Institutional culture needs to change: What can a restorative justice model offer to address sexual harassment in South African institutions of higher education?

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Introduction

Sexual harassment in institutions of higher education has been described as a global 'epidemic'[2]. In South Africa, recent #EndPatriarchy, #Endrapeculture, and #MeToo protests at our universities[3] drew attention to the high prevalence of sexual harassment and gender-based violence (GBV) at our institutions of higher learning.

Sexual harassment in institutions of higher education has been well documented: it is systemic and cultural in nature, but continues to be treated as an individual and private issue by the neoliberal university[4]. Policies and interventions are typically designed to ensure that the overall organisational culture never comes under scrutiny, but instead it becomes the responsibility and burden of victims to advocate for their own safety. Offenders are at times scapegoated in order to mask the institutional crises that gave rise to toxic gender relations in the first place.

As Bondestam and Lundqvist (2020) describe it, 'Precarious working

1 The author would like to thank Mike Batley, director of the Restorative Justice Centre in Pretoria, for his assistance in articulating some of the ideas in relation to restorative justice.

2 Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M. 2020. 'Sexual harassment in higher education – A systematic review.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(4), 397-419.

3 Gouws, A. 2018.'#EndRapeCulture campaign in South Africa: Resisting sexual violence through protest and the politics of experience.' *Politikon*, *45*(1), 3-15, DOI: *10.1080/02589346.2018.1418201*

4 Brorsen Smidt, T., Bondestam, F., Pétursdóttir, G.M. & Einarsdóttir, Þ. 2020. 'Expanding gendered sites of resistance in the neoliberal academy.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(2), 115-129.

conditions, hierarchical organizations, a normalization of gender-based violence, toxic academic masculinities, a culture of silence and a lack of active leadership are all key features enabling sexual harassment'[5]. Yet, in their extensive systematic review of the literature on sexual harassment in higher education for the period 1966 to 2017, they found that few studies paid attention to organisational factors. This is somewhat surprising, given that such factors play a critical role in research on sexual harassment outside of institutions of higher education.

In addition, most institutions of higher education engage in interventions that are ad hoc, unsystematic, rarely measured for efficacy, and most alarmingly, have limited impact. Despite the significant increase globally in a variety of interventions in higher education institutions, these have not led to a reduction in the prevalence of sexual harassment[6]. These findings appear to be consistent worldwide.

Policymakers' understanding of sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning tends to be reductionist and technical, rather than responsive to the experiences of those most affected. Emphasis is placed on determining what actually 'counts' as sexual harassment, rather than on unique experiences of sexual harassment in the complex intersection of race, age, language, and hierarchies of power[7].

The punitive approach in response to offenders of sexual harassment, at best, or the fear of reputational damage, at worst, often results in offenders being 'shifted' from one institution to another without any attempt at rehabilitation. This results in offenders repeating their problematic behaviour at the next institution, whose organisational culture is likely as supportive of the toxic environment that allows sexual harassment to continue as the last one was.

In this occasional paper, I focus specifically on sexual harassment of students by members of staff, in order to comprehend what happens when there is a clear, hierarchical power differential. In this context, I explore restorative justice as an alternative model to the punitive, individualistic, and a-contextual ways in which sexual harassment is generally dealt with in institutions of higher education,

5 Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M. 2020. 'Sexual harassment in higher education – A systematic review.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(4), 397-419.

6 Ibid.

7 Bennett, J. 2009. 'Policies and sexual harassment in higher education: Two steps forward and three steps somewhere else.' *Agenda*, *23*(80), 7-21; Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M. 2020. 'Sexual harassment in higher education – A systematic review.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(4), 397-419.

both in South Africa and globally. A restorative justice model has the potential to position misdemeanours in their organisational and societal contexts, and thereby hold organisations and individuals accountable. Furthermore, it allows for complex understandings and experiences of sexual harassment to be voiced. Finally, it allows for the potential rehabilitation of offenders, and provides an opportunity for victims to engage offenders in ways that have been identified as meaningful in the victims' healing process.

