otherwise; researchers found only a small difference in attitudes indicating that men had somewhat more permissive attitudes than did women (Petersen & Hyde, 2011). Unfortunately, the results from the adolescent studies were not analyzed separately so we cannot conclude with confidence that the findings generalize to adolescence. Although the gender difference in sexual attitudes appears to be disappearing, at least in adulthood, the *sexual double standard* persists in norms of sexual behaviour (Crawford & Popp, 2003; Donovan, 1985; Milhausen & Herold, 2001).

A double standard refers to a moral code or set of principles containing different provisions for one group of people than another. Specifically, the *sexual* double standard is an unwritten code of behaviour permitting men more sexual freedom than women and that positions men as the proactive consumers of sex and women as the passive, submissive objects of consumption. This phenomenon would predict a measureable gender difference in sexual behaviors and attitudes such that boys would be more likely than girls to engage in sexual behavior with more partners and hold more permissive attitudes toward behaviors such as casual

sex and multiple sex partners (Petersen & Hyde, 2011). Indeed, a review of 30 studies, most conducted with adolescents, published since 1980 found evidence of the continued existence of different standards of permissiveness for girls and boys (Crawford & Popp, 2003). In a 3-year ethnographic study of middle-school peer culture Eder, Evans, and Parker (1995) showed that girls, but never boys, could be derogated for showing interest in sex or sexual assertiveness. Making the first move was not tolerated for girls, with sanctions against female sexual agency including negative comments about dressing attractively. In other research with young adolescents, girls describe their fear of the epithet slut (Orenstein, 1994), and the dilemma of negotiating the narrow space between prude and slut (Tolman, 2002a). Whereas a tarnished reputation is a major issue for girls, the fear of which results in sexual desire being expressed mainly in the context of romantic love and commitment, boys are encouraged to be sexually active and their reputations tend to be enhanced by more sexual activity (Moore & Rosenthal, 2006).

Sexual subjectivity. Sexual subjectivity becomes an important dimension of an individual's conception of self during adolescence (Martin, 1996; Tolman, 2002a); it refers to one's perceptions of pleasure and experiences of being sexual. Sexual subjectivity has been described as "a necessary component of agency and thus of self-esteem. That is, one's sexuality affects her/his ability to act in the world, and to feel like she/he can will things and make them happen" (Martin, p. 10). For females, adolescence has been proposed as a key time when there is a decline in agency and self-esteem (Martin, 1996; Tolman, 2002a). Martin's (1996) qualitative studies with girls revealed that these declines were in part tied to difficulties with their possessing sexual subjectivity. For example, although there may have been some improvements in recent years, females still develop their sexuality in a cultural context of mixed messages and

double standards that prioritize male sexual values; the current cultural climate does not foster a sense of sexual agency in adolescent females (Baumeister & Twenge, 2002; Martin, 1996; Welsh Rostosky, & Kawaguchi, 2000). In fact, Tolman (1993, 1994) in line with Objectification Theory (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997), has argued that in this environment, girls often loose touch with their bodily feelings and desires and as a result feel less agentic and less sexually subjective.

Sexual self-concept, a closely related construct, refers to "an individual's positive and negative perceptions about him – or herself as a sexual being" (Rostosky, Dekhtyar, Cupp, & Anderman, 2008, p.277). The consolidation of one's sexual self-concept is considered an important developmental task in adolescence (e.g. Longmore, 1998). One aspect of the construct that has received a lot of research attention is the link between femininity ideology and sexual agency. Endorsement of conventional views of femininity are viewed as problematic in the field of sexual health because of their association with diminished sexual agency (Tolman, 2002a, 2002b; Tolman & Higgins, 1996), lower levels of sexual assertiveness, and poorer body esteem (Impett, Schooler, & Tolman, 2006). Sexual self-concepts are believed to reflect quite closely the gender role socialization that an individual has received, that is the lessons learned through social development that impart the roles, responsibilities, and obligations associated with being a woman or man (Parker & Gagnon, 1995).

Well-being. Perhaps in response to Fine's (1988) powerful critique of a cultural system that essentially silenced positive sexuality for girls, some researchers have taken up the challenge of investigating the factors that make up or predict positive sexuality for girls. As a result, we know that sexual experiences during adolescence influence several aspects of girls' overall well-being, such as self-esteem, happiness and positive sexual self-concept (Horne & Zimmer-

Gembeck, 2005; Impett & Tolman, 2006). We also know that positive sexual self-concepts and sexual agency are associated with sexual satisfaction (Impett & Tolman, 2006), which might in turn affect well-being. Therefore, an initial link has been established between sexuality and well-being for adolescent girls, however, further research is undoubtedly needed to augment our knowledge in this area. As in all domains of sex research, less is known about the impact of sexuality on the well-being of adolescent boys as compared to girls. Research has shown that boys tend to have higher levels of well-being overall (Gentile et al., 2009; McLean & Breen, 2009; Oliva; 1999) suggesting that stronger connections may exist between sexuality and well-being for boys as compared to girls; again, much research is needed to clarify our understanding of this association.

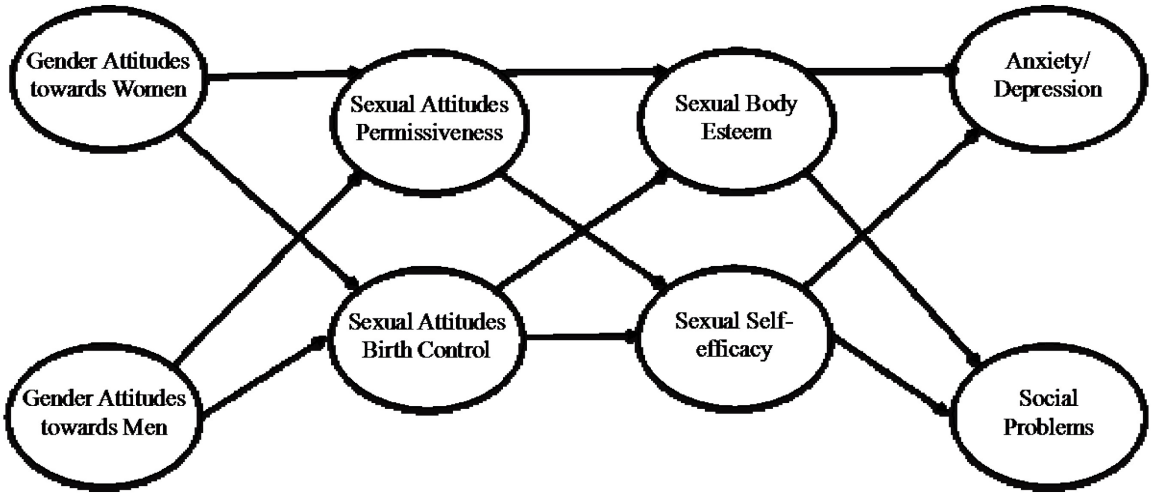
The Current Project

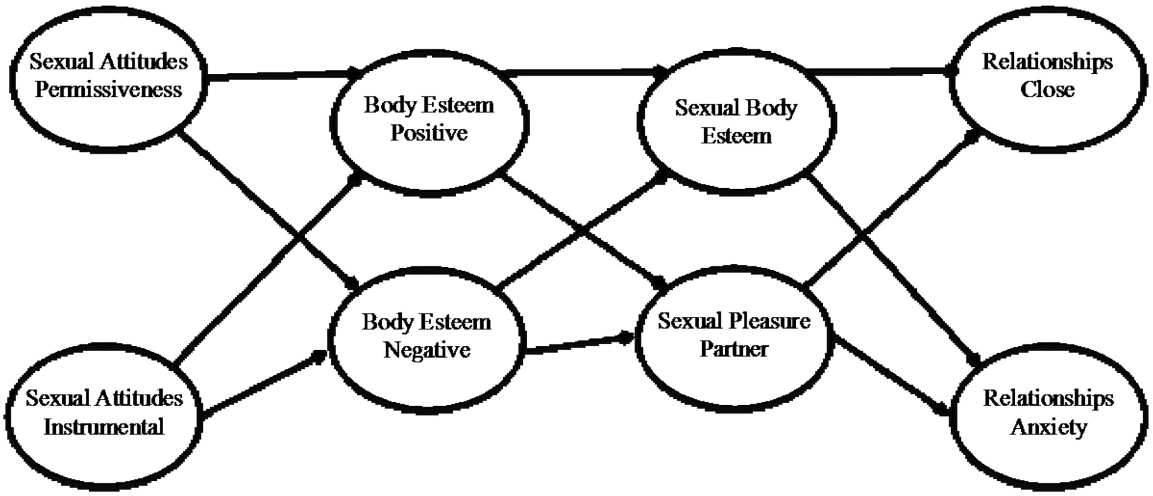
We believe it is a basic human right to embody a pleasurable, satisfying and meaningful sexuality; it is a right that is too often underappreciated and overlooked, particularly during the critical development period of adolescence. The current project is a very conscious reflection of this belief. While developing this dissertation we had three interrelated objectives in mind: (1) recontextualize research on adolescent sexuality within an analysis that included several other aspects of selfhood: gender roles, body image, well-being and close relationships; (2) contribute data and findings about adolescent boys' sexuality to a field of research in which girls and women are heavily overrepresented; and (3) broaden the scope of research to include positive aspects of adolescent sexuality such as desire and pleasure.

We met these objectives using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative methods, or approaches to collecting data that focus on the attitudes, experiences, beliefs and knowledge of an individual or group, can afford an important step in expanding the scope of the

literature on adolescent sexuality because they allow new and unexpected themes to emerge from the data (Tolman, Hirschman & Impett, 2005). The current two study project focuses on the ways in which internalized gender and sexual ideals impact one's sexual selfhood and relationship to one's body, which in turn affect one's close relationships and well-being. For example, we asked the questions: How do attitudes about gender roles relate to other aspects of sexual experience such as agency and then how is agency related to emotional well-being? Or, how do attitudes about sexuality impact one's relationship to one's body and sexual subjectivity, and what impact do these then have on how one relates to close others? In Study 1, we focused on the interplay of heterosexuality and gender; specifically, how it produces differences in socially constructed experiences of sexuality. We examined associations between gender role and sexual attitudes, sexual subjectivity and well-being (see Figure 0.2); we also analyzed adolescents' narratives for their understanding of the sexual double standard. In Study 2, we explored how sexuality becomes woven into personal and interpersonal experiences of embodiment by investigating associations between sexual attitudes, body esteem, sexual subjectivity and close relationships (see Figure 0.2); and by analyzing adolescents' narratives about sexual attraction, desire and pleasure.

Figure 0.2. Conceptual models for Study 1 (above) and Study 2 (below)





Note: N = 170.

Method for the studies

Participants

The participants were 170 tenth (n = 84) and eleventh (n = 86) grade adolescent girls (n = 89) and boys (n = 81) between the ages of 15-18 years (Mean for age = 15.82 years, *SD* = 0.76) attending two high schools in Montreal, Canada.

Procedure

Given the sensitive nature of the study's subject matter initial feasibility meetings were held with the school principal and guidance counsellor. Once their support for the project was established we organized a meeting with the all students in grades 10 and 11 to provide information about the goals of the study, the time commitment, confidentiality, special attention was given to this topic in order to ensure thorough understanding. Once the details and purpose of the study were communicated to the students we held a question and answer period for further clarification. We then distributed a consent form to be signed by the students and their parent/guardian and returned to their teachers. Using this recruitment procedure, a participation rate of approximately 89% was obtained.

The students completed a multi-section questionnaire package during class time, which took approximately one hour. The adolescents completed measures designed to assess (1) beliefs and attitudes about sexuality and gender, (2) relationship with self (i.e. sexual subjectivity and body image), (3) relationships with others (i.e. attachment), and (4) well-being. The students who participated in the study were rewarded with a gift certificate to a bookstore or a movie pass. Students were asked on the consent form whether they would be willing to participate in a semi-structured 1-hour interview about their sexual thoughts, feelings and behaviours. A subset of the sample of students who consented to the interview (*n* = 40; 20 girls

and 20 boys) was randomly chosen for participation in the sexuality development interview. The interviews were conducted by project staff and took place in a private room and were recorded, transcribed and verified. The interviewers asked questions based on a protocol (See Appendix A for interview questions) and also asked on the spot follow-up questions. Questions focused on sexuality, sexual relationships and sexual norms within the school culture.

Measures

Attitudes Toward Women Scale for Adolescents. (Galambos, Petersen, Richards & Gitelson, 1985). The Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWSA) is a 12-item self-report measure (e.g., "In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in making family decisions" or "Girls should be more concerned with becoming good wives and mothers than desiring a professional or business career"). Descriptive statistics concerning this variable represent a mean of the 12 items ($\alpha = .74$), with higher scores reflecting more conventional beliefs about female gender roles. Items are rated on a 5-point likert scale (1= Really disagree, 5 = Really agree).

Male Role Attitude Scale. (MRAS; Pleck, Sonenstein & Yu, 1994). The Male Role Attitude Scale is an 8-item self-report measure ($\alpha = .60$) (e.g., "I admire a (young) man who is totally sure of himself" or "A (young) man should be physically tough, even if he's not big"). Descriptive statistics concerning this variable represent a mean of the 8 items, with higher scores reflecting more traditional beliefs about male gender roles. Items are rated on a 5-point likert scale (1 = Really disagree, 5 = Really agree).

Youth Self-Report. (YSR; Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983; Achenbach, 1991). The YSR is a 112-item questionnaires for children ages 11-18 that assess a wide range of social, emotional and behavioural problems. Participants read a short statement then circle the number

(0 = Not true, 1 = Somewhat or sometimes true, or 2 = Very true or often true) that most closely reflects their perception of each item. The current study utilized two subscales: *depression/anxiety* (α = .61), e.g. "I feel worthless of inferior" and *social problems* (α = .65), e.g. "I don't get along with other kids". The YSR has been widely used in behavioural and social sciences and has well-established reliability and validity.

Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale. (BSA; Hendrick, Hendrick & Reich, 2006). The Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale is a 23-item self-report measure that assesses four sexual attitudes: *Permissiveness,* a 10-item variable (α = .85), e.g., "Casual sex is acceptable", with higher scores on the subscales reflecting more permissive attitudes; *Instrumentality,* a 5-item variable (α = .65), e.g., "The main purpose of sex is to enjoy oneself", with higher scores on the subscales reflecting stronger beliefs in the instrumental nature of sexual behaviour*; Birth Control* a 3-item variable (α = .76), e.g., "Birth control is part of responsible sexuality", with higher scores on the subscale reflecting stronger beliefs in the importance of birth control and *Communion* a 5-item variable (α = .62), e.g., "Sex is the closest form of communication between two people", with higher scores on the subscale reflecting stronger beliefs in the primary function of sex being to communicate or commune with another individual. Items are rated on a 5-point likert scale (1 = Really disagree, 5 = Really agree). All of the subscales but *Communion* were utilized in the current project. Descriptive statistics were determined using the means of the subscale items.

Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory (FSSI; Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006) is a self-report measure that assesses five aspects of sexual subjectivity: (1) *Sexual Body-esteem*, consisting of 5 items (α = .81); (2) *Entitlement to Sexual Pleasure from Self,* a 3-item subscale (α = .82), (3) *Entitlement to Sexual Pleasure from a Partner*, comprised of 4 items (α = .89), (4) *Self-efficacy in Achieving Sexual Pleasure*, a 3-item subscale (α = .82), and (5) *Sexual Self-*

reflection, which is a 5-item subscale (α = .71). Responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for each item. Sample items for the FSSI include: ‘‘I am confident that others will find me sexually desirable’’ (sexual body-esteem), ‘‘I think it is important for a sexual partner to consider my sexual pleasure’’(entitlement to sexual pleasure from partner), and ‘‘I spend time thinking and reflecting about my sexual experiences’’ (sexual self-reflection). Items are rated on a 5-point likert scale (1 = Really disagree, 5 = Really agree). The current investigations used three of the five subscales, we did not include *Entitlement to Sexual Pleasure Self* or *Sexual Self-reflection* in our measurement models. Appropriate subscale items were averaged to form composite measures with higher scores reflecting more sexual subjectivity. Descriptive statistics were computed using the means of the subscale items of interest.

Adult Attachment Scale. (Collins & Read, 1990). The Adult Attachment Scale (AAI) is an 18-item self-report questionnaire that includes three subscales. *Close*, or comfort with closeness and intimacy (α = .63), e.g. “I find it relatively easy to get close to others”. *Depend*, or comfort with depending on others (α = .76), e.g. “I know that others will be there when I need them“ and *Anxiety,* or worry about being rejected or unloved (α = .63), e.g “I often worry about being abandoned“. Items are rated on a 5-point likert scale (1 = Really disagree, 5 = Really agree). The two studies reported here made use of the *Close* and *Anxiety* subscales; descriptive statistics concerning these variables represent a mean of the subscale items.

Body Image. We measured body image using the Body Esteem Scale (BES) for Adolescents and Adults (BES; Mendelson, Mendelson & White, 2001). The BES is made up of three subscales: *Body Satisfaction Positive* (α = .92), e.g. “I think I have a good body”; *Body Satisfaction Negative* (α = .87), e.g. “I would like my body to be different” and *Perception of*

What Others Think (α = .84), e.g. "My classmates like the way I look". For the purposes of the current research project, only the *Positive* and *Negative* subscales were used; descriptive statistics concerning these variables were computed using a mean of the subscale items.

Limitations of scope

We acknowledge that the current research is set on a heteronormative stage, which unquestionably results an in incomplete representation of adolescent sexuality. For reasons of scope, sampling and expertise we chose to focus on heterosexual conceptions of gender and sexuality. We understand then that our research is exclusionary in that it does not discuss the subjective experiences of sexual minority youth[1]. We also acknowledge that our focus occluded a discussion of the role of race and class, dimensions of human existence that we believe are of tantamount importance to gender.

Statistical Analyses for Two Studies

Four statistical procedures were used in the two studies, each meriting explication. Three techniques were quantitative (latent group mean comparisons multi-group structural equation modeling, and testing for indirect effects) and one was qualitative (thematic analysis). This section is a description of the complex and lengthy analytic procedure used to examine the data. After these steps in the analytic process and the logic underlying them have been described we will turn our attention to the first study.

Quantitative Analyses

Comparing group means on latent variables. Comparisons of latent means were used to examine gender differences on the measures of gender role attitudes, sexual attitudes, sexual

[1] For an excellent overview of the sexual development of sexual minority youth see Diamond, Savin-Williams, & Dubé (1999).

subjectivity, body esteem, close relationships and well-being. The use of structural equation modeling to make mean comparisons was regarded as the preferred approach for two reasons. First, whereas MANOVA is thought to be more appropriate when groups are compared on a construct which emerges as a linear composite of the observed variables, structural equation modeling (SEM) is more appropriate with latent variable systems in which the construct itself is presumed to be manifested to different degrees in the observed variables (Bollen, 1989). Second, unlike MANOVA, SEM methods provide error-free measures of the latent variables by eliminating the random error of measurement for the observed variables (e.g., questionnaire items) associated with the latent variables (Dimitrov, 2006).

A five-step process was followed to examine the equivalence of all measurement and structural parameters of the factors across gender before testing for mean differences (Brown, 2006; Christ & Schlüter, 2012). According to Brown (2006) a key advantage of multi-group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is the examination of all aspects of measurement invariance and population heterogeneity across groups (i.e., factor loadings, intercepts, residual variances, factor variances, factor covariances, and latent means). We first tested the CFAs separately by gender to determine a parsimonious factor structure that fir the data for both girls and boys, we then ran the multi-group CFA. Then, in stepwise fashion we tested for equal factor structures (form invariance), equal factor loadings (metric invariance) and equal intercepts (scalar invariance). The analysis began with the least restrictive model (form invariance) as the baseline. Subsequent models, with added constraints, were tested against the baseline model using the chi square difference test. This process of testing for nested χ^2 differences assumes that the variability of the final, fully constrained model is nested within the less restrictive model. This method also allows for the testing of partial invariance, which

entails comparing group means when some but not all of the factor parameters are invariant. Our stepwise procedure to test for measurement invariance across gender was as follows: (1) Test the CFA model separately by gender; (2) test for form invariance (equal factor structure); (3) test for metric invariance (equal factor loadings); (4) test for scalar invariance (equal factor intercepts); (5) test the equality of factor covariances (this was done for sexual subjectivity, sexual attitudes and well-being, which are comprised of more than one factor). Based on the results of the analyses, we then tested for group mean differences.

Multigroup structural equation modeling (MGSEM). A Multigroup Structural Equation Model (MGSEM) with Mplus version 7.0 (Mplus 7.0; Muthén & Muthén 1998–2012) was used to test for gender differences in model path coefficients. Model fit was estimated in Mplus using 4 primary fit indices for the model fit as recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999): Chi-Square Test of Model Fit (χ^2), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residuals (SRMR). To account for missing data, models were estimated with Mplus full information maximum likelihood (FIML) using version 7.0. (Mplus 7.0; Muthén & Muthén 1998–2012).

In order to test for path differences between boys and girls, a stepwise multigroup analysis was conducted. The five steps of this process were (1) running an unconditional model with the entire sample; (2) running an unconditional grouping model; (3) testing for scalar invariance; (4) testing for equality of covariances and finally (5) testing for invariance of model paths. The first step entailed building a model based on past research, theory and preliminary analyses and running it with the whole sample (see Figure 1). Step 2, the unconditional model, was run with all parameters set to be free. This implies that the factor loadings, residual variances and regression coefficients can differ by gender, which places no restrictions on the

model parameters. Step 3, the test of scalar invariance, assumed equal factor loadings and regression coefficients with free residual variances between the genders. Step 4 assumed equality of covariances across groups. The models in steps three and four were tested against the unconditional grouping model using the χ^2 difference test (Yuan & Bentler, 2004). Based on the results of the test of measurement invariance, we moved to step 5, the test of model path invariance. In order to reduce the probability of Type I error, the twelve paths were first tested in three blocks of four paths. In Study 1 the blocks were: (1) gender attitudes on sexual attitudes, (2) sexual attitudes on sexual subjectivity and (3) sexual subjectivity on well-being. In Study 2 the blocks were: The four paths were constrained and invariance across gender was tested using the Wald Test of Parameter Constraints (Mplus 7.0; Muthén & Muthén 1998–2012). If the Wald Test indicated difference across gender then the four paths within the block were tested one by one.

Multigroup structural equation modeling (MGSEM) for indirect effects (Study2). Lastly, we ran a MGSEM to test for gender differences in indirect effects in the model. We conducted a bootstrapping analysis (BOOTSTRAP = 1000) by constructing confidence intervals around the estimates (Christ & Schlüter, 2012; MacKinnon, 2008; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Our analysis was guided by the work of Preacher and Hays (2008), whose approach emphasizes the strength of the indirect effect rather than the statistical significance of the observed associations between predictor, mediator and outcome. For small sample sizes that may not fulfill assumptions of normality, this nonparametric re-sampling approach is recommended, as this procedure reduces bias caused by the non-normality in the sampling distribution of indirect effects (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). The null hypothesis of no indirect effects is rejected if a value of 0 lies outside the confidence interval, which allows for more

stable parameter estimates (Geiser, 2010; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Based on the results of the bootstrapping we would then test for invariance of indirect paths across genders using the Wald Test of Parameter Constraints.

Qualitative Analyses

The qualitative analyses in the current project were used to enrich, support and validate our quantitative findings. Interviews were transcribed and then checked twice for accuracy. After excluding four participants for technical errors, portions of the interview in which participants spoke about relevant subject matters, such as gendered sexual norms and experiences of sexual desire and pleasure, were extracted and subjected to multiple readings by the first author. For the purposes of the first study, only the final question of the protocol was analyzed.[2] The questions that were analyzed for the second study explored the students' understanding of sexual attraction, desire and pleasure.[3] Using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which emphasizes the inductive development of analytic categories, the next step of the analysis involved reading these selections more closely for emergent themes (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). This method of analysis was chosen because it optimizes the use of qualitative data through thematic analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Smith, 1992) while also attending to the complexities of the participants' accounts and the meanings they give to their

[2] The interview question that was analyzed for Study 1 was as follows: "Are there girls/boys in your school who have a reputation for being more sexually active or open? If so, what do people say about them, what kind of reputations do they have?"

[3] The interview questions that were analyzed for Study 2 were the following: **1**. "Have you ever been attracted to someone sexually?" The interviewer then probed for student's experience of attraction: the circumstances in which attraction occurred, the traits that attract the participants and the feelings associated with attraction. **2**. "How would you describe sexual desire?" the interviewer then probed for the participant's experience of desire: circumstances in which desire occurred and the feelings associated with desire. **3**. "How would you describe sexual pleasure?" the interviewer then probed for the participant's experience of pleasure: circumstance in which it occurred, and the feelings associated with sexual pleasure.

experiences. Both patterns of meaning and inconsistencies within and across interviews were noted. Finally, transcripts were reviewed to assess the presence or absence of the inductively determined themes. In using this approach, we remained cognizant of the context within which the narratives were given and attentive to our own subjectivity as psychological researchers because both are likely to effect the generation of themes and data analysis in general (Charmaz, 1983).

Chapter 1: Looking under rocks: Testing assumptions about gender differences in sexual subjectivity in adolescence

Gender is one of the most important categories underlying human social understanding and behaviour. As a ubiquitous social category permeating language, social roles, division of labour, belief systems and cultural expectations (Maccoby, 1988), gender grounds our sense of self, both private and public, conscious and unconscious, in our every day lives. Gender is both personal and interpersonal and it determines how we think, feel and act. For most of us, gender is a natural, normal, unquestioned and unexamined part of 'me'. This very lack of examination and assumptions of 'naturalness' and 'normalcy' have led some to argue that gender is a primary site of production and reproduction of society's established structure of power, namely patriarchy (Bartky, 1990; Foucault, 1980).

Gender informs human development across the life-course. Traced across childhood and adolescence, it plays a significant role in determining, among other things, cognitions, emotions, behaviours and social interaction styles (Hibbard & Burhmester, 1998; Hill & Lynch, 1983; Maccoby, 1990; Ruble & Martin, 1998). Considering the pervasiveness and magnitude of the influence of gender on human development, it is imperative that investigations of sexuality in adolescence, or at any point during the lifespan, include gender as a key construct. The current investigation aims to illuminate some of these processes by delving into beliefs and attitudes about gender roles and their impact on sexuality and emotional and social functioning.

Development of Gender Role Expectations

Throughout childhood, children show a strong preference for interacting with members of their own gender (Bukowski, Gauze, Hoza, & Newcomb, 1993). In fact, gender segregation is one of the most powerful and pervasive social phenomena to exist in early childhood (Leaper

1994; Maccoby, 1990). It starts around three years of age, becomes progressively stronger throughout middle childhood (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1987), peaks during preadolescence (Sippola, Bukowski, & Noll, 1997), and remains a feature of social relations into older adulthood. As such, same-gender peer interactions provide a primary socialization context for young children (Fabes, Martin, & Hanish, 2007).

The last 25 years of research on peer relations has revealed that peers "provide essential socialization experiences that are necessary for the acquisition of several fundamental skills, for healthy personality development and for psychosocial adjustment" (Bukowski, 2003, p.221). Recent research has shown that from childhood into late adolescence the peer group becomes the most influential site of gender socialization (Harris, 1995; Leaper & Friedman, 2007). In fact, peers are vigilant in their enforcement of gender norms and generally disapprove of cross-gender-typed behavior (Martin, 1989). Interestingly, research suggests that males may react more harshly to gender-inconsistent behaviour in same-gender peers. For example, Fagot (1977, 1985) showed that male toddlers received negative reactions from other boys for playing with dolls, while girl tomboys were more accepted by their peers. Similarly, researchers found that boys displaying feminine characteristics were judged more harshly than girls displaying masculine characteristics (Zucker, Wilson-Smith, Kurita & Stern, 1995). Indeed, numerous studies have found that parents and peers are more likely to disapprove of gender-role violations in boys than in girls (Kane, 2006; Martin, 1990; McCreary, 1994; Sirin, McCreary, & Mahalik, 2004). One could hypothesize that the greater pressure to conform to gender norms and rigidity of those norms might lead boys to espouse more conventional beliefs about gender and hold more traditional gender role expectations as compared to girls; this is indeed what research has shown. For example, males, relative to females, typically have higher approval of

the division of labor, responsibilities, and behaviors based on gender (Galambos, Petersen, Richards, & Gitelson, 1985). Similarly, girls approved more than boys did of equality between males and females and became increasingly so, whereas boys became less approving across adolescence (Galambos, Almeida & Petersen, 1990).

More recently, Crouter, Whiteman, McHale and Osgood (2007) found that girls tended to become less traditional in their gender-role attitudes across adolescence whereas boys first declined and then increased in traditionality of gender role attitudes. It is the case in many if not all cultures that the masculine role generally enjoys higher status than the feminine role (Feinman, 1982), which may explain why girls adopt masculine traits more readily than boys adopt feminine traits (Leaper & Friedman, 2007). We see then that adolescents' attitudes about acceptable behaviours, roles and division of labour between men and women are to some extent a function of whether they are boys or girls. A central question of the current investigation is how do these gender role attitudes translate into sexual attitudes.

