

Women's conceptualisations of sexual expression: A narrative inquiry of a rural community in
Mpumalanga

by

Tinyiko Chauke

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DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

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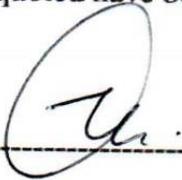
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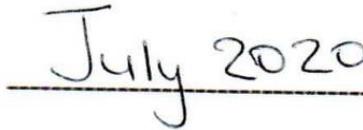
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Declaration

I, Tinyiko Chauke declare that Women's conceptualisations of sexual expression: A narrative inquiry of a rural community in Mpumalanga is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.



Signature



Date

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I am indebted to the young women naboGogo who granted me access into their private spaces and candidly shared their lived experiences. Without your contributions and expertise, this research would have never taken this turn.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to the many ‘invisibilised’ voices of our ancestors (black women) who boldly fought for the liberation of (contemporary) African women. The patriarchal veil has been removed, we see you ... may we possess a similar spirit as we forge towards the full emancipation of Africa’s women. I further dedicate this work to the people who endlessly experience violence and discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender identity due to a system that is determined to control bodies.

Imicabango yebantfu labasikati ngekuvetwa kweluvo loluphatselene netebulili: Kuphenya lokulandzisako kwemango wasemaphandleni eMpumalanga

Bulili babomake base-Afrika busachubeka ngekuhlanganiswa netifo, budlova kanye nekutala - kodvwa kuncane lokuvetwako ngetebulili, ngenjabulo kanye nangelutsandvo. Loku sekunikete imisakato yasemaveni aseNshonalanga, imitimba yekuphenya yekuphenya ngetekwelapha ngemvelo kanye netinhlango letinyenti letingekho ngaphasi kwahulumende netinhlango te-AIDS litfuba lekuvuselela lomcondvo nenkholelo yekwandza lokusolelwako kwekutiphatsa lokuphatselene netebulili kwabomake kanye netifo letihlobene nebulili babo. Ngenca yaloko, kubunjwa nekwakhiwa kwetinchazelo tebulili akukhombisi emaciso kanye nelwati lwase-Afrika. Ngekulandzela indlela yelucwaningo lwebunyenti nendlela yekulandzisa, umklamo wami wekucwaninga uhlose kukhombisa kutsi, kute kutsi bomake babone inkhululeko embusweni wentsandvo yelinyenti njengeNingizimu Afrika, badzinga kwemukelwa njengetakhamuti letilinganako hhayi 'njengemitimba' ledzinga kulawulwa kute kugcinwe kulingana kwekuphatsa kwemadvodza. Ngicaphune kuluhlaka lwekucedza umbusobucalu webufati base-Afrika (decolonial African-feminist framework) futsi ngilusebentise njengelithuluzi lwekubuta, kwakha kabusha nekucabanga kabusha emasiko laphatselene nebulili ase-Afrika. Idatha igcogwe ekulandziseni kwebantfu nakutinkhulumiswano temacembu nabomake labangu-20 labatinte emmangweni wasemaphandleni esigdzini yaseNkomazi eNingizimu Afrika. Sewuwonkhe, umsebenzi wami ugicile etigabeni tebulili, kutemacasi nasetingucukweni tetepolitiki letihambisana nekuvisisa indlela bomake lababona futsi labavisisa ngayo temacasi kuNingizimu Afrika yasemaphandleni yesimanje. Kulandzisa kwabomake kukhombisa kwekutsi, emlandvweni wonkhe, nasetikhatsini tamanje, kwakhiwa kwekulawula kwalabadvuna kwasemandvulo kwebulili nekwetemacasi kuyachubeka ngekubumba kanye nekulawula timphilo tabantfu labasikati.

Emagama lasemcoka: intsandvo yelinyenti. kuveta bulili, bomake basemaphandleni, buve, tindlela tekucedza umbusobucalu, bufati base-Afrika

Iqoqo

Izindlela ezisetshenziswa ngabesifazane zokuchaza ubulili: Uphenyo olusangxoxo olususelwa kumphakathi wasemakhaya eMpumalanga

Ubulili besimame e-Afrika buqhubeka nokuphawuleka kakhulu ngezifo, ngodlame kanye nangokuzala – kodwa kuncane okukhulunywa ngendlela yokuziphatha ngokobulili, ngobumnandi kanye nangobumnandi bocansi. Lokhu sekuze kwaphumelela ukunikeza umkhakha waseNtshonalanga wabezindaba, umkhakha wezocwaningo lwamakhambi okulapha kanye nezinhlangano ezingaqonde inzuzo (NGO) kanye nezinhlangano ze-AIDS inhlanhla yokuvuselela kabusha ubandlululo lobukoloni olutshaliwe kanye nocansi kanye namahemuhemu agcwele amayelana nokuziphatha komame abangama-Afrika ngakwezocansi kanye nocansi olugcwele izifo.. Njengomphumela walokho, isakhiwo kanye nokwakhiwa kwezincazelo kanye nezincazelo zobulili azivezi kahle ubunjalo kanye nalokho okuhlangabezana nakhone-Afrika. Uma sengilandela ucwaningo olusebenzisa amagama kanye nengxoxo, iphrojekhi yami yocwaningo ihlose ukuveza lokho, ukuze omame bezwe inkululeko ezweni lentando yeningi enjengeNingizimu Afrika, izjndawo zabo zangasese, phecelezi “private spaces” kufanele zibaze kahle njengezakhamizi ezilinganayo, hayi imizimba nje “bodies” edinga ukucindezelwa izidingo zocansi ngenhloso yokugcina uhlelo olulinganayo lokubusa kwabesilisa.. Ngiboleka kwisakhiwo sohlelo oluzabalazela ukulingana kobulili e-Afrika, phecelezi i-African-feminist framework kanti lusetshenziswe njengethuluzi lokubusa, lokuqeda ubukoloni kanye nokucabanga kabusha ngamasiko obulili e-Afrika. Idatha ithethwe kwizingxoxo zempilo yomuntu kanye nezingxoxo zamaqembu eziqukethe omame abangama-20 abahlala endaweni yasemakhaya kwisiyongi saseNkomazi eNingizimu Afrika. Ngaphezu kwalokho, umsebenzi wami utholakala lapho kuhlangana khona izinhlobo zobulili, zobulililili kanye nasezinguqukwani zepolitiki ezingaphakathi kokuzwisisa indlela abafazi abahlangabezana nayo futhi abaveza ngayo ubulili babo ezindaweni zasemakhaya eziphucukile eNingizimu Afrika. Izingxoxo zomame ziveza ukuthi, emlandweni wonke, kanye nasezinkathini zamanje, izakhiwo zobulili kanye nobulililili zobukoloni zokubusa kwabesilisa ziqhubeka nokwakha kanye nokulawula impilo ephilwa ngabesifazane.

Amagama asemqoka: Intando yeningi/idemokhrasi, ukuveza indlela yokuziphatha ngokobulili, abesifazane basemakhaya, ubuzwe, izindlela zokuqeda ubukoloni, Uhledlo lwase-Afrika lokulinganisa ubulili.

Abstract

African women's sexualities are continually plagued by narratives of disease, violence and reproduction – but less so about sexual expression, pleasure and the erotic. This has effectively provided the Western media, the biomedical research fraternity and a host of NGOs and AIDS organisations with a windfall in reviving entrenched colonial prejudices and myths regarding the alleged rampancy of African women's sexual behaviour and diseased sexualities. As a result, the form and the making of the meanings and definitions of sexuality do not necessarily reflect the realities and experiences of Africa. Following a qualitative research method and a narrative approach, my research project was aimed at highlighting that, in order for women to experience emancipation in a democratic state such as South Africa, their 'private spaces' need to recognise them as equal citizens and not as 'bodies' whose sexuality needs to be contained in order to maintain patriarchal equilibrium. I draw from a decolonial African-feminist framework and use it as a tool to question, deconstruct and reimagine African sexual cultures. Data is drawn from personal narratives and group discussions with 20 women based in the rural community of the Nkomazi district in South Africa. Overall, this study is founded on the intersectionalities of women's experiences of gender, race, age, and sexuality located in changing socio-political contexts that are key to understanding the ways in which women conceptualise and experience sexual expression in contemporary rural South Africa. Women's narratives reveal that, throughout history, as well as in contemporary times, colonial patriarchal constructions of gender and sexuality continue to shape and dictate women's lived experiences.

Key words: democracy, sexual expression, rural women, nationalism, decolonising methodologies, African feminism

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

This study focuses on my journey with the rural women of Nkomazi district in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. I elected to focus my enquiry on this area and its women as the social determinants of health research have highlighted that women's gendered roles and location impact their vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (StatsSA, 2019), reported an increase in unemployment rates in six of the nine provinces in the country compared to those reported in 2018. Mpumalanga is reported to have the largest increase in unemployment rates at 34.2 percent in comparison to the 32.4 percent reported in 2018, closely followed by Limpopo, Free State and the Eastern Cape. In addition, there are desolate statistics on rural Mpumalanga women's economic status and, as a result, researchers have correlated low-income areas with high HIV prevalence rates. As such the province's HIV prevalence rate in 2014 was reported to be 14.1 percent among women aged between 15 to 49 years (Shisana et al., 2014). The HIV prevalence percentage among women has been shown to have subsequently increased as reported in the year 2017 to 22.8 percent (Simbayi et al., 2019).

The preceding statistics make Mpumalanga, Nkomazi district in particular a fertile ground for the feminisation of infectious diseases and foreign aided NGOs and NPOs' quest to educate and reduce the HIV prevalence rates among the women population. Prominence has been placed on abstinence among the classified 'key populations' that are reported to be more susceptible to infection, such as unmarried young women and girls aged between 15 to 24 years old. It has been argued by some commentators (Arnfred, 2004) that in their reporting on the HIV and AIDS epidemic, western media and NGOs have been complicit in reviving deep-seated colonial prejudices and myths regarding the alleged rampancy of African women's sexual behaviour and diseased sexualities. Moreover, African women's sexualities are plagued by narratives of disease, violence and reproduction and less is said about women's experiences of sexual pleasure and the erotic. In addition to state grants and foreign aided NGOs, the Mpumalanga churches, in particular the Catholic church, are also closely involved in AIDS related work. Given the involvement of the

church and its moralisation of sex and the feminisation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa, I was interested in exploring how black South African women's sexualities and sexual experiences are shaped and positioned by race, gender and socio-economic status. I was further interested in how women negotiate their sexualities located in shifting socio-political periods that present antithetical images of black female bodies and sexualities. In order to explore the stated research questions I drew from the qualitative research design, underpinned by a decolonial feminist framework and African feminism to guide the study. Chapter 4 provides more detail on the nature of the interviews and the participants of this study.

1.1.1 Geography and social characteristics of Mpumalanga Province

The study was conducted in the Mpumalanga Province, and here I provide a brief outline of the social characteristics of this province. Mpumalanga is in the north-east of South Africa, bordering Mozambique and Swaziland to the east, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State provinces in the south, Gauteng in the west, and Limpopo in the north. Mpumalanga's percentage share of the national population of 51.8 million was 7.8 percent, or 4.04 million in 2011, making it the sixth most densely populated province in South Africa (StatsSA, 2019).

The province has slightly more women than men. The provincial GDP growth of 3.5 percent forecast for the period 2011-2016 was slightly lower than the expected national growth rate of 3.6 percent. In terms of the Gini-coefficient, South Africa ranks amongst the most unequal societies in the entire world in terms of income inequality measured by the UN Gini-coefficient (AIDC, 2010). Poverty is felt more by women located in rural or non-urban areas (South African Ministry of Women, 2015). Moreover, Mpumalanga was listed as having the fourth highest level of income inequality in 2011. The poverty gap widened and deteriorated from R4.5 billion in 2010 to R4.6 billion in 2011. It is reported that in March 2005 703 400 citizens of Mpumalanga received social assistance grants from the South African national government. By January 2013, the number of recipients in Mpumalanga increased to 1.4 million or 8.7 percent of the total number of national grant beneficiaries (AIDC, 2010). This widening poverty gap in Mpumalanga, particularly among women, infringes the human rights of the women in terms of having basic bodily needs satisfied (Schlyter, 2009).

1.2 Background and Motivation

This research project builds on the unintended outcomes of my Master's research project, wherein I learned that oppressive, colonialist, patriarchal constructions of gender were maintained by the men and women of the rural community in Nkomazi district. The rural women (participants) reported experiences of oppression within the Swazi tradition; however, they reported these practices as necessary to preserving the African culture and tradition. For example, amongst these were the culturally constructed sexual roles for women as well as traditionally constructed femininities that impede on women's perceptions of their sexualities and bodies. Relevant to this project's aims, Ampofo (2004) draws on various scholars' advocacy on deconstructing the meanings of certain behaviours that are deemed traditional or cultural but remain stagnant and devoid of value, using historical analysis to examine the origins of these oppressive practices. In the sections that follow, I cite various scholars' research that locates some of the oppressive practices in Africa to colonial and apartheid eras. Moreover, to map the epochal trajectories of African women's sexualities and desires as well as their intersections, I followed Bawa's approach (2018) and engaged the legacies of colonialism in the contemporary era in order to deconstruct essentialist binary and homogenising claims on women's subjective experiences on the continent.