Sexual harassment – a systemic and cultural problem in higher education

Although few studies have been undertaken at South African institutions of higher learning to determine the prevalence of sexual harassment, the published research suggests that it is as high as 45% amongst women students and 10% amongst men students[8], and 10% amongst women members of staff (however, as the authors themselves point out, actual prevalence is likely to be much higher).[9]

The issue of sexual harassment in universities was on the agenda in South Africa in the 1990s during the transition to democracy, due to the broad impetus to address the legacy of apartheid. However, Bennet (2009) suggests that after an initial spree of revisions (or formulations) of sexual harassment policy, attention died down around 1997. Between 2003 and 2009, the research focus shifted to sexual harassment at primary and secondary schools[10]. As a result of the 2016 protests, there has been an increase in research on sexual harassment and gender-based violence at universities in South Africa. However, most studies focus on peer-to-peer incidents, rather than sexual harassment by members of staff.

During the 2016 student protests on South African campuses, which included the #Endrapeculture and #EndPatriarchy protests, students accused university management of 'perpetuating a rape culture through policies which

8 Oni, H.T., Tshitangano, T.G. & Akinsola, H.A. 2019. 'Sexual harassment and victimization of students: A case study of a higher education institution in South Africa.' *African Health Sciences, 19*(1).

9 Joubert, P., Van Wyk, C. & Rothmann, S. 2011. 'The incidence of sexual harassment at higher education institutions in South Africa: Perceptions of academic staff.' *Acta Academica*, *43*(1).

10 Bennett, J. 2009. 'Policies and sexual harassment in higher education: Two steps forward and three steps somewhere else, *Agenda*.' *23*(80), 7-21; Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M. 2020. 'Sexual harassment in higher education – A systematic review.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(4), 397-419.

reinforced victim-blaming and protected offenders of sexual assault'[11]. This was bolstered further by the 2017 #MeToo protests, but again the focus was on student offenders, rather than offenders who were members of staff. The power differential, together with fear of the impact that reporting sexual harassment might have on education and employment opportunities, continues to silence students who experience sexual harassment by their lecturer or professor.

Already in the 1990s, when sexual harassment policies at universities were developed, the inevitable link between gender inequality, sexual harassment, and sexual violence was evident[12]. This would include, at the most basic level, the gender ratios of not only students, but also staff, and not only staff numbers, but the relative power that those staff members have at their disposal. In South Africa, a significantly greater number of white men still occupy management positions than women or people of colour do[13].

Not much has changed since 1997. A 2019 study found that even when women were in positions of power, there was a high turnover of women staff members, and one of the 'most serious contributory factors' to this was 'hostile institutional culture' and 'patriarchal practices that led to oppression and dominance, which made it difficult for them to cope in the senior positions they held'[14].

In an article in *The Lancet,* McCall (2019)[15] reports on interviews with women academics about the institutional culture that sustains sexual harassment globally. She says that a common form of harassment that is reported at universities is 'a quid pro quo sexual bribery or threat scenario, whereby a professor promises a good grade to a student if they will participate in a sexual act or threaten a fail if they do not'. One of the individuals she interviewed was Amanda Gouws of the University of Stellenbosch, who has overseen several quid pro quo cases because of her position on the Sexual Harassment Task Force.

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11 Orth, Z., van Wyk, B., & Andipatin, M. 2020. ''What does the university have to do with it?': Perceptions of rape culture on campus and the role of university authorities.' *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *34*(2), 191-209.

12 Bennett, J. 2009. 'Policies and sexual harassment in higher education: Two steps forward and three steps somewhere else.' *Agenda*, *23*(80), 7-21.

13 Ramohai, J. 2019. 'Women in senior management positions at South African universities: Their movement in, out and across universities.' *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *34*.

14 Ibid.

15 McCall, B. 2019. 'Taking the battle against sexual harassment in global academia online.' *The Lancet, 393*(10171), 512-514.

McCall draws attention to the fact that students feel powerless because 'the academic establishment preferentially protects academics and has poor grievance policies and procedures'. In addition, 'PhD students just want to finish their doctorate without causing a fuss. If there's a bad interaction with the supervisor, that might compromise the next step in their career, and if they speak up about bad behaviour, there is usually little official protection from many universities.'

Another telling insight reported in *The Lancet* article was, 'In academia, nobody wants to speak up and rock the boat. There's a culture of subservience to a supervisor or senior team member, coupled with a gender imbalance. That's not a great environment for quiet voices that can't see a way out.'