Gender Development in Adolescence

Adolescence is a time of much novelty and change, it is a critical transition period during which gendered behaviors may be enacted, questioned, changed or solidified (Galambos, 2004). Literature on adolescence emphasizes this period as a time of heightened differentiation of masculine and feminine personality characteristics and roles (e.g. Block, 1973; Galambos et al., 1990; Hill & Lynch, 1983; Huston & Alvarez, 1990; Richards, Gitelson, Petersen & Hurtig, 1991). Hill and Lynch (1983) argued that with the onset of puberty, girls and boys experience an intensification of gender related expectations from sources such as media, family and peers. Their Gender Intensification Hypothesis posits that behavioral, attitudinal, and psychological differences between adolescent girls and boys increase with age and are a result of increased

socialization pressures to conform to traditional masculine and feminine gender roles. They further argued that puberty plays a role in the differentiation of masculine and feminine characteristics by serving as a signal to socializing others (parents, teachers, peers, strangers) that the adolescent is beginning the approach to adulthood and should begin to act accordingly, that is, in ways that resemble the stereotypical male or female adult.

The few studies designed to test the validity of the theory have produced mixed results. Studies have failed to identify an intensification of gender-role identity across adolescents (Boldizar, 1991, Priess, Lindberg & Hyde, 2009; Wichstrøm, 1999); have shown intensification of masculinity but not femininity (Galambos, Almeida & Petersen, 1990); and have found consistent gender differences in femininity (Boldizar, 1991; Galambos, Almeida & Petersen, 1990; Priess, Lindberg & Hyde, 2009) but not in masculinity (Priess, Lindberg & Hyde, 2009; Wichstrøm, 1999). Taken together, this literature suggests that gender-role identity is already well established in childhood and does not necessarily intensify across adolescence and that girls are increasingly adopting traditionally masculine characteristics whereas boys continue to repudiate the feminine.

An alternative position to gender intensification is that gender conservatism should decrease during adolescence as youth begin interacting more with the opposite gender and therefore have more opportunities to develop understanding and tolerance for gender atypical behaviors. Theorists working within this framework focus on the development of gender role flexibility. Indeed, researchers have found that flexibility in gender-related preferences and perceptions of the self, as well as tolerance for others engaged in gender-nontypical behavior, increases throughout adolescence (Bartini, 2006; Katz & Ksansnak, 1994; Kohlberg, 1966; Signorella, Frieze, & Hershey, 1996) and that girls were consistently more flexible than boys

(Bartini, 2006; Galambos, Almeida and Petersen, 1990). Bartini (2006) found that attitude flexibility increased linearly over time; girls became more flexible about *other* gender than same gender traits and boys became more flexible about *same* gender than about other gender traits. Such flexibility may be an important component in the establishment of satisfactory companionship, intimacy, and the ability to communicate and resolve conflicts with romantic partners (Feiring, Deblinger, Hoch-Espada, & Haworth, 2002), as well as during sexual encounters.

Testing the relative merit of gender intensification versus flexibility is beyond the scope of the current project, evidence exists in support of both theories perhaps suggesting that both are at play depending on variables at the level of the individual, family, school and the broader culture. Regardless of the direction and magnitude of change in gender roles in adolescence, we hold that while youth are developing adult gender identities they are concomitantly discovering and experimenting with sexuality (Ehrhardt, 1996; Impett, Schooler, & Tolman, 2006) and it is precisely this dialogic process that we are interested in.

Gendered Sexualities in Adolescence

As was mentioned above, Social Scripting Theory (Abelson, 1981) provides an interesting social-cognitive lens through which to explore the ways in which gender attitudes may influence sexual attitudes and sexuality. Having established a general understanding of the content, structure, and function of social scripts, we can now take a closer look at social scripts as a site of interplay between sexuality and gender, specifically we will examine adolescent dating scripts.

Dating Scripts. Rose and Frieze (1993) examined whether traditional gender roles continue to define courtship interactions. Their research is based on the premise that the

fundamentals of sexual scripts, particularly gender roles, are acquired during childhood and adolescence (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Stereotyped gender roles designate the male as possessing the object of desire and the female as embodying the object of desire. These roles are expressed by men assuming the proactive role in initiating sexual behavior and women adopting the reactive role in setting the boundaries of sexual behavior. Rose and Frieze (1993) found that young adults' descriptions of a first date were highly scripted, particularly along gender lines. In their comparison of hypothetical versus actual dating scenarios they found that "hypothetical scripts appeared to form a core action sequence that was embellished during actual dates … a major emphasis of both hypothetical and actual scripts was a strong degree of gender typing" (p. 507). Their findings showed that:

> Men's proactive role encompassed initiating the date (asking for and planning it), controlling the public domain (driving and opening doors), and starting sexual interaction (initiating physical contact, making out, kissing goodnight). Women's reactive role focused on the private domain (concern about appearance, enjoying the date), participating in the structure of the date provided by the man (being picked up, having doors opened), and responding to his sexual overtures. Such gender differences serve to give men more power in the initial stages of the relationship (Rose & Frieze, 1993, p. 507).

They go on to say that their results suggest "changing social norms have not had much effect on female and male roles early in relationship development" (p. 508). The study provided evidence that gender scripts learned in childhood and adolescence inform later heterosexual behaviors and interactions. Moreover, their results indicated that adolescents rely more heavily on gender stereotypes to guide their behavior during initial romantic and sexual relationships when compared to later romantic and sexual relationships (Rose & Frieze, 1993). Perhaps as a result of this rigid adherence to gender role expectations, data show that gender differences in sexual behavior are greatest during the beginning of a youth's sexual development trajectory, but decrease over time as girls "catch-up" to boys (Mosher et al., 2005). Furthermore, gender

differences in sexual behaviours and attitudes are pronounced in adolescence but are significantly diminished by the time individuals reach adulthood (Hyde & Oliver, 2000; Conley, Moors, Matsick, Ziegler, & Valentine, 2011).

According to Maccoby (1998), established patterns of interactive styles among girls and boys may have a strong influence on gender-specific differences in sexual behavior throughout the life cycle (e.g., women's greater need for intimacy and men's emphasis on sexual performance). Given the ubiquity of gender segregation in childhood, for some children, limited experience with mixed-gender interactions may be related to their ability as an adolescent to be comfortable and form satisfying heterosexual relationships with the other sex (Maccoby, 1990). Ehrhardt (2000) concurs with Maccoby (1998) in her belief that childhood understandings and enactments of gender may determine how sexuality unfolds between young men and women:

> Girls and boys begin to have increased contact in adolescence under new parameters of physical attraction. They must adapt to cross-gender interactions with very little experience and very little guidance by adults, especially in our society where sex and gender education is at best sporadic. Boys and girls also come to these cross-gender interactions with expectations that they will encounter the same patterns of behavior they have experienced in their same-gender peer groups. Young women expect more reciprocal agreement; instead they are confronted with masculine patterns that are focused to a greater degree on performance, dominance, and competition (p. 11).

Researchers have begun to examine the implications of these relational patterns for adolescent sexual interactions. Preliminary evidence suggests relational styles generalize to the sexual context creating gendered patterns of influence during sexual negotiations and activity. Studies have shown that adolescent girls, compared to boys, are less assertive during sexual negotiations, engage more often in unwanted sexual behavior and are more negatively affected by initial sexual experiences (for a review see Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2009). Impett, Schooler, and Tolman (2006), found that girls who internalize norms of traditional femininity reported poorer sexual self-efficacy. Girls with low sexual self-efficacy may find it difficult to

voice their sexual desires and needs, engage in wanted sexual behavior and not engage in unwanted sexual behavior. One reason why girls who have internalized more conventional ideas about femininity may engage in more risky sexual behavior is because buying into ideas about what it means to be appropriately feminine is at odds with sexual self-efficacy and thus may undermine girls' ability to negotiate and enact protection behaviours (Impett, Schooler, & Tolman, 2006). They conclude that internalizing ideas about femininity may be especially disadvantageous to adolescent girls who are beginning to explore sexual activity, who, due to their lack of experience, may rely more heavily on gendered scripts. However, the extent to which internalizing traditional ideas about masculinity impacts boys' sexual health has yet to be determined.

Kaestle (2009) found that a greater proportion of young women as compared to young men engaged repeatedly in sexual activities they disliked and were more likely than young men to report repeated participation in these activities. Woody, Russel, D'Souza, and Woody (2000) found that adolescent females evaluate first intercourse significantly more negatively than males: they reported less positive emotional reaction, poorer outcomes, and a lower evaluation of their decision than did males. However, in the context of romantic relationships, researchers found no gender differences in the associations between sexual behavior and either relationship satisfaction or commitment, suggesting that the meaning of sex may differ for adolescent girls when it occurs within the context of a romantic relationship. Indeed, much research has supported the notion that romantic relationships are particularly critical for understanding adolescent girls sexual activity (Oliver & Hyde, 1993; Patrick, Maggs, & Abar, 2007; Regan & Berscheid, 1995; Rose, 2000).

Some of the research addressing gender differences in sexuality has shown that whereas adolescent boys face a nearly uniform positive environment with regard to sexual behavior, adolescent girls face inconstant, highly differentiated environments that send an array of conflicting messages about the desirability and costs of sexual behavior (Udry et al., 1986). It is not surprising then that in general, adolescent boys are more likely than girls to have sexually permissive attitudes, to be sexually experienced at earlier ages, to have more sex (including same-sex behaviour), to have had sex more recently, and to count more sex partners (Browning, Kessler, Hatfield, & Choo, 1999; Manlove et al., 2011; Mosher et al., 2005).

Interestingly, many of these gender differences diminish as youth move through adolescence. According to Feldman and colleagues et al. (1999), as girls gain more confidence and experience during later adolescence, they feel less compelled to justify their sexual desires and behaviors by locating them within a serious relationship. Young men, conversely, become more interested in having sex within an intimate relationship as they become more emotionally mature and socially skilled, and as both the novelty of sexual activity and its implications for social status begin to wane (Patrick, Maggs & Abar, 2007). We believe that the research is unequivocal: beliefs about femininity, masculinity and attitudes about gender roles play a critical role in sexual development in adolescence. If adolescents are relying on gender roles to negotiate their formative experiences of becoming sexual, these cognitive processes are an integral part of their initial learning about sex and intimacy and as such have the potential to shape what will eventually consolidate into an adult sexual identity. The literature linking gender development and sexual development is still in its initial stages and for reasons outlined above has focused largely on the subjective experience of girlhood.

The Sexual Double Standard. Despite a long history of public denouncement beginning over 150 years ago in the Declaration of Sentiments at Seneca Falls in 1848, the sexual double standard persists in norms of sexual behaviour (Crawford & Popp, 2003; Donovan, 1985; Milhausen & Herold, 2001). It relegates girls and women to the role of "sexual gatekeepers" whose primary task is to navigate the narrow sexual space between prude and slut (Diamond & Savin-Willimas, 2009). The sexual double standard might help explain why intercourse often represents an expression of status or power in younger adolescents boys and not girls (O'Sullivan, Meyer-Bahlburg, & Watkins, 2000; Savin-Williams & Diamond, 2004) or why adolescents girls rate sexual activity more positively in the context of relationships when this distinction does not exist for boys (Welsh, Grello, & Harper, 2003). In sum, the double standard and the gatekeeper effect are useful explanatory tools when examining differences in gendered sexualities between boys and girls.

Implications for Well-being

Emotional Well-Being. The pervasiveness of depression along with the extremely serious psychological, social and economic consequences to society makes it one of the most pressing mental health concerns of our time (Cichetti & Toth, 1998). The gender difference in adult rates of depression is one of the most consistent findings in the clinical literature on the disorder (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987; Wichstrom, 1999). Research with adolescents shows that the gender difference emerges between 13 and 14 years of age, and can be explained in part by increased developmental challenges such as pubertal development, dissatisfaction with weight gain and attainment of a mature female body, and increased importance of feminine gender role identification (Wichstrom, 1999). As girls leave girlhood and become women, they get depressed; the gender difference in depression persists across adolescence and well into

adulthood. Becoming women is depressing for girls. This has been explained in part through adherence to normative gender roles (Impett, Schooler, and Tolman, 2006), through the pervasiveness of sexual objectification (Bartky, 1990; de Beauvoir, 1961; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) and through sexuality development.

Research indicates that depressive symptoms were associated with earlier sexual debut among female adolescents, though this association did not hold true for males or for females as the sample aged into emerging adulthood. Furthermore, depressed affect is more strongly related to early intercourse for girls than for boys (Spriggs and Halpern, 2008; Whitbeck, Yoder, Hoyt, & Conger, 1999). Research on self-esteem found similar gender differences, with sexually active adolescent males reporting higher self-esteem than sexually active adolescent females or virgin males (Grello & Welsh, 2002). We see then that the process of becoming sexual, a task with profound implications for self-development and the development of self-in-relationship, can be aversive and lead to more feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness for girls when compared to boys.

In the last decade, a new body of knowledge about the sexual motivations and desire of adolescent girls and women has emerged. This innovative new direction in research has yielded investigations of sexual subjectivity (defined as having a sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure and sexual safety) and its interactions with psychological well-being. Researchers have introduced constructs such as sexual pleasure, satisfaction and self-efficacy into the study of adolescent sexuality in an attempt to broaden our perspective and offer more representative models of human sexuality. Results show that among adolescent girls, sexual subjectivity is associated with self-esteem and resistance to sexual double standards (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006). Using sexual self-concept (O'Sullivan, Meyer-Bahlburg, & McKeague, 2006)

to operationalize sexual subjectivity, Impett and Tolman (2006), found that young women who reported higher levels of sexual self-concept and greater approach versus avoidance motives also reported greater sexual satisfaction. We see also that the negative association between self-esteem and sexuality is upended when girls experience a healthy sense of sexual subjectivity. We are suggesting that sexual subjectivity could have a similarly positive effect on depressed affect in adolescence.

Social Well-Being. Relationships, defined as aggregations of interactions that endure over time and that form the basis for reciprocal interpersonal expectations (Hinde, 1997), are basic developmental contexts in which we learn skills such as self-efficacy, social competence, and emotion regulation (Collins & Laursen, 2004). Furthermore, we acquire basic knowledge about the world from our experiences in relationships. These skills emerge from early relationships and are refined continuously within them and in later relationships. According to Hartup (2009), well-functioning relationships have a bearing on mental and physical health, mortality, and well-being. In childhood, parent-child interactions are principal to healthy adjustment and functioning. In adolescence, variations in the quality of friendships have significant implications for individual functioning and well-being (Laursen, 1996). Furman and Buhrmester (1992) maintain that the developmental significance of friends is of paramount importance during adolescence, and that adolescents increasingly rely on their friends for intimacy, support, understanding, advice and comfort. Compared to childhood, adolescent peer relationships are less distant, more intimate, satisfy affiliative needs and prepare individuals for relationships with equals (Collins & Laursen, 2004). The development of romantic and sexual relationships in adolescence is intimately bound to peer relationships with dyadic romantic relationships often emerging from mixed-gender group contexts (Connoly, Craig, Goldberg, &

Pepler, 2004; Dunphy, 1963). To our knowledge, the current investigation is the first to examine the links between normative sexuality and social functioning.

Objectives and Hypotheses

The gendered sexual myth that the male sex drive is 'natural, simple and predictable' and that female sexuality is 'complex, capricious and unpredictable is reflected and reproduced in the research on sexuality, both in adolescence and adulthood. Female sexuality, which is often characterized as unruly, dangerous and problematic, has been the focus of the vast majority of sexuality research, particularly in adolescence. Conversely, adolescent male heterosexuality is most often painted as powerful, dominant, steadfast and unflagging, and certainly not in need of support, empowerment, research or treatment.

Feminists have concerned themselves, and rightly so, with the ways in which patriarchy controls and oppresses girls and women, for the consequences of living within a patriarchal culture for girls' and women's mental, physical, emotional and sexual health are undeniable. Although boys and men are not victims of patriarchy in comparable ways, the struggle inherent in the task of embodying cultural conscriptions of masculinity and the effects of the pressure to enact the role ascribed to heterosexual manhood certainly deserve our attention because as long as we collude with myths of masculinity that tell us that manhood is 'naturally' virile, aggressive and dominant we will not be able to truly change the impact that this gender role identity has on women, children and our culture at large. With this in mind, the current study had the following four objectives: (1) test assumptions about gender differences in gender roles, sexual attitudes, sexual subjectivity and well-being in adolescence; (2) examine the links between these constructs and how they differ for boys and girls; (3) speak with adolescents and

explore their beliefs and attitudes about gendered sexualities; and (4) broaden the conversation and scope of research to include boys.

Hypothesis 1. Comparing groups on latent variables using multi-group CFA

***Hypothesis 1a: Gender attitudes*.** Considering past research indicating greater gender role attitude flexibility in females as opposed to males, we expected to replicate this result with females endorsing lower, or less conservative, gender role attitudes.

Hypothesis 1b: Sexual attitudes. Although prevailing beliefs suggest that the genders differ notably in their sexual attitudes, a recent review of meta-analytic studies found only small gender differences in sexual attitudes with men having somewhat more permissive attitudes than women, however, the results were collapsed across adolescence and adulthood obscuring any age effects that may have been present. Based on the body of research indicating stronger reliance on gendered sexual scripts in adolescence when compared to adulthood, we predicted that boys would endorse more permissive sexual attitudes then girls. In terms of attitudes toward birth control, given the continued existence of the sexual double standard and cultural norms that relegate girls to the role of sexual gatekeepers, we predicted that girls would place a higher value on birth control as compared to boys.

Hypothesis 1c: Sexual subjectivity. Research to date on sexual subjectivity has focused on adolescent girls resulting in very little being known about adolescent boys' sexual subjectivity. Our cultural assumption is that boys enjoy a very positively reinforcing environment with regard to their sexuality, which would predict that boys in general would report higher levels of sexual subjectivity. As such, we hypothesized that boys would endorse higher levels of both sexual self-efficacy and sexual body esteem.

Hypothesis 1d: Well-being. Given the vast literature on gender differences in depression, we expected girls to report lower levels of emotional well-being, or higher levels of anxious/depressed affect. A recent meta-analysis examining gender differences in relationship processes suggests that boys and girls undergo different socialization experiences, each with its corresponding protective and vulnerability factors (Rose & Rudolph, 2006). However, because the meta-analysis revealed that girls are exposed to a wider variety of stressors both in the broader peer group and in their friendships, we predicted that girls would endorse higher levels of social problems.

Hypothesis 2. Given the absence of research linking gender attitudes, sexual attitudes, sexual subjectivity and well-being, our hypotheses are based on theory as well as research in other domains. We made three predictions about our model (See Figure 1.1): (1) given the finding that adolescent boys as compared to girls hold more rigid and traditional gender role expectations, we predicted a stronger associations between gender role attitudes and sexual attitudes for boys as compared to girls; (2) given the robust gender difference in attitudes toward causal sex (Petersen & Hyde, 2010), we expected to find a stronger association between permissiveness and sexual subjectivity for boys than for girls, we expected no gender differences in attitudes toward birth control; and (3) our hypothesis was based on the sexual double standard, which would predict a positive association between sexual subjectivity and well-being for boys (higher sexual subjectivity would be associated with lower anxious/depressed affect and less social problems), and the opposite associations for girls.

Results

Quantitative Results

Preliminary analyses. Means and standard deviations for the variables that were used in this study are reported in Table 1.1. The correlations between these measures are reported separately by gender in Table 1.2.

Hypothesis 1: Comparing groups on latent variables using multi-group CFA. The following procedure was followed to test for mean differences on the latent variables of interest: (1) Test the CFA model separately by gender; (2) test for form invariance (equal factor structure); (3) test for metric invariance (equal factor loadings); (4) test for scalar invariance (equal factor intercepts); (5) test the equality of factor covariances and finally (6) test for group mean differences. See Table 1.3 for results of tests of form, metric and scalar invariance of latent constructs across gender.

1a. Gender roles attitudes towards women and men. Initial confirmatory factor analyses were run with only the girls in the sample with all items of the scales in order to reduce the number of observed variables. We then ran the reduced item CFA with the males in the sample. In this way we reduced the number of items from 12 to 6 (for gender attitudes toward women) and from 8 to 5 items (for gender attitudes toward men). We then ran a multi-group CFA to determine which of these items were the strongest predictors of the latent constructs for both genders. In this way we ended up with three items from the gender roles attitudes toward women scale and three items from the gender role attitudes toward men scale in our multi-group CFAs. When examining the construct of gender role attitudes across the groups we found equality of factor structure, equality of factor loadings, full invariance across intercepts and equality of covariances across the two groups. According to Brown (2006) these findings allow for group mean comparisons on gender role attitudes. With males as the reference group, mean comparisons showed that *females* showed significantly *lower* gender

roles attitudes toward women (β = –.98, *SE* = .21, *p* = .00) as well as gender roles attitudes toward men (β = –1.13, *SE* = .28, *p* = .00). This finding suggests that adolescent girls endorse less traditional gender role expectations for women in the context of heterosexual relationships (e.g. "girls should be more concerned with becoming good wives and mothers than desiring a professional or business career") and for men in terms of norms of masculinity (e.g. "a man will lose respect if he talks about his problems").

1b. Sexual attitudes (permissiveness and birth control). Using the girls as a reference group, we began with a confirmatory factor analysis for the girls with the intention of reducing the number of observed variables from 10 to 5 for the subscale permissiveness. We tested the reduced item CFA on the boys and then ran the multi-group CFA using the 5 items for permissiveness and the 3 items from the subscale birth control to determine the factor structure that best fit the data for both genders. As a result of this procedure we dropped one item from the permissiveness scale so that we ended up with 4 permissiveness items and three birth control items. Multiple group invariance evaluation for sexual attitudes revealed equality of factor structure, equality of factor loadings, partial equality of intercepts and equal covariances across the groups, allowing for group mean comparisons on sexual attitudes (Brown, 2006). Mean comparisons showed that compared to males, *females* (β = –.92, *SE* = .20, *p* = .00) showed significantly *lower* levels of sexual permissiveness. Results also showed a trend towards females endorsing significantly *higher* levels of attitudes toward birth control (β = 0.32, *SE* = .18, *p* = .07). The outcome indicates that adolescent girls are significantly less accepting of sexual behaviors outside of a monogamous relationship (e.g. "I do not need to be committed to a person to have sex with him/her") than adolescent boys.

1c. Sexual subjectivity (sexual self-efficacy and sexual body-esteem). In this case, given the small number of items on each subscale, we were able to run a multi-group CFA using all the items from the two subscales to determine the factor structure that best fit the data for both genders; we ended up with 3 items for each latent construct. When examining the construct of sexual subjectivity across groups we found equality of factor structure, partial equality of factor loadings, equality across intercepts, and unequal covariances allowing for group mean comparisons on sexual subjectivity (Brown, 2006). Mean comparisons revealed that compared to males, *females* reported significantly *lower* levels of sexual body esteem ($\beta = -0.56$, $SE = .16$, $p = .00$). There were no gender differences in reported means for sexual self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.22$, $SE = .17$, $p = .21$). This result reflects that adolescent boys, as compared to girls, have more confidence in their physical attractiveness and sexual desirability (e.g. "I am confident that others will find me sexually desirable").

1d. Well-being (anxiety/depression and social problems). The construct consisted of two factors: anxiety/depression (4 items) and social problems (4 items). The multi-group CFA, determined that the factor structure that best fit the data for both genders comprised three out of the four observed variables for each latent construct. The subsequent tests of invariance revealed equality of factor structure, equality of factor loadings, equality across intercepts, and equal covariances between the groups allowing for group mean comparisons on well-being (Brown, 2006). Subsequent mean comparisons revealed that compared to males, *females* reported significantly *higher* levels of depressed/anxious mood ($\beta = 0.82$, $SE = 21$, $p = .00$), and were trending toward significantly *more* social problems ($\beta = 0.36$, $SE = .21$, $p = .06$). Here we see that in terms of both emotional and social well-being, girls reported more difficulties.

Hypothesis 2: Testing for gender differences in model paths using MGSEM. A Structural Equation Model was constructed using Mplus version 7.0 (Mplus 7.0; Muthén & Muthén 1998–2012) based on past research, theory, maximum likelihood estimation on a correlation matrix and hypothesized relationships between the variables of interest. In these models, latent variables were used to test the predicting role of the following constructs: gender attitudes on sexual attitudes, sexual attitudes on sexual subjectivity and sexual subjectivity on well-being.

Step 1**: **Unconditional model. The baseline model (See Figure 1.1) for the sample included direct paths (a) from gender role attitudes (attitudes toward women and attitude toward male roles) to sexual attitudes (permissiveness and birth control); (b) paths from sexual attitudes (permissiveness and birth control) to sexual subjectivity (sexual self-efficacy and sexual body esteem) and finally (c) paths from sexual subjectivity (sexual self-efficacy and sexual body esteem) to well-being (anxiety/depression and social problems). As well as covariances between the variables that make up the four constructs. The latent factor structures were identical to those determined by the multi-group CFAs except that one of the permissiveness items was dropped from the model resulting in three rather than four indicators of permissiveness. The overall model showed a good fit (χ^2 (236) = 298.20, p = .00; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .07). All but three of the direct paths in the model were found to be significant: sexual attitudes permissiveness on gender attitudes towards women (B = -.69, β = -.45, SE = .18, p = .01) and gender attitudes towards men (B = 1.19, β = .74, SE = .10, p = .00), and sexual attitudes birth control on gender attitudes towards women (B = -.12, β = –.42, SE = .17, p = .01); sexual body esteem on sexual attitudes permissiveness (B = .17, β = .27, SE = .09, p = .00), and sexual self-efficacy on sexual attitudes permissiveness (B = .23, β = .19, SE = .10,

p = .05) and sexual attitudes birth control (*B =1.81,* β = .27, *SE* = .09, *p* = .00) and finally, anxiety/depression on sexual body esteem (*B* = -.40, β = -.50, *SE* = .11, *p* = .00) and social problems on sexual body esteem (*B* = -.24, β = -.43, *SE* = .13, *p* = .00) and sexual self-efficacy (*B* = .10, β = .36, *SE* = .14, *p* = .01).

Step 2: Unconditional grouping model. Due to the small sample size, the model could not be tested separately by gender. Therefore, the next step was to run an unconditional grouping model with gender as the grouping variable. This model assumes that the factor loadings and intercepts are equal across the two groups. The fit indices for the unconditional grouping model were as follows: (χ^2 (552) = 721, *p* = .00; CFI = .85; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .11). The model did not present a good fit, suggesting differences across groups. A subsequent model representing partial form invariance across gender was run and showed a good fit (χ^2 (502) = 610.02, *p* = .00; CFI = .90; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .10). This model, which included residual covariances between SP1 and SP3 for the boys and AD1 and AD2 for the girls, replaced the unconditional model as the baseline model in subsequent analyses.

Step 3: Testing for scalar invariance. To test for scalar invariance across groups factor loadings and intercepts were unconstrained for each variable in eight successive models. Using the nested chi-square method, each model was compared to the baseline model to test for invariance across groups (See Table 1.4). Results indicated partial scalar invariance with a difference in the factor loadings and intercepts for two variables: sexual attitudes birth control and sexual subjectivity body esteem. The fit indices for the new model in which these two variables were not constrained reached a good fit (χ^2 (496) = 584.46, *p* = .00; CFI = .92; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .10) (See Table 1.5 and 1.6).

Step 4: Equality of covariances. To test for equality of covariances between the factors within the three constructs of gender attitudes, sexual subjectivity and well-being a step-wise nested chi-square procedure was followed. Firstly, a baseline model was run in which all the covariances in the model were constrained to be equal. Next, three separate models were run each with one covariance set to be free. Finally, the three models were tested against the baseline model to see if releasing the constraint on any of the covariances improved the model. Results of the analysis indicated unequal covariances between boys and girls for all constructs (See Table 1.7).

Step 5: Invariance of model paths. Thus far we have shown partial metric invariance, partial scalar invariance and equality of covariances across genders. We can now proceed to the test of invariance of model paths. The initial three Wald Tests showed no significant difference between boys and girls for the regressions of sexual attitudes on gender attitudes, a significant difference for the regressions of sexual subjectivity on sexual attitudes (*Wald Test Value* (4) = 11.46; $p = .02$), and no significant difference for the regressions of sexual subjectivity on well-being. The four subsequent tests of path invariance revealed a significant gender difference on two paths (See Figure 1.2).

The Wald Test of the regression of sexual subjectivity body esteem on sexual attitudes permissiveness was significant (*Wald value* (1) = 8.5; $p = .00$) and revealed a significant positive effect for boys ($B = .43$, $\beta = .47$, $SE = .14$, $p = .00$) and no effect for girls ($B = -.05$, $\beta = -.09$, $SE = .13$, $p = .51$). Likewise, the Wald Test of the regression of sexual subjectivity self-efficacy on sexual attitudes permissiveness was significant (*Wald value* = (1) 3.82; $p = .05$) and showed a significant positive effect for boys ($B = .50$, $\beta = .43$, $SE = .15$, $p = .00$) and no effect for girls ($B = -.03$, $\beta = -.02$, $SE = .13$, $p = .89$). Taken together, the results of the tests of gender

differences in model paths provided strong support for the gender similarities hypothesis (Hyde, 2005) in that 83.33% of the model paths were invariant across gender. Interestingly, both of the paths that varied significantly by gender originated at sexual attitudes permissiveness, suggesting that this variable may be critical in the process of gendered sexual development, which was indeed precisely what we found in our thematic analysis of the adolescents' accounts of gender differences in norms of sexual behaviour.