Drawing on rural Nkomazi women's perceptions of some cultural practices as oppressive, various scholars reveal that women's experiences of violence are intricately interwoven into culture and the framing of beliefs and values on masculinity and femininity (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2004). Arnfred rightly puts it that reference to culture has become an essential condition of African women's oppression (2004). Drawing on feminist analyses, Boonzaier and de la Rey (2004) acknowledge the prominence of multiple sites of power and oppression - such structures as race, class, sexual orientation and gender - as contours to the abuse of women (2004). Inflexible cultural codes of what being a 'proper woman' entails are commonly established in order to keep women in inferior positions. In addition, Yuval-Davis (2003) highlights the interconnectedness between the notions of sexuality and other forms of construction of racism (2003). Similarly, women's sexualities are identified as key sites through which their subordination is maintained and imposed in postcolonial Africa (McFadden, 2003; Pereira, 2003). The history of women's subordination through their sexualities across Africa dates back to the colonial era wherein African women's sexualities were politicised (Tamale, 2005). Moreover, Ratele's (2009) work on sexualities during

apartheid in South Africa reveals how sexuality and sexual immorality became crucial in the fashioning of 'whiteness'. During the apartheid era, the state, courts as well as parliament played a pivotal role in constituting sexuality for the maintenance of the white race and identities (Ratele, 2009). White women served as boundary markers, embodying the iconography of racial and gender purity, through the control of sexuality by way of constructing social stigma through legislative means (McClintock, 1995). Ratele (2009) adds that Afrikaner nationalism was contrived on societies' dominant organising principles such as constructions of gender and racial differences. Thus, managing sexuality through morality constructed the character and dominance of the colonial project on racialisation and sexualisation of morality (Alexander, 1991). According to Tamale, in Uganda, colonialists' constructions and perceptions of Africans as decadent and hypersexual led to intensified surveillance and repression of African women's sexuality in particular, leading to the medicalisation of women's sexualities, and their bodies reduced to the purpose of reproduction (Vaughan, 1991; Musisi, 2002 in Tamale, 2005).

Scholars assert that the regulation of the bodies of women is principal to constructing masculinist citizenship and nationhood (Lewis, 2009; Tamale, 2005). The separation of the public-private spheres in Africa preceded colonisation; however, it was reinforced by colonial policies and practices. The blurred distinctions between public and private life were guided by notions of men as public actors and women as private performers (Tamale, 2005). Males' performance of enacting their control over women's bodies seeks to remind women of their socially prescribed subordination and powerlessness. Public acts of marking women's bodies, either through goading or harassment for being perceived to be inappropriately dressed in public spaces, reinforces the legitimacy of an aggressively patriarchal status quo in the public space. Lewis refers to incidents of the torment of young women between 2007 and 2008 at the Noordhoek taxi rank and the ritualised humiliation of young women in rural KwaZulu-Natal. These acts seek to confirm and reproduce a malicious hierarchical order, one which is wholly opposed to the social freedoms related to legislation and policy-making in democratic South Africa (Lewis, 2009). Tamale (2011) observes that the western centric interpretation of African sexuality discourses suggests that the nature and the construction of sexuality meanings and definitions distort the experiences of Africans. Lewis (2005) puts forward the view that the racist legacies that fixated on the sexuality of black women have meant that they suppressed discussions about their bodies and sexuality, thus fuelling further the dominant heteronormative and patriarchal public discourses. Segalo (2012)

makes the observation that people who live in oppressive regimes carry secret experiences that go un-recounted. Thus, the thrust of this study lies in understanding rural elderly and young women's conceptualisations of sexual expression and sexual bodies located through South Africa's most tumultuous political period and through shifting socio-political terrains.

1.3 The research problem

Women's social positions are often utilised as a means to construct women's modes of sexuality and expression of sexuality. As an example, middle class women's expression of sexuality is framed in discourses of emancipation and as (western) feminist. This is consistent with western feminist emphasis on bodily autonomy while those of women in lower income areas are labelled as agentless (Bawa, 2018). These stereotypic views communicate the perceptions that sexual agency and empowerment are reserved for those who have assimilated western 'culture' and/or who are middle class women (Bawa, 2018). In addition, African theorists emphasise that essentialist notions of women as powerless gendered subjects have colonial origins that distort women's agency and power within their communities (Bawa, 2018; Posel, 2005; Tamale, 2005; McFadden, 2003; Pereira, 2003; and Amadiume, 1987). It is my understanding that women's sexualities and bodies are perceived as a private matter (Nkealah, 2016), but when publicised they are often in the context of disease and sexual violence.

My aspiration for this study was to firstly explore the ways in which meanings and modes of sexual expressions change or remain the same across time and further understand contemporary rural women's conceptions of autonomy in their sexual expression or a lack thereof. Secondly, I aimed to examine the ways in which women collude with hetero-patriarchal ideologies on gender, tradition, sex and sexualities of women, and how these actions replicate the very formulations that render women as agentless sexual subjects. Finally, I endeavoured to learn the ways in which women resist hetero-patriarchal formulations in relation to their bodies and sexualities. Moreover, African feminist scholars have shown the manner in which women's personal hardships in the private sphere are in fact public issues instituted by the gender inequality of the social structure (Alexander & Ampofo, 2004; Bennett, 2011; Bawa, 2018; Lewis, 2005; Oyewumi, 1997). Bennett illuminates that classifications of people's bodies through social markers as either male or female serve as a representation of a violent procedure (Bennett, 2011). In fact, these socially constructed

gender disparities define roles and expectations that the individuals are required to fulfill both in the private and public spaces. This study's aim was to capture the rural women's experiences of sexual expression devoid of essentialist notions of rural women as agentless subjects and powerless victims of poverty and sexually transmitted infections. Central to this project is the attempt to profile South Africa through the diverse ways in which political shifts in the context of sexualities have been experienced by two generations of women.

1.4 The significance of the study

The study is driven by an overall urge to understand and represent the sexuality of black (South) African women in a manner that does justice to their cultural complexities, which is a key characteristic of African feminism(s). In line with the National Democratic Revolution document (ANC, 2015), my aim is to show that freedom cannot be achieved unless the women of South Africa have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. Therefore, I am contending that South Africa has not achieved freedom and emancipation as many women have not been freed from the shackles of patriarchy and other forms of gendered inequalities. This presents a setback to a country that has emerged from defeating oppressive regimes and the subsequent liberation of minorities. I concur with Nkenkana (2015) that a nation is never fully emancipated unless the women of that country are emancipated completely. The National Democratic Revolution document further recognises that sex and sexuality are increasingly a primary location for the reproduction of unequal gender power-relations and male dominance, and women continue to experience oppression in this area.

However, history affirms black women's radical struggles for their rights since pre-colonial times, confirming that African women are not passive victims of their oppressive patriarchal contexts (Arnfred, 2004; Ampofo & Brobbey, 2015). As such, this study endeavoured to unearth strategies that women utilise in order to resist patriarchal structures in the context of their sexualities. As envisaged, I identified traditional practices and customs that women of Nkomazi district found to be sexually liberating and those that are oppressive. My aspiration for this study was to provide useful insights and groundwork for future researchers specifically in the area of African sexualities and to add to the current available research on African sexualities by authors such as, to name a few, Arnfred (1990), Becker (2004), Bennett (2011), Lewis (2008), Mama (1996), Oyewumi

(1997), (2011), Alexander (1994) and Ratele (2009). Their research on sexuality in African contexts reflects the interplay between colonial, post-colonial and apartheid experiences of black women, highlighting how sexual liberation cannot be devoid of contextual and cultural influence. Finally, in this study I am responding to Oyewumi (1997) together with various scholars' invitation to interrogate history through examining African societies' sexualities (Apusigah, 2008) by way of localising the intersections of African women's gendered experiences of gender, sex, sexuality, tradition, culture and politics in African contexts so as to avoid imposing and misrepresenting women's meanings and experiences of sexuality (Apusigah, 2008). These preceding debates address the psychological significance, relevance and societal input regarding this issue, as well as providing a possible explanation of the stated research problem.

1.5 Research objectives

The study aimed to explore women's views and experiences of sexual liberation within a patriarchal pre-democratic and democratic state through the following objectives:

1. To understand the manner in which elderly women signify issues of gender and sexuality in the context of apartheid South Africa.
2. To explore women's experiences of embodying a female gendered body and sexual expression in present-day South Africa.
3. To examine elderly and young women's differences and similarities in the perceptions of female sexual bodies and sexualities located in the shifting socio-political landscapes.
4. To explore the ways in which patriarchal society has defined and shaped South African women's sexualities and sexual expression.

1.6 Thesis outline

This study comprises of nine chapters.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical Literature Review: outlines the theoretical debates and methodological underpinnings of this research. This study is guided by the decolonial framework and is influenced by African feminism and feminist methodologies.

Chapter 3 - Review of Literature: Mapping the bodies and sexualities of African women in changing socio-political contexts: this chapter reviews the literature on women and sexualities in pre-colonial, apartheid and contemporary South Africa. It also examines factors that influence women's perceptions of their sexual bodies, sexualities and expression, while analysing the history of sexualities in Africa. Thus, the chapter focuses on ideas about women, nationalities, gender and sexuality in South Africa.

Chapter 4 - Research Methodology and Design: describes the research methodology and design utilised in this study. The study is qualitative and followed a narrative inquiry design. The narratives were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The chapter further examines the research process for the study, including access, research participants, the population, the sampling technique, the sample size and the analysis of the narratives. The chapter also outlines the ethical considerations of research of this nature.

Chapter 5 - Making Sense of Political Shifts in the Personal: This chapter addresses objective: 1. It presents elderly women's trajectories of motherhood and as working citizens under an oppressive government. In later sections, the chapter explores young women's definitions and experiences of living in a democratic state.

Chapter 6 - Then and Now: This chapter presents women's diverse relationships over time. It presents the 'then' and 'now' discourse as women interpret change through the dialogue of the female body.

Chapter 7 - "Whose body is it, anyway?" The chapter examines the extent to which the women's patriarchal contexts have defined and shaped their sexuality and experiences of sexual expression. This chapter locates itself on the interplay between women's relationships with their sexualities and bodies and societal prescripts for these bodies. It attempts to answer the question, "To whom do women's bodies belong? to see if patriarchal societal notions of sexuality and female gendered sexual bodies continue to dictate how women express their sexualities and experience pleasure.

Chapter 8 - Discussion of Findings: re-examines the theoretical debates and frameworks in chapter 2 and in chapter 3 and illuminates how the data presented in the analytic chapters corresponds with literature and highlights the implications of these findings for African feminism and the decolonial framework.

Chapter 9 - Conclusion and Recommendations: this chapter provides the conclusions of the study and further offers recommendations on possibilities and a way forward on the topic of women's conceptualisations of sexual expression.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.1 African feminism and Decolonial feminism

This chapter describes and explains African feminism and decolonial feminism. I describe how the tenets of these feminisms intersect, influence and inform this study. The study's focus is on the rural women of South Africa. This chapter operates with the thinking that the many intersections of gender, race, sexuality, tradition, culture, colonialism, apartheid and nationalism offer ways to envisage the links between the nation states and sexualities. Finally, the subject inquiry of this chapter is the intersecting scholars' theorisations on decolonial and African feminism(s) debates on the colonial arrangements of the following intersecting concepts, whose effects are still felt in post-colonial Africa; gender, race, culture, tradition and sexualities. By foregrounding the scholars' debates, theorisations and analyses within the frameworks of post-colonial feminism and African feminism, I will show that it is within these intersections that the prevailing inferiorisation and dehumanising practices of the colonial administration are maintained in keeping African women in subordinate positions in the contexts of sexuality and sexual relationships and sexual expression. I deem the postcolonial feminisms and African feminisms as appropriate in analysing and addressing the intersections of black (African) women's subordinate positions (Crenshaw, 1991). This allows for the contextualisation of Nkomazi women's diverse struggles and histories. As Amadiume aptly puts it, contextualising women's experiences enables a space where we are able:

“...to look at where the women are coming from, what struggles they have made, and what resources they have carried forward to face and overcome new challenges” (2001, p.65).

2.2 Tracing the trajectories of feminism(s)

Feminism is described as a multitude of various theoretical perspectives that emanate from the complexities of different material conditions and identities of women and activist agendas. It is further guided by myriad and innovative ways that women have contested unequal power relations within their private and public lives (Ahikire, 2014). As a starting point, scholars aver that women have always contested unequal spaces prior to the construction of the concept of 'feminism' (Ampofo, Adjei & Brobbey, 2015). For Mama (in Salo, 2001), feminism means denouncing

subjugation and also committing to the struggle for the liberation of women from oppression and its intersections, including psychological, emotional, socio-economic, political and philosophical oppression. At the same time this meant putting an end to patriarchy and its instruments that seek to maintain gender disparities and inequalities, globally (Mama, 2012). For Steady, feminism became a response to oppression, and she asserts that “true feminism” (p.36) stemmed from lived experiences of oppression, and limited access to basic human resources (Steady in Decker and Baderon, 2018). Below is an attempt to trace the genesis of women’s struggles and rights movements. I begin with tracing the rights movements waged by both white and black American women in the west and in the later sections of this chapter I discuss how the subsequent feminist movements by and for minorities emerged as a response to and a rejection of westernised and exclusionary feminist practice. However, it is important to note, as alluded to elsewhere in the chapter, that feminism does not have a linear pattern or history and that non-western women played crucial roles in waging struggles against inequality albeit it was not reported in scholarly feminist work and it was not labelled as feminism. The scholars’ principal observation is pertinent here, in that feminism predates colonialism, more so in intent as evidenced by the struggles of women for their gender concerns (Ampofo et al., 2015).