The article points out that in an environment where women feel voiceless and unheard, it is unsurprising that some might turn to 'digital vigilantism', as was the case at Rhodes University, where the names of 11 alleged rapists were posted online when women students felt nothing had been done to address the recurrent crisis of the university's 'rape culture'[16]. The danger with digital vigilantism is, of course, that due process is not followed, and innocent people's lives may be harmed through the dissemination of rumours or half-truths.

Central to the problem globally is that policies and procedures which address sexual harassment remain vague, and victims are rarely informed about the outcomes of official processes: 'When no justice is seen to have been meted out, harassers are emboldened, and potential complainants are dissuaded from coming forward as nothing appears to happen.'[17]

This is what protests in 2016 and in subsequent years have attempted to draw attention to. These protests, together with other demonstrations relating to the need for 'transformation' at institutions of higher education across a broad range of issues, points to the intersection of gender-based violence with race, class, and continued colonial and apartheid legacies[18]. They have led to universities implementing 'transformation' initiatives and revising anti-

16 Gouws, G. 2018. '#EndRapeCulture campaign in South Africa: Resisting sexual violence through protest and the politics of experience.' *Politikon*, *45*(1), 3-15.

17 McCall, B. 2019. 'Taking the battle against sexual harassment in global academia online.' *The Lancet, 393*(10171), 512-514.

18 Ngabaza, S., Shefer, T. & Clowes, L. 2018. 'Students' narratives on gender and sexuality in the project of social justice and belonging in higher education.' *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *32*(3), 139-153.

discrimination policies. Due to the Covid-19 crisis, some of the momentum has been lost. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the fact that students have not been on campus during the pandemic does not necessarily mean that they have been protected from harassment. In fact, reports about universities in South Africa and other countries worldwide suggest that students were more vulnerable during lockdown[19], increasing the likelihood of them being victims of harassment by their professors.

Sexual harassment policies and interventions

While institutions may have established transformation offices and revised their policies, these steps do not seem to have translated into significant protection of women students. One of the reasons for this is the protectionist attitude of institutions of higher education, because of the risks of legal action and of reputational damage. The 1997 Labour Relations Act made sexual harassment in the workplace an institutional risk because of the possibility of 'vicarious liability'. Bennet (2009) describes how this should have ensured that workplaces had zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind; instead, the legislation had the opposite effect of 'making the route towards voicing discrimination or violation so taxing, tortured, or inaccessible that no one ever takes it'[20].

There are few university-specific South African studies of sexual harassment. However, Bennet (2009) describes a 2008 study which compared the Universities of Botswana, Stellenbosch, and the Western Cape. Significantly, it was noted that the University of the Western Cape had the oldest policy framework and the best support structures to address sexual harassment. Although a small group of feminist scholars at Stellenbosch University had lobbied for and developed a strong policy framework, this was largely ignored, and victims were unaware of how to access support. Bennet (2009) writes, 'The research hinted strongly at the 'disappearance' of gender as a key concern within the (very high-profile and well-resourced) university engagement with transformation'. This is likely to have also been the case at other high-profile and well-resourced universities across

19 For example, during lockdown students may have been unable to access resources on campus such as computers, so they might have required additional financial support to secure a laptop or pay for data, in order to continue with their studies at home.

20 Bennett, J. 2009. 'Policies and sexual harassment in higher education: Two steps forward and three steps somewhere else.' *Agenda*, *23*(80), 7-21.

the country.

According to Bennet (2009), none of the universities took implementation of policy seriously:

> ... As a core strand of their university's interest in building cultures of democracy. There was a widespread sense that most campus constituents perceived policy statements and structures as marginal to their own theorisations of gender, sexuality, and violence. In addition, very few complaints had been reported through policy procedures[21].

The study listed several challenges in relation to meaningful implementation of sexual harassment policies. Procedures for reporting were obscure, and deciding whether an incident 'counted' as sexual harassment was largely the responsibility of human resource officers with minimal training in the 'philosophical nuances of legal definition'. The interaction of university policies and national policy frameworks, particularly in the case of rape, added an additional layer of complexity[22].

More recently, in response to protests at Rhodes University, a Sexual Violence Task Team was set up in 2016 to 'explore how a counter culture to the rape culture may be implemented at the University'[23]. The task team published a 158-page report with extensive recommendations, which included retributive and restorative justice processes to deal with sexual harassment. However, it is unclear whether or not any of these recommendations were taken seriously or whether they were implemented.