Qualitative Results

The overarching theme that emerged from our analysis of the interviews was that of the sexual double standard, which we believe can explain a significant proportion of our data pertaining to gender and sexuality. A double standard refers to a moral code or set of principles containing different provisions for one group of people than another. Specifically, the *sexual* double standard is an unwritten code of behaviour permitting men more sexual freedom than women and that positions men as the proactive consumers of sex and women as the passive, submissive objects of consumption. This moral code and gender dynamic was very apparent in adolescents' accounts of gender differences in sexual freedom of expression and behaviour:

> "Like the guys are always like bragging and stuff, and the girls are more like, they don't like blurt out anything into the open, whatever. Girls will usually keep it more between friends and I find that if a guy starts saying like 'Oh yeah I had sex with like this many people' his friends are all 'Yeah, good for you buddy!' but for a girl it's more 'Ok, you're turning into a slut'…I guess it's like, goes back to like, there's still some like sexism. Guys are always going to be thinking they're better and for girls it's like 'Ok well, you did that, shame on you'." - *16 year-old girl*

> "So she had like five guys under her, under her like…she was playing…and then when everyone found out they kind of hated her. They, and then she, she, since she's not at our school anymore…all her friends bitched at her for a solid hour…everyone just kind of hated on her. *When asked what the reaction would have been if she had been a he, he responded*: "I think he would have had a bunch of high fives." - *17 year-old boy*

We believe that the sexual double standard is a prescriptive set of norms outlining acceptable cultural expressions and representations of sexual selves and that as a shared belief system, it largely defines our culture's process of sexual socialization or what is termed here sexualization. The adolescents' narratives of sexualization were broken down further into three themes: (1) *sexual beliefs and expectations* associated with *femininity* and *masculinity;* (2) *developmental changes in adolescent enforcement of the double standard* and (3) *explanations for the existence of the double standard.* The first theme was broken down further into three subthemes: a) *morality*; b) *objectification/subjectification* and c) *enacting femininity/masculinity.* The results of the thematic analysis will be discussed further and illustrated with excerpts from transcripts in the following sections.

Sexual beliefs and expectations associated with femininity.

Morality. The dominant message about femininity as it pertained to sexuality, conveyed by both boys and girls, was that female sexuality is inherently a moral concern. Many of the adolescents spoke of sexually active and open girls using derogatory and devaluing language, for example using words such as "bad, slut, whore, dirty". These are the words of a 15 year-old boy: "a girl don't want to hang out with a slut and a guy doesn't want to hang out with a slut because she might have a disease or something or he doesn't want to loose his rep". To be a female and 'too sexual' was considered a grave offense by most of the adolescents, punishable by slander because girls are meant to be "good, innocent, and pure".

In the words of a 16 year-old boy: (*the girls*), they're viewed way more negatively than the guys. I would say morally, not to be rude, but as sluts, as yeah, they don't have a high reputation as people. Even their guy friends don't view them highly, no one respects them for what they're doing". He goes on to describe how their behaviour results in their objectification

or dehumanization: “but at the same time no one, like none of those guys that are friends with them tell them to stop. They would just take advantage of it I guess.” Several girls spoke of fear of being judged by their peers for engaging in ‘unacceptable’ sexual behaviour and several girls spoke about their fear of being judged as ‘not sexual enough’ and how this could also damage their reputations. As we hear in the words of a 17 year-old girl, female sexuality is being constricted on the one hand by the epithet ‘slut’ and on the other ‘prude’: “It’s annoying cause like you don’t want to be considered a prude, but you also don’t want to be considered a slut, so its like finding that balance” Thus, we see that an adolescent girl’s sexual path is quite narrow and flanked by cliffs, and to stray from the path means to fall into disrepute: “If you go against those rules you’re better not to say anything, you have to be very picky with who you tell because depending on who you tell other people can find out and judge you” (*16 year-old girl*).

Another indication of the moral nature of beliefs about female sexuality is the presence of the gatekeeper effect in the words of the adolescents. They overwhelmingly situated responsibility for sexual encounters with the girl, rather than the boy, even in the case of pressure, coercion or not wanting to “make the guy feel bad”: “they might want to force a girl to do some stuff like orally or physically and the girl maybe doesn’t want to but he still forces her. So like she gets like pressure and sometimes she goes on the act but after that she’s like “oh shit, did I really do that?” (*17 year-old girl*). Their accounts suggest that solely girls are responsible for what sexual behaviours do and do not occur, a reality that was reiterated in the feelings of regret and shame we detected in girls’ accounts of sexual experiences. For example, “you can just move on with your life if you haven’t done that, but if you have, then you have that thing holding you back, saying “I did this and I didn’t want to” and I don’t know, I just find that girls do too many things that they regret” (*15 year-old girl*).

The epithet slut or whore was clearly used amongst adolescents as a way of policing girls' behaviour. Many of the participants stated that girls are more often the ones engaging in relational aggression by imposing the moral code and its requisite punishments. "Girls are known for talking about other girls…I've heard a lot more girls making fun of girls for doing that…girls are more catty like that." Or "girls are bitches and they try to push other people down so they get higher up…they're doing most of the damage". In response to the question about what people say about girls who have a reputation for being sexually active or open, one girl responded: "Whores. Not in my opinion but in everyone else's opinion, but I have called someone a whore and a slut before but it's not because of what they're doing, it's like a feeling toward that person and taking it out by knowing that they do certain things and then calling them a slut and a whore because you have something against that person not because they actually, they're doing this. It's just a way to get your anger out towards that person" (*16 year-old girl*).

Interestingly, and in support of past research, the boundaries of acceptable female sexual expression expanded when a girl was in a committed relationship. In this way, we see that evaluations of female sexual expression depend on whether she is attached to a man: "You have to be very in control of the situation…god forbid anybody found out about you, you're automatically a slut if you haven't been in a relationship for like awhile", this rule is not without its provisions however, when in a relationship as when not, girls are expected to navigate the narrow social space between slut and prude: "unless you're been together like two weeks and then that's kind of slutty…but then if you wait too long you're a prude…there aren't too many girls in our grade now who just like have sex, except for that little group, the rest of the girls, they, I've only heard about them having sex in relationship" (*16 year-old boy*).

Moreover, we see how acceptable forms of female sexuality are dependent on loyalty and exclusivity in accounts of reactions to cheating on the part of girls when compared to boys: "my best friend was basically run out of town because of that (*cheating*), her boyfriend never got mad at his friend but everyone was freaking out at her saying you're such a slut…they (*the friends*) weren't mad at each other, no one gave him trouble because of it" (*17 year-old girl*).

Objectification. In line with Objectification Theory (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997), we encountered many references to the sexual objectification of female adolescents, most notably in the form of sexual passivity, or a distinct lack of sexual agency. Female sexuality was described over and over in passive terms, for example sexual behaviour was described as "giving her(self) up", or as the "he's getting the girl and she's being got" (16 year-old boy). Sexual willingness, or agency was described as being "easy", meaning, in the words of a 16 year-old boy to be "willing, when you don't have great standards that means you're willing to do sexual things". In this way, sexual agency on the part of girls was viewed as undesirable in the social world of adolescents: "the girl's put down because she's willing to do anything" (*15 year-old boy*).

In one instance girls were referred to as "things", in other words as objects rather than a sentient beings: "girls are just associated with just like clean, you know like in general I mean in history also you know girls are these pure you know sort of *things*". One 16 year-old girl described male sexual conquest at her school in the following way: "so its kind of like treating women like objects and after like they had enough, they had what they wanted, then they're done with you type if thing". It is conceivable that one of the consequences of objectification is the development of the 'harried gatekeeper' effect: "girls are seen as more protective ones, well

the less horny ones, and the ones who allow guys to have sex with them instead of the other way around" (*16 year-old boy*).

Enacting femininity. Many of the adolescents spoke of "their *actually* being" equality between the genders in terms of sexual desire and attraction, saying things like "some girls always want to have sex too…we don't hear as much about the girls, but I think it's like equal in life". They talked about a discrepancy between what girls experience and what they portray publicly, and explained this behaviour as a function of fear of opprobrium: "I think they're pretty much the same as guys except they don't want to show it, I think it's because they don't want to be seen as sluts and stuff". The following quote demonstrates how girls might feel restricted in their verbal expression of sexuality: "girls, they're a little shy about it, but when you get into it they're not that shy…but also they're shy, they're like in the middle. Like they don't want to just walk into a room and start talking about sex" (15 year-old boy).

It was apparent that some of the adolescents had internalized our culture's ideals of femininity, one girl in grade 11 talked about her experience of becoming sexual as follows: "for me as a girl, I would like to think that I have higher standards its like something that I care about…I don't want to be considered easy, I'm proud of my standards…I don't want to be taken advantage of". Her words suggest that she has adopted the culture's ideal of feminine sexuality as a protective measure against physical and emotional pain.

Surprisingly, but perhaps because most of the girls had already internalized conventional ideals of femininity, only one girl lamented the restrictions on her freedom of movement and expression: "yeah it bothers me a lot because whenever I'm having fun someone will be like, "well, why are you doing that?...they take it sexually…"oh, well, you just want to have sex with that person", "no, I'm just having fun" I find that everyone relates everything to

sex." One boy expressed empathy for how being a girl within the rubric of the double standard must be difficult: "I have heard a couple of friends complain about how it's not fair that if a guy hooks up with a ton of girls he's a player and if a girl hooks up with a ton of guys she's a slut. Of course I'm sure a lot of girls are frustrated by that". This would be an important area to explore further with adolescents in order to promote critical thinking and empathy within their peer groups.

Sexual beliefs and expectations associated with masculinity.

Morality. As we saw above**,** the task of becoming a sexual adult for a teenage girl is a distinctly moral one, replete with rules about good and bad behaviour, social judgment and rejection as well as feelings of guilt, shame and regret. In stark contrast to female experience, sexual development for adolescent males was not described in moral terms, or if it was it was nearly uniformly "good". With a few exceptions, for example, "a girl can think that he just gets with everyone and he won't be able to find anyone to be with" (*16 year-old boy*), adolescents' beliefs about male sexuality can be illustrated with the following quotes: "like its more normal for guys to be promiscuous, like people won't necessarily victimize them and call them a slut" (*16 year-old girl*), or "guys don't worry about that stuff as much, they don't really see it as being taken advantage of, they see it like a good thing" (*17 year-old girl*), or finally, "it's not seen as a bad thing at all for boys" (*17 year-old boy*).

Subjectification. In contrast to the narratives about female sexuality, male sexuality was firmly rooted in the individual and his subjectivity. Whereas female sexual desire and agency were often disparaged, male desire was spoken of as normal, natural and boundless: "Males, they have more sexual desires and they think about sex more because of hormones and all that stuff" or "boys, they want it more than us". Sexually active males were described as "smart,

heroes, bosses, and legends" and being sexual buttressed their sense of self-worth: "they have a certain confidence, they are the popular boys, they're sort of sure of themselves, being experienced makes them sure of themselves" (*15 year-old girl*). Boys did not seem to experience the same restrictions to their sexual expression that girls did: "the guys, like us, we're just open about it" (*15 year-old boy*). We hear the edification of sexual conquest in the words of one 16 year-old boy: "when a guy manages to get sex a lot its like you can, you can convince so many girls to have sex with you, like you're so smart", thus persistence and perhaps even coercion is valued by some as a heterosexual masculine attribute.

Enacting masculinity. As was mentioned above**,** the adolescents spoke of a hidden equality between the genders, saying things like "even though people say guys think about sex more and everything, I think that's just ridiculous, everybody has their desires and they might not show them the same way but they're all there". Also, contrary to the popular belief that girls are invested in romance and boys in sex, one 15 year-old girl asserted that "they're just saying things but they want to wait for the right girl". The adolescents talked about a difference between how boys enact masculinity on the public stage and what they say in private, intimate conversation, for example, a girl in grade 10 described this phenomenon in the following way:

> "Some guys, I find a lot of guys, they'll be like "oh yeah, I'd like to umm do this chick" you know or something but that's not really the way they feel, that's just they're just saying that because they think that all the other guys are gonna be like "oh yeah I'd do her too", you know they think they're cool or something. But when you talk to that person personally, like alone, you see their real side of them and they're like "oh no, you know I really I you know I have to be with someone I love".

This discrepancy between male's public and private selves was understood as a way of securing and retaining status and reputation amongst male peers: "I think they want to create an image that they're pros and stuff but they don't know anything but some people believe them; I think that it makes them feel like cool" (17 year-old girl). Or in the words of a boy in grade 10:

"if I was feeling insecure for some reason like I'd be like "this happened, that happened…I'd have more than enough ammunition", as such sexual activity can be used in the war to secure power and influence amongst male peers. Another adolescent spoke of the ways in which sexual conquest is woven into male peer group systems: "women are more perceived as innocent than men, its not that its right or anything, it's just the fact that like men can actually do that and kind of get away with it…like men have more of a boys club, like we have a kind of understanding." (17 year-old boy).

Mainstream masculinity was not above reproach however; girls and boys alike spoke about negative feelings towards males who enacted masculinity based on conquest and the objectification of women, using words such as "douchebag" and "asshole". A 15 year-old boy shared his thoughts about males who speak openly and publicly about their sexual activities: "he's like the typical jock sort of….like he appears to be really sexually successful person because he talks to all his jock friends about it, he spreads the word, he's all about status….I feel as though outside of that they're quite unsuccessful because they need to have status based on sexual relationships." His words convey a belief that enacting conventional masculinity is a way of bolstering an otherwise fragile sense of self.

Another boy spoke about a cost of conventional masculinity, namely the loss or absence of emotional connection during sexual activity: "they don't give it any importance, the sexual activity, they just do it and they don't feel anything from it…but like my friend, he'd actually have an emotional feeling for his girlfriend so it would be more important and more special". We see then that although boys are not made to endure public humiliation and social rejection as a result of being sexual, the idealized masculine heterosexual role was being questioned and evaluated critically by some of the adolescents.

As we saw with the girls, the boys also demonstrated internalized sexual gender ideals, in the following quote we hear how despite knowing that current beliefs and stereotypes are based on gender inequality, the adolescent supports these views because of a feeling he has: "girls would be viewed the same as the guys if there was gender equality but I don't know, personally, I kind of agree with the views that are already in place, like it just, it just feels wrong when a girl is sexually active that young and I guess for a guy its more expected but for a girl, I don't know it feels not right." (*16 year-old boy*).

Changing developmental norms. Several of the adolescents spoke about how beliefs and expectations about sexuality had changed since they started high school. The dominant message was that adolescents used to be more judgmental and less tolerant of sexual behaviour, especially on the part of girls, and that time has relaxed the rules and allowed girls more freedom of sexual expression: "it's gotten easier cause…I was more judgmental because I wasn't exposed to as many things, it's become more normal now, I think people are less judgmental and more open, you can do more things than when you were younger without people talking about it. Maybe when we were younger we would have seen it as wrong, now it takes a lot more to be considered a slut" (*17 year-old girl*). But despite it "becoming more normal to do those kinds of things", one girl noted that "there are reputations that have followed those people" (*17 year-old girl*). Based on what they have said about reputations, we can surmise that it is the girls who have been more negatively affected by entrenched reputations. According to this sample of adolescents, the consequences of norm transgression are greatest in early adolescence, which indicates that this would be the optimal time to intervene in this process and educate young people about healthy positive sexuality and the far reaching impact that gender role expectations can have on sexual development.

Explanations for the existence of a sexual double standard. Several of the adolescents demonstrated the ability to think critically about sexual gender role expectations. When an adolescent spoke about the double standard in implicit terms, which was the case in most interviews, the interviewer asked for their explanation for the difference in sexual gender norms. What follows is some of their responses:

> If a girl does it its not accepted in society and that could also go back to like how men had higher power than women all through history so it could go back to that situation. It could be because women were always treated like men had control over them and it's still like that in countries all over the world where women don't have rights, like they can't choose whether or not to go on birth control and they can't choose when not to have a baby so it just goes back to how men have control over women and if a woman does something its not acceptable, but if a man does something it is acceptable. It also plays in with the media, how the media made people think that if a woman dresses a certain way then they like give her names like slut, whore, but if a man dresses a certain way like it doesn't really matter. - *16 year-old girl*

> I wouldn't even be thinking about if girls are as horny as guys if our society wasn't becoming more equal in terms of gender and it is but there's still that difference of guys being superior to girls….so in the big society the men own the most money, the men own the most business, the majority of women aren't seen as respectfully as men are, then if you take that and you put it into a town like Montreal like the same thing happens. - *16 year-old boy*

> It was not even 6 decades ago that men were the working class and women stayed at home and were in the kitchen, our parents grew up right after that, they grew up kind of in the women's rights times…so their parents are more traditional…we're affected both by the tradition and the new rights movement….I guess some people are more "women's rights, women can do whatever they want" but a lot of us are still influenced by like the past and traditional, like men have to be in control and they can do whatever they want. Men can be promiscuous but women if they're promiscuous then they're a harlot or they're a slut, you have to be very careful about the way people are brought up. - *16 year-old girl*

> Well I guess there's like a double standard and its probably because of how girls are supposed to be and how society thinks they should be and how guys are supposed to be, like guys are supposed to be like very masculine and assertive and like full of testosterone and they should be doing those kinds of things but girls are supposed to be like more innocent and they shouldn't be doing that so early….well yeah, I definitely think there's a double standard. - *16 year-old boy*

We hear in their words that adolescents are deconstructing conventional beliefs about masculine and feminine sexuality and linking those beliefs to our patriarchal social structure. They are doing this spontaneously, meaning without adult guidance or formal educational channels such as curricula, workshops or focus groups. If we want to promote healthy sexual development in adolescence, we believe that dialogue around issues of gender and sexuality is not only possible at this age but also imperative. Adolescents are already thinking and possibly talking about these issues, we feel that it is our responsibility to frame the conversation and create safe spaces to question and promote empathy between and amongst the genders.

It should be noted here that although the dominant message gleaned from the final question of the interviews was of the continued existence of a sexual double standard, there were several adolescents, both girl and boys, who categorically denied any difference between the genders in this regard. There were also a few of the interviewed youth who did not know of boys and/or girls in their school who had a reputation for being more sexually active or open. Their perspectives suggest that not all adolescents are equally aware or affected by the adolescent culture of sexuality. Sex education and intervention initiatives would of course need to be sensitive to these differences.

Discussion

The current project aimed to extend the efforts of researchers in the area of adolescent sexuality by expanding our knowledge of normal development, examining the relationship between gender roles and sexuality and by including both boys and girls in our investigation. We approached the topic with a frame of positivity, choosing to focus on well-being rather than

risk in an effort to promote a paradigm shift in the field. We feel that we have succeeded in our aims and what follows is a discussion of the implications of our findings.

Quantitative Findings

Hypothesis 1: Interpretations and Implications. This first wave of analyses looked at mean differences across gender on the following constructs: gender roles attitudes, sexual attitudes, sexual subjectivity and well-being. We found differences on all accounts, in the direction of our predictions, meaning that past findings about gender differences in these domains still hold true. The magnitude of the differences, however, ranged considerably from very small in the case of sexual subjectivity *self-efficacy* (with boys reporting higher levels of the construct) and sexual attitudes toward *birth control* (with girls endorsing higher levels of the attitude), to very large in the case of sexual attitudes *permissiveness* (boys permitted themselves more sexual freedom) and *anxious/depressed* affect (girls reported higher levels of these negative emotions).

There was a medium effect size for the gender difference on *gender role attitudes toward men and women*, with boys in both cases holding more traditional gender role beliefs. Our findings showed that at this age boys and girls hold different beliefs about acceptable gender norms, and is in line with past research indicating that girls are consistently more flexible when it comes to their beliefs about gender roles (Bartini, 2006; Galambos, Almeida and Petersen, 1990). There was also a medium effect size for the difference in levels of *sexual subjectivity body esteem*, which indicated that boys felt more sexually desirable and more confident in their ability to attract a sexual partner.

In our opinion, the most striking finding from these analyses is the very large gender difference in sexual attitudes about *permissiveness*. Let us remind you here that these items

included questions such as “I do not need to be committed to a person to have sex with him or her” and “I would like to have sex with many partners”. In general, the girls applied less permissive, or more restrictive statements to themselves, suggesting an internalization of cultural sexual ideals. The same seemed to be true for the boys who, in general, endorsed more permissive statements about themselves. Hence, we see evidence for the internalization of the sexual double standard.

Considering that education and conscientious dialogue about sexuality is largely absent from the lives of adolescents, it is our contention that they gleaned most of their beliefs about gender differences in sexuality from the media, Internet, pornography and each other. This is especially troubling because often adolescents’ capacity for critical and abstract thought is not fully developed, therefore without the guidance of adults in their communities, youth become vulnerable to the negative consequences of rigid moral codes both as enforcers and victims. Moreover, the sexual double standard valorizes unwillingness or an absence of sexual desire in young women, while it encourages conquest and consumption in young men. This gender dynamic can set the stage for unhealthy heterosexual encounters, including ones involving coercion and unwanted sexual activity. As such, the sexual double standard is an important point of intervention in our efforts to improve relations between the genders and promote healthy sexuality development.

In sum, the analyses of mean differences revealed that in general boys, as compared to girls, endorsed higher levels of emotional well-being, reported higher levels of sexual subjectivity, and held more permissive attitudes about sex as well as more conventional beliefs about gender roles. Taken together, we might say that the data evokes a fluid and coherent integration of gender and sexuality. The picture for girls was more disjointed; for example, they

held more flexible beliefs about gender roles, but allowed themselves less sexual freedom and reported less sexual subjectivity, suggesting a disruption in the interrelationship of gender and sexuality, which may partially account for lower levels of emotional well-being. The following sections will help shed light on the connections between the different constructs and how they hang together differently for boys and girls.

Hypothesis 2: Interpretations and Implications. The second wave of analyses involved building a statistical model for the study and then testing for gender differences in the strength and/or direction of the model's paths. We made three predictions about our model: (1) given the finding that adolescent boys as compared to girls hold more rigid and traditional gender role expectations, we predicted stronger associations between gender role attitudes and sexual attitudes for boys as compared to girls; (2) given the robust gender difference in attitudes toward causal sex (Petersen & Hyde, 2010), we expected to find a stronger association between permissiveness and sexual subjectivity for boys than for girls, we expected no gender differences in attitudes toward birth control and; (3) our hypothesis was based on the sexual double standard, which would predict a positive association between sexual subjectivity and well-being for boys, and a negative association between the variables for girls. Although certainly not desirable, it is often thought provoking to be confronted with findings that are contrary to expectation. We found differences where they were not expected, and no differences where they were expected. Overall, our model demonstrated strong associations between the constructs, and mostly similarities across gender.

Firstly, we will examine the relationship between gender role attitudes and sexual attitudes. In the absence of gender differences, we found support for a process that may underlie the double standard. For both girls and boys, we found a *negative* relationship between attitudes

toward female gender roles and permissiveness and a *positive* relationship between attitudes toward male gender roles and permissiveness. In other words, the more one endorsed conventional male gender roles the more permissive their attitudes toward sex. In contrast, the more one subscribed to conventional beliefs about female gender roles, the less permissive their attitudes toward sex.

We see then that for these adolescents, traditional gender role expectations are associated with male sexual freedom and female sexual restriction. Said another way, gender role expectations, which may reach their apogee of rigidity during adolescence, confer boys with significantly more sexual freedom than girls. Meaning that during the critical years of early sexual development, girls are met with expectations of restraint and constriction, while boys are encouraged to express and explore their sexualities. Determining the developmental consequences of this gendered double standard is beyond the scope of the current investigation. However, if girls progressively learn to discount their own bodily experiences of sexual desire and dismiss their own motives for sexual contact (Tolman, 2002b), it should not be surprising then that the number one form of sexual dysfunction among North American women is low or non-existent sexual desire (Laumann, Paik, & Rosen, 1999). Indeed, in the words of Diamond and Savin-Williams (2009): "How are girls supposed to consistently suppress and deny their sexual desires from childhood through adolescence, and then suddenly blossom into healthy, lusty, sexually self-confident adults at the magical age of 18?" (p. 490).

Secondly, we found gender differences in the associations between sexual attitudes and sexual subjectivity. As in the first wave of analyses, the gender differences were rooted in permissiveness, such that it was positively associated with sexual self-efficacy and sexual body esteem for boys only. It makes logical sense that sexual freedom, or permission to explore your

sexuality, might engender feelings of self-efficacy and confidence or in other words, sexual subjectivity. Since girls are too often denied this freedom, or are not given permission to explore their sexualities, it also makes sense that sexual subjectivity was not determined by permissiveness for adolescent girls.

The only sexual attitude that was associated with sexual subjectivity for girls was sexual attitudes birth control, which was positively associated with sexual self-efficacy. Though the gender difference was not statistically significant, this pathway was found to be significant and positive for girls and not significant for boys, suggesting that when girls experience empowerment around their decisions to use birth control it increases their feelings of sexual self-efficacy. This finding complements past research showing that girls who report low levels of sexual self-efficacy are less likely to voice their sexual desires and needs, and are more likely to engage in unwanted sexual behavior (Impett, Schooler, Tolman, 2006). It follows then that asserting one's desire or right to use birth control during a sexual encounter would be positively associated with sexual self-efficacy, especially for girls who might see themselves as more responsible for avoiding pregnancy.

Finally, though none of the gender differences were statistically significant, three of the pathways between sexual subjectivity and well-being were statistically significant for girls and not for boys. The association between sexual body esteem and depressed affect was negative and significant for the girls in our sample. We know from the body image research that body esteem and depressed affect are negatively correlated for girls (Stice, Hayward, Cameron, Killen & Taylor, 2000) and for boys (Blashill & Wilhelm, 2014); our findings take this one step further by showing girls who feel more attractive and sexually desirable also report lower levels of depressed affect suggesting that the ways in which adolescent girls embody their sexualities

impacts their emotional health. Understanding the ways in which healthy sexual embodiment enhances emotional well-being for girls is a critical avenue for future research (Tolman, Bowman, & Fahs, 2014), however, our findings make clear that if we want to promote emotional well-being in adolescent girl, one way of doing so is to promote positive feelings about their developing sexual bodies.

The paths from sexual self-efficacy to depressed affect and social problems were both positive and significant for girls only. This finding suggests that for girls, knowing what you want and being able to ask for it is associated with more depressed affect. It is possible that girls who reported higher levels of sexual self-efficacy are also more sexually assertive. We know from the thematic analyses that for girls, sexual assertiveness comes at a social cost, namely that of rejection and reproach from their peers. Therefore, seeing that sexual assertiveness is discouraged in girls and women, and defies cultural norms of female sexual passivity, one could posit that this process of sexual socialization, which in essence demands a subversion of desire and sexual agency, results in some girls, especially the more assertive ones, feeling negatively toward themselves.

It could be said that this finding contradicts previous studies linking sexual subjectivity to positive outcomes such as higher self-esteem, resistance to the sexual double standard (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006) and greater sexual satisfaction (Impett & Tolman, 2006). Perhaps sexual subjectivity overall predicted positive outcomes, however, we looked at a specific subscale, sexual self-efficacy, and given the substantial belief in the sexual double standard within the adolescent peer culture, we feel that in this context it makes sense that sexual self-efficacy would be negatively associated with well-being for girls, both on a personal and on a social level. Overall, we can tentatively say that sexual subjectivity has more of an impact on

well-being for girls than boys, with the caveat that the differences were not statistically significant for our sample. Of course this is not to say that sexual subjectivity is not relevant to the well-being of boys, quite to the contrary, we believe it is enormously relevant, just perhaps not to the same degree as it is for girls.

In sum, our quantitative findings revealed more gender similarities than differences, however, interesting differences were found in the associations between sexual attitudes and sexual subjectivity. Mean attitudes about sexual freedom or permissiveness differed significantly by gender and had interesting implications for adolescent male sexual subjectivity. Boys reported feeling more attractive and sexually desirable when they allowed themselves more sexual freedom. Moreover, for the boys, allowing themselves more sexual freedom was associated with sexual assertiveness and agency. We see then that sexual permissiveness is a critical component of healthy adolescent male sexuality development.

As in all aspects of development, freedom to explore and learn from new experiences is fundamental to the process of healthy sexual development. We believe that in our culture girls are not granted the sexual freedom needed to develop a healthy sense of sexual subjectivity, a reality that is reflected in our findings. More research is needed to determine the predictors of adolescent female sexual subjectivity and great efforts need to be made to challenge the sexual double standard so that both boys and girls have the opportunity to explore their developing sexualities in an atmosphere of support and encouragement.