2.2.1 First wave feminism: voting rights

Ampofo et al. (2015) suggest that this nineteenth century American and United Kingdom feminism wave acquired its categorisation through the subsequent issues and approaches occurring from the 1960s to the 1980s. Hewitt describes the United States feminists as being inspired by and also working alongside activists during the nineteenth century in various parts of the world, including Mexico, the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, and South and East Asia in the mid- to late-twentieth century (2012). First wave feminists were comprised of middle and working class women who involved themselves in activism and campaigns struggling for issues of equal rights for women, education, abolition of slavery, legal reform and women’s right to vote (Ampofo et al. 2015; Hammer & Kellner, 2009; Krollokke & Sorenson, 2005). Hewitt (2012) submits that contrary to scholarly works framing feminist movements and struggles as middle class and white concerns, women of colour and working class women occupied central roles in identifying and confronting women’s struggles in the workplace, including sexual harassment and various forms of discrimination. Privileging black American women’s positionality with regards to interventions in

issues of equality and rights, Krolokke and Sorenson (2005) capture Mary Church Terrell's (1868-1954) efforts in exposing the enmeshment of sexism and racism with white male's dominance and subjugation. This parallels with other black influential first wave feminists and activists including Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) and Harriet Tubman's (1843-1913) involvement in the abolitionist movement including Ida B. Wells' (1862-1931) contestation that issues of emancipation must be understood and challenged within the intersections of gender and race (Douglas & Kellner, n.d). Further, according to Krolokke and Sorenson, by engaging in public persuasion women and suffrages confronted stereotypical patriarchal views of women as well as 'proper' female conduct because in those years such conduct was regarded as improper for women as women's engagement in the public space indicated a public display of masculinity qualities and a threat (2005). Krolokke (2005) deftly elaborates that this very activity confronted the "cult of domesticity" (p.5) that dictated a women's rightful place, that is, in the home serving the needs of her husband and children.

Following this argument, patriarchy was constructed as baseless and an absurdity and thus recognised as illegitimate, but it possessed the ability to marginalise and to construct women as the appendage of the male (Krolokke & Sorenson, 2005). Thus, biological differences were not accepted by the women as a political justification for the discrimination against women. As explored further by Krolokke and Sorenson, politically, this understanding contributed to the claims that men and women be considered equals and obtain access to similar resources and positions as their male counterparts (2005). In this way, women fought the political issues in their private lives. Issues such as those of women's sexuality and pleasure were confronted as well as reproductive rights and birth control. Hammer and Kellner (n.d) capture that it was against this background that great numbers of young women began to trouble the institute of marriage and the construction of women and children as males' possessions. It is for this reason that Krolokke and Sorenson construct these varied interventions of the first wave taking place in the USA as having inspired later feminist movements, including the second wave below whose focus was on the personal being political (Krolokke & Sorenson, 2005). Scholars characterise the ending of the first wave as occurring when western women were granted suffrage (Hammer & Kellner, 2009).

2.2.2 Second wave feminism: the personal is political

Ensuing from women's struggles and movements for equal rights in the public space are women's radical movements and the politicisation of the personal in the public space. These movements took place in the early 1960s persisting well into the 1980s (Krolokke & Sorensen, 2005; Ali et al., 2000 in Ampofo et al., 2015; Krolokke & Sorenson, 2005; and Laughlin, Gallagher, Cobble, Boris, Nadasen, Gilmore, & Zarnow, 2010). Holmes (2000) captures how women's politicisations of their relationships with men challenged the objectifications and (mis)representations of women and their bodies as portrayals of males' objects of pleasure and women's assertion that women's claim to full citizenship is bound up with equal relationships in their personal lives and also brings what is characterised as the personal into the public space. Espoused in women's protests and movements against the objectification of women's bodies in the United States, women protested against the Miss America Pageants between the years 1968 and 1969. Women utilised the public space to conduct performances aimed at illuminating the extent of women's objectification in the pageants coined as "women's oppression" (p.8). In light of the pageants the women highlighted that these pageants present the connotation that women's physical appearance is more important than their intellectual abilities (Freeman, 1975 in Krolokke & Sorenson, 2005). Thus, Hammer and Kellner (n.d) suggestively state that second wave feminism represented the new wave of consciousness, protest and women empowerment concepts (Ampofo et al., 2015).

The process of consciousness raising allowed women to construct or highlight that what was defined as personal problems were in fact politically determined (Snyder-Hall, 2010). Following this, relations between women and men were central to the politicisation of sexuality, including the address of the concerns of women regarding sexual liberation and sexual pleasure (Holmes, 2000; Hammer & Kellner, 2009). With regards to consciousness raising and resisting the patriarchal ideals of male ownership of women's bodies as part of the second wave movement, women-only spaces were formed specifically for women. As Holmes (2000) critically analyses, these spaces maintained an environment for the women to express themselves, their needs and interests with the aim of empowering women (Krolokke & Sorenson, 2005). However, even among themselves the women experienced challenges with one another for representative space. For example, heterosexual women and lesbian women struggled to 'earn' their place within the radical feminist space wherein lesbian women perceived that they would have to justify their

presence within the feminist movement as heterosexuality was perceived as more natural and prominent (Holmes, 2000). Subsequently, within the context of the United States, movements such as the civil rights and black power movements entered the scene in criticism of capitalism and imperialism centring themselves on the interests of the oppressed groups, groups such as the working class and black women, including homosexuals (Freeman, 1968 in Krolokke, 2005). Snyder-Hall (2010) theorises that during the movements of the American feminists in the second wave the feminists presented divergent views of oppression and empowerment relating to the contentious issue of women's gendered sexualities in discourses of pornography, sex work, as well as heterosexuality. However, the mid-1990s saw the advent of the third wave of feminism that emerged with the idea of advancing and uniting the ideals of gender equality and sexual freedom as espoused in the erstwhile waves. That is to say, second wave feminism was split into supposed 'pro-sex' and 'anti-sex' (p.258) camps, thus contributing to the demise of the movement (Snyder-Hall, 2010). Contrary to second wave feminists, third wave feminism encompassed inclusivity and plurality, and embodied non-judgement in its stance with regards to how women choose to negotiate conflicting issues of gender equality and sexual pleasure.

2.2.3 Third wave feminism: "Choice feminism"

The third-wave of American feminism emerged in the mid-1990s as an inclusive and respectful movement of women's choices not limited to sexual fluidity and expressions as well as contesting patriarchal static female-gendered roles for women (Snyder-Hall, 2010). This movement strove for inclusivity of queer and non-white issues as an attempt to divorce themselves from white middle-class hegemony (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000 in Snyder-Hall, 2010). Arguing within the context of 'choice', Snyder-Hall (2010) suggests that third-wave feminists maintained that every woman should be able to decide for themselves how to navigate and negotiate contentious issues of both gender equality and sexual liberation, thus illuminating a significant quality of third wave feminism as respecting plurality and individuals' self-determination and rejecting judgement. An example of this quality was arguing against the politics of universal definitions of womanhood and static identities (Snyder-Hall, 2010; Hewitt, 2012). Thus, they confronted and critiqued their predecessors' universal definitions and the boxing of women's identities and sexual desires and pleasures (Hewitt, 2012; Krolokke & Sorensen, 2005). Instead of judgement, Snyder-Hall (2010), for example, argues that third wave feminism asked women to partner together with

other women in order to address shared concerns. Emphasising Snyder-Hall's argument, Krollokke and Sorensen point out that third wave feminists are driven by desires to advance a feminist theory and politics that privilege conflicting experiences of women and to deconstruct flawed categorisations of women (2005). Although third world feminism resonated with most young women and was perceived to espouse ideas of inclusivity and acceptance, it has, however, been critiqued by reverberant arguments of third world, post-colonial feminists, black American feminists and African feminists listed in this chapter as a western concept serving the interests of white middle class women. Western scholarship is charged with ignoring the struggles of black American women's contributions to feminism and isolating their struggles to specific organisations such as the NOW (National Organization for Women) organisation and the pageant protests as alluded to in preceding arguments and elsewhere in this chapter (Laughlin, Gallagher & Nadasen et al., 2010; Hooks, 1994). Evans and Chamberlain (2015) advance the argument and explore the flaws of categorisations delineating (western) feminism and feminist scholarship into wave structures. They further critique the wave theorisations as constructing generational barriers among feminists and excluding feminists of colour and privileging western feminism. Central to this discourse Kinser (2004 in Laughlin, Gallagher & Cobble et al., 2010) asserts that the wave narrative obfuscates black women's labour activism. It is therefore not surprising that marginalised women theorised feminism(s) to 'talk back' and to denounce exclusionary discourses of western feminism(s) and to advance feminist ideas and analyses that take women's location and varied experiences and their intersecting historical issues into account.

2.2.4 Black and third world feminisms

In describing these two feminisms Ampofo et al. (2015) highlight that, in differentiating between them, the scholars clarify that the black feminism bases its focus of experiences on the diaspora. Krollokke and Sorensen (2005 in Ampofo et al., 2015) highlight North American black feminism as rooted in nineteenth century obliteration movements enunciating black resistance and advocating for social, political, and economic equality. Thus, Collins (1990 in Ampofo et al., 2015) asserts that in order to correctly examine and acknowledge black women's lives, feminist theory should be anchored on the impact and experiences of race, gender and class. In the same vein, Crenshaw (1989 in Ampofo et al., 2015) coined the term 'intersectionality' (p.908) as a way of highlighting the manner in which multiple oppressions are experienced. Collins (1990 in Ampofo

et al., 2015) is reported to have introduced ‘the matrix of domination’ (p.908) as a way to analyse the manner in which the intersecting oppressions are organised. Thus, black feminists formed organisations to struggle against the intersecting and myriad oppressions of women (Ampofo et al., 2015).

2.3 The intersectionalities of African and decolonial feminist framework and scholarship

Edwin (2016) competently highlights postcolonial and African feminisms as possessing a dual function at its inception, namely, in identifying the weaknesses of European and American feminisms, countering and dismantling the application of flawed theorisations to African societies and advancing a feminist discourse that is answerable to localising African women’s realities (Edwin, 2016). Thus, African feminists aver that, instead of importing ‘foreign concepts’, African feminism and scholarship must locate itself within the realities of African women and their settings (Edwin, 2016). Central to the discourse around challenging western feminism(s) and the localising of African women’s experiences, African feminism(s) introduced alternative concepts, methodologies, and theorisations in order to centre and valorise African knowledge.

Decker and Baderon recognise African feminism as integrating dimensions of women’s oppressions such as racial, sexual, class and culture in an attempt to produce an all-encompassing strand of feminism that acknowledges women’s personhood as opposed to her sexual body (2018). Parallel to African feminist scholars’ debates are decolonial feminist scholars’ debates and theorisations on centring feminism and marginalised women’s experiences in their cultural, traditional, social and historical context. This framework emerged from the Chicana feminist movement that was driven by the historical and socio-cultural exclusion of women of Mexican descent in the United States of America (Connell, 2014). Closely aligning with African feminism, decolonial feminism locates decolonial debates on discourses of race, gender and sex (Grosfoguel, 2011; Lugones, 2010). Decolonisation speaks to the fact that the liberation of women does not entail their integration within the patriarchal system but rather tries to understand how the patriarchal system functions; therefore, decolonising of gender becomes an important task (Nkenkana, 2015). Decolonial scholars and thinkers in their analyses emphasise the notion of ‘coloniality’ as a critique of western gender concepts in post-colonised contexts so as to denounce oppressive neo-colonial relations of power that intersect with gender (Mendez, 2015). The

coloniality of gender is constructed as concrete and entangled with exercises of power. Nkenkana (2015) concurs that the coloniality of gender addresses the enduring question of the liberation of women from all forms of oppression. Lugones (2008) concurs in saying that the task of decolonial feminists and theorists is to reconceptualise the logic of gender and race as intermeshed so as to recognise women of colour. Similarly, decolonial theorists caution that a gender transformation not only entails the emancipation of women but also requires collective efforts from both men and women in order to defy the colonial global structure that continues to subjectify Africans (Lugones, 2010; Maldonado-Torres, 2011; Nkenkana, 2015). This is the right position considering that African feminists also believe in working with men in the struggle for the emancipation of women. Lugones (2010) adds that resistance to coloniality is enabled when it is a communal effort rather than individuals working in isolation. This framework was also utilised in understanding the narratives of the women in this study. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter. Lugones (2010) aligns herself with Maldonado-Torres' (2007) analyses of coloniality and reminds us in asserting that colonialism not only represents an event but also prevailing patterns of power that continue to plague post-colonial states. For this reason, decolonial theory concerns itself with confronting, challenging, and undoing the dominant and assimilation force of colonialism, not only as a historical but also a contemporary process underwritten by Eurocentrism (De Lissovoy, 2010).