How restorative and retributive justice are defined

Bennet (2009) speaks of formal and informal processes, where the formal process involves a legal procedure, which leads to criminalisation and sentences involving expulsion, disciplinary warnings, or public disgrace, while the informal

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Sexual Violence Task Team. 2016. *'We will not be Silenced': A Three-Pronged Justice Approach to Sexual Offences and Rape Culture at Rhodes University/UCKAR*. Grahamstown, South Africa: Critical Studies in Sexualities and Reproduction.

process is potentially more 'rehabilitative, privileging non-punitive explorations of activity, assuming the possibility of re-harmonising an acrimonious situation, and open to the possibility of both 'mutual responsibility' and 'forgiveness' as part of the process'[24].

A restorative justice approach would fall into the 'informal' category, although it may be quite regulated, and it can be differentiated from a retributive approach. Retributive justice tends to be primarily concerned with rules that have been broken, allocation of blame, and choosing appropriate punishment. Restorative justice is more concerned with 'making things right and healing', and rebuilding trust, not necessarily with the offender, but with the institution or society at large[25].

A more adversarial and legal route, or 'criminalisation', as Bennet (2009) refers to it, can intensify the offender's 'rage, frustration or anxiety', with consequences for the complainant's safety. Apart from this, a criminal process can be 'traumatising', resulting in complainants either failing to report incidents or withdrawing their complaints. Beyond this, Bennet (2009) describes how 'breakdown of health occur[s], people drop out of university or move, and long-term bitterness and 'sandpaper grief' – usually targeted as much at the university as at the offender – is the result'.

It is well evident in the literature that a criminal, adversarial approach does not address sexual violence adequately. Apart from the fact that such an approach is time-consuming and potentially traumatising, it requires extensive evidence, with an emphasis on technical aspects (including, for example, what 'counts' as sexual harassment) and it rarely results in a conviction[26]. Furthermore, it does not allow for the story to be told on its own terms.

Although Bennet (2009) makes an important critique of the rehabilitative approach, which will be discussed in the next section, I advocate for this approach because, as stated earlier, a restorative justice model has the potential to situate misdemeanours in their organisational and societal contexts, and thereby hold organisations as well as individuals accountable. Furthermore, it allows for the

24 Ibid.

25 Zehr, H. 1990. *Changing Lenses*. Scottdale, USA: Herald Press.

26 van Wormer, K. 2009. 'Restorative justice as social justice for victims of gendered violence: A standpoint feminist perspective.' *Social Work*, *54*(2), 107-116; Cyphert, A.B. 2018. 'The devil is in the details: Exploring restorative justice as an option for campus sexual assault responses under title ix.' *Denver Law Review*, *96*(1), 51-86.

expression of complex understandings of sexual harassment, including giving voice to victims' experiences. Finally, it allows for the potential rehabilitation of offenders, and provides an opportunity for victims to engage offenders in ways which have been identified as meaningful in their own healing process.

A restorative justice approach to sexual harassment

The restorative justice literature is broad and diverse. However, the main tenets of this paradigm may be defined as follows: encounter, reparations, and transformation[27]. Of major importance are the relational dimension, the victim's voice and the community voice, as well as creating space for encounter and dialogue. A restorative view holds that harm cannot be addressed through the imposition of pain and suffering on the offender. Rather, the restorative approach looks for acknowledgement of responsibility by the offender and a willingness to make amends for the suffering inflicted on the victim. This is taken further by addressing the underlying causes of the incident, which include the offender's own impaired personhood and needs. This becomes framed within the overarching goal of contributing to a more just society, understood holistically.

Cyphert (2018) discusses how restorative justice theory is 'predicated on an expanded understanding of who is harmed by wrongdoing' and 'an expanded understanding of who is responsible for causing and repairing harm' by placing the harm in the context of a whole community or society[28]. Misconduct, he states, harms not only the victim but has 'ripple effects' throughout the community. In a context where students on South African university campuses report that they feel unsafe, that they experience a sense of alienation[29], and where research has firmly established that it is organisational culture that contributes to sexual harassment, an intervention that involves transformation of the entire institutional culture makes sense.