Qualitative Findings

The major theme that emerged from the analyses was of the sexual double standard. This moral code and gender dynamic was very apparent in adolescents' accounts of gender differences in sexual freedom of expression and behaviour. The adolescents mostly subscribed

to these unequal and unjust norms of heterosexual behavior without question. Their beliefs were unexamined and often the double standard was described as 'just feeling right". We believe that this reveals a process of internalization in its later stages, meaning that the adolescents had already internalized the beliefs and now held them to be 'true'. Beliefs or schemas are easier to challenge and change before they have been consolidated and integrated into a person's sense of self. Therefore, if we are to address and right the imbalance inherent in the sexual double standard our findings indicate that we should do so before late adolescence.

Sexual beliefs and expectations associated with femininity and masculinity.

Morality. Adolescent female sexuality was a moral concern for all the adolescents. They spoke with conviction and assurance about the perils of female sexuality: loss of reputation, judgment from peers, and ostracization. They seemed justified in their beliefs and seemed to feel that the punishments fit the crime, so to speak. The girls spoke about the precarious negotiation of the 'right amount of sexual', not too much and not too little. They described a seemingly impossible task of fitting their sexualities into the confines of acceptability. Interestingly, relationships provided girls with a safe haven from reproach, albeit within certain parameters. Again, here we see that female sexuality was allotted a very narrow field of expression; sexuality was beyond reproach in a relationship as long as the girls did not wait too long, or not wait long enough before being sexual.

The adolescents placed the moral responsibility for sexual action firmly on the shoulders of the female participants. Many of them described a gender dynamic in which the boys actively pursued sexual activity while the girls allowed, tried to rebuff or rebuffed their advances. This gender dynamic has been described as the "gatekeeper effect", a term that perhaps only reflects part of the picture. We believe that "harried gatekeeper effect" more aptly

describes the female experience in the heterosexual interactions of this kind in our study. Both girls and boys talked about a heterosexual script based on pressure, coercion, crossing boundaries and often times feelings of regret and shame. Our data revealed that too often, processes akin to sexual harassment and bullying underlie these interactions. As such we feel confident in claiming that this gender dynamic is harmful to adolescents and should be brought out into the open, deconstructed and demystified through dialogue.

A very interesting and complex finding was that girls were often the more vocal admonishers of female sexual behaviour. In other words, the girls did a very good job of policing each other and enforcing the moral code of the sexual double standard. Why might this be? Why would a disempowered group uphold the rules of those in power and oppress its own members in a spiteful and at times vicious manner? This is a complex issue involving among other things, group and power dynamics, internalization of cultural ideals and identity development. Perhaps the girls actively distanced themselves from disgraced female identities as a way of securing power and safeguarding their reputations. They created a temporary shelter from scrutiny and judgment by pointing fingers at and naming those who were 'bad', and as such drew attention away from themselves and protected their sexual identities.

Thus we see that girls bear a heavy burden of moral responsibility during heterosexual encounters in adolescence. In stark contrast, male sexuality was almost never described in moral terms, or at least boys were not subjected to the same strict regulatory norms of sexual behaviour and as such enjoyed considerably more sexual freedom. In fact, male sexuality was almost always cast in a positive light. Our interviews suggested that adolescent male sexuality was championed despite knowledge of the imbalance and injustice created by the sexual double standard.

Some of the adolescents voiced their frustration or empathy on account of the double standard, but resignation and acceptance of the status quo inevitably followed these moments of solidarity. These moments of solidarity, compassion for the experience of the other, and perspective taking, are the ideal starting point for dialogue around issues of gender and sexuality. We were encouraged to discover that adolescents were engaging in perspective taking without adult guidance because it means there a foundation exists for future workshops or focus groups. The following section discusses another gendered sexual process, namely sexual objectification and subjectification.

Objectification and subjectification. Sexual objectification was present in the adolescent narratives in several different ways. Firstly, if we contend that the suppression of female sexual agency increases the likelihood that girls will deny their sexual desires, it may well also facilitate a process of self-objectification. According to Frederickson and Roberts (1997), dissociation or distancing from one's bodily needs and sensations is a powerful predictor of internalized objectification. We are suggesting here that our data provides evidence for *sexual* self-objectification, a process by which girls are socialized to experience their bodies, not only as objects, but also as objects of male desire. Thus, as girls learn to shape their bodies to fit the ideals of the male gaze, so too they mold their desires to meet the needs of the male sex drive. This points to an interesting intersection of Objectification Theory and sexuality development in adolescence. To date, there has been surprisingly little research addressing the sexual implications of Objectification Theory making this finding particularly significant.

Our findings suggest that sexual objectification could also be implicated in the development of the 'harried gatekeeper' effect, in the sense that internalized sexual objectification might facilitate a subversion of one's own sexual needs and wants in the service

of another's. If a large part of your sexual identity is predicated on your ability to embody the needs and desires of your male sexual partners, it makes logical sense that you would eventually assume responsibility for the outcomes of those needs. Said another way, through a mechanism of sexual self-objectification, girls may internalize and embody male sexual needs and in the process undertake responsibility for their management.

Alongside the process of sexual objectification we saw a parallel process, which we labeled sexual subjectification. Subjectification is a process of uninterrupted integration of one's sexual identity into one's more general sense of self, which we posit enables the individual to value their sexuality as an integral part of themselves. The process was distinctly masculine in that male sexuality was revered and given freedom of expression, and sexual males were elevated to positions of social privilege. As we have seen, this was not the case for females. Thus, based on our findings that females are socialized more often through a process of sexual objectification and males through a process of sexual subjectification, we feel confident in our assertion that sexuality development, in so far as it entails integrating one's sexual identity into one's sense of self, is a less complicated or more straightforward process for adolescent males. This is in support of our quantitative findings that revealed a more cohesive and fluid integration of gender and sexuality for the males in our sample as compared to the females.

Enacting femininity/masculinity. A very interesting finding that emerged from these analyses is what we termed "enacting femininity/masculinity', a process which suggests a layered social reality, one in which myriad representations of the self co-exist. William James' (1890) concept of the 'subjective self' or 'self-as-me' and 'self-as-I', as well as narrative theories of self, understand identity as an ongoing work, one that develops and changes over

time and across dimensions of one's life, including sexuality (Cohler, 1983). Narrative theories of self explain how people internalize and evolve a dynamic and often contradictory sense of self – or multiple selves - through story and narrative. Perhaps the self could be organized in terms of public and private selves, reflecting differences in how we represent ourselves in public or in groups and how we are in private or more intimate settings.

We contend that gender differences in sexuality such as the double standard are predominantly enacted on a public stage, because the characters (or selves) in the drama are representations of social ideals while the storylines are based on master cultural narratives and dominant heterosexual scripts (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). In our cultural as in many cultures, gender *difference* is valued and emphasized, which could explain why many of the adolescents described their peers as acting in more stereotypically gendered ways when they were in public. This would also explain why many adolescents referred to hidden similarities between the genders, similarities that were only expressed in private. We are suggesting that gender similarities are hidden because they belie myths and scripts of gender difference upon which adolescent sexual narratives and social structures rest. Of course, enacting gendered sexual scripts can have an enormous impact on private, sexual relationships as well. But often, when sexual activity is pursued in the service of a cultural gender myth, the interaction is co-opted by the script and consequently looses its private or intimate quality. Our challenge then is to help adolescents forge new heterosexual scripts, ones that allow them to maintain intimacy and connection during sexual encounters and permit them to be true to themselves publicly and privately.

A final interesting finding from our qualitative analyses revealed that the social repercussions of sexual gender role transgressions were most acute in the early years of high

school. As the teenagers aged they became more flexible in their thinking about sexuality and as a result less persecutory of sexual females. What we gleaned from this result was that intervention programs should target early adolescence, or possibly even late childhood in order to confront the issue prior to or during its peak impact period.

In sum, the thematic analyses evinced several thought-provoking findings. Firstly, adolescents' narratives of female sexuality had a manifest moral quality that was all but absent from their descriptions of male sexuality, a difference that conceivably affords boys greater freedom of sexual expression. Secondly, a process of objectification characterized female sexual development, while males were exposed to a process of sexual subjectification. Again, we believe that this gender difference in sexual socialization has profound implications for adolescent sexual development, specifically, boys are encouraged down a path of sexual evolution that appears to be less complicated, more reinforced and in essence healthier than the disparate paths that girls are expected to navigate. This finding is not surprising when considered in the context of extant theory and research; however, we believe that this is the first study to clearly demonstrate the insidious gender disparities that in many ways determine the course of adolescent sexual development.

Implications for Sexual Health in Adulthood

Low desire is the most common sexual difficulty among women and seems to affect approximately 20% to 30% of women across all ages (Brotto, Bitzer, Laan, Leiblum, & Luria, 2010). The authors go on to ascertain from past studies that low desire seems to affect about 1% to 20% of sexually active males. According to Brotto & Smith (2014), adherence to rigid gender roles may contribute to the experience of low desire. For example, dominant discourse portrays male sexuality as predictable, autonomous, and performance oriented (McCarthy &

McDonald, 2009). Men who have internalized these ideals and sexual scripts may experience low desire and avoidance if they are unable to perform as they would like to during intercourse. Furthermore, traditional male scripts obviate the possibility for intimacy during sexual activity, which may over time lead both men and women to avoid sexual interactions. Women may not pursue sexual pleasure for fear of negative repercussions such as stigma, and a primary focus on penetration without attention to other centers of female pleasure may lead to reduced desire in women (Brotto & Smith, 2014; Wolf, 2012). Moreover, repeatedly denying one's sexual needs and wants over time would surely result in chronic low sexual desire in adulthood. We saw evidence for adherence to traditional sexual gender ideals in our sample of adolescents, suggesting that an effective intervention would need to target this age group or younger children. Research is needed to establish a link over time between internalizing traditional sexual scripts in adolescence and developing sexual disorders in adulthood, however, we believe strongly that this link exists.

Strengths and Limitations

The major strength of this study is the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the sexual lives of adolescents. The mixed-method approach allowed for the integration of rigorous statistical analyses and rich narrative data, resulting in a more comprehensive gestalt that neither on its own would have afforded. We feel that the inclusion of boys in a comprehensive manner was a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge, especially since we found strong support for the gender similarities hypothesis. We believe that a paradigm shift is in order, one that frames gender within a discourse of similarity and shared humanity, in this way we can turn our attention to the salient and impactful areas of difference, such as the double standard. The unique importance of sexual attitudes about permissiveness

and all that it implied is a key finding of this study, this construct stood out in both the qualitative and quantitative analyses, signaling its importance in our discussions of gendered sexualities. The finding is quite topical given recent mainstream media attention to issues such as sexual consent, the line between coercion and seduction, and traditional gendered sexual scripts that to some extent still determine the course of heterosexual interactions. And finally, we feel that the study has important practical implications, especially with regard to sex education curricula in North America.

Like other studies, this project has some methodological limitations. Firstly, though the sample size was adequate, there was some doubt as to our ability to detect gender differences in the structural equation model. A larger sample size would have increased the power and assuaged our doubts. Second, there is the problem of directionality in that without a longitudinal design it is impossible to determine causality. As such, we do not know the temporal order in which our constructs contribute to one another. We believe that our model is grounded in theory and past research and therefore empirically sound, however we do not know for example if sexual subjectivity contributes to well-being or vice versa. Finally, the study is limited in that it privileges heterosexual values and experience; a more comprehensive study would have examined a more representative spectrum of adolescent sexual identity and experience.

Conclusion

This study is unique in its provision of a window into the sexual world of adolescents, a world of which adults are too often unaware. During the course of the study the window transforms into a mirror and what we see reflected are conventional beliefs about sexuality and gender enacted on an adolescent stage. Adolescents are internalizing, performing and policing

cultural ideals of heterosexuality without the cognitive, social and emotional aptitudes of adulthood and they are inflicting harm on one another. For this reason, we must look into and inhabit the sexual world of adolescents more often and promote communication, compassion, respect and pleasure. In guiding them we can begin to heal ourselves.

Table 1.1. Descriptive statistics for the study variables for girls (*n = 89)* and for boys (*n = 81)*.

	Girls		Boys	
Measure	*M*	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*
Gender Attitudes toward Women	2.18	*(.42)*	2.53	*(.40)*
Gender Attitudes toward Men	2.92	*(.53)*	3.22	*(.55)*
Sexual Attitudes Permissiveness	2.27	*(.78)*	3.06	*(.82)*
Sexual Attitudes Birth Control	4.15	*(.62)*	3.99	*(.78)*
Sexual Subjectivity Body Esteem	3.07	*(.83)*	3.47	*(.62)*
Sexual Subjectivity Self-Efficacy	2.81	*(1.28)*	3.03	*(.98)*
Anxiety/Depression	.49	*(.30)*	.29	*(.25)*
Social Problems	.43	*(.32)*	.29	*(.29)*

Table 1.2. Bivariate associations between variables for girls (below the diagonal) and for boys (above the diagonal).

	Gender Attitudes Women	Gender Attitudes Men	Sexual Attitudes Permissive	Sexual Attitudes Birth Control	Sexual Body Esteem	Sexual Self-Efficacy	Anxious Depressed	Social Problems
Gender Attitudes Women	___	.38**	-.13	-.17	-.07	-.01	-.02	-.12
Gender Attitudes Men	.40**	___	.30**	.16	.20	.28*	.00	-.22*
Sexual Attitudes Permissive	-.10	.00	___	.31**	.22	.40**	-.13	-.13
Sexual Attitudes Birth Control	-.24**	.01	.16	___	-.04	.17	-.15	-.13
Sexual Body Esteem	-.04	.02	-.15	.05	___	.41**	-.25*	-.27*
Sexual Self-Efficacy	-.07	-.14	.04	.29**	.58**	___	-.02	.03
Anxious Depressed	-.01	-.19	-.08	.02	-.38**	.06	___	.68**
Social Problems	-.03	-.13	.07	.05	-.41**	.03	.75**	___

Note. Values above the diagonal for males and values below the diagonal for females; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 1.3. Fit indices for nested models in tests of form, metric, and scalar invariance and equality of covariances.

Construct	Model	*df*	χ^2	CFI	RMSEA	90% CI	SRMR
Gender attitudes: Towards women and men							
	Form Invariance Girls	8	6.49	1.00	.00	(.00-.11)	.04
	Form Invariance Boys	8	10.73	.95	.07	(.00-.16)	.05
	Model 0	16	17.22	.99	.03	(.00-.11)	.05
	Model	22	23.75	.98	.05	(.00-.10)	.09
	Model 2	26	31.37	.94	.05	(.00-.11)	1.00
	Model 3	26	31.37	.94	.05	(.00-.11)	1.00
	Model 4	27	34.46	.92	.06	(.00-.10)	.09
Sexual attitudes: Permissiveness and birth control							
	Form Invariance Girls	32	43.07	.92	.06	(.00-.11)	.08
	Form Invariance Boys	32	50.50	.93	.09	(.04-.13)	.07
	Model 0	64	93.57	.92	.08	(.04-.11)	.07
	Model 1	74	107.28	.92	.07	(.04-.10)	.14
	Model 2	81	140.64	.85	.09	(.07-.12)	.15
	Model 2 SAP4/SAI3	79	114.27	.91	.07	(.04-.10)	.14
	Model 3	79	114.27	.91	.07	(.04-.10)	.14
	Model 4	82	119.93	.90	.08	(.04-.10)	.14

Sexual subjectivity: Body esteem and self-efficacy						
Form Invariance Girls	47	71.83	.95	.08	(.00-.11)	.06
Form Invariance Boys	47	71.52	.93	.08	(.04-.12)	.07
Model 0	94	143.35	.95	.08	(.05-.11)	.07
Model 1	106	180.01	.92	.09	(.07-.12)	.16
Model 1 - partial metric invariance	105	168.09	.93	.09	(.06-.11)	.13
Model 2	113	182.57	.92	.09	(.06-.11)	.13
Model 3	113	182.57	.92	.09	(.06-.11)	.13
Model 4	119	186.56	.93	.08	(.06-.11)	.13
Well-being: Anxiety/depression and social problems						
Form Invariance Girls	7	12.95	.95	.10	(.00-.18)	.04
Form Invariance Boys	7	4.05	1.0	.00	(.00-.09)	.03
Model 0	14	17.00	.99	.05	(.00-.12)	.04
Model 1	20	23.95	.98	.05	(.00-.11)	.06
Model 2	23	26.59	.99	.04	(.00-.10)	.06
Model 3	24	28.68	.98	.05	(.00-.11)	.06
Model 4	25	29.12	.98	.06	(.00-.10)	.07

Note. Model 0 = Baseline all groups - equal form (form invariance); Model 1 = metric invariance - equality of factor loadings; Model 2 = scalar invariance - equality of intercepts; Model 3 = scalar invariance with covariance baseline; Model 4 = equality of covariances.

Table 1.4. Chi-square difference tests of form, metric and scalar invariance for latent constructs across gender.

Construct	Model comparisons	$\Delta \chi^2$	*p*	Δ *df*
Gender Attitudes				
	Model 1 compared to Model 0	6.54	.37	6
	Model 2 compared to Model 1	7.62	.11	4
	Model 4 compared with Model 3	3.09	.08	1
Sexual Attitudes				
	Model 1 compared to Model 0	13.71	.19	10
	Model 2 compared to Model 1	33.36	.00*	7
	Model 2 (SAP5/SAI3) compared to Model 1	7.0	.22	5
	Model 4 compared to Model 3	5.66	.13	3
Sexual Subjectivity				
	Model 1 compared to Model 0	36.76	.00*	12
	Model 1 (partial equality of factor loadings) to Model 0	24.74	.00*	11
	Model 2 compared to Model 1 (partial)	14.48	.07	8
	Model 4 compared to Model 3	4.0	.68	6
Well-being				
	Model 1 compared to Model 0	6.95	.33	6
	Model 2 compared to Model 1	2.64	.45	3
	Model 4 compared to Model 3	0.44	.51	1

Table 1.5. Model fit indices for nested models for test of scalar invariance.

Model	*df*	χ^2	CFI	RMSEA	90% CI	SRMR
Baseline	502	610.02	.90	.05	[.03-.06]	.10
Gender Attitudes Women (GAW)	496	603.12	.90	.05	[.03-.06]	.10
Gender Attitudes Men (GAM)	498	603.23	.90	.05	[.03-.06]	.10
Sexual Attitudes: Permissiveness	498	607.88	.90	.05	[.04-.07]	.10
Sexual Attitudes: Birth Control	500	602.33	.91	.05	[.03-.06]	.10
Sexual Subjectivity: Body Esteem	498	592.33	.91	.05	[.03-.06]	.10
Sexual Subjectivity: Self-efficacy	498	607.09	.90	.05	[.03-.06]	.10
Well-Being: Anxiety/Depression	498	603.89	.90	.05	[.03-.06]	.10
Well-Being: Social Problems	498	606.22	.90	.05	[.03-.06]	.10

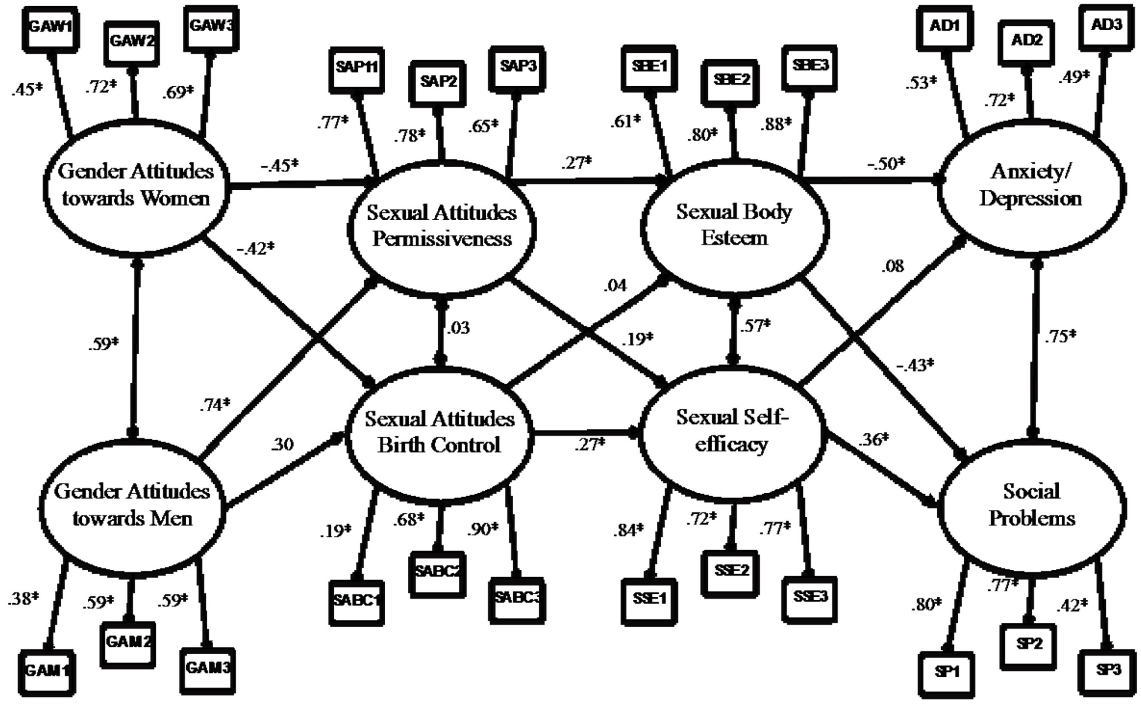
Table 1.6. Test of scalar invariance for multi-group structural equation model.

Construct	Model comparison	$\Delta \chi^2$	Δdf	*p*
Gender Attitudes				
GAW	compared to baseline	6.90	6	.33
GAM	compared to baseline	6.79	4	.15
Sexual Attitudes				
Permissiveness	compared to baseline	2.14	4	.71
Birth Control	compared to baseline	7.69	2	.02*
Sexual Subjectivity				
Body Esteem	compared to baseline	17.69	4	.00*
Self-efficacy	compared to baseline	2.93	4	.57
Well-Being				
Anxiety/Depression	compared to baseline	6.13	4	.19
Social Problems	compared to baseline	3.8	4	.43

Table 1.7. Test of equality of covariances.

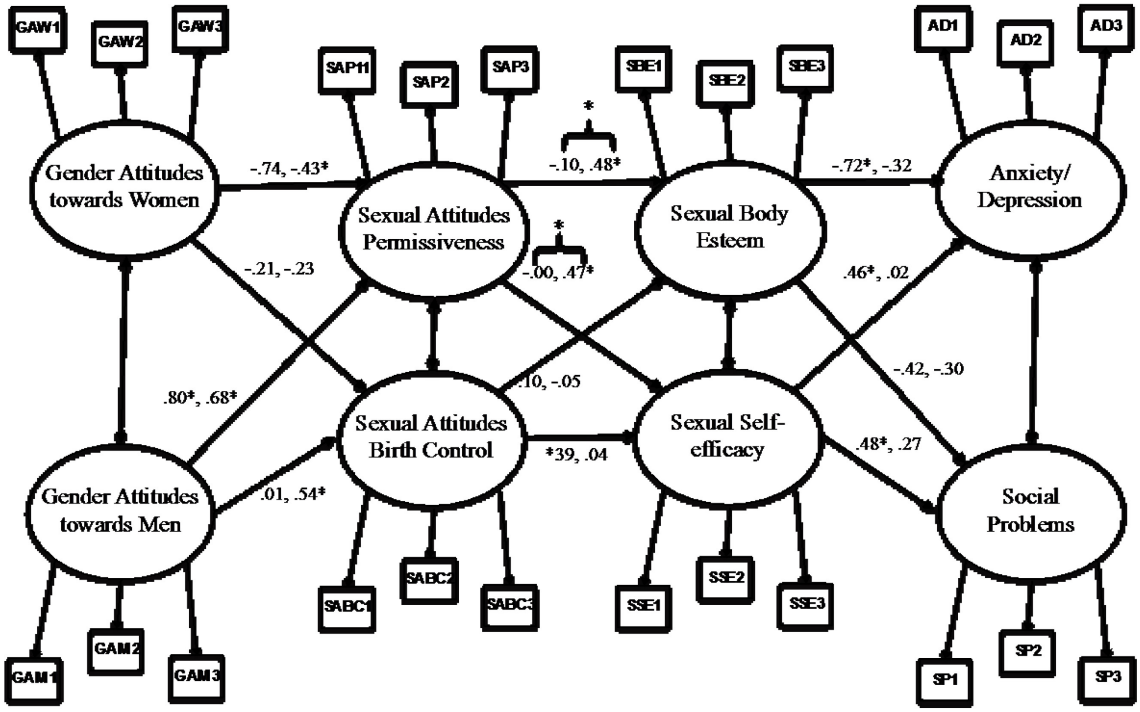
Model	*df*	χ^2	CFI	RMSEA	90% CI	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	*p*
Baseline – all covariances constrained	494	603.67	.90	.05	[.04 – .07]	.10			
Gender Attitudes	497	633.22	.87	.06	[.04 – .07]	.12	30.73	3	.00*
Sexual Attitudes	497	611.48	.89	.05	[.04 – .07]	.11	13.76	3	.05*
Sexual Subjectivity	497	622.11	.88	.05	[.04 – .07]	.10	13.79	3	.00*
Well-Being	497	616.28	.89	.05	[.04 – .07]	.11	12.47	3	.01*

Figure 1.1. Unconditional model for entire sample.



Note: Significant effects ($p < .05$) shown as standardized coefficients (betas) are noted with the symbol (*). χ^2 (236) = 298.20, p = .00; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .07.

Figure 1.2. Test of model path invariance.



Note: Significant effects ($p < .05$) shown as standardized coefficients (betas) are noted with the symbol (*). Coefficients for girls are shown first and coefficients for boys are shown second. The path coefficients that differ significantly by gender are marked by the symbol (}*).

Chapter 2: Through the body: Examining the role of body esteem in adolescent emotional and sexual health

The ways in which we experience our bodies, or how we embody our selves, are affected by many factors existing at multiple levels of social complexity including culture, developmental history, memory, gender and sexuality. One philosophical perspective that has had a profound impact on Western cultures' epistemology and ontology of the body, is dualism. Dualism, or Cartesian dualism, named for the 17th century philosopher that was its creator, organizes the world into polarities or dichotomies, for example mind/body or culture/nature, and inherent in this splitting is the privileging of one pole over the other. In the case of the dualistic opposition of mind and body, the mind represents rationality, objectivity and predictability, and the body signifies emotionality, changeability, and instability. Therefore, in the division of the person into a mind and a body, the mind is granted dominion over the body and as such rationality over emotionality. In this way, reality is parsed into a meaningful value system comprised of pairs with one, such as the mind, occupying a morally superior position to another, in this case the body[4]. The entity in the position of moral superiority is perforce accorded power over its counterpart or 'opposite'.

Dualism is a patriarchal philosophical system and as such bestows men with the moral advantage and dominion over women. Men are endowed with the faculty of reason or mind, while emotion, or body defines women. This cultural system of moral opposites is deeply ingrained in our culture, it is pervasive and insidious to the point of near invisibility, forming the texture of reality and subtly dictating how we think, feel, and relate to ourselves and to

[4] Other examples of dualities in Western metaphysics include: *male*, female; *culture*, nature; *reason*, emotion; *form*, matter. The italics represent the privileged positions in the philosophical system.

others. Modern philosophers, particularly feminist philosophers such as Judith Butler, have argued for the elevation of our epistemology of the body, and by extension of the female. They have worked to position the body at the centre of philosophical inquiry and to exonerate the body from its historical position of inferiority. This study was designed with the body at its centre for three reasons (1) to reify the central role of the body in human experience, specifically sexual experience; (2) to examine the role of the body in adolescent sexuality development and (3) to examine gender differences in embodied heterosexualities in adolescence.

Embodiment in Adolescence

Identity formation (Erikson, 1968) and its corollary increase in self-consciousness, self-awareness, preoccupation with image and concern with social acceptance, is perhaps the most important developmental achievement of adolescence. Several years ago Harter (1997) concluded that physical appearance is the most important domain contributing to children and young adolescents' sense of self-worth, having a greater contribution than social acceptance, and scholastic and athletic competence. Given the import placed on physical appearance during adolescence, it would follow that one's evaluation of one's appearance, or of one's body, might impact identity formation through an individual's experience of sexual development.

Adolescence is typically marked by very little stability and much change; girls and boys grapple with changes in their bodies, relationships, emotions, and experiences. Many of these changes harken the beginning of a process that unfurls into adult sexuality. The overarching aim of the current study was to examine the links between adolescents' relationships to their bodies, or body image, as defined as the experience of embodiment and incorporation of the perceptions and attitudes about one's body (Cash, 2002), and certain aspects of sexuality

development. More specifically, we were interested in the ways one's body image impacts one's sexual attitudes, sexual subjectivity and relationships to others. Though some research has addressed these issues in adolescence, the lion's share of the studies sample adult populations. Furthermore, given the historic association of the body with the feminine, and due to the fact that body 'issues' are by and large shouldered by females, almost all the studies outlined below in the literature review sampled women and girls.