Bawa (2018) contributes to the discourses in dismantling essentialist western theorisations on African women's experiences and forwards the notion that, to effectively address the concerns of women in the continent, it is advisable that African and post-colonial feminism(s) historicise women's oppression, this along with acknowledging contemporary social, cultural, traditional and religious discourses that perpetuate the relegation of women into subordinate positions, while taking care not to alienate African men. Thus both the African feminist and decolonial debates lie in encompassing emancipation from oppression based on factors such as political, economic, social, and cultural indicators of racial, cultural, sexual, and class biases (Decker & Baderoon, 2018). Sam-Abbenyi (1993) reprises preceding scholars' arguments in asserting that African women scholars do not classify their problems in linear or hierarchical forms or in dichotomies as opposed to western feminists who privilege one form of oppression over another such as sexism over racism or sexuality; neither do they advocate such a separation that might only tend to overstate certain issues. African feminism further recognises that certain inequities and limitations

existed or exist in traditional societies and that colonialism reinforced them and introduced others, such as the moralisation of sexualities, which impacted views on sexuality. African feminism describes feminist principles that localise and set apart the needs of African women stemming from their lived realities (Bawa, 2018). I find African feminism to be beneficial to underpin this study and interpret the lived experiences and narratives of the two generation of women, as African feminism acknowledges a common struggle with African men (Bawa, 2018). In line with the study's prime concern, Du Bois (in Maldonado-Torres, 2004) makes a pertinent point with regard to what he coins the 'decolonial attitude' (p.262) that dictates the significance for the colonised to assume responsibility for their own narratives and to also acknowledge the existence of many truths and views. Drawing on western feminisms and its colonial undertones, several literary African women scholars rejected the term 'feminism' - including its theorisations that disregard the African context, including discourses containing racism and ethnocentrism of the European colonial enterprise, turning feminism into an imperialistic discourse on Africa (Kolawole, 2004; Oyewumi, 1997; Edwin, 2016).

Other such scholars include Ogundipe-Leslie (1989), Mama (2012) and Nnaemeka (2004) who, like many African scholars and feminists, reiterated that feminism needs to acknowledge Africa's diverse socio-cultural and political histories, including, to name a few: politics, traditional norms and practices, race, gender, colonialism and apartheid. Thus, enters decolonial feminism to not only generate epistemologies that accurately represent the realities of Africans, but also to disrupt the ways that knowledge has been produced (Lewis, 2005; Nkenkana, 2015; Oyewumi, 2005). Below I describe some of the issues that African feminist scholars suggest western feminists neglect to recognise in the lives of African peoples. These are discussed under feminist features suggested by the preceding scholars as starting points for African feminists in successfully contextualising African experiences. These key terms that are central in the underpinnings of this study include: *African womanism*, *umojia*, *nego-feminism*, *stiwanism*, and *motherism*, among others, in order to advance African feminist thought and scholarship. These features centre on a specific standpoint by the dominant African feminist thinkers cited below that are central to the tenets of African feminism that recognise pluralities in African women's experiences and the acknowledgement of many truths. These concepts intersect as each of the African theorists below forward them:

2.3.1 African womanism: African peculiarities

Ogunyemi (1996), drawing on feminism and African-American *womanism*, asserts that western feminism overlooks African *peculiarities*. She therefore suggests a need to define African *womanism*. In her argument she states that “an African woman knows that she is deprived of her rights by sexist attitudes in the black domestic domain and by Euro-American patriarchy in the public sphere” (Ogunyemi, 1996, p.43). That is to say, an African woman’s feminism is rooted in taking the initiative to name herself as opposed to leaving it to others, in particular the Euro-American feminists, or to legacies of colonial ideologies. In this way the African woman locates herself in African history that is her local environment, which Ogunyemi (1996) defines as “African peculiarities” (p.114). I find this feature central to the objectives of this study of Nkomazi women as well as the agenda for African feminism’s counter discourse on western feminism. Resonating with the lived experiences of the Nkomazi women, Ogunyemi (1996) continues and delineates African womanism as a:

“conciliatory spirit... because, when all is said and done, we still have to live with our fathers, uncles, husbands, sons, friends, lovers, and male relations” (p.106).

In an interview with Salo (2001) entitled, “Talking about feminism in Africa”, Mama contrasts *womanism* by advancing the argument that changing the terminology does not solve the problem of global domination. Her standpoint is as follows: “*I choose to stick with the original term, insist that my own reality inform my application of it... Words can always be appropriated*” (Salo, 2001, p.61). Mama continues by stating that naming feminism differently does not produce the desired changes for African women and feminists such as the western domination of global politics and the misrepresentations and mislabelling of African experiences by those in the global North (Salo, 2001).

2.3.2 Umoja: Spirit of togetherness

Echoing various African and post-colonial feminist scholars on locating multiple sources for women’s various intersecting oppressions, Kolawole (1997) identifies these intersecting factors as impinging on the efforts of women’s self-assertion: “patriarchy, tradition, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and gender imperialism” (Kolawole, 1997, p.25). Kolawole (1997) avers that to counter what she terms as “destructive traditions” and “imperialistic images” (p.39) of the

African in western feminism, she suggests a conversational action. In other words, an alliance with men and other actors in the African space that will be able to address the pluralities of the layers of African women's perspectives that affect women's lives, thus making feminism a more relatable concept for the reverberant voices of the rural women in this study, that is to say 'ordinary women' (Kolawole, 1997). Kolawole advances her argument and introduces self-definition as emanating from a collective action by all social actors. This dialogic action by community members and other actors is branded as a signifier and embodiment of the spirit of *Umoja*, which emphasises harmony in diversity and promotes the accommodation of diverse attitudes sans the judgements of individuals' African identity (Kolawole, 1997). Here, *Umoja* is taken from the Swahili language and signifies the spirit of togetherness and unity. Relevant to the everyday lives of this study's women as well as bearing this in mind in my line of interviews with the women, *Umoja* is argued to enhance positive dialogic action that does not view the attainment of emancipation as detesting men, thus advancing the emancipation of both African men and women (Kolawole, 1997).

2.3.3 *Nego-feminism: Skillful maneuvers*

Parallel to Kolawole's (1997) dialogic action in progressing 'our' interactions in and with African spaces, Nnaemeka (2004) presents African women as possessing unique abilities and ways in which they skilfully negotiate and navigate through challenging situations (Nnaemeka, 2004). She theorises *nego-feminism* - also known as *feminism of negotiation* - to underscore African women's skilful navigation through challenges presented to them, thus bringing into light the ways in which African women in some contexts appear to be colluding with patriarchal ideals and contradicting them at the same time. In her explanation of the malleable qualities of *nego-feminism*, Nnaemeka skilfully enlists the metaphor of a chameleon that modifies its colour to adjust to its surroundings in order to survive and to advance. Furthermore, by observing the movements of the chameleon (read 'women') Nnaemeka suggests that it is "cautious, goal-oriented, accommodating, adaptable, and open to diverse views" (2004, p.382). Put simply, the chameleon (read 'women') knows the when, where and ways of negotiating with and around patriarchy in diverse settings in which it is positioned. Together with Ogunyemi and Kolawole, Nnaemeka constructs the roots of African feminism within the African environment and challenges patriarchy through negotiation, accommodation, and compromise (Nnaemeka, 2004).

2.3.4 *Stiwanism: Inclusion and participation for social transformation*

Closely following the theorisations of *Nego-feminism*, *Umoja*, and *womanism*, Ogundipe-Leslie (1989) offers and champions the term *stiwanism* derived from the acronym STIWA - Social Transformation Including Women in Africa. She advances the depiction of the Mao-Tse Tung Chinese man with three “mountains”, (pp.28-31) or burdens, on his back to the conditions of the African woman whose suffering is a consequence of colonisation, neo-colonialism, poverty and ignorance (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1989). In an appropriate link to this study, Ogundipe-Leslie builds on Mao’s three hurdles that include foreign intrusions, or oppression from outside, feudal oppression or authoritarianism and the Chinese man’s backwardness. She adds and theorises specifically the African woman’s race as a contributor to imperialism and neo-colonialism, and a man who is immersed in the ideals of patriarchy. To complete this combination and prodding the line of argument of this study, in her argument she further includes the African woman and theorises that her negative self-image has caused her to internalise patriarchy and gender hierarchy (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1989). To overcome the stated hurdles, Ogundipe-Leslie suggests that scholars need to explore feminism in African contexts and in traditional spaces and designs contained in African indigenous cultures (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1989). Thus, Ogundipe-Leslie affirms a *stiwa* feminist is one who imagines feminism not only as inclusion but also as participation in the “social and political transformation of Africa” (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1989, p.230). Pertinent to the lives of Nkomazi women, Ogundipe-Leslie underscores *stiwanism* comprising of issues around a woman’s “body, her person, her immediate family, society, her nation, her continent and their locations within the international economic order” (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1989, p.35).

2.3.5 *Postcolonial African feminism*

Bawa (2018, p.2) explores the notion of post-colonial African feminism by drawing from various feminist scholars’ (Adeniyi-Ogunyankin, 2016; Afonja, 1981; Ahmadu, 2000; Kolawole, 2002; Nnaemeka, 1998; Obiora, 1997; Oyěwùmí, 2003; Tamale, 2008) contestations of western feminism by synthesising around broad themes such as contesting colonial narratives of African female subjects in western academic and development discourses. African postcolonial scholarship challenges the trivialisation of local patriarchal customs that are oppressing and marginalising women. The scholarship also engages with culture, nation and global campaigns in context-specific ways to advance women’s rights, statuses and positions on the continent.

Similarly, Mohanty et al. (1991) in their contribution critiques western feminist theory arguing that it homogenises third world women on the basis of a shared oppression. She argues that this results in an assumption of women as an already established group, one which has been labelled powerless, exploited and sexually harassed. In these texts women are defined as victims of male violence and the sexually oppressed (Mohanty et al., 1991). This raises the question whether in 'local' contexts (as in African) customs that appear to prioritise men over women should be understood as patriarchal and if so how they should be resisted without damaging the project of reclaiming African culture.

Moreover, postcolonial scholars and writers agree with this perspective and argue that, in contemporary South Africa, the manner in which one becomes "a person", the manner in which one becomes integrated into meaning, identity, and possibilities for survival within South Africa involve all the experiences which flow from racialisation, from "becoming gendered", and from questions of culture, class, and sexuality (Msimang, 2000, p.69). To conclude the preceding scholars' arguments regarding feminism(s) and the relevance of the feminist tenets to this study, Mohanty et al. (1991) and Hooks (2014) aptly capture the objective of this study. It has become vital that we reflect on 'our' lived experiences and foreground such experiences as a foundation to knowledge (Mohanty et al., 1991). Similarly, Hooks has argued that as black people (women) we need to scrutinise the language that people use against us, because most people are vulnerable to the 'pushing' language that is used against them (2014). Thus, language is a place of struggle, how people imagine themselves and the language they use (Hooks, 2014). Therefore, African feminism is suitable for this study as it assists in the understanding of genealogies of the language that have been used against African women, their bodies and sexualities.

Thus, the study aimed to prioritise the experiences and voices of these women (Kiguwa, 2019). Post-colonial feminism(s) undergirding this study casts a critical eye on the processes of colonisation and on post-coloniality with regards to writing, activism and theorising around Africa. African feminisms also point to a diversity of tactics, theories and standpoints, especially in the interplay between scholarship, practice and activism and how these inform each other (Akin-Aina, 2011). Maldonado-Torres (2007) further explores this fact and states that it is in this manner that coloniality is sustained in scholarship as well as in the former colonised people's self-image. It is thus Bawa's (2018) assertion that in researching African women's sexualities and modes of

expressions without being reductionist, it becomes imperative that researchers engage with multiple identities and ways of being, lived experiences and realities that point to the complexities of the continent beyond what has been represented in popular discourses. It is for these preceding arguments that I find African feminism(s) as well as decolonial feminism and frameworks as fitting intersecting theorisations to explore the peculiarities and pluralities of African women's experiences and realities. In order to evade the symbolic and epistemic violence that is found in the othering logic of western discourses and practices, the study and its research methods are underpinned by an African feminist framework together with the decolonial feminist perspective (Zavala, 2013).

2.4 Linking African feminism to the study

2.4.1 African feminists on African sexualities

In this section I draw from Arnfred's (2009) contribution in her analyses of African feminist scholars and thinkers on African sexualities discourse. To examine African feminist scholars' contributions to issues of sexualities and African women on the continent, like Arnfred, I draw from two journals edited in South Africa but drawing on scholars and writers featuring topics from all over the continent. The journals are *Feminist Africa* and *Agenda* (2009). Arnfred reprises the African and post-colonial scholars' contentions in this study that knowledge on African and third world women's sexualities has been externally conceptualised and produced originally by colonial anthropologists and later in contexts of biomedical discourses of risk and danger (2009). I will refer to McFadden's (2003) and Arnfred's (2009) contribution wherein their focus on sexuality is specifically on pleasure and power, creativity and desire. This theorisation, as scholars observe, is borne from Lorde's (1978) notion of "the power of the erotic" and the view of sexuality as a source of strength and resistance (Arnfred, 2009; Gqola, 2011). Arnfred suggests that McFadden's (2003) accentuation has subsequently informed much African feminist exploration of sexuality (Arnfred, 2009).