There have been arguments that women might choose a restorative process because of 'gendered expectations', including the idea that 'good girls forgive',

27 Johnstone, G. & Van Ness, D. (eds). 2007. *Handbook of Restorative Justice*. US & Canada: Willan.

28 Cyphert, A.B. 2018. 'The devil is in the details: Exploring restorative justice as an option for campus sexual assault responses under title ix.' *Denver Law Review*, *96*(1), 51-86.

29 Ngabaza, S., Shefer, T. & Clowes, L. 2018. 'Students' narratives on gender and sexuality in the project of social justice and belonging in higher education.' *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *32*(3), 139-153.

a compulsion to protect the offender, or in order to maintain a 'bridge to their position in the heteronormative, hierarchical, patriarchal system in which they perceive themselves to belong'[30]. Bennet (2009) for example, describes the mediator in a restorative approach as 'a benign third-party who will refashion the (hurt, feminised, silent) body back into language through reconnection to a communicative, even conciliatory, masculine presence (the perpetrator)'.

However, Cyphert (2018) importantly distinguishes between mediation and a restorative justice approach, saying that while a mediation process involves no assignment of guilt, in a restorative justice process 'the requirement that the responsible person accepts responsibility [is] a pre-condition of participation as opposed to neutrality toward the parties'. She describes how a restorative justice approach seeks to answer three key questions: '(1) Who has been harmed?, (2) What are their needs?, and (3) Whose obligation is it to meet those needs?'

Although the danger exists that when confronted with the power differential, women, particularly students who have experienced harassment by a staff member, will 'give in' to a restorative justice approach and its outcome, the process is more likely to lead to a satisfactory outcome for the victim than an adversarial approach.

Using standpoint feminism as her starting point, Van Wormer (2009) describes how a restorative justice approach supports the following standpoint feminist concerns: 'reliance on the woman's personal narrative for truth-telling, acceptance of a holistic, non-dichotomised view of reality, including a merging of the personal and political, a focus on choice and options, an understanding of the gendered nature of power relations in society and an emphasis on personal empowerment and respect for personal dignity'[31]. Van Wormer emphasises that a restorative justice process is guided by the choices that a victim makes regarding how they wish the process to unfold.

The most relevant restorative justice process is victim-offender conferencing. Van Wormer stresses that this is not mediation, which assumes a 'dispute between equals', but a facilitated dialogue where the power differential between victim and offender is clearly understood, and where the victim tells their story

30 Cyphert, A.B. 2018. 'The devil is in the details: Exploring restorative justice as an option for campus sexual assault responses under title ix.' *Denver Law Review*, *96*(1), 51-86.

31 van Wormer, K. 2009. 'Restorative justice as social justice for victims of gendered violence: A standpoint feminist perspective.' *Social Work*, *54*(2), 107-116.

and the offender listens[32]. The intention of such a process is that the offender should come to a full realisation of what they have done, develop empathy for their victim, and potentially connect with their own past victimisation (although the latter should not become the responsibility of the victim).

Cyphert (2009) describes the stages that should be followed. The first stage is referral and intake, where the choices available to the victim should be made clear, including that they can withdraw from the process at any time. The offender is invited to participate – their participation is also voluntary. The second stage is the conference, which requires a highly trained facilitator, who works with a 'carefully developed script that structures the dialogue and order of questions' in order to best support and protect the victim. The conference begins with the survivor sharing their story, with an emphasis on the impact of the harm done. This is followed by an exploration of how the harm could be addressed and what could be done to rebuild trust. An agreement is reached about how to repair the harm done, which includes clear tasks and a timeline of 'restoration and reintegration'. This could, for example, include restitution, and could also include an agreement that the offender leave the university environment permanently, or for a specified period[33]. The third and final stage is monitoring and reintegration, which requires that the offender stay accountable to someone within the university environment, to ensure that the agreement is followed. Survivors need to be informed of progress and offered ongoing support when necessary.

Having said all of this, it is critically important that victims are given a choice between retributive and restorative approaches.

Victim-offender conferencing places the onus on the individuals involved and does not necessarily address systemic problems or the organisational culture. Adaptations of restorative justice practices, such as healing circles or community reparations, could address these gaps.