Relationships to our Bodies

Troubled attitudes toward eating are near universal among girls and women in North America, in fact, body image dissatisfaction is so common that it is considered normative and its presence is linked to the development of eating disordered attitudes and behaviours (Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, Tantleff-Dunn, 1999). Women comprise about 90% of those suffering from anorexia and bulimia, making eating disorders distinctly female; it is no surprise then that research has consistently shown that women report higher levels of body dissatisfaction as compared to men (McCabe and Ricciardelli, 2005; Presnell, Bearman, & Stice, 2004). Body dissatisfaction now begins at a very young age and has been measured in girls as young as five (Krahnstoever Davison, Markey, & Birch, 2003).

Sadly, in Western cultures, the transition to womanhood is marked by high levels of body dissatisfaction and desire to be thinner for the vast majority of girls (Thompson, Coovert, Richards & Johnson, & Cattarin, 1995). It is well documented that the majority of adolescent girls are dissatisfied with their bodies and want to be thinner (e.g., Attie & Brooks-Gunn, 1989; Thompson, Coovert, Richards, Johnson, & Cattarin, 1995), with many engaging in dieting and or other unhealthy weight loss behaviours (e.g., French, Perry, Leon, & Fulkerson, 1995; Stice, Killen, Hayward, & Taylor, 1998). The extent of body dissatisfaction among adolescent girls

has been frequently explained by the greater sociocultural emphasis upon physical attractiveness for women and an increasingly prominent "culture of thinness" (Thompson et al., 1999).

The cultural ideal of thinness has glorified low body weight and made it a defining feature of feminine beauty. Thus the developmental changes associated with puberty move adolescent girls away from, rather than closer to, the societally-prescribed thin beauty ideal (Salter & Tiggemann, 2010). As a result, the weight gains of puberty seem to have a more negative impact on girls' body satisfaction, depressed affect, self-esteem and perceived romantic competence when compared to boys (McHale, Corneal, et al., 2001; Richards et al., 1990; Barker & Galambos, 2003). Said another way, in early adolescence, boys with more advanced pubertal development feel more attractive and more satisfied with their bodies than do girls with more advanced pubertal development (Siegel, Yancey, Aneshensel, & Schuler, 1999).

Some researchers have examined the associations between gender role expectations and body satisfaction. For example, studies have shown that having less traditional gender role attitudes is related to lower levels of weight concerns and disordered eating for girls (Edwards-Leeper & Allgeier, 2002; McHale, Corneal, Crouter, & Birch, 2001). A recent meta-analysis examining this question concluded: "in the search for variables that might predict body satisfaction and help prevent eating disorders…the negative association between feminist identity and body shame is one of the strongest "protective" effects we found "(Murnen & Smolak, 2009, p. 195). As was mentioned above feminist theories such as Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) help to shed light on the association between mainstream gender roles and disordered eating for girls and women. According to

Objectification Theory, a relatively constant preoccupation with appearance, or self-conscious body monitoring, can profoundly disrupt a girl's cognitive processing (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). As de Beauvoir wrote, when a girl becomes a woman she is "doubled; instead of coinciding exactly with herself, she [also] exist[s] outside" (1952, p. 316) herself as observer and judge. Piran and Cormier (2005) wrote of the "disrupted connection" that many women experience with their bodies in a patriarchal culture; they argued that a focus on how the body *looks* rather than *feels* can lead women to disconnect from their bodies, to loose touch with their bodily sensations such as hunger, fatigue or sexual desire. Much less is known, both theoretically and empirically, about body dissatisfaction and disordered eating in boys and men, though these issues have garnered more research attention in recent years.

Although body dissatisfaction has typically been less evident among males, there is increasing recognition of the effects of cultural representations of masculine body ideals on adolescent boys' body esteem. The implications of cultural standards that idealize muscularity and dominance must be distinguished from the cultural ideals that promote thinness and vulnerability as attractive for women. It is our belief that at base, these differential standards serve to reinforce power structures that oppress and disempower women relative to men. That being said, within this context of relative societal privilege, internalization of masculine cultural standards of attractiveness appears to have some deleterious effects as well. Research in the area has shown that the desire to develop muscularity has been associated with higher levels of depression and lower self-esteem (Cafri et al., 2002; McCreary & Sasse, 2000). Among men, internalization of dominant cultural standards of attractiveness has been linked to self-objectification, body dissatisfaction and drive for muscularity (e.g., Karazsia & Crowther, 2008; Warren, 2008). Furthermore, studies of adolescents have shown that boys are increasingly

dissatisfied with their overall appearance and would like to change their body shape and weight (Garner, 1997; McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2001).

Finally, an examination of the links between body surveillance, body shame, appearance anxiety and disordered eating revealed that although girls report higher levels of the constructs, the pattern of relations among the variables seemed consistent across gender groups (Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). We have seen then that both girls and boys become increasingly dissatisfied with their body image during adolescence (e.g. Graber, Peterson & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). Thus, it could be said that our society's focus on external appearance has negative health consequences for both boys and girls as they are becoming sexual (Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004). Let us turn now to a more pointed examination of the associations between body satisfaction and sexuality development.

Relationships to our Sexual Bodies

Partnered sexual activity almost by definition involves another individual focusing attention on one's body. It is not surprising then that much research has focused on the association between body image and perceptions of sexual relationships or encounters. Among heterosexual women, body satisfaction is positively correlated with sexual satisfaction (Donaghue, 2009; Grogan, 2008) and there are some indications of a similar, albeit weaker, association among heterosexual men (Sanchez & Kiefer, 2007). It follows then that women who feel more negatively about their bodies present lower levels of sexual desire and arousability (Koch, Mansfield, Thurau, & Carey, 2005), report less frequent sexual initiation or sexual avoidance (Ackard, Kearny-Cooke, & Peterson, 2000) and experience decreased pleasure, orgasm, sexual satisfaction and a greater degree of ambivalence in deciding whether to engage in first-time sexual encounters with a new partner (Sanchez & Kiefer, 2007; Shulman

& Horne, 2003; Yamamiya, Cash, & Thompson, 2006). Studies of college-aged women revealed associations between negative body image and engagement in behaviors that increase risk of sexually transmitted infections, HIV transmission, or unintended pregnancy (Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, & Lust, 2005; Gillen, Lefkowitz, & Shearer, 2006). In another study of college women, body image self-consciousness was negatively associated with sexual self-esteem and sexual assertiveness (Wiederman, 2000).

Research with adolescents has evinced similar links between negative body esteem and decreased sexual health for girls. For example, self-objectification, or internalized objectification, was found to be associated with less sexual assertiveness and less consistent use of condoms and contraceptives among adolescent girls (Hirschman, Impett, & Schooler, 2006; Impett, Schooler, & Tolman, 2006; Schooler, Ward, Merriwether, & Caruthers, 2005). It could be that dissociation from one's body and its desires, sensations and needs, decreases the likelihood of asserting oneself sexually and conversely increases the likelihood of acting based on one's partner's desires, needs and expectations (Tolman, 2002). Other studies, addressing the links between body evaluation and coital debut, revealed an interesting gender difference; whereas early sexual intercourse was associated with body satisfaction among adolescent boys, it was associated with body dissatisfaction among adolescent girls (Gillen, Lebowitz, & Shearer, 2006; Kvalem, von Soest, Traen, & Singsaas, 2011).

In sum, evidence to date seems to suggest that body image is a central component of sexual development in adolescence. For reasons mentioned above, most of the research to date has focused on girls and women, though several studies have tested for and found gender differences in the effects of body image on sexual development. What follows is a brief discussion of gender differences in the ways boys and girls learn about their sexual bodies.

Gender Differences in Embodied Sexualities

In a recent meta-analysis of gender differences in sexuality, Petersen and Hyde (2010) reported many gender similarities and only a few consistent gender differences. Reported rates of masturbation was one of the robust gender differences, with rates being consistently higher for males, an effect that is evident in adolescence as well (Robbins et al., 2011). We believe that this gender difference in openness-to-pleasuring-oneself-sexually may have profound consequences for sexuality development in that while boys learn about their pleasure, what they like and do not like, and what feels good, in essence they learn to explore and value their bodies as sources of sexual pleasure, girls do not. Girls forego learning about their sexuality through self-stimulation and exploration and as such lack knowledge about their bodies as sources of sexual pleasure. Perhaps this lack of sexual self-knowledge represents a devaluing of female sexual pleasure that could translate into the prioritization of male sexual pleasure during adolescent heterosexual encounters. Said another way, the marked gender difference in masturbation practice means that girls enter sexual interactions with significantly less knowledge about their bodies, sexual preferences and needs, which could increase the likelihood of deferment to the sexual preferences and needs of the boys, thereby decreasing the likelihood of experiencing pleasure.

Masturbation is one avenue through which adolescents might gain knowledge of their sexual bodies. Another source of information about the sexual body is educational curricula, which is typically narrowly focused on prevention and certain aspects of biological functioning. Pastor (2009) described how sex education for children is largely focused on heterosexual intercourse for the purpose of reproduction rather than pleasure. The focus on reproduction necessitates teaching children about male external genitalia and female internal and not external

genitalia. In fact, Bem (1989) found that before puberty, girls had more knowledge of boys' genitalia than of their own. Pastor (2009) proposed that this lack of education leads to women and men having less knowledge of female sexual arousal and response, which in turn leads to the orgasm gap or the finding that men are more likely than women to report having orgasm as a result of heterosexual partner sex (Douglass & Douglass, 1997; Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994). This lack of knowledge about and absence of attention to female external genitalia could also be a consequence of lifelong gender differences in rates of masturbation; because females are not learning how to stimulate pleasure in their external genitalia, they cannot demonstrate the behaviour to sexual partners. In sum, masturbation and sex education are more important sources of sexual knowledge for boys than they are for girls. It seems that rather than through self-stimulation, girls gain most of their sexual knowledge through encounters with others, making partnered sexual activity an important locus of sexual development for both boys and girls.

Embodied Sexualities: Sexual Subjectivity

In the last decade, a new body of knowledge about how adolescent girls embody sexuality has emerged. This innovative new direction in research has yielded investigations of sexual subjectivity (defined as having a sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure and sexual safety) and its interactions with psychological well-being. Researchers have introduced constructs such as sexual body esteem, pleasure, satisfaction and self-efficacy into the study of adolescent sexuality in order to test more representative models of sexuality during this developmental period. Results show that among adolescent girls, sexual subjectivity is associated with self-esteem and resistance to sexual double standards (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006). Using sexual self-concept (O'Sullivan, Meyer-Bahlburg, & McKeague, 2006)

to operationalize sexual subjectivity, Impett and Tolman (2006), found that young women who reported higher levels of sexual subjectivity and greater approach versus avoidance motives for sexual activity, also reported greater sexual satisfaction. We see then that the negative association between self-esteem and sexuality is upended when girls experience a healthy sense of sexual subjectivity. For the purpose of the current investigation, we are suggesting that sexual subjectivity could have a similarly positive effect on adolescents' social well-being, specifically on their relationships with close others. Although the meaning, correlates and predictors of the sexual subjectivity may differ as a function of gender, we feel that the construct is undoubtedly as important for boys as it is for girls and as such we have included both genders in our study. Thus far we have examined the construct of body image, we have looked at the implications of body image on sexual functioning and we have addressed some known gender differences in the way sexuality is embodied. Let us now turn to a discussion of how body image and sexual subjectivity might impact adolescents' close relationships.

Relationships to Others and their Bodies

Romantic relationships are a hallmark of adolescence, yet it is only in the past decade that they have become the focus of scientific inquiry. Once thought to be trivial, transitory and negligible, adolescent romantic relationships are increasingly regarded as significant relational factors in individual development and well-being (Collins, 2003; Furman & Collins, 2008). Prior to adolescence, interactions typically occur with peers of the same gender as most friendship pairs are of the same gender (Maccoby, 1998; Kovacs et al., 1996). Affiliation with mixed-gender groups follows in early to middle adolescence and facilitates the progression from same-gendered friendships to dyadic romantic relationships (Connolly et al., 2004). Attachment theory, a particularly influential view of close relationships holds that a history of

sensitive, responsive interactions and strong emotional bonds with caregivers in childhood facilitates adaptation to the transitions of adolescence (Allen & Land, 1999; Collins & Sroufe, 1999). A redistribution of attachment-related functions takes place in adolescence as youth increasingly rely on friends and romantic partners, as opposed to parents, to fulfill attachment needs such as desire for proximity, support, companionship, intimacy and unconditional acceptance (Fraley & Davis, 1997; Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). These inchoate romantic relationships are the primary context within which early sexual behaviors take place and as such these experiences may be particularly colored by previous mixed-sex interactions and by attachment history.

There have been relatively few studies of attachment style and sexual behavior, but Hazan, Zeifman, and Middleton (1994) found that attachment security was related to enjoyment of a variety of sexual activities, including mutual initiation of sexual activity and enjoyment of physical contact. Attachment anxiety was related to anxiety about sexual attractiveness and acceptability, and greater liking of the affectionate and intimate aspects of sexuality then for the physical aspects. Attachment avoidance was related to a dislike of much of sexuality, especially the affectionate and intimate aspects. Avoidance was also found to be positively associated with more accepting attitudes toward casual sex and more frequent "one night stands" (Feeney, Noller, & Patty, 1993). Based on the research, it seems that reactions to sexual intimacy are part and parcel of attachment relationships: security is conducive to intimacy, sharing, considerate communication and openness to sexual exploration; anxiety is characterized by fears of rejection and abandonment, which can easily diffuse into sexual situations. Similarly, avoidance interferes with intimate, relaxed sexuality because physical closeness and psychological intimacy are a major source of discomfort for avoidant individuals. In sum, in adulthood,

individual differences in attachment style have been associated with a host of relationship behaviors and outcomes, though less is known about the relationship between attachment styles and sexuality. Until recently, however, similar studies have not been conducted with adolescents.

Even fewer researchers have explored links between attachment style and sexuality during adolescence, in fact we only know of one study. Tracy and colleagues (2003) found that anxious adolescents' dating and sexual experiences were strongly colored by fears of rejection and abandonment; they fell in love often, and had sex more frequently at a young age, but were prevented form enjoying it by the fear of rejection and abandonment. This predicted pattern was especially evident among girls**.** They measured adolescents' appraisals of intercourse, and found that regardless of attachment style, girls experienced more negative and fewer positive emotions than boys at all three time points (first intercourse experience, last intercourse experience, and first intercourse experience with their most recent partner). Furthermore, for girls, at all the time points, anxious attachment was associated with having sex because of fear of losing one's partner (Tracy, Shaver, Albino, & Cooper, 2003). Thus we see that an anxious attachment style seems to impact sexual experience, and we see that attachment style does not seem to affect gender differences in appraisals of sexual intercourse.

According to Tracy and colleagues (2003), we still do not know the extent to which attachment style in adolescence is a stable feature of an individual's personality or a changeable feature of the person anchored in a set of current relationships (Tracy, Shaver, Albino, & Cooper, 2003). For this reason, our intention was not to determine the attachment style of each participant but rather to gather information about their beliefs and perceptions of themselves in close relationships. Current research knowledge in this area is rather limited, meaning that more

studies are needed to expand our understanding of the impact of attachment style, or experiences in close relationships, on sexuality development in adolescence.

Objectives and Hypotheses

Perhaps partially as a result of dualism, psychologists have tended to concern themselves with the mind, and more recently with the advent of neuropsychology, the brain, while the body has historically been the purview of biologists and medical practitioners. A relatively new movement in the field of medicine called Whole Person Care (e.g. Hutchison, 2011) emphasizes a more holistic approach to illness, in other words greater integration of the physical and mental aspects of personhood into treatment trajectories. The study of sexuality necessitates a holistic approach in that 'biological' and 'psychological' processes are tightly woven into sexual systems. That being said, the biology of sexuality has most often been examined within a paradigm of dysfunction or with an eye to reducing risk behaviors, rather than as an investigation of healthy, normal sexuality.

The current study aimed to incorporate the body into an examination of typical adolescent heterosexual experience. We did so by measuring body esteem as well as sexual body esteem and by interviewing adolescents about sexual attraction, desire and pleasure, what we believe to be distinctly embodied experiences. Given the importance adolescents place on their physical appearance, the widespread experience of body dissatisfaction and the physical transformations of adolescence, we believe that it is imperative to understand adolescents' experiences of embodiment, particularly as it relates to their sexual development. With this in mind, the current project had the following five objectives: (1) test associations between sexual attitudes, body esteem, sexual subjectivity and intimacy in adolescence; (2) examine gender differences in these associations; (3) speak with adolescents and explore their beliefs and

attitudes about embodied sexualities; (4) include boys in a research initiative on body image and sexuality and (5) study adolescent sexuality within a positive healthful framework.

Hypothesis 1. Comparing groups on latent variables using multi-group CFA

Hypothesis 1a: Sexual attitudes. Although prevailing beliefs suggest that the genders differ notably in their sexual attitudes, a recent review of meta-analytic studies found only small gender differences in sexual attitudes with men having somewhat more permissive attitudes than women, however, the results were collapsed across adolescence and adulthood obscuring any age effects that may have been present. Based on the body of research indicating stronger reliance on gendered sexual scripts in adolescence when compared to adulthood, we predicted that boys would endorse more permissive sexual attitudes then girls. Based on the above meta-analysis, we did not expect gender differences in instrumental attitudes toward sex.

Hypothesis 1b: Body esteem. A large body of evidence exists showing that both girls and women consistently report higher levels of body dissatisfaction when compared to boys and men (Attie & Brooks-Gunn, 1989; McCabe and Ricciardelli, 2005; Presnell, Bearman, & Stice, 2004; Thompson, Coovert, Richards, Johnson, & Cattarin, 1995). Our hypothesis was based on this past research and predicts that girls will endorse higher levels of negative body esteem and lower levels of positive body esteem when compared with boys.

Hypothesis 1c: Sexual subjectivity. Research to date on sexual subjectivity has focused on adolescent girls resulting in very little being known about adolescent boys' sexual subjectivity. Our cultural assumption is that boys enjoy a nearly uniformly positive environment with regard to their sexuality (Udry et al., (1986), which would predict that boys in general would report higher levels of sexual subjectivity. As such, we hypothesized that boys would endorse higher levels of both sexual self-efficacy and sexual body esteem.

Hypothesis 1d: Close relationships. A recent meta-analysis examining gender differences in attachment style revealed that males report higher avoidance and lower anxiety than females, though the effect sizes were small (Giudice, 2011). The gender differences in anxiety peaked in young adulthood, whereas those in avoidance increased through the life course. Seeing as the gender differences in anxiety reached their zenith in early adulthood, it is conceivable that they are present during adolescence, therefore we hypothesized that girls, as compared to boys, would report higher levels of anxiety in close relationships. We did not expect gender difference in levels of comfort with closeness in relationships.

Hypothesis 2. The current project concatenates research and theory from several domains in the field psychology. Given the absence of studies directly linking sexual attitudes, body esteem, sexual subjectivity and attachment, our hypotheses are based on theory as well as research in each separate domain. We made three predictions about gender differences in our model: (1) given the robust gender difference in attitudes toward causal sex (Petersen & Hyde, 2010), we expected to find a stronger association between permissiveness and body esteem for boys than for girls; (2) given higher levels of body dissatisfaction in girls as compared to boys, we expected to find a positive association between body esteem and sexual subjectivity for boys and a negative association between the variables for girls; and 3) given past research linking sexual subjectivity to well-being in adolescent girls, we expected to find the same for adolescent boys and therefore no gender difference in the associations between sexual subjectivity and attachment.

Hypothesis 3. Given our presumption of the centrality of the body and processes of embodiment in sexuality development, we expected body esteem and sexual subjectivity (body

esteem) to mediate the associations between attachment and sexual attitudes. We did not expect a gender difference in the mediation effect.

Results

Quantitative Results

Preliminary Analyses. Means and standard deviations for the variables that were used in this study are reported in Table 2.1. The correlations between these measures are reported separately by gender in Table 2.2.

Hypothesis 1: Comparing groups on latent variables. As in Study 1, comparisons of latent means were used to examine gender differences on the measures of sexual attitudes, body esteem, sexual subjectivity and attachment. The stepwise procedure to test for measurement invariance across gender was identical to Study 1: (1) Test the CFA model separately by gender; (2) test for form invariance (equal factor structure); (3) test for metric invariance (equal factor loadings); (4) test for scalar invariance (equal factor intercepts); (5) test the equality of factor covariances and finally (6) test for group mean differences. Results of the analyses of invariance can be found in Table 2.3.

1a. Sexual attitudes (permissiveness and instrumentality). After testing the CFA separately by gender, the multi-group CFA consisted of 4 items for permissiveness and 3 items for instrumentality. Multiple group invariance evaluation for sexual attitudes revealed equality of factor structure, equality of factor loadings, partial equality of intercepts and equal covariances across the groups, allowing for group mean comparisons on sexual attitudes (Brown, 2006). In support of our hypotheses, mean comparisons showed that compared to males, *females* ($\beta = -.92$, $SE = .20$, $p = .00$) showed significantly *lower* levels of sexual permissiveness, and no gender difference in levels of sexual instrumentality ($\beta = -0.09$, $SE =$

.21, p = .67). The outcome indicates that adolescent girls are significantly less accepting of sexual behaviors outside of a monogamous relationship (e.g. "I do not need to be committed to a person to have sex with him/her") than adolescent boys.

1b. Body esteem (positive and negative). The initial CFAs by gender resulted in a factor structure of 3 indicators for body esteem positive and 3 indicators for body esteem negative. Subsequent multiple group invariance evaluation for body esteem revealed equality of factor structure, partial equality of factor loadings, equality of intercepts and unequal covariances across the groups, allowing for group mean comparisons on sexual attitudes (Brown, 2006). Mean comparisons showed that compared to males, *females* (β = –.48, *SE* = .17, p = .00) showed significantly *lower* levels of positive body esteem, or satisfaction with their bodies. Results also showed that females endorsed significantly *higher* levels of negative body esteem, or dissatisfaction with their bodies (β = 0.42, *SE* = .20, p = .04). These results are not surprising given the well-documented epidemic of body dissatisfaction among girls and women. Furthermore, they indicate that the problem continues to affect adolescent girls to a greater degree than adolescent boys.

1c. Sexual subjectivity (sexual body-esteem and pleasure from partner). After testing the CFA separately by gender, the multi-group CFA consisted of 3 items for sexual body esteem and 3 items for entitlement to pleasure from partner. When examining the construct of sexual subjectivity across groups we found equality of factor structure, partial equality of factor loadings, equality across intercepts, and unequal covariances allowing for group mean comparisons on sexual subjectivity (Brown, 2006). Mean comparisons revealed that compared to males, *females* reported significantly *lower* levels of sexual body esteem (β = – 0.56, *SE* = .16, p = .00). There were no gender differences in reported means for sexual pleasure from

partner (β = 0.20, *SE* = .17, *p* = .24). This result reflects that adolescent boys, as compared to girls, have more confidence in their physical attractiveness and sexual desirability (e.g. "I am confident that others will find me sexually desirable").

1d. Close relationships (close and anxiety). We ran CFAs separately by gender, the analyses revealed that the following factor structure was the best fit to the data: 3 observed variables made up each of the two factors, close and anxiety. The multi-group CFA revealed equality of factor structure, equality of factor loadings, partial equality across intercepts, and equal covariances between the groups allowing for group mean comparisons on well-being (Brown, 2006). Subsequent mean comparisons revealed no gender differences in levels of comfort with closeness (β = 0.23, *SE* = 18, *p* = .19), or in levels of anxiety in close relationships (β = 0.24, *SE* = .16, *p* = .14). According to our results, adolescent girls and boys endorse similar levels of both attachment security and anxiety.

Hypothesis 2: Testing for gender differences in model paths using MGSEM. A Structural Equation Model was constructed using Mplus version 7.0 (Mplus 7.0; Muthén & Muthén 1998–2012) based on past research, theory, maximum likelihood estimation on a correlation matrix and hypothesized relationships between the variables of interest. In these models, latent variables were used to test the predicting role of the following constructs: sexual attitudes on body esteem, body esteem on sexual subjectivity and sexual subjectivity on attachment.

Step 1. The baseline model (See Figure 2.1) for the sample included direct paths (a) from sexual attitudes (permissiveness and instrumentality) to body esteem (positive and negative); (b) paths from body esteem (positive and negative) to sexual subjectivity (pleasure from partner and sexual body esteem) and finally (c) paths from sexual subjectivity (pleasure

from partner and sexual body esteem) to attachment (close and anxiety). As well as covariances between the variables that make up the four constructs. The latent factor structures were identical to those determined by the multi-group CFAs except that one of the permissiveness items was dropped from the model resulting in three rather than four indicators of permissiveness and one indicator was dropped from each of the body esteem subscales, meaning that there were two rather than three indicators for body esteem positive as well as for body esteem negative. The overall model showed a good fit (χ^2 (193) = 236.56, p = .02; CFI = .97; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .07). Six of the twelve direct paths in the model were found to be significant: body esteem positive on sexual attitudes instrumentality (B = .60, β = .32, SE = .11, p = .01); sexual pleasure from partner on body esteem positive (B = .38, β = .35, SE = .14, p = .01) and body esteem negative (B = .55, β = .52, SE = .14, p = .00); sexual body esteem on body esteem positive (B = .50, β = .74, SE = .12, p = .00); attachment close on sexual body esteem (B = -.58, β = –.41, SE = .11, p = .00); and attachment anxiety on sexual pleasure from partner (B = .21, β = .39, SE = .12, p = .00) and sexual body esteem (B = -.40, β = –.48, SE = .10, p = .00).

Step 2: Unconditional grouping model. Due to the small sample size, the model could not be tested separately by gender. Therefore, the next step was to run an unconditional grouping model with gender as the grouping variable. This model assumes that the factor loadings and intercepts are equal across the two groups. The fit indices for the unconditional grouping model were as follows: (χ^2 (414) = 542.15, p = .00; CFI = .90; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .10). The model did not present a good fit, suggesting differences across groups. A subsequent model representing partial form invariance across gender was run and showed a good fit (χ^2 (410) = 506.13, p = .00; CFI = .93; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .10). This model included four residual covariances: two for the girls and two for the boys. This partial form

invariance model replaced the unconditional model as the baseline model in subsequent analyses.

Step 3: Testing for scalar invariance. To test for scalar invariance across groups factor loadings and intercepts were unconstrained for each variable in eight successive models. Using the nested chi-square method, each model was compared to the baseline model to test for invariance across groups (See Table 1.5). Results indicated partial scalar invariance with a difference in the factor loadings and intercepts for three variables: body esteem negative, sexual subjectivity body esteem and attachment anxiety. The fit indices for the new model in which these three variables were not constrained reflected a significantly better model fit than the baseline model (χ^2 (400) = 476.84, p = .01; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .09); ($\Delta \chi^2$ = 29.29, Δ df = 10, p = .00).

Step 4: Equality of covariances. To test for equality of covariances between the factors within the four constructs of sexual attitudes, body esteem, sexual subjectivity and attachment a step-wise nested chi-square procedure was followed. Firstly, a baseline model was run in which all the covariances in the model were constrained to be equal. Next, four separate models were run each with one covariance set to be free. Finally, the four models were tested against the baseline model to see if releasing the constraint on any of the covariances improved the model. Results of the analysis indicated equality of covariances between boys and girls for all constructs except for sexual subjectivity (See Table 1.7).

Step 5: Invariance of model paths. Thus far we have shown partial metric invariance, partial scalar invariance and partial equality of covariances across genders. We can now proceed to the test of invariance of model paths. The initial Wald Test of Parameter Constraints showed a significant difference between boys and girls for the regressions of body esteem on

sexual attitudes (*Wald Test Value* (4) = 13.85; $p = .01$), no significant difference for the regressions of sexual subjectivity on body esteem and no significant difference for the regressions of attachment on sexual subjectivity. The four subsequent tests of path invariance revealed a significant gender difference on three paths (See Figure 2.2). The Wald Test of the regression of body esteem positive on sexual attitudes permissiveness was significant (*Wald value* (1) = 6.00; $p = .01$) and revealed a significant positive effect for boys ($B = .27$, $\beta = .34$, $SE = .15$, $p = .02$) and a significant negative effect for girls ($B = -.42$, $\beta = -.39$, $SE = .14$, $p = .01$). The Wald Test of the regression of body esteem positive on sexual attitudes instrumentality was also significant (*Wald value* = (1) 7.20; $p = .01$) and showed a significant positive effect for girls ($B = 1.31$, $\beta = .52$, $SE = .14$, $p = .00$) and no effect for boys ($B = -.19$, $\beta = -.11$, $SE = .16$, $p = .49$). The third test of path invariance revealed a trend toward a gender difference in the regression of body esteem negative on sexual attitudes permissiveness (*Wald value* = (1) 3.15; $p = .07$), indicating a significant positive effect for girls ($B = .39$, $\beta = .34$, $SE = .15$, $p = .02$) and no effect for boys ($B = -.00$, $\beta = -.00$, $SE = .17$, $p = .99$). The final test of the regression of body esteem negative on sexual attitudes instrumentality showed no gender difference. Taken together, the results of the tests of gender differences in model paths provided strong support for the gender similarities hypothesis (Hyde, 2005) in that 75% of the model paths were invariant across gender. Of note is the fact that all of the significant gender differences were found in the associations between sexual attitudes and body esteem suggesting that the process by which sexual attitudes impact one's relationship with one's body differs for boys and girls.