In what follows, Pereira (2003) and Arnfred (2009) critique McFadden's assumption on the sexually oppressed African women, including the notion that their sexuality is constructed as "bad, filthy and morally corrupting" (McFadden, 2003; Arnfred, 2009, p.152; Pereira, 2003). Pereira (2003) and Arnfred (2009) insist that McFadden's claims are "gross simplifications" of African

women's sexualities. Parallel to African and post-colonial African feminist scholars' arguments in this study, Pereira first argues that it is impossible to generalise across the continent and across ethnic, religious, class, and age divides; second, Pereira labels McFadden's approach as profoundly ahistorical. Subsequently, Pereira underscores that the views on female sexuality in a negative light in various parts of Africa is a recent occurrence historically linked to modernity (Pereira, 2003). Similarly, Arnfred (2009) observes that later contributions to African sexualities explored the landscape along the trajectories of sexuality as pleasure, creativity, and desire, but against the "gloom and doom" (p.152) of considerable HIV/AIDS research. Relevant to the study's position, Arnfred articulates scholastic contributions that have asserted for re-interpretations and re-readings of African cultures, traditions and sexualities (Arnfred, 2011).

Moreover, contrary to notions of African cultures as patriarchal and repressive, Arnfred observes that feminist researchers discover often to "their own surprise" the presence of traditions that contain sexual autonomy for women (2009). Such practices as *tsarance* and *kawance* practiced in remote villages of Northern Nigeria as examined by Pereira in her contribution describe these practices as contemporary examples of courtship (2005). Key to the practice of *tsarance* is that it was performed and carried out publicly among young, unmarried girls and boys, as opposed to couples separated from the group (Pereira, 2005). The practice occurred on the days leading up to a friend's wedding wherein women are afforded the liberties to engage in sexual relations with young men. The practice of *kawance* or *angwance* occurred on the night of the wedding among the female friends of the bride wherein boys and men would get an invitation to participate in sexual celebrations for the night. On the other hand, *angwance* refers to the husband's side of sexual celebrations. Ranger (1989 in Pereira, 2005) in reference to the celebrations inherent in these practices claims that the amount of sexual freedom exercised by women in this account counters various "inventions" (p.65) of tradition utilised in hegemonic sexist ways across Africa to regulate women's sexual behaviours and sexualities (2005).

Similar to Pereira's (2005) efforts to map African women's sexualities, Tamale's contribution highlights the manner in which the erotic permeates the cultural lives among the Baganda people, a patrilineal society located in Uganda. To achieve this objective Tamale examines the purported historical custom of *Ssenga* performed among the Baganda people through contemporary feminist eyes (Tamale, 2005). *Ssenga* is described as literally "father's sister", indicating the woman who,

in this patrilineal society, will be responsible for initiating her young nieces to the guidelines and norms of sexuality in adult women's lives, including the 'tricks of the trade' (Tamale, 2005). What generated Tamale's (2005) interest in the practice of *Ssenga* is its commodification in the 'modern' urban life. *Ssengas* are observed to promote their knowledge and abilities in the market, and are hired to perform and deliver their knowledge and instructions at special pre-wedding women-only parties (Tamale, 2005). In her examination of this practice and the teachings that *Ssengas* provide young marriageable women, Tamale highlights a double lens, focusing on the conservative and perhaps the emancipatory aspect of this practice (2005). On one hand, it educates the young women on how to conduct themselves as obedient married wives, while on the other hand instructs them on how to negotiate agency, autonomy, and self-knowledge about their sexuality (Tamale, 2005).

Hungwe's paper (2006) adds to the preceding scholars' conceptualisations of mapping African women's sexualities and their sexual bodies from the past to contemporary feminist eyes. Hungwe examines the meanings attached to notions of women's "unrespectability" and "respectability" in the 1930s among the Kikuyu sex workers located in rural Dangaron (Hungwe 2006). In this population, Hungwe (2006) found that sex work was regarded as a legitimate means by which women can earn a living and in turn fend for themselves and their families. In comparison to contemporary times, the women were not stigmatised or looked down upon based on their ways of earning a living; instead, they were able to establish themselves as heads of households. Hungwe explains that in instances where women were found to disregard their family ties and responsibilities they were perceived and condemned as "unrespectable" without judgements on their sexual conduct (2006).

Arnfred (2009) advances the sex work in relation to African women and calls attention to the moral condemnation of sex work as embedded in the word "prostitute" (p.154) as linked to disregarding family ties and hierarchies more than to the interconnection between sex and money. In line with Hunwge's (2006) observation on "respectable" women, Haram's (2004) contribution reveals the ways in which the polyandrous mothers in Northern Tanzania among the Meru ethnic group negotiate "respectability". In the analysis of the life histories of the Meru single mothers, Haram (2004) found the common practice of multiple and concurrent partnerships among the mothers; however, Haram argues that these polyandrous mothers had to be careful when they drew upon support from their previous lovers and fathers of their children as a woman loses respectability and

claim to motherhood for failure to fend for her children's social and economic needs. Thus, Haram reveals that women must portion out their fertility and attach themselves to other men in a range of new sexual and reproductive unions (2004). Hungwe (2006) finds that the women utilise their sexuality and childbearing capacity to develop new forms of kinship and marriage systems.

In addition, South African studies on women's sexualities and sexual expressions, particularly Shafer' and Foster's (2001) study, found that women are viewed mostly by men and themselves as "slags, sluts, loose" (p.8) if they are sexually active and are involved in multiple partnerships, while males, on the other hand, are applauded for similar behaviours (Shefer & Foster, 2001). Shefer exposes how such language reproduces female sexuality as receptive to male sexuality, together with the view of categorising and perceiving women as pure, impure and asexual (Shefer & Foster, 2001). Thus, the scholars infer sexuality as framed as a male territory which men regulate and set the terms on which women must be introduced and guided (Shefer & Foster 2001).

Contrary to Shefer and Foster's (2001) argument on African women's oppressed sexualities and passivity, Magwaza contributes to the debate by revealing that 'traditional' African women are active agents in their daily gendered-lives. In her study, Magwaza exposes ways in which Zulu women translated transgressive and assertive counter-discourses through their dress as a form of non-verbal protest (Magwaza, 2011). In one example, Magwaza describes the Camper-Ndwedwe women's communication of personal protest at a wedding within the public space using dress. The attire the women wore was *isidwaba* which is symbolic of a married woman's status but can be worn by younger women in a different context. She found that these women employed the public (wedding) space to 'silently' communicate their concern and garner sympathy as the man in question had decided to wed another woman (Magwaza, 2011).

I turn my attention to ways in which the media and scientific research has contributed to the essentialisation of African sexualities and bodies of both African men and women, to which Steady (2007) refers in her work as "essentialising imperatives" (p.183) that linger in black women in Africa and the diaspora. Jungar and Onias (2004) advance Steady's theorisation on the *essentialisms* maintained by hegemonic paradigms and ideologies that essentialise Africans through stereotypes, disease and through social construction. In their analysis with regards to media interest in male circumcision research, Jungar and Onias found that the medicalisation and media interest by 'African news' revives the colonial western fantasy about "African sexuality"

(p.108). Patton (1999, as cited in Jungar & Onias, 2004) upholds that media reporting on HIV/AIDS is constructed through harmful assumptions on cultural and political difference. Jungar and Onias amplify Patton's assertion that in this way scientists and policy makers have the authority to produce "masks of otherness" (Jungar & Onias, 2004, p.109). In the section that follows, I highlight the ways in which scholars have argued on how colonised people have been stripped of their 'being' through colonialism and relegated to a state of non-being. It is my take that coloniality is maintained and kept alive in women's perceptions of their sexual bodies and sexualities as well as those around them. Sithole argues as follows: "If the futures of Africa are imagined, contemplated, and actualised in the colonial state, such futures will only be a myth" (2015, p.3).

2.5 Linking the Decolonial feminist framework to the study

This study concerns itself with how coloniality, the accompanying power, successor force and survivor condition of colonial experience lingers and contaminates African imagination and knowledge. In the same vein it endeavours to describe the ways in which African people's imaginations are beginning to break free from coloniality (Mpofu, 2014). Quijano (2007) illuminates that, "Africa remains entangled and trapped within the snares of the colonial matrix of power, consisting of intersecting domains including: control of authority, control of gender and sexuality and control of subjectivity and knowledge" (pp.168). I have utilised a decolonial lens to explore how coloniality as a destructive force that is rooted in the African imagination and knowledge production continues to affect views on women's sexualities and bodies. Through the narratives of women and ways in which they make meanings of their bodies and sexualities, I attempt to expose the epistemic violence and imperialist historiography contained in western theorisations, literature and scientific health research on African women and how this impacts women's views of themselves and how they are perceived by others. Wynter (2003) proposes that the Euro-North American centric modernity produced two scripts: a *public script* that emphasised and promised emancipation, civilisation and development, a script, as Wynter argues, which sold modernity as a "glorious achievement", (p.5) and the *hidden script* of modernity identified as coloniality (Wynter, 2003). I view the notion of decoloniality as an aid in exploring and exposing the *hidden script* of modernity known as coloniality that enabled racial classification of human population, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid and neo-colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

Thus, I am looking for the hidden script of modernity in how postcolonial women talk about their sexuality as well as possible new kinds of scripts that the women are attempting to forge.

To Wynter (1995) this script is that of “history’s monumental crimes” (p.5) that encompass genocides and, most importantly for this study, the *epistemicides* of African knowledge systems and imagination - *epistemicides* such as distorting, disfiguring and ultimately obliterating the history of the colonised (Wynter, 2003). In their contribution, Bakshi, Jivraj, and Posocco (2016) emphasise the invisibility of coloniality but claim that mentally and psychologically it is experienced by many people who do not ‘fit’ into the notion of modernity and, thus, decoloniality makes visible the colonial differences. Coloniality allows the understanding of the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administration (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

Smith (1999) affirms a significant need for understanding the complex ways in which people were brought within the imperial system. She further notes that the colonial impact is still being felt today, despite the apparent independence gained by former colonial territories such as South Africa. Smith (1991) contends that imperialism continues to destroy and reform itself continuously, thus the colonial past is embedded in political discourse more broadly, and the discourses on female gendered bodies and sexualities in particular.

Schiwy (2007) advances the thinking that construction and performance of gender and gender relations are paramount to the process of decolonisation and cautions that notions of femininity are themselves colonial constructs that have pressed more complex notions of gender and sexuality (2007). This is evidenced in narratives on the constructions of oppressive traditional femininities and constructions of ‘proper’ women or well-behaved women all under the guise of culture and tradition. Significant to this study is exploring the ‘how’ and ‘when’ men and women devise traditional culture to suit patriarchal agendas, distinguishing between such conveniently devised traditional culture and ‘genuine’ traditional culture and the extent to which the purported ‘genuine’ traditional culture contributes to the subjugation of women. Taking into account the interconnections of race, class, gender and sexuality, the decolonial lens provides an understanding of the indifference of black men, historically racialised as inferior, to Nkomazi women’s lived experiences of violence (Mendez, 2015). Lugones (n.d) points to the ways in which men remain unaware of their own complicity in or collaboration with the violent domination of women of colour.

I set my gaze on the narratives of the rural women of Nkomazi district and separated myself from the western-centric notion of essentialising and universalising all African women's experiences, particularly those of sex and sexuality. I drew from the notion of *pluriversality* or *pluriversal* which is the view of many truths and realities. Querejaz (2016) highlights that *pluriversality* entails perceiving reality as made up of many truths, ontologies and diverse ways of being. This refers to whatever the women consider important to their lives, whatever they regard as an authentic expression of themselves, is the reality that I accept as true and a basis of knowledge about sexualities and sexual expression. I elected the decolonial framework as a tool to underpin this study as it is argued that the modern sciences frame and basis of knowledge are characterized by anthropocentrism (De la Cadena, 2010). Western feminism(s) centres on race, class and gender, overlooking the consequence of traumatic colonisation of African peoples by the west (Salo, 2001). De la Cadena (2010) contends that by embarking on the path of *pluriversality* it is not difficult to learn that the political is more than the west has led people to believe it is.

2.6 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter I have described the frameworks I drew upon for this study, namely African and decolonial feminist frameworks. The former offers what western feminism(s) fails to offer, understanding African contexts and the many intersecting oppressions of women and prioritising of women's lived experiences and voices (Kiguwa, 2019). I have also described the relevance of the notion of *pluriversality* in exploring the gendered experiences of the women. Finally, in this chapter I use African feminist and decolonial feminist frameworks as tools to explore how the intersections of race, gender, tradition, culture, sexuality, class, colonialism, imperialism and apartheid continue to shape and colour women's experiences of being 'women' in South African contexts.

Chapter: 3 Imagi-nation of gender and sexuality in pre-democratic and democratic South Africa

3.1 Introduction

In order to locate my research within the body of literature, in this chapter I will critically review literature from sub-Saharan African contexts by analysing dominant scholars' work on the interplays of colonialism, apartheid, race, sexuality, gender and nationalism, including the ways in which sexuality has featured in national discourses. In my attempt to highlight the notion of nation-building in democratic South Africa, I pay special attention to women's intersecting embodied experiences of race, gender and sexuality. Moreover, the literature reveals that colonial legacies of African sexualities remain today in the current South African democratic state. Thus, this chapter will revisit the African women's history of colonial oppression and colonial construction of sexuality (Aniekwu, 2006; Tamale, 2011).