The idea of healing circles within the practice of restorative justice originated in North American native communities, where a whole community engages in a ritual which includes telling stories about the trauma. There are also examples of this kind of practice throughout the African continent. Karp et al. (2016)

32 Ibid.

33 Cyphert, A.B. 2018. 'The devil is in the details: Exploring restorative justice as an option for campus sexual assault responses under title ix.' *Denver Law Review*, *96*(1), 51-86.

specifically encourage the use of circles as a key tool in restorative justice practices in educational institutions, stating that:

> Restorative practice is rooted in the basic human impetus to sit together and deliberate the issues ... Circle practice offers an innovation in the prevention education arena through its unique emphasis on the intersection of information sharing, education, reflection and community building ... The circle is designed so that participants engage in an inclusive and non-hierarchical way, typically in a circle formation with no obstructions (no conference tables or desks) and passing a talking piece around the circle repeatedly to ensure that everyone has a voice[34].

Adaptations of this in the university environment enable students to share experiences in a broader context. Typically, workshops on sexual harassment and gender-based violence allow for the telling of stories and sharing of experiences in this way, without ritualisation of the process. But beyond this, for a university as an institution to choose to support a series of healing circles can serve as a powerful signal that it wants to 'heal' a harmful organisational culture, and initiate a genuinely transformed culture.

Another restorative practice is community reparations, which normally refer to interventions by, say, a government after a period of war, to address large-scale war crimes, including sexual crimes, and involve making a public apology and, in some instances, offering of compensation to those who are affected. If a university wished to show its commitment to bring an end to the 'epidemic' of sexual harassment and gender-based violence, an intervention of this nature would speak volumes.

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34 Karp, D.R., Shackford-Bradley, J., Wilson, R.J. & Williamsen, K.M. 2016. 'Campus Prism: A report on promoting restorative initiatives for sexual misconduct on college campuses.' 2-3. Available at *www.SkidmoreRJ.org* This is also discussed in Batley, M. 2018. *Introduction to Responding Restoratively to Situations of Sexual Misconduct: A Resource Manual.* Pretoria: The Restorative Justice Centre.

Conclusion

There are clearly too few studies at South African institutions of higher education that involve sexual harassment and policy frameworks to address sexual harassment[35]. A key reason is likely that it is a minefield for an academic to undertake research on this topic at their own institution or at a 'neighbouring' one. If university management was to commission such research, this could serve as a clear indication of management's commitment to meaningfully address sexual harassment, using empirical data, rather than responding in the ad-hoc, a-contextual, non-evidence-based, current ways.

Bennet (2009) also draws attention to the fact that most universities have closed down their gender studies units (many had already done so by 2009), which is a worrying trend. A deep engagement with gender dynamics, and understanding the intersectional relationship of gender with race and class, is critical to support the interventions of committees or offices delegated to deal with sexual harassment. Following the letter of an official policy in a technical and mechanical fashion cannot replace engaging with the complexity of gender, power, and sexuality as it unfolds in a particular organisational culture.

Apart from the 'deeply private shame'[36] experienced by those who have survived sexual violence, sexual harassment has 'physical, psychological and professional consequences'[37], leading to long-term health challenges, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, physical pain, and sexually transmitted disease. It can result in students dropping out of their studies or underperforming, with a direct impact on their career opportunities.

Beyond this, even observing or hearing about sexual harassment has consequences for the organisational culture of institutions of higher learning, including increasing tension between colleagues, and between staff and students.

As already reiterated, sexual harassment is a symptom of organisational culture, and the hierarchical, patriarchal, systems that control universities in

35 As Borsen Smidt et al. (2018), argue, in the global context '[t]here is clearly a gap between neoliberal, bureaucratic policy and critical knowledge on experiences of sexual harassment in a normative academic culture'.

36 Bennett, J. 2009. 'Policies and sexual harassment in higher education: Two steps forward and three steps somewhere else.' *Agenda*, *23*(80), 7-21.

37 Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M. 2020. 'Sexual harassment in higher education – a systematic review.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(4), 397-419.

South Africa and globally, so that if one is a direct victim of sexual harassment, the culture as a whole has a negative impact on one's well-being and one's ability to thrive.

Although sexual harassment policies need to support retributive and restorative approaches to justice, a restorative justice model has the potential to situate misdemeanours in their organisational and societal contexts, thereby holding organisations and individuals accountable. It also allows for the voicing of complex understandings and personal experiences of sexual harassment. Finally, it allows for the potential rehabilitation of offenders, and provides opportunities for victims to engage with offenders in ways that are meaningful in their healing process.