Hypothesis 3: The mediating role of the body in the translation of sexual attitudes into sexual subjectivity. Contrary to prediction**,** results of the bootstrapping analysis revealed no indirect effects; therefore the hypothesis of mediation was rejected.

Qualitative Results

The major theme that emerged from our discussions of sexual attraction, desire and pleasure was what we are calling "sexualities-in-relationship" because the adolescents' narratives about these aspects of their sexualities, were invariably interpersonal in nature[5]. What was most striking about the interviews was the ways in which the adolescents (1) negotiated the often new experience of sexual encounters between self and other, (2) how they understood and defined their sexual partners, and (3) how this differed and did not differ for boys and girls. For example, when asked about whether or not they had experienced sexual pleasure two among them responded:

> I have felt it because I've been in love and I've been extremely happy with a partner, even if we're just snuggling…Its all the feelings that are going on inside my stomach, the butterflies and the warmth and like the pure bliss and happiness, and maybe its not sexual pleasure but even if we were to fool around it's all the more enjoyable because our connection is so strong, I don't necessarily think about the actions but I can still recall how good I felt about it because our emotions were so close and because of how strongly I feel for him its all the more pleasurable when we do fool around.
>
> *- 17 year-old girl*

We hear in her words that value was placed in emotional connection above sexual or physical connection. This sentiment was echoed in the narratives of many girls suggesting that in general, girls were more concerned with the relational and emotional aspects of sexuality such as trust, respect, and emotional connection. A male student also speaks of a distinction between the physical and mental/emotional aspects of sexuality:

[5] The exception to this was the adolescents' (mostly boys') descriptions of masturbation, which in most cases seemed to be less favourable than receiving pleasure interpersonally.

> I felt a nervous sort of insecurity, pretty much every guy feels this insecurity about size…but like once I realized that what you're doing isn't physical, its about the mental attraction between two people, the emotional link, then it like the nervousness just went away, like I knew it didn't matter to her and it didn't matter to me either.
>
> - *16 year-old boy*

The dichotomy, or separation of physical and emotional aspects of sexuality, is believed to be at the heart of dysfunctional heterosexual gender dynamics and will be elaborated on further. The boys also spoke about emotional aspects of sexual relationships, however concerns about satisfying their sexual needs dominated their narratives, and they more often related to girls as sexual objects rather than subjects. We have a striking example in one boy's answer when asked 'when does he feel sexual desire?'; "Whenever I see something that I want, not like an object obviously, a girl". Therefore, a core supposition about sexuality that was shared by both girls and boys was that it can be distilled into two component parts: the emotional, which seemed to denote a *subject-subject* relationship and the physical, which seemed to denote a *subject-object* relationship. This supposition was the next theme that emerged from our interviews and we labeled it emotional/physical dualism.

Emotional/Physical Dualism

We found that the two components of sexuality were valued differently by function of gender. In general, girls cared more about emotional connection, or in other words they spoke about subject-subject sexual relationships and boys cared more about physical connection, describing more often subject-object sexual relationships, which they referred to as "hook-ups". The transcripts suggested that hook-ups, or sexual activity outside of relationship, were a boon for males and an encumbrance for females, as evidenced in the words of a 15 year-old girl: "Slutty is like hooking up with a lot of guys in like a short span of time or like going really far

with a guy you just met...like I try not to judge people and if like someone does something slutty I'm not like "slut" but like for me that's not what I would do".

A possible explanation for this sexual double standard can be found in the adolescents' understanding of the psychological structure of sexual relations outside of relationships, or hook-ups. They seem to view them as an interaction between a male subject and a female object, a dynamic that potentially robs the female of her personhood and leaves her vulnerable to denigration and/or feelings of being "used", a term that came up repeatedly in the girls' narratives. It is our contention that females favour sexual activity within relationships because the presumed psychological structure of a relationship, one of subject-subject, acts as a protective mechanism against objectification. For example, in the words of a 15 year-old girl:

> If I'm going to be with someone it can't just be physical because I'd be like attached and like I would like….If I found out it didn't mean the same thing to them like I'd be hurt and like I don't know I'd feel bad about myself….I'd feel used….I'm really scared of rejection and I think that's rejection in a way because its just like well I'm just using you for your body and like what you are on the outside but I don't really care about you as a person…I don't have interest in being like "Ok, let me give this guy head and then like never talk again" because I'd feel like so hurt and so used.
>
> - *16 year-old girl*

Their stories show that girls believe they have a greater chance of sexual subjectivity, as opposed to objectification, if they are sexual within the parameters of a relationship, meaning in conjunction with an emotional attachment to their sexual partner. Said another way, the emotional attachment seems to safeguard their personhood, presumably because attachment implies an emotional bond between two subjects. Other examples of emotional/physical dualism can be found in the words of two 16 year-old boys, the first was describing sexual pleasure: "It's like totally sexual, like there's nothing emotional to it, which makes it a lot more, like a lot different than anything in a relationship would be", and the other was talking about

attraction: “well, physical (attraction) is more like hooking up and personality (attraction) is more like going out, being with the person, I guess”. As was mentioned earlier, this method of parsing sexual relationships is believed to be spurious and the source of much suffering on the part of both genders.

The theme of *emotional/physical dualism* was broken down further in accordance with our three constructs: *attraction, desire* and *pleasure*. We found one predominant sub-dichotomy within the construct of *attraction*, namely, *the body/the person,* which generated a sub-theme for the girls only, which we labeled, *risk: trust and authenticity. Desire* had four sub-themes: (1) *wanting/I don’t know*; (2) *fundamental, natural and embodied*; (3) *giving and getting* and (4) *attachment needs*. Finally, *pleasure* evinced three sub-themes (1) *pleasure with self*; (2) *hierarchy of pleasure*; (3) *the sexual double standard*. In the following sections the results of the thematic analysis will be discussed further and illustrated with excerpts from transcripts.

Attraction

The body/the person. When talking about sexual attraction, the adolescents (both boys and girls) invariably did so in terms of (1) appearance, the physical, or what we are calling the *body* and (2) personality, behaviour, or what we are calling the *person*. As such, they split the construct of attraction into two elements and made clear delineations between them. Girls tended to value personality equally, if not more than appearance: “personality, I guess looks, the way he treated me…I felt that he was a good guy and like if we were together he’d be good to me.” Being treated well was seemingly very attractive to girls, they talked about an attractive boy in these terms: “he’d be good to me”, or “aww, he’s taking care of me“. Girls typically did not mention only physical attributes when describing what they are attracted to, though two of them did: “guys with blue eyes, and I like them muscular…I mostly look at their face and the

body too"; they more often spoke about the role of personality in sexual attraction. For example, "guys that I like, they've never been like the ones that I find the most good-looking, personality is the most important thing to me, charisma, they make me laugh, confidence, that's how my parents raised me" or "less about how someone looks, more like their attitude and how they carry themselves, the way they act toward others". One 16 year-old girl described the potential pitfall of only considering the body and not the person:

> At first I didn't care about personality traits…but then I realized that some people could be assholes and they could be mean and its not worth it to have someone really really good looking if they're mean or they don't treat you the way you're supposed to be treated and they're too full of themselves that they don't care about anyone else…It was in grade 10 that I realized that personality mattered more than what people look like. So if someone was nice and caring it kind if overruled physical looks.
>
> *- 16 year-old girl*

Therefore, we see that for girls, sexual attraction is primarily a matter of personality traits, or knowing the *person*. Girls wanted to be treated well, they wanted to be respected by their sexual partners and they knew that if they do not establish an emotional connection first they were at greater risk of repercussions, both on a social and personal level. Boys also stressed the importance of personality, although not as a safeguard against opprobrium and rejection; they seemed to be more concerned about a girl's personality because of how it might impact their quotidian enjoyment of life: "Personality, it's always stressed in my family…I'd go for the average looking girl cause I wouldn't want to spend time with someone who's mean and rude and stuff". Two other boys talked about the importance of fun: "looks just like pulls you in, and then if they're like fun to be with, it like seals the deal…cause if they're not fun to be around its not fun to be with them at all…someone who's not afraid to do anything, like play random games, like play hacky-sack…so they have to try things, that makes them fun…someone who's not fun would just watch me play I guess," or "I'm attracted to a girl

who's fun to talk to and we get along well". Some of the boys talked about honesty and intelligence as important characteristics of the person "looks do count, but they're not the most important thing, it makes me unattracted if they're not really smart". A few of the boys' statements about personality had misogynistic undertones, meaning that their narratives were disrespectful and demeaning to the person they were attracted to:

> Skinny girls, fit, a girl that's not shy, that doesn't complain – well, all the time you know, there's these girls who only complain, that's not afraid to talk and say anything she wants that's on her mind, you know, that kind of girl that tries to turn you on all the time but then when time happens she backs down and stuff. So she's like…she makes you work on her for like a long period of time but gets on your nerves sometimes. Uh yeah, and as I said, fit, you know, she's in good shape and has big boobs.
>
> - *18 year-old boy*

> Someone who's not bitchy, you know? Like a good personality, a good person I guess. Kind. No, not I dunno. Not even. It's just…someone who's not, like, you know, repulsive. Some people are just like, you know you don't want to talk to them because they're just so annoying or they're just…they'll complain about everything, and that's just annoying. *He goes on to talk about what attracts him to a girl physically.* Height, breasts, ass, you know, waist, legs, you name it, hair, face – pretty much everything.
>
> *-17 year-old boy*

Interestingly, when asked about sexual desire, as opposed to attraction, many more boys talked about connecting with another person. For example, when asked to describe sexual desire one 17 year-old boy said: "It's getting close with the person and really like connecting with them, like on more than one level, emotional and physical", this will be discussed further in the following sections. Finally, some of the boys, like some of the girls, spoke predominantly about appearance when describing sexual attraction "face, body, like personality sometimes, chest area, legs" or "their body I guess, whoever has a nice body, slim, athletic, decent breasts". In sum, all the adolescents parsed attraction along the dualistic lines of the body and the person. In general, they valued a "mix" of personality and appearance, though the reasons for doing so seem to differ as a function of gender.

Risk: Trust and authenticity (girls only). As we have seen, sexual attraction can be risky business for girls because of social norms such as those found in the words of this 17 year-old boy: "Girls who do a lot of stuff outside of a relationship are obviously called sluts, but like girls who do a lot of stuff at the beginning of a relationship are also called sluts because its like "get to know the person first, like what are you doing?". His words suggest that even in relationship, girls are at risk of having their sexuality and person degraded.[6] They are also at risk of being cheated on: "he was my first everything and he cheated on me"; "the first guy I kissed…he used me, he cheated on me, it was bad", so it does not come as a surprise that trust and trustworthiness were an important part of sexual attraction for girls: "I'm not really picky, someone who's nice to me, caring, smart and trusting". A 15 year-old girl linked attraction to trust, comfort, relaxation and security, which she says could lead to more sexual willingness:

> I think you can be more attracted to someone if you can trust them, because having trust in someone you're more comfortable with them, and if you're more comfortable with them you become more comfortable with yourself and if they're comfortable around you then, its just like its relaxing and if you can feel relaxed and safe with someone, you can like open yourself up and be more willing to experience different things. - *15 year-old girl*

Girls also talked about the attractiveness of authenticity: "I like the ones who are different, you know not necessarily quiet and alone but they don't have to be around a certain group of guys and act a certain way. They're true to themselves", or "its really them like talking, they're like, its true what they're saying, and I like could see that." It seems that the girls took the above 17 year-old's admonishment to heart and placed stock in knowing and trusting the person that they are sexually attracted to. In sum, we see that attraction for girls was

[6] I recently heard a story about a (married) woman being called a slut by a friend because she was pregnant with her second when her first was not yet two years old. It seems there is no escaping this epithet.

primarily about the person per se, though looks were important as well, and about emotional connection, which we contend protects them against the risk of becoming a "slut" and/or of being "used". The interview data suggest a measure of risk in girls' appraisals of attraction that is absent for the boys. The boys seem to be describing what might characterized as a process of selection rather than a calculation of risk.

Desire

Wanting. When asked to describe sexual desire, girls especially, commonly used the verb to want: "wanting someone, wanting to be with someone", or "if you want to, like if you see someone and you really want to kiss them and want to be able to touch them, touch their skin, actually getting close to them" or "to want to have a guy close to you, to be with him, like feel his touch and just feel his breath". The only response that was more common than "wanting" was "I don't know". Our data revealed that girls' narratives about desire were somewhat all-or-nothing in nature; the girls either spoke intensely about "wanting", "giving themselves entirely" or "being as close as possible to the other person" or they said that they had never felt sexual desire and didn't know how to describe it, in a sense distancing themselves from the experience.

Boys also described desire in terms of wanting: "the want to have sexual feelings, to be close to the person" or "me wanting to get pleasure out of one or more people". Therefore, for both boys and girls, sexual desire is a feeling of wanting, of yearning for, longing for, or perhaps an impulse to possess. Many more girls than boys expressed never having felt desire and not knowing how to describe it, suggesting that girls may distance themselves from their sexual wants and desires. Indeed, research has shown that desire is a complex experience for

adolescent girls; they are at once sexualized and expected to be sexual and punished for being so because they are defying cultural expectations of female sexual passivity (Tolman, 2002).

Natural and controllable? Both girls and boys talked about sexual desire as a natural and human feeling. For example, a 16 year-old girl described it as "a feeling in your stomach where you just want, its like an animal instinct, you just want. You need, its not something you can control once its there." Or another girl described it in these words: "human instinct, it's something that everyone has, it's a combination of the physical and emotional aspects". Two 16 year-old boys put it this way: "primal…good I guess…can't help it…instinctual" and "ever present in my mind, an urge". Conventional beliefs about gendered sexualities would have us believe that male sexual desire is an unmitigated sexuality, that male desire is unflagging, uncomplicated, primal, and for lack of a better word, animal. Our data suggests that this quality of desire is not an experience that is exclusive to males, that females also describe sexual desire in this way. It would appear that the gender disparities in sexual desire that are present in adulthood (Brotto, Blizer, et al., 2014), are perhaps not present in adolescence, which belies the notion that female desire is inherently less *potent* or *virile*[7]. A very interesting idea for a prospective study would be to record female sexual desire across adolescence and adulthood in order to determine when the gender differences in reported levels of sexual desire first emerge.

Along with describing desire as natural and normal, both genders described sexual desire in terms of bodily sensations, for example "butterflies in your stomach", "a heaviness in my chest", or "warm in my ears and you can't stop smiling". One girl described plainly her

[7] Both of these words formally apply to males. The definition of virile in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) is: (of a man) having strength, energy, and a strong sex drive. The definition of potent in the OED is: (1) having great power, influence, or effect; (2) (of a male) able to achieve an erection or to reach orgasm. The English language seems to be bereft of comparable words for female sexual desire.

experience of arousal: “I guess I get wet but like I don’t know, I guess I just want that person, hyper, overpowering, I’ll start taking charge, I feel it often.” Their words conveyed a clear sense of embodied sexuality, and their experiences of desire seemed to be coloured by a feelings of excitement and at times anxiety. For example, in the words of a 15 year-old boy: “not nerve-wracking, but you feel nervous,” or a girl described it as follows: “he said something and it gave me a weird feeling inside, like kind of putting me on edge and like wanting to know what’s going to happen and what it would be like”. This sense of mixed excitement and apprehension was especially apparent in the girls’ narratives:

> Scary but exciting at the same time, scary because well I don’t know, I’ve had ex-boyfriends that have been real assholes so whenever I’m looking for new guys it’s kind of scary for me because I’m afraid to get hurt again, but it’s exciting because your heart kind of races …it’s like a challenge. - *15 year-old girl*

Unfortunately, the meaning of “asshole” was not clarified so we cannot say for certain what she as afraid of, but suffice to say that for girls, sexual desire, like sexual attraction seems to involve risk and the threat of emotional pain. The boys did not talk about feeling scared and hurt in the way that the girls did, which does not mean that they are not feeling similarly. An effective sexuality education course would need to create conditions in which both boys and girls feel comfortable expressing vulnerability, fear and emotional pain.

Giving and getting. This theme is part of a larger picture, a sexual script that writes males as the beneficiaries of sexual pleasure and females as the purveyors of those pleasures, this will be discussed further in the section on sexual pleasure but it bears mentioning here because the adolescents talk about giving and receiving in their descriptions of desire. For example, one 15 year-old girl had this to say about sexual desire: “You see beyond their outside and look into them, sexual desire is wanting more than their physical, its wanting to be with

them and *give* yourself to them like sexually and entirely". We hear in her words that sexual desire involves entrusting your sexual partner with your self, it sounds as though she is gifting him her personhood, which are very high stakes for a new unknown experience. In contrast, several boys talked about desire in terms of receiving, or in this case obtaining: "me wanting to get pleasure out of one or more people, or obtain it one way or another". Another 15 year-old boy talking about getting in the following excerpt:

> Your first time feels weird because you never really felt this before and like you want it so bad that like, not like you're desperate for it, but like "Oh my god I have to *get* this, or I have to *get* that because it feels so good"….then like you want to go further...you'll sort of do anything to *get* it I guess…Well at the girl's pace cause like you don't really just want to use her…you don't want to use her but you want to *get* what you want…You don't want to go to fast so like she thinks you're using her, but you don't want to go too slowly…but like if you go too fast then like she might break up with you and then like the whole thing would be ruined. You want to go slowly and then slowly advance to the next part…Over time you just learn what the girl wants, like what the girl doesn't want and like what *she doesn't mind*, so its like react to what she wants and doesn't want accordingly.

Here we have some evidence for the sexual script and gender role expectations that cast girls as objects of desire, as representations of something to be "gotten" and responsible for giving or submitting their bodies and selves to male desire. We will see more evidence for this in the section on pleasure.

Attachment needs. The girls' narratives of sexual desire, more so than those of sexual attraction, were rooted in attachment needs such as trust, felt security and closeness: "I wouldn't just jump into a relationship with someone I don't know…I have trust issues, I wouldn't be able to open up to someone I don't know so I think that's a really important part of a relationship, to be able to trust and be open with someone". One girl described it as follows: "wanting or *allowing* yourself to be intimate with someone", why might an adolescent girl need to allow herself to be intimate with a boy? One possible explanation is because of the

abovementioned risks involved in being sexual as an adolescent female. Perhaps as a result of these risks, it is especially important for girls to trust and feel safe and comfortable with their sexual partners.

Sexual desire, for the girls, seems to result from an intense and profound emotional connection, a wanting yes, but a wanting that is very much connected to a person: "I just really want to be with that *person*, like as close as you can possibly be with them….desire is more like you get to know them, so you know like who they are, their personality…ok, I want *you*, you feel really passionate toward someone". Furthermore, we see evidence for the underlying attachment bond when it is ruptured:

> My first boyfriend cheated on me with like four girls, that's big especially when I'm young and I'm just starting to experience things, I lost my virginity to him, I waited a year, it was on my birthday, it was perfect at the time…I've just realized you can depend on people and then they're not there a lot of the time. So I try not to depend on people and I realize yeah it's hard to keep everything inside but like sometimes you don't get hurt that way. *- 16 year-old girl*

As was mentioned previously, the boys' descriptions of sexual desire emphasized emotional connection more so than their narratives about sexual attraction. For example, two 16 year-olds told us that desire was: "getting really close with the person and really like connecting with them, like on more than one level, emotional and physical" and "wanting to spend time, get to know them…be sexually attracted to the way they talk, the way they act." Another boy put it this way: "that's when it's sort of serious and like then I start looking for what they're like, like who they are instead of what they look like." And finally, one boy was explaining how he does not feel sexual desire while masturbating because "it's different cause sexual desire is with the *person*". It would seem from their words that for boys, sexual desire incorporates the person, in the literal sense of the word; it fixes the person within the body in a way that

attraction does not. In other words, sexual desire conjures sexual subjectivity and it connotes embodied sexualities; the boys are describing desiring someone, not a body or a body part. If, as we believe, sexual subjectivity is requisite to healthy sexuality, then understanding the purpose and meaning of jettisoning the self from the body becomes imperative. One would need to determine the conditions of sexual subjectivity versus sexual objectification in order to promote the occurrence of "mixed-personality-and-looks feelings" toward the person during sexual encounters.

Pleasure

Pleasure with self. In general, the girls reported not masturbating. In fact, only one girl talked about masturbation and her ability to bring herself to orgasm. The interviews conveyed an overwhelming sense that girls do not explore their bodies and capacities for pleasure on their own. Why was this the case? One girl explained it in this way: "I feel like I wouldn't feel pleasure because it's not like from someone else" and another described her experience of feeling disgust and shame while exploring her vagina:

> I've never fingered myself, I've kind of tried but I didn't feel anything and like I don't even know if I was doing it properly, I haven't really like felt pleasure or like actually gone, like done it because I just like grossed myself out and I was like "eww, I can't do this, this is really gross"…It feels weird, something that you do when you're older and I know guys do it all the time so why shouldn't it be ok for girls to do it but I've never, I mean, I just feel it's kind of like frowned upon for girls to do it so maybe that kind of warps my perspective of like this is wrong or whatever.
>
> - *15 year-old girl*

It seems logical that a lack of experiential knowledge of one's body and its capacity for sexual pleasure would translate into a lack of pleasure during sexual encounters. Indeed, the girls more often described pain rather than pleasure during sexual encounters, however, whether their reluctance to pleasure themselves contributes to their lack of pleasure during sexual

interactions remains to be seen. The words of the girl who described masturbating and experiencing pleasure point to another reason why girls may experience lower levels of pleasure during sexual encounters:

> When he fingers me it feels good but I've never actually had an orgasm, um but yeah when I masturbate it feels really good. *Are you able to tell your boyfriend do this, don't do this, this feels good, that doesn't feel good?* Um, well like it always feels good, he's always doing something right, it's just I don't finger myself because it's really hard for me to because then I just end up rubbing my clit and then I get that before I get to my g-spot so I don't really know myself where my g-spot is, but when I just rub my clit I, I do it over the covers because I need more pressure and when I do it straight on the skin it takes me way longer so I don't really know how to do it I guess. *Why couldn't he just do it over the covers the way you do it?* Like I think he'd rather be straight on and I don't think it's as intimate maybe so, I don't know we've never tried.
>
> - *17 year-old girl*

In this case, the girl has experiential knowledge of what she finds pleasurable, which she subverted in the service of a) achieving pleasure through penetration and b) what she thinks her partner's preference is. Therefore, she elevated the pleasure she receives from her partner above the pleasure she gives herself, despite achieving orgasm on her own and not with her partner.

There was a marked difference in masturbation rates for boys, almost a mirror image in experience seeing as all the boys reported masturbating. Rates of masturbation is one of the only consist and robust gender differences in sexuality and as such deserves our attention. We believe that this striking behavioural difference could contribute to a hierarchy of sexual pleasure wherein male pleasure is elevated about female pleasure and as a result females bend and reshape their pleasure, trying to fit the parameters of male pleasure. We see evidence for this in the girls' description of receiving sexual pleasure from a partner.

Hierarchy of pleasure. Receiving sexual pleasure did not appear to be straightforward for the girls. Several of them spoke about pain, uncertainty, self-doubt, discomfort, fear and anxiety when asked about their experiences of sexual pleasure, in short - not pleasure:

> I've been fingered…at the beginning actually it hurts…my friends say it shouldn't so I don't know if that's like normal, but like um now it doesn't hurt as much as it feels good and it doesn't take me as long to feel relaxed. I guess I've trained myself to feel relaxed and let go and it feels good, it works. I was fingered by one other guy, that was really bad too, um he, like it didn't work with him cause I was like really uncomfortable and scared. - *15 year-old girl*

> (Being fingered) kind of felt a little weird cause it was just, I wasn't used to it cause I haven't masturbated previously, it was just like different and it didn't feel like anything, but then after like the second or third time it started feeling good but before then it was just like I don't get the point of this like it doesn't, its not feeling like its described, like I heard its supposed to feel…like it's supposed to feel really, really good, amazing…So I was like maybe something is off, but after it happened a few times I realized that it does actually feel really good. *When asked what might have changed, she answered*: Maybe I was more used to it, it wasn't like a shock anymore, like I was more comfortable with it and was able to relax rather than just be like really tense and not know what was going on. - *17 year-old girl*

Our data suggest that it is not uncommon for girls to feel afraid during sexual encounters, especially initial ones. The reasons for this are myriad, however, we believe that their lack of sexual self-knowledge combined with a tendency to subsume their sexual needs, may engender feelings of helplessness and lack of control in sexual situations, which would in turn exacerbate their fears. Anxiety during sexual encounters is associated with multiple sexual dysfunctions such as HSDD, anorgasmia and ED. It is feasible that for some, these early encounters set the stage for later sexual dysfunction in adulthood.

The boys did not seem to be conflicted about receiving sexual pleasure; they did not talk about feeling tense, scared or unsure of themselves. To the contrary, they talked about feeling good, enjoying themselves and feeling satisfied: "Like you're feeling good while the other person is giving something to you" or "being on the receiving end of anything sexual, and enjoying it" or "she made me happy, satisfied me sexually and it was nice". In one case a 16 year-old boy described a sense of accomplishment that accompanies sexual pleasure:

> Satisfying, and often for me a sense of accomplishment. Well because let's say it's someone that I've been friends with for a while and so I had to get to know them first and then I had to work on them to the point where they wanted to have a sexual relationship with me and so once I've achieved a goal that I've set up for myself, like let's say I want to have sex with this person, once I've had sex with this person, that's an accomplishment to me. - *16 year-old boy*

His words evoke the image of a stereotypical heterosexual male, bent on sexual conquest, driven by a need for accomplishment rather than by sexual connection. We might conclude that he represents the "asshole" that haunts the stories and experiences of nascent adolescent female sexuality.

While most of the adolescents discussed sexual pleasure within a framework of receiving, a few of the girls spoke about giving pleasure to their partners. A 17 year-old girl talked about the hierarchy of pleasure in her relationship:

> If anything I like to focus on him, make sure he's having, to make sure he's enjoying himself. *When asked if she felt pressure to give him an orgasm, she answered*: I don't feel pressure, I just might feel a little bad after if I don't, but I don't feel pressure to do it…*When asked if her boyfriend would feel bad if she did not attain orgasm, she answered*: It's a bit different because it's a bit more difficult for a girl to have an orgasm than a guy, depends on how much time you have, you might just be at the stage of doing certain things that would not result in her having an orgasm…I think girls think about it that a lot more than guys do, they don't know how, or guys are very selfish, well the guys who we're surrounded with at school, well I guess selfish isn't…..but well if they finish they're fine, like they don't care. - *17 year-old girl*

We hear how she normalizes her experience of her pleasure being secondary to her boyfriend's. She does on three grounds: (1) female orgasm is difficult to achieve; (2) the stages of sexual activity, or what are referred to as the "bases", do not ensure female orgasm and (3) boys are not concerned with female orgasm. All three of these grounds, on which she accepts her diminished pleasure, would be important topics of discussion in a sexuality education curriculum.

The sexual double standard. The final subtheme harkens back to our previous discussion of the sexual double standard. When asked about the dynamics of giving and receiving pleasure in adolescents sexual relationships, a 17 year-old boy had this to say: "I mean you hear a lot about guys who want things to be done to them, and then you hear a lot like especially about the girls who do a lot to guys and then they're like sluts so like everyone knows about them." His words suggest, as we have seen elsewhere, that boys want to receive sexual pleasure and the girls who choose to be the purveyors of this pleasure are often objectified and degraded as a result of their actions. This theme also emerged from girls' narratives of sexual pleasure in which they expressed concerns about being judged, having a damaged reputation and feeling regret after having participated in a sexual encounter:

> Sometimes you'll have regrets, you might regret it or be like I enjoy that, I want to do it again…I've regretted doing stuff when I was drunk because the guy turns out to be an asshole or hooking up with someone that I just met and then having them bash or backtalk me or whatever…those situations can lead to not having trust in the person so being scared to go into it because you regret. *- 15 year-old girl*

We hear that her experiences of being sexual have had personal and social repercussions. In a sense her sexuality, a fundamental part of her self, was used against her as a means of degrading her person, which could have lead to her feelings of regret, distrust and fear. Another girl talked about the importance of keeping her sexual pleasure hidden or out of the public eye: "I like having a good reputation, I like to be myself and I don't want to worry like, oh like are people judging me about this…It's happened before that people have been like "oh, you're getting so into it" and I got comments about it for the next couple of day." We believe that the experience of relating to your sexuality as a threatening and untrustworthy part of yourself is much more common in girls than in boys. If we were to frame the relationship-to-self within attachment theory, we could say that the process of sexuality development might

result in either a secure or insecure attachment to one's sexual self. We would then posit that girls, more often than boys, develop insecure attachments to their sexual selves. Testing the quality of adolescent's attachment security to their sexual selves would be a very interesting direction for future research.