3.1.1 Voyeurisms and destructions

In colonial times, black women's sexualities and bodies were under the scrutiny of the negative gaze of European imperialists, thus with imperial interference came the need to police these "rampant sexualities" (Levine, 2006, p.142). In light of the preceding arguments, it is therefore expected that the imperialists would be 'dangerously' fascinated with the pre-colonial bodies and sexualities. Lugones (2008) reveals the above as one of the reasons colonial intrusion thrived in segregating women from the newly produced colonial public sphere. As per the Victorian norms and values, African women's contributions were reduced to exclusively domestic roles as caretakers of the home and children, while men were performing masculinised duties such as politics and the economy (Arnfred, 2004; Lugones, 2008; Oyewumi, 1997). Indeed, women, by virtue of being categorised as women by western standards, made them ineligible for leadership roles and were thus subordinated to men due to their anatomy (Lugones, 2008). The transformation of state power into male-gender power succeeded in the marginalisation of women from state created structures, a sharp contrast to Yoruba state organisation in which power was not viewed as depending on a person's gender but rather on seniority (Oyewumi, 1997). The inferiorisation of native females may be linked to the control and transformation of tribal life. The obliteration of the gynocracies contributed to the destruction of the people through famine, disease, and disorder

of social, spiritual, and economic structures (Maese-Cohen, 2010; Oyewumi, 1997). Oyewumi (1997) pointedly describes that the introduction of the western gender system was welcomed by Yoruba males who conspired with the inferiorisation of women (Maese-Cohen, 2010). Lugones (2010) posits that the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised may be recognised in terms of gender, race, and sexuality. In Levine (2008), we are informed of the colonialist's struggle to clothe or civilise the natives, with the natives going as far as making a mockery of the clothes that they were instructed to wear. On the other hand, Oyewumi (1997) illustrates Yoruba women's 'fight' to remain in their prominent positions as opposed to going back home to their nurturing roles as per the instructions of patriarchal imperialists' orders. House-Midamba (1996) also notes the eccentricities between the Kikuyu and the colonialists over the issue of female circumcision as well as the dispossession of Kikuyu land. The authors demonstrate clearly the lived resistances of pre-colonial bodies to the colonality of gender (Lugones, 2010).

In the successive sections, I explore the manner in which this fascination led to the need to control and police the 'deviancy' of African sexualities as they did not fit into westernised norms of civilisation. Wicomb (1998, in Baderoon, 2011) eloquently underlines that the design of dehumanisation and inferiorisation of the colonised justified the erroneous belief that all enslaved women were guilty of sexual deviance by virtue of their positions as slaves. Following the thinking of the preceding authors, Baderoon (2011) writes that images of black bodies in South Africa are better understood within the context of the grand colonial narrative. Augmenting Ratele's (2009) earlier argument, Baderoon (2011) points out that, within the South African context under the Dutch and British rule succeeded by apartheid, regulating and controlling sexuality was central to the maintenance of the white race. In tandem, Stoler adds that the very ideas of labelling and classifying people as both 'coloniser' and 'colonised' attributed to notions of sexual control (2002). This is evident in slave masters' normalisations of sexual violation of slave women and enforced prostitution of slave women and slave owners' licence over the bodies of the slave women (Baderoon, 2011). In what follows, Shafer and Ratele (2011) suggest very strongly that chief to the sex laws of colonial and apartheid South Africa was the reconstruction of racism which was notable in bestowing sexual entitlement on white manhood and, as already mentioned, subordinating white womanhood. Thus, the scholars argue, apartheid ideology was rooted in white male control over people's lives (Shafer & Ratele, 2011). In similar vein, Baderoon (2011) articulates that the implications of racial sexual transgressions were prevalent in the colonies and

contraventions of these sexual laws between Europeans and indigenous people posed a threat to whiteness. She further argues that the panic of racial difference was rooted in sexualities. Furthermore, Shefer and Ratele (2011) highlight that the ways in which intimate relations in post-apartheid South Africa are constructed is a consequence of the preceding sex laws that governed sexualities and punished sexual transgressions among interracial couples. The scholars theorise that intimate relations in the post-apartheid nations continue to be governed by prevailing notions of racism. Bhana and Pattman (2009) shed light on the reproductions of colonial sex laws in contemporary South Africa in their study among learners between the ages of 16 and 17 in formerly white boys' and girls' schools, a black township school and a formerly Indian school in the Durban area. In their study, Bhana and Pattman, (2009) concluded that race is central to young people's constructions of intimate relations and desirability. These relations are framed in discourses of 'us' and 'them', thus mirroring the apartheid discourse on forbidden interracial relationships rooted in racist, inferiorising and pathologising ideologies.

Shefer and Ratele (2011) construct the apartheid administrators' segregation law of the races as bodily divides evidenced in contemporary young people's notions of sexual desirability. The authors further add that, although these laws continued to be transgressed, they succeeded in "putting the lid of desire in the other" (p.195) by way of criminalising and pathologising it. In similar vein, Lugones (2008) recognises two fundamental practices in colonisation: the imposition of races, complemented by the inferiorisation of indigenous people (Africans). Moreover, with regards to the history of visual representation, Lewis (2005) declares that, "black women's bodies have often been the subject of voyeuristic consumption, the consumption not only of black women's sexuality, but also of black women's trauma and pain" (p.15). In the same vein, Abrahams (1997) purports that travel writers framed European perceptions of Africa and rationalised colonisation and thus fueled the imperialists' sexual obsession with black pre-colonial bodies. To illustrate this point, Abrahams (1997) cites the travels of travel writers, Thuneberg and Spaarman, who in the late 1770s wrote ten pages describing Khoisan women's elongated clitoris. According to Abrahams (1997), this was done in order to determine whether the elongated clitoris was due to the work of nature or culture. Subsequent to this the preoccupation with Khoisan women's buttocks for any white traveller in Southern Africa emerged (Abrahams, 1997). For example, Abrahams (1997) tells Sarah Baartman's story wherein she was taken from her native land and exhibited in Europe as one of the 'spoils of British imperialism'; the chief object of

interest was her buttocks. It is clear from such writings that colonial powers exploited the people and resources of the African continent. Drawing on discourses on black women's bodies, particularly that of Sarah Baartman, Gqola (2006) suggestively states that the bodies of black women are represented through a pattern of "hyper visibility" (p.45) and have been intensely vulnerable to surveillance and 'invisibilised' to the systemic violence to which they are exposed. Magubane (2001) in her contribution demonstrates the ways in which colonial medical, literary and scientific discourses succeeded in constructing images of racial and sexual difference. This was accomplished through the body of Sarah Baartman, the so-called "Hottentot Venus". In this instance the portrayal of Sarah Baartman revealed stereotypical representations of black women in sexually debased roles (Magubane, 2001).

While Wicomb (1998 in Baderoon, 2011) powerfully reproves that Baartman's bodily experiences under her captors locates the (black) body as a landscape of dishonour, her analysis leads to the conclusion that Baartman's experiences signify the burden of memory carried by descendants of enslaved people in surviving slavery. Wicomb refers to this as "ontological shame" that continues to plague the descendants of the slaves (1998, p.92). She explains that this ontological shame finds itself in the knowledge of the colonial gaze on predecessors' bodies and those slaves who were engaged in sexual relations with the colonisers. Reprising Wicomb (1998), Baderoon (2011) writes that black women's bodies have become symbols for the sexual violence of slavery, thus rendering them invisible to the systematic violence they endured during slavery. Mendez (2005) poignantly points out that it is from these disturbing colonial voyeurisms of black women's bodies that we can draw the complexities of how gender and sexuality function as a racialising and a colonial force. Furthermore, similar to scholars such as Bhana and Pattman (2009) and Shefer and Ratele (2011), Baderoon exposes colonial caricatures that continue to be reproduced in post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa achieved through language. In her contribution, she pays specific attention to representations of black women's bodies through popular derogatory South African curse words that are based on women's bodies (2011). Baderoon explains that it is through these popularised curse words that black women's bodies become visibilised into the public sphere, conjuring up the legacy of sexual violence endured by women during slavery. In her analysis, Baderoon includes common denigrating phrases among a litany of phrases signifying "bodily contempt" (p.219) embedded in South African contexts. Such phrases as 'poes, naai and moer (p.219) refer to women's body parts aimed at degrading women and also rendering implied

violence. Radithalo (2005, in Baderoon, 2011) adds that these derogatory phrases are not only commonplace in degrading women but are also prevalent in male interactions utilised to gain dominance over each other. As a result, Baderoon (2011) emphasises that the translation of names of intimate body parts of women into such degrading phrases allows for the deconstruction of such elements that construct black women's bodies in a language containing "brutal exclusion" (p.220). She further purports that by observing the purpose that these phrases serve in interactions may prove to undo the harm of implied sexual violence that these phrases hold for women (Baderoon, 2011). As already mentioned, prevailing harmful colonial voyeurisms and destructions contributed to the constructions of stereotypic views on the fecundity and diseased bodies of black African women. These continue to shape the discourse in post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa and are kept alive in scientific and health discourses on the sexualities of Africans disguised as development and health relief for the 'hopeless' African peoples as argued by scholars cited below.

3.1.2 "What kind of sex are Africans having?"

Colonial regimes were successful in creating conditions under which sexually transmitted diseases and infertility flourished. They also over-emphasised the health and social disasters for political gain. Science was thus deployed in ways that justified retributive and moral interventions that often exacerbated black people's sexual health. An example of such manipulation of science is detailed by Epprecht (2009) who points to efforts by the Southern Rhodesian state to control syphilis by subjecting African women migrants in towns to mandatory vaginal examinations. Tamale (2011) adds that underpinning sexuality research in the field of public health in South Africa is the colonial medicalisation of African women's sexuality and reducing its purpose to reproduction. Europe imposed such prejudiced scientific discoveries on African women's bodies, sexualities and their reproductive roles onto the African continent and its people. South African researchers bought into this, and subsequently reinforced racist ideologies and stereotypes that perpetuated the othering of black women's sexuality and sexual behaviours (Arnfred, 2004; Tamale, 2011). Shefer and Ratele (201) saw the problems of the role of HIV/AIDS as central to the racialization of sexuality in post-colonial South Africa. This is evident in the classification of (black) youth as a population that is vulnerable to HIV risk infection. This demonstrates the manner in which sexuality is utilised to reproduce prejudicial and stigmatising stereotypes of a certain race group (Shefer and Ratele, 2011). Another example of the medicalisation argument points to the longitudinal study conducted

by the Centre for Disease Control on KwaZulu-Natal women in rural South Africa; the study revealed that 58 KwaZulu-Natal women who were infected with HIV had vaginas more “friendly” to the HIV virus (Medical Brief, 2015). This prompted the then Deputy Director of the Wits Centre for Reproductive Health and HIV to comment as follows, “What kind of sex are we Southern Africans having that confers a several thousand-fold risk on a young woman in KwaZulu-Natal versus her contemporary in London or Delhi?” (Child, 2015, p.1). Moreover, Benaya and Undie (2008) observe that in sub-Saharan Africa research on sexuality has been foreign-funded and has had fleeting rapid responses to HIV and AIDS pandemic and the country’s reproductive related challenges. Thus, the scholars argue that the popularity of these fleeting projects has hampered the development of insider perspectives within the contexts of sub-Saharan Africa (Benaya & Undie, 2008). It is in these medical discourses that rural black women in South Africa remain stigmatised and frozen into roles of passive victims of HIV infection.

Shefer and Ratele (2011) capture this concern and point out that the stigmatisation of HIV/AIDS mirrors the complexities of the discourse on othering and blame emanating from both local and international racist and sexist discourses of sexuality (Junga and Onias, 2004; Shefer and Ratele, 2011). The scholars equate this gaze to that of the colonial European fascination with unrestrained African culture and sexualities. Jungar and Oinas (2004) reprove that this harmful social construction of HIV/AIDS constructs Africans as “lost” (p.98) to the pandemic. This is in tandem with the belief that the disease spreads differently in Africa than it does in the west. This, the scholars argue, stems from colonial fantasies of African sexualities as different to those of the west (2004). To emphasise this point, Jungar and Oinas (2004) point to the widely promoted project of male circumcision in Africa. In their argument they expose how this project is not promoted as an option for HIV prevention in western countries wherein condom use is promoted as the primary method of HIV prevention. The scholars took strong issues with this, arguing that these are driven by the ideology of Africa as a dark continent and one that is lost to the pandemic, thus requiring different measures of HIV prevention. The scholars illuminate that in the medical scientific circles it is discussed that circumcision will work best for Africa as male circumcision is embedded in African culture as opposed to utilising a foreign western device, implying that condoms hamper prevention efforts (Jungar and Oinas, 2004). In addition, the scholars continue to purport that male circumcision has become popularised through western intervention strategies as Africans cannot be trusted to decrease the prevalence of the disease and thus require development from the west in

the form of surgical means, which is male circumcision, a method that is directly performed on their bodies in order to effect change. As a result, the scholars conclude that it is in altering the “black penis” that change in Africa can be achieved (Jungar and Oinas, 2004). In a similar vein, in the successive sections scholars argue that the HIV/AIDS discourse, driven by capitalism, modernisation and globalization, reshaped and interfered with African customs and traditions involving women’s bodies as a means of curbing the HIV pandemic in African contexts. Such practices include virginity testing of young women and girls as a key instrument in HIV prevention and decreasing HIV prevalence in South Africa’s rural areas. Scholars argue below that these programmes contribute to the ‘othering’ of African women and their sexual practices. It could also be argued that it is through such programmes that the pandemic has been feminised in Africa. As such, Becker (2004) proposes that studies focusing on the cultural constructions of gender and sexuality in post-colonial and post-apartheid contexts need to acknowledge the manner in which these social dynamics continue to be shaped by the oppressive political milieus.