Discussion

The primary aim of the current investigation was to pull the body from the margins into the center of our epistemology of adolescent heterosexuality. Rather than address the body as a purely biological entity, we hoped to expand our understanding of the process of embodiment during adolescence, both personally and interpersonally. We analyzed both a statistical model and adolescents' verbal expressions of their experiences. The model examined how adolescents' beliefs about sex impact their perceptions of their bodies, their sexual subjectivity and ultimately their close relationships. It was cyclical, flowing between the personal and interpersonal, the cognitive and the physical and touched on sexuality, embodiment and intimacy. The interview data was replete with meaning and evinced a rich thematic analysis. What follows is a discussion of our mixed-method findings.

Quantitative Findings

Hypothesis 1: Interpretations and implications. This first wave of analyses looked at mean differences across gender on the following constructs: sexual attitudes, body esteem, sexual subjectivity and close relationships. We found differences on all accounts, in the direction of our predictions, meaning that past findings about gender differences in these domains still hold true. However, the magnitude of the effects varied considerably from small effect sizes for the variables measuring embodiment (body esteem positive and negative), to large effects for sexual body esteem and sexual attitudes permissiveness. Therefore, of the

gender differences that we did find (recall that there were no mean differences on sexual attitudes instrumentality, sexual pleasure from partner or the close relationship variables), only two evidenced large effects. The girls applied less permissive, or more restrictive statements to themselves, suggesting that they had internalized cultural sexual ideals and integrated them into their developing sexual identities. The same seemed to be true for the boys who, in general, endorsed more permissive statements about themselves. These findings suggest that by late adolescence, young people have internalized the sexual double standard. As such, the sexual double standard should be an important point of intervention in our efforts to improve relations between the genders and promote healthy sexuality development.

The second large effect was seen in levels of sexual body esteem, with boys endorsing significantly higher levels than girls. This finding is not surprising given what we know about gender differences in body esteem. It becomes interesting, however, when juxtaposed against the smaller effect sizes for gender differences in positive and negative body esteem. The comparison suggests that there is something uniquely gendered about sexual body esteem: boys reported feeling more sexually attractive and desirable than girls did and this difference was greater than the gender difference in body satisfaction.

Perhaps this finding reveals a repercussion of the sharp increase in girl's body dissatisfaction as they move through puberty. In other words, the development of secondary sex characteristics and the weight gain characteristic of puberty, which moves girls away from cultural ideals of thinness, might result in girls feeling less attractive and sexually desirable than boys. The physical changes of puberty transform girls into women in a culture that glorifies and sexualizes the prepubescent female body, a body that is distinctly devoid of womanhood. As such, adolescence signifies a time when girls are especially dissatisfied with the appearance of

their bodies and do not feel that their bodies are sexually attractive or desirable. Although we cannot draw any temporal conclusions, our findings suggest that general body dissatisfaction might develop into dissatisfaction with one's sexual body at some point during adolescence.

Although the effect sizes of the gender differences in body esteem positive and negative were small, they are worth noting. We saw that girls endorsed higher levels of body esteem negative and lower levels of body esteem positive than boys. The interesting finding here is that the gender difference was greater for body esteem positive, meaning that levels of body dissatisfaction do not account for the gender difference in body esteem, but rather levels of satisfaction do. According to our results it would seem that the source of the gender difference is in positive, not negative, feelings about one's body. Our results are in line with research showing that boys are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their bodies (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2001), however they also indicate that there continues to be significantly more boys than girls reporting positive feelings about their bodies.

Hypothesis 2: Interpretations and implications. The second wave of analyses involved building a statistical model for the study and then testing for gender differences in the strength and/or direction of the model's paths. We made three predictions about gender differences in our model: (1) given the robust gender difference in attitudes toward causal sex (Petersen & Hyde, 2010), we expected to find a stronger association between permissiveness and body esteem for boys than for girls; (2) we expected to find a positive association between body esteem positive and sexual subjectivity and a negative association between body esteem negative and sexual subjectivity; given higher levels of body dissatisfaction in girls as compared to boys, we expected the associations to be stronger for girls; and 3) given past research linking sexual subjectivity to well-being in adolescent girls, we expected to find the

same for adolescent boys and therefore no gender difference in the associations between sexual subjectivity and close relationships. Although certainly not desirable, it is often thought provoking to be confronted with findings that are contrary to expectation. We found differences where they were not expected, and no differences where they were expected. Overall, our model demonstrated strong associations between the constructs, and mostly similarities across gender.

Firstly, we will examine the relationship between sexual attitudes and body esteem; the associations between these constructs held all the gender differences in the model. Most striking was the difference in the relationship between sexual attitudes permissiveness and body esteem positive. The association was positive for boys and negative for girls, meaning that more permissive attitudes about sexual behaviour are linked with positive body esteem for boys and less permissive attitudes are linked with positive body esteem for girls. Said another way, boys feel good about their bodies when they allow themselves more sexual freedom and girls feel good about their bodies when they restrict their sexual freedom, suggesting a gendered process of sexual embodiment. Whereas boys are able to integrate their sexuality into their body esteem, girls perhaps need to divorce certain aspects of their sexuality from their bodies in order to maintain feelings of positive body esteem. If this were the case it would suggest a disordered process of sexual embodiment in adolescent girls and would have profound implications for female sexuality development. Future research would be needed to further understand the reasons for this striking gender difference.

Although the gender difference in the association between sexual attitudes permissiveness and negative body esteem was not significant, it did reveal a trend and we believe can help to elucidate the gender difference described above. The association between

permissive sexual attitudes and negative feelings about one's body was significant and positive for girls, and non-existent for boys, suggesting that for girls, not only do less permissive attitudes increase positive feelings of body esteem, but more permissive attitudes increase negative feelings of body esteem. Therefore, we see an inverse relationship between sexual freedom and body esteem for adolescent girls, and a unidirectional positive association for boys. Although much is known about the negative consequences of the sexual double standard, to our knowledge ours is the first study to demonstrate a direct link between internalization of the sexual double standard and body esteem in adolescence. More research is needed to further elucidate this important finding.

The final gender difference in the model was found in the association between sexual attitudes instrumentality and body esteem positive. The analyses revealed a significant positive association for girls and no significant association for boys. Let us remind you here that instrumentality was operationalized as follows: "the main purpose of sex is to enjoy oneself" or "sex is primarily physical". The items connote an embodied sexuality in their reference to pleasure and the physical aspects of sexuality, suggesting that for girls, belief in the importance of sex as a physical, embodied experience has positive implications for body esteem. It would follow then that teaching girls about pleasure and encouraging them to value the physical aspects of sexual experiences might increase their body satisfaction. Indeed, this would be an important component of a sexuality education program aimed at promoting healthy, embodied sexualities in adolescence.

The second part of the model comprises the associations between body esteem and sexual subjectivity. Although the analyses did not produce any significant gender differences, there are several significant pathways that merit discussion and interpretation. Firstly, we will

discuss the findings associated with body esteem positive and then we will turn to body esteem negative. As we hypothesized, body esteem positive was positively associated with sexual body esteem for both girls and boys. Meaning that feeling satisfied with one's body was related to feeling sexually attractive and desirable, indicating that having a positive body image was associated with positive sexual development for both genders. Body esteem positive was also associated with feeling entitled to receive pleasure from a sexual partner, however, only for the boys. Thus we see that feeling satisfied with one's body is an important contributing factor to sexual subjectivity, particularly for boys. On the other hand, feeling dissatisfied with one's body was associated with feeling entitled to receive pleasure from a sexual partner for both girls and boys. This finding is rather confounding in that one would not expect someone with a negative body image to feel deserving of sexual pleasure. Even more perplexing is that girls with positive body esteem did not report feeling deserving of sexual pleasure but girls with negative body esteem did. Further research is needed to shed light on this finding as the current study lacks the data necessary to make any cogent interpretations.

The final portion of the model consists of the associations between sexual subjectivity and experiences in close relationships. As predicted, we did not find any gender differences in the associations; however, several of the regressions were significant and provide interesting points of discussion. Firstly, sexual body esteem was negatively associated with comfort with closeness in relationships for both girls and boys. In other words, adolescents that felt sexually attractive and desirable reported less comfort with closeness in relationships. This finding suggests that perhaps sexual body esteem is not a singularly positive construct in that for some, feeling attractive or desirable might be a function of internalized objectification, which might explain the feelings of discomfort with closeness or intimacy. An interesting avenue for future

research might be to develop a measure of sexual body esteem that distinguishes between body esteem that results from objectification and sexual body esteem that stems from subjectification.

Interestingly, sexual body esteem was negatively associated with anxiety in close relationships, but only significantly so for girls. This finding provides support for our hypothesis that sexual body esteem is not a uniformly positive construct in adolescence. Our findings suggest that feeling sexually attractive and desirable is not only linked to greater discomfort with closeness, it is also related to more feelings of insecurity in close relationships. Taken together, these findings indicate that feeling sexual, or sexual embodiment during this stage of sexual development may have negative implications for adolescents' experiences in close relationships, especially for girls. Feelings of sexual embodiment in adolescence are often accompanied by youth's first heterosexual experiences. It makes sense that early heterosexual relationships would be marked by discomfort and insecurity, not least because novelty is typically characterized by uncertainty and anxiety. Furthermore, given the ubiquity of gender segregation in childhood (Leaper 1994; Maccoby, 1990), for some adolescents, limited experience with mixed-gender interactions may be related to their ability to be comfortable and form satisfying heterosexual relationships (Maccoby, 1990). Therefore, it is conceivable that the adolescents who report higher levels of sexual body esteem are also the adolescents who are negotiating early heterosexual encounters, which we believe are characterized by significant discomfort and anxiety.

The final significant regression in the model was found in the relationship between entitlement to pleasure from a sexual partner and feelings of anxiety in close relationships; the association was significant and positive for girls and not significant for boys. In other words,

girls who felt more entitled to pleasure from a sexual partner also felt higher levels of anxiety in close relationships. One explanation for this finding might be found in social script theory (Abelson, 1981), and more specifically in gendered heterosexual scripts (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Research indicates that adolescents rely heavily on gendered scripts to navigate their early sexual experiences (Rose & Frieze, 1993; Simon & Gagnon, 1986). These scripts typically cast boys as the recipients of pleasure. It could be that feeling deserving of pleasure is linked with anxiety for girls because their pleasure is often 'hors script', meaning that getting their sexual needs met would require direct communication about matters that most adults find difficult to navigate and as such would be quite anxiety provoking.

In sum, our quantitative findings revealed more gender similarities than differences, however, interesting differences were found in the associations between sexual attitudes and body esteem. Mean attitudes about sexual freedom or permissiveness differed significantly by gender and had interesting implications for body esteem in our model. Boys reporting feeling good about their bodies when they allowed themselves more sexual freedom and conversely, girls reported feeling good about their bodies when they restricted their sexual freedom. It would seem that boys were better able to integrate aspects of the sexuality into their body esteem. Our findings provide a direct link between internalization of the sexual double standard and body esteem in adolescence. Another important link between sexual attitudes and body esteem was found; our results suggested that for girls, belief in the importance of sex as a pleasurable and embodied experience has positive implications for body esteem.

Our model also showed that feeling satisfied with one's body is an important contributing factor to sexual subjectivity, particularly for boys. Meaning that body esteem plays a critical role in adolescent sexual development. Our analyses cast sexual subjectivity in a

nuanced light in that it seemed to have negative implications for adolescent close relationships. A possible explanation for this is that the adolescents who reported higher levels of sexual body esteem were also the ones navigating initial heterosexual encounters, which are often characterized by discomfort and anxiety. Furthermore, feeling deserving of pleasure might have been linked with anxiety for girls because their pleasure is often disregarded in heterosexual encounters, meaning that getting their sexual needs met would require communication skills that elude most adults in our culture. Let us now turn to a discussion of the studies' qualitative findings.

Qualitative Findings

The major theme that emerged from the analyses was sexualities-in-relationship. The adolescents' narratives about attraction, desire and pleasure were almost uniformly rooted in interpersonal processes, which the adolescents believed could be parsed according to emotional and physical aspects of sexuality. Although both boys and girls differentiated between physical and emotional/relational features of sexuality, the structure, content and meaning of the distinctions varied considerably across gender. The narratives revealed that girls viewed emotional connection, or connection with the person as a prerequisite for sexual connection. In other words, sexual interactions were acceptable when they were encounters between two subjects. Engaging in sexual activity within the context of a relationship seemed to provide assurance of their subjectivity, or that they were being respected and valued as sexual beings.

The importance of emotional connection was also evidenced in the norms and sanctions surrounding female sexual behaviour. For example, if a girl was 'too' sexual, 'too' early in a relationship she was castigated by her peers, indicating that insufficient time had elapsed to form an emotional connection and therefore the girl was being sanctioned for engaging in

sexual activity in the absence of emotional connection. The adolescents described sexual activity in the absence of a relationship, or emotional connection, as 'purely' physical. The adolescents shared the belief that sexuality can be divided along physical and emotional dimensions, and they believed that sexual activity was only acceptable for girls when it was an expression of an emotional connection; this was not the case for boys.

The interviews revealed that boys valued sexual connection, with or without the presence of an emotional connection. They described emotional connection as occurring within the context of relationships, or between two subjects, whereas strictly physical connection occurred in the context of hook-ups, or sexual encounters in the absence of a 'relationship'. Therefore, boys valued and sought out sexual interactions that were devoid of emotional connection, which we believe is one of the mechanisms through which sexual objectification occurs.

Without emotional connection, or in other words in the absence of feelings for the person with whom one is being sexual, the psychological structure of the sexual encounter can easily become one of subject interacting with object; objects that are then consumed and collected as markers of sexual prowess. This process of sexual objectification, which is fundamental to heterosexual male identity, is a critical point at which patriarchy enacts power on women's bodies. The adolescent males spoke of this process and those that were skilled at it, with adulation. In contrast, male and female adolescents spoke of the girls who were objectified in the process with disdain. Therefore, a critical point of intervention would be adolescents' beliefs about the possibility of separating the physical and emotional/relational aspects of sexuality. It is our contention that they are inseparable, that a subject remains a subject even while being objectified. Emotional connection is omnipresent; it is not only an artifact of being

in a ‘relationship’. Furthermore, all sexual encounters occur within a ‘relationship’ in that they are the result of two subjects relating to one another. A successful intervention would then help adolescents develop more nuanced understandings of relationships and challenge their dualistic thinking in order to encourage a more holistic approach to sexual subjectivity.

Attraction. The adolescents also divided their descriptions of attraction according to the duality of physical/emotional: physical attraction was described in terms of appearance and physical features, or characteristics of the body, and emotional attraction was described in terms of personality features, or qualities of the person. Although both boys and girls seem to value a confluence of physical and emotional attraction, their motivations for doing so were divergent. Similar to our understanding of why girls favour sexual activity within the confines of a relationship, girls seem to value personality traits over physical features in a sexual partner as a way of protecting themselves from the emotional distress of being objectified, or derided as sexual beings. According to many girls, sexual attraction was dangerous in that they were constantly negotiating risk; the risk of their sexuality being deemed ‘too much, too little, too soon, too late, too willing, too unwilling’, by their partners and their peers. As such, the girls described authenticity, trustworthiness, and being respectful as attractive qualities.

The boys did not talk about attraction in terms of negotiating risk. They also valued a convergence of personality traits and physical characteristics but seemingly for different reasons. While the girls were assessing personality traits in order to hedge their bets, and ultimately take a risk, the boys were selecting personality traits to optimize their chances of enjoying themselves. Whereas the girls were talking about trust, respect and conscientiousness, the boys were talking about agreeableness and openness to experience. Thus we see that both girls and boys included personality characteristics in their narratives of attraction, however,

they seemed to be attracted to different traits, which we believe to be a result of a double standard that places girls at greater risk of emotional and social repercussions following a sexual encounter. Said another way, the sexual freedom enjoyed by many heterosexual adolescent males affords them the ability to select sexual partners based on affinity and compatibility, while because of the restrictions and sanctions placed on female heterosexuality, many adolescent girls select partners based on transparency, respect and loyalty. More research is needed in order to determine the prevalence, generalizability and implications of this striking gender difference in attraction.

Desire. The thematic analysis of the adolescents' descriptions of desire produced four themes: (1) wanting; (2) natural and controllable? (3) giving and getting; and (4) attachment needs. What follows is a discussion of the most interesting and impacting findings from this section. The intensity of the descriptors that the girls used to illustrate their sexual desire, and their assertions that sexual desire was 'normal and natural', were both quite striking. Our research seems to confirm that the dilemma of desire (Tolman, 2002) is not due to a lack of sexual desire, as is so often the case in adulthood (Brotto, Blizer, et al., 2014). Based on our interviews, adolescent girls experience as much if not more sexual desire than adolescent boys. This finding helps to disconfirm the current *discourse of male sexual drive* (Hollway, 1984), which portrays male sexuality as virulent and uncontrollable and saddles women with the impossible task of controlling the uncontrollable. Our data suggest that adolescent female desire is equally natural and normal, albeit with the expectation of controllability. It seems then that adolescent females are charged with the responsibility of controlling not only the sexual feelings of their heterosexual partners, but also their own sexual feelings. Given the

impossibility of this position it comes as no surprise that by the time they reach adulthood 20-30% of the girls will suffer from low sexual desire (Brotto, Blizer, et al., 2014).

Through cultural representations of heterosexual behaviour, girls learn to control their sexual desire in order to conform to expectations of sexual passivity. They also learn to dampen and distance themselves from their desire because they are often punished if they do not (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014). We saw evidence of this in our interviews, with the majority of girls expressing never having felt sexual desire or not knowing how to describe it. It is our contention that girls sublimate or dissociate from their feelings of sexual desire because of the risk of negative consequences to their emotional and social well-being. Whereas boys talked about desire as producing feelings of anxiety, or being nerve-wracking, girls talked about their fears associated with desire. A certain measure of anxiety is expected given the novelty of the experiences, however, we do not believe that fear, or being scared of sexual encounters is conducive to healthy sexual development. We believe that the fear stems from the risks that adolescent girls are obliged to take if they want to be sexual, these risks need to be made explicit and addressed if we want girls to become sexual in an environment that feels safe and supportive.

Typically in our culture, heterosexual scripts cast men as the sexual initiators and women as sexually passive. Our data provides support for the internalization of these ideals in adolescence. In their descriptions of sexual desire, the girls talked about *giving* and the boys talked about *getting*. Cultural scripts put pressure on girls to be passive in their giving, of themselves, their bodies, or sexual pleasure. A possible consequence of this expectation of passivity is that it facilitates a process of self-objectification, meaning that during sexual encounters, girls do not act as sexually embodied subjects, but rather as the objects of their

sexual partner's desires. Tolman (2002) suggested that by discouraging women's sexual agency (and men's sexual responsibility), these cultural messages increase girls' vulnerability to sexual coercion and psychological distress. This issue will be discussed further in the section on sexual pleasure.

The final noteworthy finding from our discussions of desire was the marked presence of attachment needs such as trust, felt security, dependency and closeness, in essence knowing the person, both in the girls and boys narratives. Here we see that sexual desire, unlike sexual attraction, seemed to be firmly rooted in subject-subject relationships. Therefore, for adolescents, sexual desire incorporated the person into the body; as such it seemed to be a less dualistic and more holistic sexual feeling. Furthermore, the link between early sexual experiences and attachment needs is undeniable. This is not to say that all sexual partners function as attachment figures, but rather that we see evidence of a transitional phase, with the final outcome being a transfer of attachment needs from parental figures to romantic partners (Fraley & Davis, 1997; Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). In addition, sexual desire conjured sexual subjectivity and connoted embodied sexualities; as such it would be a very useful educational tool in discussions with adolescents about sexual subjectification versus objectification. A discussion of the differences between sexual attraction and sexual desire would illustrate the differential processes of objectification and subjectification, and allow for a dialogue about the mechanisms, and possible consequences of these processes.

Pleasure. The thematic analysis of our discussions about pleasure revealed three subthemes: (1) pleasure with self; (2) hierarchy of pleasure; and (3) the sexual double standard. What follows is a discussion of the pertinent and significant findings. The robust gender difference in rates of masturbation (Petersen & Hyde, 2010) was replicated in our data. In fact,

only one girl talked about experiencing pleasure and orgasm through masturbation, while all the boys spoke about masturbation as an important component of their sexual development. The interviews evinced two reasons for the girls' eschewal of masturbation: feelings of shame and disgust, and not believing that masturbation is pleasurable. We believe that girls' avoidance of masturbation contributes to their lack of knowledge of, and appreciation for their bodies as sources of sexual pleasure. Research is needed to determine the veracity of this claim, but we believe that this then translates into diminished pleasure during sexual encounters. Another possible downstream effect of girls' restraint from masturbation is the ultimate placing of their partner's pleasure and preferences before their own. We are of the opinion that if girls had more experiential knowledge of their bodies and pleasure and if this knowledge was valued culturally, they may be less inclined to cast it aside in the service of male pleasure. As such, instructing girls about masturbation and encouraging them to explore the behaviour is a much-needed antidote to the negative emotions and false beliefs surrounding masturbation for girls.

Our data revealed that it is not uncommon for adolescent girls to feel pain rather than pleasure during sexual encounters, meaning that their narratives of pleasure were marked by a distinct lack of pleasure. The girls normalized their pain and lack of pleasure, framing their experience as an inevitable part of female sexual development. Along with pain the girls described feelings of discomfort and fear in their descriptions of sexual pleasure, particularly when they were receiving sexual pleasure. Their narratives suggested that the ways in which their sexual partners were touching them were not pleasurable, and furthermore, rather than expressing their lack of pleasure and instructing their partners on how to pleasure them, the girls reorganized their experience so that the pain and discomfort was "pleasurable".

We could say then that adolescent heterosexual female pleasure is often not embodied, but rather imposed on her body by her male sexual partner. In contrast, receiving sexual pleasure seemed to be uniformly positive for the boys. They talked about feeling good, happy and satisfied. Our data painted a plain picture of a hierarchy of sexual pleasure, which we've seen informs adolescents' understanding of receiving pleasure; it also extends to their beliefs about giving sexual pleasure. It was evident from the narratives of several of the girls that the primary goal of sexual interactions was male pleasure, operationalized as orgasm. The girls accepted their pleasure as secondary for several reasons: they believed that female orgasm is more difficult to achieve than male orgasm, they explained that common sexual activities are not conducive to female orgasm, and thirdly they held no expectation that their partners would concern themselves with their pleasure. Our task then is to challenge adolescents' beliefs about hierarchies of pleasure so that *all* adolescents can enjoy and feel satisfied during sexual interactions.

The final theme to emerge from the adolescents' narratives about pleasure pertained to the sexual double standard, and specifically how the double standard affects adolescents' understanding of the directionality of pleasure. Their accounts suggested that boys, more so than girls, wanted to receive sexual pleasure and that the girls who were the vehicles of pleasure were just that, a means to an end. Here again we see a mechanism of objectification when it comes to males receiving pleasure from females. Therefore, the sexual exchange of pleasure was disadvantageous to females on several levels, firstly female pleasure was considered secondary to male pleasure by both girls and boys, and secondly, when girls 'give boys what they want' they are at risk of victimization. Once again we see the dilemma of female sexuality – damned if you do, and damned if you do. Sadly, we did not see evidence for any form of

female sexuality that could be described as pleasurable, embodied, autonomous and integrated into the adolescent's sense of self, or in other words, a healthy sense of sexuality. We saw more evidence of healthy sexuality in boys' narratives; however, objectification of girls and women was present in many of their accounts of sexuality, which in our view is an unhealthy process that necessarily has deleterious effects on their sexual well-being.

In sum, our qualitative findings underscored several very interesting processes embedded within adolescent heterosexuality. Firstly, adolescents conceived of sexual relationships as being either physical, or physical *and* emotional. Depending on the form of the relationship, adolescents held different expectations, different scripts were enacted and there were different outcomes. Typically, only boys spoke of wanting strictly physical sexual encounters, pointing to what we believe is a gendered process of objectification. Embedded in the belief that a sexual interaction can be strictly physical is the assumption that a body can be emptied of emotions and personhood, or that the two are separable. All the adolescents held this belief, and we believe that without it, neither objectification nor self-objectification would be possible. Therefore, the dualistic thinking that underlies adolescents' understanding of sexual relationships needs to be made explicit in a way that allows them to see the erroneous nature of this distinction and exposes the harmful outcomes that can result from this way of thinking.

The process of objectification seemed to be more likely to occur in the context of sexual attraction, rather than desire. For boys, sexual attraction could be only physical, meaning without any emotional connection to the person, but sexual desire was described as a relational feeling, meaning it was directed toward a person rather than an object. Girls were less likely than boys to describe an objectifying process of attraction, and always spoke of desire in relational terms. A very interesting finding was that girls seemed to try to protect themselves

against objectification by ensuring that their sexual encounters were grounded in emotional and personal connection, or in other words in subjectivity. Therefore, it would seem that girls' sexual subjectivity was in the hands of the boys who held the power to either to connect to them as people, or objectify them. This process could be upended if we focused on nurturing female sexual agency and created conditions in which girls were empowered to act on their sexual needs and desires. In other words, we can disrupt the processes of objectification and self-objectification by encouraging sexual subjectivity and embodied sexualities. Our data clearly show that it is not enough to work with girls on this issue; this is a heterosexual gender dynamic and it is critical that boys take part in the dialogue and in the change.

A direct and powerful means of promoting female sexual subjectivity is through sexual pleasure. Our data revealed a hierarchy of pleasure that was buttressed by the beliefs and actions of both boys and girls. The narratives told us that girls were receiving pain and not pleasure from their partners, and that boys were indeed experiencing sexual pleasure. This imbalance in expectations and experiences of pleasure should be righted. It is imperative that heterosexual gender dynamics result in sexual pleasure for both parties. We believe that a focus on female pleasure, both through self-stimulation and partner education would greatly help to tip the balance and equalize the existing hierarchy of pleasure.

Strengths and Limitations

The major strength of this study is the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the sexual lives of adolescents. The mixed-method approach allowed for the integration of rigorous statistical analyses and rich narrative data, resulting in a more comprehensive gestalt that neither on its own would have afforded. We feel that the inclusion of boys in a comprehensive manner was a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge,

especially since we found strong support for the gender similarities hypothesis. We believe that a paradigm shift is in order, one that frames gender within a discourse of similarity and shared humanity, in this way we can turn our attention to the salient and impactful areas of difference, such as hierarchies of pleasure and embodied sexualities.

Like other studies, this project has some methodological limitations. Firstly, though the sample size was adequate, there was some doubt as to our ability to detect gender differences in the structural equation model. A larger sample size would have increased the power and assuaged our doubts. Second, there is the problem of directionality in that without a longitudinal design it is impossible to determine causality. As such, we do not know the temporal order in which our constructs contribute to one another. We believe that our model is grounded in theory and past research and therefore empirically sound, however we do not know for example if body esteem contributes to sexual subjectivity or vice versa. Finally, the study is limited in that it privileges heterosexual values and experience; a more comprehensive study would have examined a more representative spectrum of adolescent sexual identity and experience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as psychologists and educators, the current study points us squarely in the direction of sexual embodiment and relational sexualities. Many of the heterosexual gender dynamics present in the study are unhealthy and imbalanced. We believe that adolescents are capable of egalitarian, pleasurable, and respectful sexual encounters but that they are being denied the education necessary to create these relationships. As their mental health providers, educators, parents and friends, it is our responsibility to provide this education and to model positive, healthful, embodied and relational sexualities.

Table 2.1. Descriptive statistics for the study variables for girls *(n = 89)* and boys *(n = 81)*

	Girls		Boys	
Measure	*M*	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*
Sexual Attitudes Permissiveness	2.27	*(.78)*	3.06	*(.82)*
Sexual Attitudes Instrumentality	2.66	*(.61)*	2.92	*(.63)*
Body Esteem Positive	3.22	*(.93)*	3.55	*(73)*
Body Esteem Negative	3.20	*(.98)*	2.94	*(.79)*
Sexual Subjectivity Body Esteem	3.07	*(.83)*	3.47	*(.62)*
Sexual Subjectivity Pleasure Partner	3.22	*(1.30)*	2.99	*(.96)*
Attachment Close	3.53	*(.61)*	3.69	*(.63)*
Attachment Depend	2.63	*(.64)*	2.60	*(.49)*

Table 2.2. Bivariate associations between variables for girls (below the diagonal) and for boys (above the diagonal).

	Sexual Attitudes Permissive	Sexual Attitudes Instrument	Body Esteem Positive	Body Esteem Negative	Sexual Body Esteem	Sexual Pleasure Partner	Attachment Close	Attachment Anxiety
Sexual Attitudes Permissive	___	.38**	.18	-.03	.22*	.45**	.15	-.05
Sexual Attitudes Instrument	.32**	___	.12	.01	.14	.23*	-.11	.23*
Body Esteem Positive	-.27*	.21*	___	-.65**	.55**	.06	.34**	-.45**
Body Esteem Negative	.33**	-.03	-.70**	___	-.57**	.14	-.22	.29**
Sexual Body Esteem	-.15	.21*	.61**	-.58**	___	.41**	-.25*	-.27*
Sexual Pleasure Partner	.16	.24*	.03	.18	.28**	___	-.02	.03
Attachment Close	-.12	-.01	.17	-.28**	.45**	.17	___	-.32**
Attachment Anxiety	.16	.1	-.23*	.42**	-.22*	.32**	-.17	___

Note. Values above the diagonal for males and values below the diagonal for females; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2.3. Fit indices for nested models in tests of form, metric, and scalar invariance and equality of covariances.