3.1.3 Women’s sexualities and pleasure

Colonial draconian laws, values, multitudes of literature together with foreign-funded health interventions continue to be plagued with notions of African women as passive victims of disease and violence, which lead to the further oppression and silencing of African women’s voices in matters of sexuality. In Ogunjide-Leslie’s (2001) words: “Are African women voiceless or do we fail to look for their voices where we may find them, in the sites and forms which these voices are uttered?” (p.13). It is noteworthy that society creates a context that aims to govern the behaviour of members of the society; suggesting that sexuality should be perceived as part of society’s ethical or moral guidelines that may include taboos, prescriptions and practices, all of which are decided by socio-cultural views on sexuality and gender relations (Borty, 2014). Falola (2001) makes the argument that societies that have been colonised are negatively affected in many ways, most important of which is the erosion of their cultural values. Falola (2001) brings to the fore that a society whose cultural values have been destroyed is deprived of its identity because culture determines our identity, as well as how others perceive us and how we are able to make connections with our natural and social environments. For this same reason, Anthony and Sylvester (2014) assert that the colonialists succeeded in their ability in making indigenous peoples lose the essence of their being and their culture. The encounter between western colonising culture and indigenous

cultures raises problematic questions in relation to women's roles and sexuality. The subjugation of women is often alluded to as an indication of the inferiority of indigenous cultures; thus, emancipating colonised women from their oppression, oblivion and heathenism was at the core of the colonialist discourse of perceptions of women as victims of male aggression (Pui-Lan, 2004). Contemporary, cultural norms and values emphasise notions that an acceptable African woman is one who is heterosexual, married, and capable of child bearing and, most importantly, satisfies her husband sexually (Horn, 2006). My position lies with Oyewumi's (1997) assertion that these are western misreadings of the world of the colonised and a rash judgement of the African continent and its people. As alluded to in the previous section, this is reflected in the ways that African scholars, inclined to colonial training and devotion, failed to re-right colonial misrepresentations of Africa (Apusigah, 2008).

Instead, they contributed in shaping African cultural systems in line with colonial stereotypes of Africans (Apusigah, 2008). Evidently, this resulted in faulty replications of western systems in African culture and the regime of colonisers' animosity towards women's erotic powers and potentialities (Arnfred, 2004). To illustrate this point, I refer to Leclerc-Madlala, Simbayi and Cloete (2009), who stated that African patriarchal society and culture contributes to women's passive experiences of sexuality. In another example, Petros, Airhihenbuwa, Simbayi, Ramlagan and Brown (2006) concur that African women's subordinate position in society disadvantages women in expressing sexual agency in intimate relationships and asserting themselves in violent encounters. In line with the erroneous colonised constructions of black women's experiences of sex, Francoeur, Noonan, Opiyo-Omolo and Pastoetter (2004) report that older black women define sexuality in terms of conceiving children; a large percentage of them are not familiar with a female orgasm and have never experienced it. According to these authors, women's lack of sexual pleasure is because African culture and religion conjure feelings of shame, sin and passivity in women with regard to their nakedness, thus enforcing the message that self-pleasuring and sexual exploration is sinful (Francoeur et al., 2004). Shaw (2004) agrees that most African women reported that they were repulsed by masturbation; this stems from being ashamed of their nakedness and socialised not to name or say the word 'vagina'. In contrast, this flies in the face of ethnographic studies conducted in pre-colonial Africa, in which women were reported as not only seeking sexual relationships for procreation but as a norm and most importantly for sexual pleasure.

Converse to preceding scholars' theorisations, Tamale (2006), in a study on women's sexuality, found that women perceived sex both for procreation as well as for sexual pleasure. A glaring example is that of the reports on same-sex relationships among women. Moreover, Nzegwu's philosophical analysis of the indigenous Igbo conceptualisation of sexuality (2001, cited in Benaya & Undie, 2008) centres on concealed sexual behaviour and sexual desire that is embedded in pleasure and sexual satisfaction that are not tied to reproduction. In light of the scholars cited in this work, it is clear that the 'colonial project' is advanced in cultural hegemonies based on conformist hetero-normative discourses of morality. Interestingly, Tamale (2006) puts forward that within African sexual initiation schools traditional sexuality is enriched by 'western' sexual practices in terms of sexual self-discovery; which entails educating women on oral sex, masturbation and women's ejaculation. Part of these lessons includes advocating for women's disruption of patriarchal power in a form of subservience to the male sexual partner (2006). In addition, Jewkes and Morrell (2012) found that, although South African women negotiate their sexuality in contexts of patriarchal inequality, they are, however, not passive participants and demand sexual satisfaction. Borty (2014) adds that women in Ghana, particularly the matrilineal Akan, are said to be liberated sexually and are encouraged to affirm their right over a displeasing husband.

Tamale (2011) adds that, historically, African cultures and sexualities were framed as inferior to those of the 'west'. African women's sexualities were therefore characterised as contrasting with European sexual norms and practices and perceived as underdeveloped and excessive. Presently, in many societies, black women, in particular, are perceived as oppressed, and yet they are able to exert some control in their private spaces. Benaya and Undie (2008) note that there is empirical literature that reports on women's resistance in cultural contexts of social constructs of sexual pleasure. Such an example was observed in Tanzania where women were noted for their creative means of weaving together the ideas of sexuality and pleasure into cloth design, music, and in wedding ceremonies. To problematise some of the African scholars' analyses on African women's sexuality, according to Undie and Benaya (2008), sex and money in sub-Saharan Africa are linked with poverty, HIV, and AIDS. The difference in western rigidity regarding sexual relationships and acceptable reasons for engaging in such relationships is noteworthy, while transactional motives for engaging in sex are stigmatised and embodied in the image of a sex worker. Poulin (2005) goes beyond the reality of financial constraints and sexual risk behaviour issues to

investigate the social meanings of transactional relationships among young people in Malawi. What emerges is a somewhat different picture in that monetary gains of such relationships are perceived as meaningful and significant in the context of intimate partnerships.

3.1.4 Traditional constructions of young women's sexuality and its regulation

Within traditional and cultural settings, women's sexualities are surveilled and monitored throughout the stages of their lives. In addition, Diallo (2004) drives the point home that from an early developmental stage young girls are socialised into gender roles, and sex education in the home is conducted by the young woman's older siblings and elderly women. The manner in which she carries her body is required to be in line with notions of femininity. Diallo (2004) underlines that this is achieved through comments and in some cases through criticism from elders and counsel on how a woman should interact with men in customary events such as initiation schools and weddings. Diallo (2004) further highlights that young women's mobility, particularly those in rural areas, continues to be under strict surveillance as a preventive measure for young women's early sexual debut as marriage in some parts of the sub-Saharan region continues to be viewed as the sole entry into a sexual life. Sex prior to marriage may be interpreted by elders as disrespect. As such, Leclerc-Madala (2003), highlighting the extent of the surveillance on developing young women's bodies within their communities, cites her interview with Andile Gumede, a proponent and virginity tester in KwaZulu Natal on the practice of *ukushikila* which entails the inspection of a young woman's lower body for signs of physical maturity and readiness for marriage.

Andile interprets the other use of the practice of *ukushikila* as a way of estimating the young woman's sexual experience by inspecting her body for indicators of her sexual activity such as "flabby stomach and loose buttocks" (p.19), whereas the body of a virgin is 'tight' and firm (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). Building on this, Mkundi (2009) makes the claim that some proponents of female circumcision purport that, due to young women's dangerous desire for sex, partial or total excision of her genitalia becomes a necessary practice to keep her in check and to preserve her virginity for marriage and it is argued to also keep married women from indulging in extra marital sexual relations. Given the preceding arguments on restrictions and surveillance on women's sexualities, Arnfred (2015) explores the ways in which, in some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, women are expected to be active sexual participants and even dominate the activity. The converse of this, as already stated elsewhere in this work, reveals that the freedoms of women's

expressions of sexuality are only acceptable in accordance with the norms and standards set by the ‘gatekeepers’ of culture and tradition. Foregrounding the methods of control and socialisation processes is the public’s intense fascination with the developing bodies of young women and girls and their sexual behaviours as alluded to in the subsequent sections (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003).

3.1.5 Virginitv testing

Within the space of virginitv testing, Mubangizi (2012) among other scholars (Chisale & Byrne, 2018) observes the practice of virginitv testing as physical inspection of a young girl’s genitalia to confirm the tightness of the young woman’s hymen in order to determine if she is indeed ‘pure’ or still a virgin. A hymen is identified as a membrane that partially closes the vaginal opening. If her hymen is found to be closed or tight, then she is considered to be a virgin and has ‘passed’ the test. Virginitv testing varies across regions and from across communities. In some regions the testing is performed by the mother of the young girl and in other areas, including South African communities like that of KwaZulu-Natal, the practice is performed by experienced elderly women from within the community and is annually performed on many young girls in a public setting (Chisale & Byrne, 2018; Mubangizi, 2012). In addition, the scholars write that the practice is not new to South Africa and is prevalent particularly among the Nguni people, namely, the Zulu and Swazi people, and is also practiced in some of the sub-Saharan African regions such as Zimbabwe, Kenya and Ethiopia (Chisale & Byrne, 2018; Mubangizi, 2012).

Moreover, the practice is purported to have become less common in the middle of the 20th century, but it was reinvigorated by the African ‘crises’ of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Mubangizi, 2012). As this line of argument progresses, public celebrations and growing interest in young women’s and girls’ chastity came to be identified by those individuals who were advocates of the practice situated virginitv testing celebrations as symbolising people going back to nature or culture as a means to curb the growing scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic among young people (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). This echoes Jungar and Oinas’ (2004) contestations on the essentialising and othering methods of HIV prevention programmes that appeal to Africans by merging modernity with Africa’s traditional methods as solutions to decreasing the prevalence of the disease. Leclerc-Madlala (2003) offers that not only do the virginitv testers test young girls’ and women’s virginitv but also provide teachings on African heritage and revive young women’s pride in their heritage through such activities as cooking of traditional African food, singing of old

songs and traditional dance routines, thereby offering an escape from early sexual debut by way of interacting with like-minded young girls and women. This parallels the observations of Chisale and Byrne (2003) that the practice of virginity testing has opened up a platform for older women to engage with young women about their sexuality and other sexual issues, thus fostering notions of shared heritage and linguistic identity among the Nguni community and cultivating a sense of belonging. Describing some of the young women's perceptions and experiences of participating in this practice, citing Scorgie's (2002) findings among the virgins in KwaZulu-Natal, Chisale and Byrne (2018) point out that the girls participated in the practice out of their own volition. The girls are reported to have further asserted that participating in this practice and having their virginity declared public affirmed their commitment to a good future (Chisale & Byrne, 2018). In addition to this, scholars observe that the prime incentive to passing the virginity test is marriage (Diallo, 2004; Chisale & Byrne, 2018; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). Emphasising the unregulated nature of the virginity testing practice as well as society's unrelenting interest in the regulation of the female developing body, scholars argue that this gave rise to commoditised virginity incentive programmes.

One such case is of a Zulu-speaking woman running a small factory only hiring women who were virgins. Once in her employ the women were subjected to routine virginity tests. She is reported to have argued that this was her contribution to restoring what has been lost in the Zulu culture and assisting in the reduction of HIV rates in the province (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). Subsequent to her popularity, the government caught wind of her unconstitutional actions that violated the women's human rights and labour practice regulations and she was forced to close down the factory (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). In another example, in 2016 the then mayor of uThukela municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, Dudu Mazibuko, introduced a university bursary fund known as the Maiden's Bursary that specifically targeted virgin girls and women. The bursary in question would be paid out on condition that the women submit to a virginity test. Students who were found to no longer be virgins upon receiving the funding would have their bursary revoked (Chisale & Byrne, 2018; Mkasi and Rafudeen, 2016). In her defence, the mayor argued that the bursary fund was aimed at motivating young women to abstain from sexual activities and to remain virgins. She thus insisted that the bursary was geared towards decreasing the high HIV prevalence in KwaZulu-Natal and pregnancy rates among youth (Mkasi and Rafudeen, 2016). Similarly, in Uganda the Department of Health made efforts to curb the HIV pandemic by encouraging virginity testing and

incentivising young women who were found to be virgins with kitchen appliances (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). Moreover, scholars lament the fact that abstinence and chastity are regarded as a woman's responsibility whereas the boys are absolved of the blame. The arguments on testing boys for virginity is that for them it is challenging to near impossible to confirm that a boy is a virgin hence the focus is on young women and girls (Chisale-Byrne, 2018; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). This is coupled with the public chastisement that young women face if they are found to not be pure, resulting in some young women resorting to extreme measures to mimic the tester's findings of a hymen that is intact; such harmful practices Leclerc-Madlala (2003) found were young women inserting toothpaste into their vaginas while others inserted raw meat to mimic the tightness of the vagina. Ensuing from these discourses, scholars further emphasise the ways in which this practice impinges on young women's human rights as stipulated in the South African Bill of Rights and those of privacy and bodily integrity, including the right of control over one's body (Chisale & Byrne 2018; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Mubangizi, 2012; Mkasi & Rafudeen, 2016). Furthermore, in keeping with the legal framework, Mubangizi (2012) adds that the violation of young women's privacy is interpreted as a violation of the right to dignity, particularly in cases of the practice performed publicly which proffers indirect discrimination in cases of a 'negative' test result. Similarly, according to the Children's Rights Act stipulated in Section 12(4), virginity testing is prohibited and considered a violation of children's rights for those who are under the age of sixteen (Mubangizi, 2012).