Construct	Model	*df*	χ^2	CFI	RMSEA	90% CI	SRMR
Body esteem: Positive and negative							
	Form Invariance Girls	8	13.33	.98	.09	(.00-.17)	.03
	Form Invariance Boys	8	18.32	.94	.14	(.07-.23)	.05
	Model 0	14	31.43	.97	.12	(.07-.18)	.04
	Model 1	20	46.74	.98	.13	(.08-.18)	.21
	Model 1 – partial	19	37.77	.96	.11	(.06-.16)	.21
	Model 2	23	45.32	.96	.11	(.06-.15)	.21
	Model 3	23	45.32	.96	.11	(.06-.15)	.21
	Model 4	24	51.62	.92	.12	(.07-.16)	.18
Attachment: Close and anxiety							
	Form Invariance Girls	8	6.84	1.00	.00	(.00-.11)	.04
	Form Invariance Boys	8	6.84	1.00	.00	(.00-.11)	.04
	Model 0	16	15.27	1.00	.00	(.00-.10)	.05
	Model 1	22	22.94	.99	.02	(.00-.10)	.09
	Model 2	26	32.26	.95	.05	(.00-.11)	.10
	Model 2 – partial [ANX2]	25	27.00	.98	.03	(.00-.10)	.10
	Model 3	25	27.00	.98	.03	(.00-.10)	.10
	Model 4	26	27.25	.99	.02	(.00-.09)	.10

Note. Model 0 = Baseline all groups - equal form (form invariance); Model 1 = metric invariance - equality of factor loadings; Model 2 = scalar invariance - equality of intercepts; Model 3 = scalar invariance with covariance baseline; Model 4 = equality of covariances.

Table 2.4. Chi-square difference tests of form, metric and scalar invariance for latent constructs across gender.

Construct	Model comparisons	$\Delta \chi^2$	*p*	Δ *df*
Body Esteem				
	Model 1 compared to Model 0	15.31	.02*	6
	Model 1 (partial equality of factor loadings) to Model 0	6.43	.27	5
	Model 2 compared to Model 1 (partial)	7.55	.11	4
	Model 4 compared with Model 3	6.30	.01*	1
Attachment				
	Model 1 compared to Model 0	7.67	.26	6
	Model 2 compared to Model 1	9.32	.05*	4
	Model 2 (ANX2) compared to Model 1	4.06	.26	3
	Model 4 compared to Model 3	0.25	.62	1

Table 2.5. Model fit indices for nested models for test of scalar invariance.

Model	*df*	χ^2	CFI	RMSEA	90% CI	SRMR
Baseline	410	506.13	.93	.05	[.04-.07]	.10
Sexual Attitudes: Permissiveness	406	502.16	.93	.05	[.04-.07]	.10
Sexual Attitudes: Instrumentality	405	495.91	.93	.05	[.03-.07]	.10
Body Esteem: Positive	408	504.85	.93	.05	[.04-.07]	.10
Body Esteem: Negative	408	500.16	.93	.05	[.03-.07]	.10
Sexual Subjectivity: Body Esteem	406	493.13	.93	.05	[.03-.07]	.10
Sexual Subjectivity: Pleasure Partner	406	499.33	.93	.05	[.04-.07]	.10
Attachment: Close	406	504.05	.92	.05	[.04-.07]	.10
Attachment: Anxiety	406	495.75	.93	.05	[.03-.07]	.10

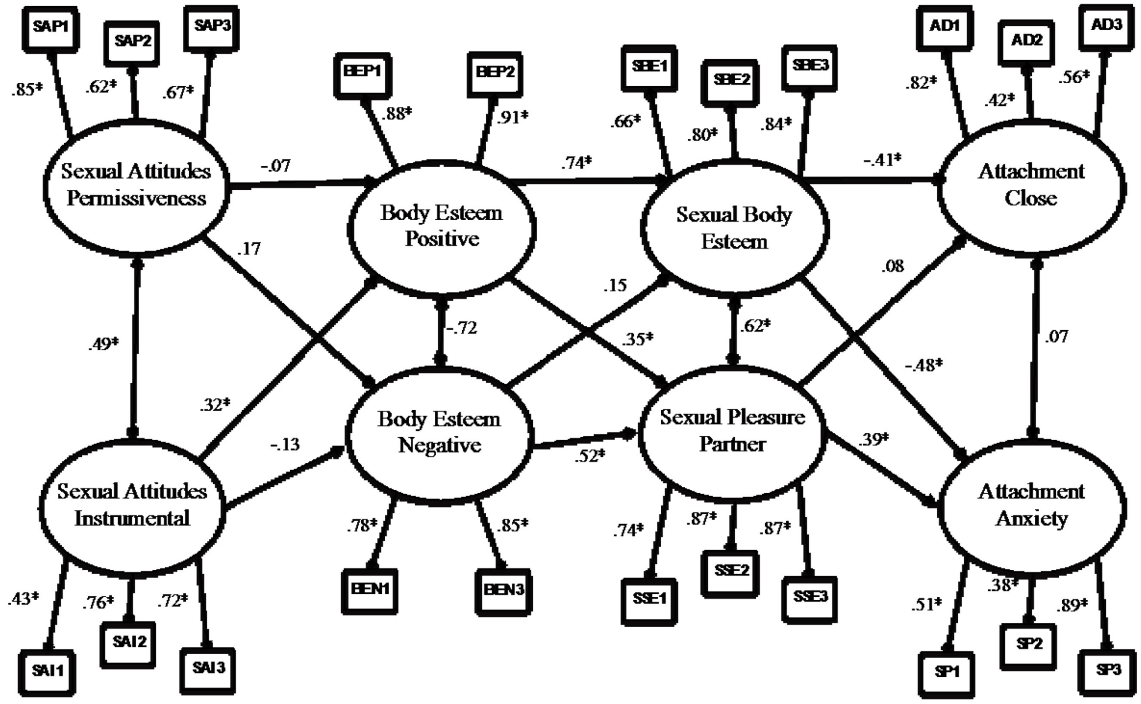
Table 2.6. Test of scalar invariance for multi-group structural equation model.

Construct	Model comparison	Δ χ^2	Δ *df*	*p*
Sexual Attitudes				
Permissiveness	compared to baseline	3.97	4	.41
Instrumentality	compared to baseline	10.22	5	.07
Body Esteem				
Positive	compared to baseline	1.28	2	.53
Negative	compared to baseline	5.97	2	.05*
Sexual Subjectivity				
Body Esteem	compared to baseline	13.00	4	.01*
Pleasure Partner	compared to baseline	6.80	4	.15
Attachment				
Close	compared to baseline	2.08	4	.72
Anxiety	compared to baseline	10.38	4	.03*

Table 2.7. Test of inequality of covariances.

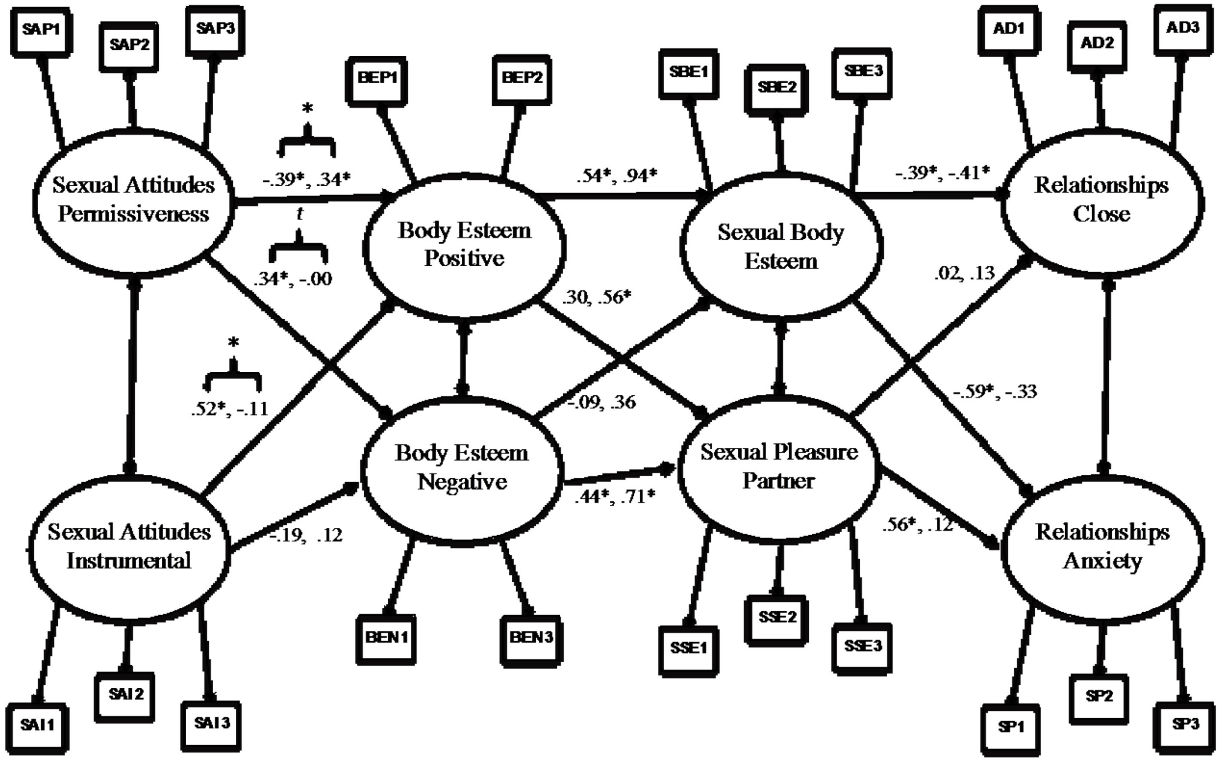
Model	*df*	χ^2	CFI	RMSEA	90% CI	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	*p*
Baseline – all covariances constrained	403	500.77	.92	.05	[.04 – .07]	.11			
Sexual Attitudes	402	500.69	.92	.05	[.04 – .07]	.11	.08	1	.78
Body Esteem	402	497.52	.93	.05	[.04 – .07]	.11	3.25	1	.07
Sexual Subjectivity	402	496.61	.93	.05	[.04 – .07]	.11	4.16	1	.04*
Attachment	402	499.63	.92	.05	[.04 – .07]	.11	1.16	1	.28

Figure 2.1. Unconditional model for entire sample.



Note: Significant effects ($p < .05$) shown as standardized coefficients (betas) are noted with the symbol (*). χ^2 (236) = 341.05, p = .00; CFI = .93; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .08.

Figure 2.2. Test of model path invariance.



Note: Significant effects ($p < .05$) shown as standardized coefficients (betas) are noted with the symbol (*). Coefficients for girls are shown first and coefficients for boys are shown second. The path coefficients that differ significantly by gender are marked by the symbol (}*).

General Discussion

The principal aim of this dissertation was to contextualize adolescent sexuality within social processes (Tiefer, 1995); toward this aim, we created two models that connected critical aspects of sexuality, namely sexual subjectivity and sexual attitudes, and other central facets of the developing self, specifically gender role expectations, body esteem, close relationships and well-being. In this way, we hoped to ground our investigation of sexuality in social processes and thereby contribute towards an integrative understanding of adolescent sexual development. Study 1, "*Looking under rocks: Testing assumptions about gender differences in sexuality in adolescence*", was designed to investigate how the interplay of heterosexuality and gender produces differences in socially constructed experiences of sexuality; Study 2, "*Through the body: Examining the role of body esteem in adolescent emotional and sexual health*", aimed to illuminate how sexuality becomes woven into personal and interpersonal experiences of embodiment. The following section provides a synthesis and discussion of the key findings from the two studies; it is organized according to major themes that emerged from the studies. We then outline what we believe to be critical components of a sexuality education program.

Gender similarities

This dissertation was designed to look more closely at commonly held beliefs about gender differences in sexuality; what we found instead were several small effects for the differences, and many more similarities than differences, at least in the quantitative analyses. In her germinal meta-analysis, Hyde (2005) found that decades of research on gender differences across several domains of experience had largely failed to produce any effects of great magnitude. The study led to the formulation of the *gender similarities hypothesis,* which posits that gender differences may be amplified in patriarchal cultures as a justification for the

society's gendered division of labour and when tested empirically the differences are often dwarfed by the much larger similarities. An interesting example of this phenomenon was found in the thematic analysis in Chapter 1, specifically in the theme of *enacting masculinity/femininity.* The theme emerged from adolescents' distinctions between public and private selves and attributions of more traditional gender roles to their peers' public selves. The process suggests a layered social reality, one in which myriad representations of the self can co-exist (James, 1890; Cohler, 1983). We agree with Hyde (2005) that gender differences are predominantly enacted on a public stage. Our cultural rhetoric emphasizes gender differences; it is not surprising then that adolescents emulate these ideals and especially so when they are in social situations. It is also not surprising that gender similarities were hidden from public view and only expressed in confidence; gender similarities may need to be hidden because they belie myths of difference, myths upon which adolescent sexual narratives, scripts and relationships rest.

Following the initiative of Hyde (2005), research in the area of gender has started to focus on similarities rather than difference. However, amidst all the similarities, Petersen & Hyde (2010) did find some reliable gender differences in the area of sexuality; large effect sizes for difference were seen for rates masturbation, use of pornography and attitudes about casual sex, findings that were reflected in our data. Although we did not measure rates of pornography consumption, attitudes about permissiveness stood out in both studies and accounted for most of the gender differences in our models. Likewise, rates of masturbation were found to differ significantly between boys and girls; the implications of these gender differences in sexual development are explored further in the following sections. We found mean gender differences for most of our variables but only three evidenced large effect sizes: (1) sexual attitudes

permissiveness; (2) sexual body esteem; and (3) anxious/depressed affect. In sum, the current project provides credence to the gender similarities hypothesis and highlights some of the implications of key gender differences in sexuality during adolescence.

The Sexual Double Standard

The norms of this unwritten moral code of heterosexual behaviour pervaded nearly all aspects of the current research initiative. Mean attitudes about sexual freedom differed by gender, with boys endorsing higher levels of the construct in both studies. Moreover, permissiveness accounted for most of the gender differences in both our models. In Chapter 1, the gender difference had positive implications for adolescent male sexual subjectivity and no impact on female sexual subjectivity; boys reported feeling more sexually desirable and had higher levels of sexual assertiveness when they allowed themselves more sexual freedom. Based on our findings, we feel confident that sexual permissiveness is a critical feature of healthy adolescent male sexuality development. Conversely, the study confirmed our belief that girls are not granted sufficient sexual freedom in our culture for it to have an affect on their sexual subjectivity. In Chapter 2, gender differences in attitudes toward sexual permissiveness had implications for the adolescents' body esteem. Whereas, boys reported feeling good about their bodies when they allowed themselves *more* sexual freedom, girls reported feeling good about their bodies when they *restricted* their sexual freedom. This finding uncovered a direct link between internalization of the sexual double standard and body esteem, or in other words, provides evidence for gender differences in embodied sexuality in adolescence.

The sexual double standard was also evidenced in adolescents' narratives of female sexuality, which had a manifest moral quality that was all but absent from descriptions of male sexuality. Thus we saw that, separate from the restrictions imposed by gender role expectations,

moral restrictions on female sexuality, which amount to restrictions of sexual freedom, also had far-reaching consequences for sexuality development (Drury & Bukowski, 2013; Orenstein, 1994; Tolman, 2002a). The power of the sexual double standard cannot be overstated; for better or worse it has the potential to impact many facets of sexual development including sexual agency, sexual subjectivity, and sexual body esteem, which then affect personal and interpersonal well-being. As such, we believe it should occupy a central place in any sexuality education program.

Objectification and Subjectification

Another major finding that emerged from this dissertation was the identification of the commensurate processes of objectification and subjectification. Objectification refers to the experience of being treated as a body, or collection of body parts, valued for its consumption by others. Sexual objectification occurs whenever a (usually) woman's body, body parts, or sexual functions are separated out from her person, reduced to the status of mere instruments, or regarded as if they were capable of representing her (Bartky, 1990). In other words, when objectified, women are treated *as bodies* – and in particular, as bodies that exist for the use and pleasure of heterosexual men (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). We saw ample evidence for this process in both our studies. For instance, the adolescents conceived of sexual relationships as being either physical, or physical *and* emotional and specific expectations, scripts and outcomes characterized the different types of sexual relationships. Typically, only boys spoke of wanting strictly physical sexual encounters, pointing to a gendered process of objectification. Embedded in the belief that a sexual interaction can be strictly physical is the assumption that a body can be emptied of the person and his or her emotions, or objectified. Whether they valued this type of relationship or not, all the adolescents believed that sexual encounters could be devoid of

emotional connection, much like relationships to other objects in one's environment. It is our contention that objectification and self-objectification would not be possible without such a belief. As such, it is a critical point of focus in our sexuality education program. Objectification can be countered in several ways, for instance, by using embodiment theory (see Tolman, Bowman & Fahs, 2014) to challenge adolescents' dualistic thinking, and by promoting processes of subjectification, as we saw in adolescents descriptions of desire, in lieu of objectification, which made up many of the narratives of attraction.

A very interesting finding was that girls seemed to try to protect themselves against objectification by ensuring that their sexual encounters were grounded in emotional and personal connection, or in other words in subjectivity. Therefore, it would seem that girls' sexual subjectivity was in the hands of the boys who held the power to either connect to them as people, or objectify them. This process could be upended if we focused on nurturing female sexual agency and created conditions in which girls were empowered to act on their sexual needs and desires. We saw that one way to achieve this aim would be through encouraging positive body esteem, positive sexual embodiment, and promoting knowledge about female sexual pleasure; we can disrupt the processes of objectification and self-objectification by encouraging sexual subjectivity in girls.

A direct and powerful means of promoting female sexual subjectivity is through sexual pleasure. Our data revealed a hierarchy of pleasure that was buttressed by the beliefs and actions of both boys and girls. The narratives revealed that girls were often receiving pain and not pleasure from their partners, while boys clearly narrated experiences of sexual pleasure. This imbalance in expectations and experience of pleasure should be righted; it is imperative that heterosexual gender dynamics result in sexual pleasure for both parties. We believe that a

focus on female pleasure, both through masturbation and partner education would greatly help to tip the balance and equalize the existing hierarchy of pleasure. Furthermore, belief in the importance of sex as a physical, embodied experience had positive implications for girls' body esteem; this suggests that encouraging embodied sexualities might impact girls' well-being via increased sexual fulfillment as well as body satisfaction.

Alongside the process of sexual objectification we saw a parallel process, which we labeled sexual subjectification. Subjectification is a process of uninterrupted integration of one's sexual identity into one's more general sense of self, which we posit enables the individual to value their sexuality as an integral part of themselves. The process was distinctly masculine in that male sexuality was revered and given freedom of expression, and sexual males were elevated to positions of social privilege.

In sum, objectification seemed to be a distinctly female phenomenon, while males were exposed more often to sexual subjectification. We believe that this gender difference in sexual socialization has profound implications for adolescent sexual development; specifically, we believe that boys follow a more straightforward path of sexual development; one that facilitates integration of sexuality with other aspects of the self. Conversely, girls are expected to navigate what might best be described as a labyrinth of sexual development: a maze of truncated paths that often defies attempts at integration and embodiment.

Emotional and Social Well-being

In Study 1 we saw that girls who feel more sexually desirable also reported lower levels of depressed affect, suggesting that the ways in which adolescent girls embody their sexualities impacts their emotional health. Understanding the ways in which healthy sexual embodiment enhances emotional well-being for girls is a critical avenue for future research (Tolman,

Bowman, & Fahs, 2014), however, our findings make clear that if we want to promote emotional well-being in adolescent girls, one way to do so is to promote positive feelings about their developing sexual bodies. In contrast, sexual self-efficacy was associated with more depressed affect for girls. It is possible that girls who reported higher levels of sexual self-efficacy are also more sexually assertive. Sexual assertiveness defies cultural norms of female sexual passivity, which is in essence a subversion of desire and sexual agency (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014; Tolman, 2002b). We contend that socializing girls to be sexually passive could very easily result in some girls, especially the more assertive ones, feeling negatively toward themselves. Given the substantial belief in the sexual double standard and accordant restrictions on female sexual behaviour evidenced in our adolescent sample, we feel that in this context it makes sense that sexual self-efficacy would be negatively associated with well-being for girls, both on a personal and social level.

Our findings in Study 2 further cast sexual subjectivity in a nuanced light in that it also had negative implications for adolescent close relationships: sexual body esteem was negatively associated with comfort with closeness in relationships for both girls and boys. This finding suggests that perhaps sexual body esteem is not a singularly positive construct in that for some adolescents, feeling attractive or desirable may be a function of internalized objectification rather than healthy sexual embodiment, which might explain the feelings of discomfort with closeness or intimacy. Sexual body esteem was also positively associated with anxiety in close relationships, but the association was only significant for girls. Taken together, these findings indicate that feeling sexual, or sexual embodiment during this stage of sexual development may have negative implications for adolescents' experiences in close relationships, and especially for girls.

A final noteworthy finding was that girls who felt more entitled to pleasure from a sexual partner also felt higher levels of anxiety in close relationships. One explanation for this finding might be found in social scripting theory (Abelson, 1981), and more specifically in gendered heterosexual scripts (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Research indicates that adolescents rely heavily on gendered scripts to navigate their early sexual experiences (Rose & Frieze, 1993; Simon & Gagnon, 1986). These scripts typically cast boys as the recipients of pleasure. It could be that feeling deserving of pleasure is linked with anxiety for girls because their pleasure is absent form heterosexual scripts, meaning that getting their sexual needs met would require rewriting and enacting new and different scripts, which would conceivably result in increased anxiety in their close relationships.

Overall, four major conclusions can be drawn from the totality of the findings: (1) the genders are similar and they are different; (2) the sexual double standard continues to determine norms of sexual behaviour and development; (3) adolescent notions of sexual relationships adhere to a false dichotomy that splits the person into a physical object and an emotional subject and (4) sexual subjectivity has different implications for well-being as a function of the gender of the individual. We believe strongly in the translation of research findings into practical and applied knowledge. For instance, the findings comprised in this dissertation would be invaluable to the development of a sexuality education curriculum; what follows is an initial formulation of a sexuality education program that incorporates the knowledge garnered by this research project.

Sexuality Education Program

Since 2005, there has been no formal or mandatory sex education in Quebec schools, instead responsibility for sex education has been diffused amongst all the teachers in the school

system, meaning that the French, Math and Geography teachers should all take part in the process. Not surprisingly, ten years later, the diffusion of responsibility has led to inaction, meaning that sex education is regularly not being taught in Quebec schools. According to a Statistics Canada Report (Rotermann, 2005), Quebec had the lowest rates of condom use, and highest rate of 15-19 year olds who had engaged in sexual intercourse. Since 2005, Quebec has seen a rise in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and teenage pregnancy; perhaps removing sex education from the formal curriculum was not in the best interest of the adolescents. The state of sex education in Quebec is particularly dire; adolescents are often not even getting the basics of biology and prevention, not to mention exposure to such issues as consent, communication and pleasure. So, although some provinces are doing a better job at keeping down rates of STIs in youth, to our knowledge very few adolescents across the country are being formally taught for example, how to talk about sex, how to express their sexual needs and wants to a partner, or about the sexual double standard and its implications for sexual interactions. This is especially troubling not least because we live in a culture that glosses over a pandemic of sexual violence against girls and women. We strongly believe that an effective way to prevent sexual violence against girls and women is to ensure that adolescents learn about sexuality within a framework that emphasizes respect, communication, pleasure, and reciprocity as well as biology and prevention; a framework that would also address among other issues, gender role expectations and scripts, coercion, objectification, subjectification, sexual embodiment and the impact of the sexual double standard.

We strongly believe in promoting positive, healthful sexualities, meaning that adolescents should be learning about sexuality within a framework that emphasizes respect, communication, pleasure, and reciprocity, as well as biology and prevention. Based on our

findings, we believe that a sexuality education program should include the following topics of discussion in no particular order: (1) the mechanisms and impact of objectification and subjectification (example attraction vs. desire); (2) hierarchies of pleasure; (3) the importance of sexual self-knowledge; (4) reconstituting the structure and meaning of sexual relationships; (5) rewriting sexual scripts; (6) non-penetrative sexual activities; (7) implications of the sexual double standard; and (8) challenging the false binaries of body/person – physical/emotional. Our data indicated that many of the adolescents' beliefs about sexual development became more flexible over time. We therefore suggest that the discussion groups include youth from all ages across adolescence thereby exposing the younger participants to the more flexible and open-minded thinking of the older youth.

Conclusion

To conclude, we believe our research to be the first to clearly demonstrate how heterosexuality and gender interact to produce differences in socially constructed experiences of sexuality, knowledge that is invaluable to our understanding of sexuality development. Moreover, we provided evidence for the impact of sexual social standards on adolescent bodily experiences; in other words, we connected the body as a biological entity to the body as a social entity (Tolman, Bowman, & Fahs, 2014) and as such provided support for embodiment theory and its application to the study of adolescent sexuality. Overall, the findings reported in this dissertation provide an excellent starting point for the development of an education program that approaches sexuality through a gendered lens with an eye toward cultivating healthy, positive and embodied sexual subjectivities.

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Appendix A: Parental Consent Form

Gender and Sexuality Project
(Secondary 4 and 5)
Fall 2011

PERMISSION SLIP

Please read and sign the following:

I understand that I am being asked if my daughter/son can take part in a research study conducted by Dr. W. M. Bukowski. I know that the purpose of the study is to examine current adjustment in social relations and in emotional functioning, as well as examine sexual development and attitudes towards gender roles and sexuality. I have been told that the questionnaires are about the social relations of young people and how they think and feel about themselves. I am aware that the participants will answer some questions in an interview about their current well being, sexual development and experiences in romantic relationships.
I know that my daughter/son does not have to participate in the study, and that even if she/he starts to take part in it, she/he can quit at any time. I also know that all answers will remain confidential and will NOT be shown to anyone. Only Dr. Bukowski and his assistants will know what is in the questionnaires.

Please check one of the following and ask your daughter/son to bring this permission slip into the homeroom class tomorrow.

_____ My daughter/son has permission to take part in Dr. Bukowski's study.

_____My daughter/son **does not** have my permission to take part in Dr.

Bukowski's study.

(SIGN)_____ DATE:_____

Student's Name: _____

Appendix B: Adolescent Consent Form

Gender and Sexuality Project
(Secondary 4 and 5)
Fall 2011

Consent form

Please read and sign the following:

We would like to invite you to take part in a research project. We are interested in learning more about how young people feel about themselves, especially with regards to gender roles and sexuality, and how they relate to others. Although your parents have given us permission to ask you about this, you are still free to make your own choice. If you agree to be part of our project, we will ask you to do two things: (1) answer some questions on your computers in class and (2) take part in a 45-minute interview about your sexual thoughts, feelings and experiences.

All of your answers to the questions will be kept confidential. "Confidential" means that no one will know what you wrote or what you said in the interview. We will write a code number, not your name, on all forms. No one will see your answers to the questions except the people here today. That means we are not going to share your answers with your parents, teachers, or classmates.

You are free to say no to participating in this project or to stop answering questions at any time. If you want to stop, all you have to do is let us know and we will still give you a reward for your help. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask us at any time.

_____

_____ I would like to take part in **both** parts of the study.

_____ I would like to take part in the questionnaire component of the

study but not the interview component.

_____ I would **not** like to participate in the study.

Student's Name:_____

(SIGN)_____ DATE:_____

Appendix C: Adolescent Sexual Development Interview

1. When did you first *learn about sex*?
    a) From whom? Circumstances? Internet?
    b) Was sex (also sexuality) talked about in your family of origin?
2. Do you remember when you first starting thinking about your sexual orientation?
3. Have you ever been *attracted* to someone sexually?
    a) When? Who? Why?
    b) Same-sex? Opposite-sex?
4. How would you define sexual desire?
5. Have you ever felt sexual *desire*?
    a) What did it feel like?
    b) Can you describe the circumstances for me?
6. How would you define sexual *pleasure*?
7. Have you ever had any sexual experiences, *alone* or with someone else?

If yes, can you tell me about your *first* sexual experience?

    a) Who it was with?
    b) What were the circumstances?
    c) How did you feel? Enjoyable? Pleasurable? Not?
    If appropriate, ask about *most memorable* sexual experience

8. Have you ever watched pornography?
    What were the circumstances? Alone/With peers/Partner?/How often?
    Can you describe your relationship to pornography?
9. Have you ever felt pressure to engage in sexual activities?
    a) Circumstances?
    b) What did it feel like?
    c) Have you ever engaged in sexual activity when you haven't wanted to?
10. Have you ever pressured someone into engaging in sexual activity?
    a) Circumstances?
    b) What did it feel like?
11. Are the girls at your school who have a reputation for being more sexually active or open? If yes, how are they talked about?
12. Are the boys at your school who have a reputation for being more sexually active or open? If yes, how are they talked about?