Drawing on debates on the practice of virginity testing, scholars illuminate the disjuncture between South Africa's legal framework and traditional norms and practices, augmenting the contestations of politicians on this practice. Mkasi and Rafudeen (2016) cite the ANC Women's League as saying that the practice violates women's rights to bodily integrity, while the Democratic Alliance was reported as arguing for an investigation of the "constitutional soundness" (p.119) of the practice. The Gender Commission on Gender Equality is argued to have also condemned the practice, framing it as "discriminatory, invasive of privacy, unfair, impinging on the dignity of young girls and unconstitutional" (Mkasi & Rafudeen, 2016, p.120). At the same time espoused in the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 is citizen's rights to participation in "the cultural life of their choice" (1996, p.13). The critics of the practice acknowledge this but note the discordance between the practice of culture and individual rights to dignity. Nomagugu Ngobese of the Nomkhulwane culture and youth development organization is cited in Mkasi and

Rafudeen (2016) illuminating the tensions between the state's legal framework and tradition. She vehemently argued against the state's criminalisation and distortion of the practice as follows:

Enough is enough... We are sick and tired of being spoon-fed policies that were drafted without us that are destroying our society (2016, p.121).

In line with African feminist thinking, Nomagagu emphasises individuals' contexts that need to be borne in mind when certain cultural practices and ways of doing things are put in the spotlight as a means of demonising the everyday practices, particularly in modernised settings:

“We don't live alone, we live communally here ... Protecting children? They are creating laws that are destroying families” (Mkasi & Rafudeen, 2016, p.121).

A parent's frustration with the criminalization of the practice is cited in Mkasi and Rafudeen (2016) arguing against the government's interference in child rearing and cultural practices involving children as follows:

“We parents have been marginalised: I am not renting children owned by the government. If my ancestors tell me to do this [virginity testing], I can't argue with them” (Mrs. Luthuli, IRIN 2005 in Mkasi & Rafudeen, 2016, p.122).

Echoing the sentiments of the preceding speakers, Diallo (2004) emphasises that often it is the interests of women as opposed to motivations from men that are behind the sustenance of traditional practices that involve women's bodies. Building on this, Diallo adds that in some cases young women would be proponents of the practice of female circumcision even to the rejection of their parents (2004). As a result, African commentators cast a critical eye on western notions of African women's passive and oppressed sexual experiences and cultures and present African women as agentic subjects over their bodies and sexualities (Arnfred, 2015; Bakere-Yusuf, 2013; Diallo, 2004; Nzungwu, 2011), while taking care to avoid over-generalisations and essentialising of African cultures and women's sexual experiences. However, this is not to say that women's sexualities in Africa are not plagued by “violence, sexual epidemics, domination, mutilation and repression” (Bakare-Yusuf 2013, p.28) as already mentioned in earlier sections of the chapter. Given these insights, Vance (1984) eloquently illustrates the tensions with regard to women's sexualities and sexual freedoms. She continues that only speaking of women's pleasure and sexual satisfaction blurs women's negotiations of their sexualities within patriarchal spaces; however,

solely speaking on violent sexual intrusions into women's bodies disregards their sexual agency and at times sexual choice.

3.1.6 Female circumcision as African cultural heritage or a hindrance to women's sexual pleasure

Similar to virginity testing, Diallo (2004) describes and contextualises the practice of female circumcision in Mali as one led and performed by elderly women in the community known as the *magnonmakanw* and *bolokoli-kêlaw*. Augmenting the proponents of the practice of virginity testing, in their study Diallo found that the *magnonmakanw* and *bolokoli-kêlaw* supported female circumcision as empowerment for women for sexual agency, as opposed to western conceptions of the practice as mutilation (2004). In tandem, Arnfred (2015), in her contribution among women in Mozambique, found that embedded in the initiation schools for young women were skills on sexual empowerment and young women were educated on sexual agency and becoming experts in their sexual relationships. Arnfred highlights that sexual pleasure for both partners was highly emphasised, bearing in mind the goal of conception (2015). This 'holistic' approach to initiation entailed preparations of women's bodies for sexual activities, including the elongation of the labia minora as well as training on instruments to heighten the senses which ostensibly enhance sexual desire and pleasure. These instruments include the carving of body tattoos and strings of glass beads to be worn around women's hips as well as the use of erotic scents. These instruments ostensibly promote sexual desire as well as extended foreplay, and amplify meanings attached to this experience. Arnfred forwards the term "sexual capacity building" (Arnfred, 2015, p.152).

Returning to Diallo's (2004) introduction of the practice of female circumcision, it is described as a practice that is designed to regulate young women's sexualities and is prevalent in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa, both in urban and rural parts of the regions (Diallo, 2004; Dellenborg, 2004). This practice involves various methods of cutting of women's genitalia. One such method is the *sunna-circumcision* as outlined in Diallo (2004). It is the removal of the skin that covers the clitoris. The second method is referred to as clitoridectomy, commonly known as "excision" (p.174). This entails cutting some parts or the removal of the entire clitoris together with an incision in the labia minora (small lips of the female genitalia). Diallo (2004) further asserts that, given this, the practice has slowly begun to fade among adolescents and infants who are located in the city. This is coupled with the myth that the clitoris can bring harm to the young woman or her sexual partners (Diallo, 2004). Without taking away the trauma as well as the harmful effects of

the practice, including painful sexual experiences and dysfunctional genital organs (Dellenborg, 2004), interpreting the practice of female circumcision as mutilation is framed in Eurocentric thinking underpinned by scientific research lenses that locate women's sexual fulfilment and pleasure in the clitoris. Dellenborg (2004) supports this view and cites informal conversations with friends who participated in the practice of clitoridectomy and reported to have found sex pleasurable. For this reason, Ahmadu (2000) adds that it is a simplistic view that conceives of sexual pleasure based solely on biological anatomy. In line with African feminist and decolonial thinking, Dellenborg (2004) writes on the significance of the pluriversality of women's sexual experiences located in varying socio-cultural and historical contexts prior to overgeneralising circumcised African women's experiences of sex. Scientific research has appropriated the clitoris a principal role in women's achievement of orgasms (Dellenborg, 2004).

Thus, Dellenborg (2004) argues that conceptions of sexual pleasure are driven by cultural prescripts of what is entailed in pleasurable sex. Framing female circumcision as mutilation, Makundi (2009) presents some of women's motivations for participating in the practice, including socio-cultural and religious reasons as a form of spiritual cleanliness. It has been argued, however, that this practice pre-dates religion (Makundi, 2009), while in other regions it is classified as a rite of passage for young girls into womanhood. Makundi continues that for some young women the practice is significant for one's cultural identity and belonging (Makundi, 2009). Dellenborg (2004) supports this view citing women's social exclusion in some regions if she is discovered to be uncircumcised. The scholars' contributions in this work have demonstrated that studies of sexualities in Africa require reframing of implicit notions of male-domination and subjugated women that conceptualise men as sexual subjects and women as objects of male pleasure (Arnfred, 2015). In line with decolonial and post-colonial thinkers, this process is identified as dismantling and unlearning dominant ideas (Arnfred, 2015; Tamale, 2011).

3.2 Tracing the trajectories of South Africa's socio-political history

It has become commonplace to discuss the history of South Africa's people in tandem with the country's oppressive tumultuous socio-political shifts of colonialism followed by apartheid. For this study, I have confined myself to the debates on black women's embodied experiences of gender within the changing socio-political climates. This section of the chapter will trace

researchers, political analysts and scholars' analyses of the advent of Afrikaner nationalism, apartheid and the subsequent fall of apartheid as well as the emergence of African nationalism as a response to the oppressive state. Given that it is impractical to list all the laws enacted in the advancement of the apartheid agenda, I will limit my analysis to the laws that bore significance to women's organising and movements against apartheid legislation and laws that impinged on women's economic independence. Some of the scholars that are cited in this work qualify black women's planning and organising of the marches against unjust apartheid laws and exposed their understanding of their daily experiences within the oppressive intersecting concepts of race, gender, colonialism and apartheid while also contextualising their struggles to their communities (Gasa, 2007). Before proceeding to outline the debates on women's resistance struggles against oppressive state managers, of interest here is the exploration of the meanings of apartheid, its advent and reasons for its existence. Clark and Worger (2013) submit that the term 'apartheid' was constructed from the Afrikaans and Dutch language, loosely translated as "apartness" (Clark & Worgerp.3), thus signifying a policy of separation of people either by race, place of residence or place of work. It is important to note that apartheid's racial discrimination policy was spearheaded by the National Party (NP) government in 1948, reproducing the discriminatory policies employed by their predecessors in the constitution of the Union of South Africa in the year 1909 (Clark & Worger, 2013; Welsh, 2015). The constitution in question succeeded although not without resistance from black Africans and other activists. The movements of 'non-white' races were regulated and controlled through the legislation that was coined the Natives (Urban Areas) Act in the year 1923, and advanced in 1948 as the pass law (Welsh, 2015). The pass law legislation by its design was constructed to enforce influx control, which is the regulation of the number of Africans residing and working in urban areas (Wells, 1983). Within the space of racial discrimination, as Clark and Worger (2013) among others have observed, the design of apartheid was to accentuate the importance of Afrikaner nationalism and identity and to distinguish the Afrikaner nation from the European English speakers. Moreover, with regard to keeping the purity of the Afrikaner nation, Afrikaner women played pivotal roles as their sexuality was utilised within the nationalist iconography for the reproduction and maintenance of the white race (McClintock, 1995; Ratele, 2009). It is at this juncture that I engage gender and sexuality within the context of politics and nationalist discourses.

3.2.1 *The making of gender and sexuality in nationalist iconographies*

Afrikaner nationalism

The process of apartheid has become synonymous with Afrikaner nationalism with its emergence in the ruling National party (NP). In order to appeal to solidarity in the Afrikaner nation of the 1940s the party adopted the values and ideologies embedded in Afrikaner nationalism (Welsh, 2015). Welsh explains further that the construction of these principles was fashioned and instilled by the NP together with the Dutch Reformed Church and the Afrikaner *Broederbond*, thus explicitly embodying masculinised nationalism. To explore the makings and phallographic nature of nationalisms in South Africa, I turn to (but not limited to) the following scholars; Lewis (2009), McClintock (1995), McFadden (1992), Musila (2009), Mohanty et al. (1991), Nagel (1998), Ratele (2009) and Yuval-Davis (2003). In keeping with discourses on domesticity in nationalist projects, McClintock (1995) argues that the origins of the Afrikaner tradition were gender biased and, subsequently, became synonymous with white male interests. Yuval-Davis (2003) advances the argument and identifies culture as an additional element in nationalist projects. She alludes to the Afrikaner *Broederbond* movement, constructed to garner a sense of pride in the culture and heritage of the Afrikaner nation. The movement attempted to achieve its objectives through the *Federasie van Afrikaner Kultuurorganisasies* (Federation of Afrikaner Cultural Organisations, FAK). FAK organised Afrikaans music examinations, composed folksongs and set up Afrikaner art exhibitions to remind the Afrikaner nation of their genealogy. In this context language served as a unifying base to encourage Afrikaans speakers to invest in their own organisations and banks such as SANLAM (South African National Life Assurance Company) and SANTAM (South African National Trust and Assurance Company Limited), (Clark & Worger, 2011). The significance of the Afrikaner language was further amplified through religion. Protecting the Afrikaner culture came to represent the “essence” (p.11) of the Afrikaner nation (Yuval-Davis, 2003). By its design and construction the *Broederbond* movements fostered constructions of the ‘other’. The ‘other’ in a South African context referred to nations categorised as non-white and non-Afrikaner speakers (Yuval-Davis, 2003). Reprising Yuval-Davis’ (2003) contribution, Clark and Worger (2013) highlight that for Afrikaner nationalism the Afrikaans language embodied notions of ethnicity and a distinguishing feature from other white people, in particular the English speakers. Moodie (1975, as cited in Clark & Worger, 2013) powerfully captures this point and enlists one of the *Broederbond* leader’s assertions as follows;

...we are here concerned with our highest and holiest ethnic concerns, for defence of language means in the nature of the case defence of the People, because it means the cultivation and confirmation of national consciousness, national pride, national calling, and national destiny (p.29).

Moreover, Greenfield (1992) theorises that at the foundation of all nations lies the most common principle, which is the nation's perceptions of the superiority of their nation in comparison to other nations. Yuval-Davis (2003) concurs and describes an additional dimension to nationalist projects, which is the racial group's false sense of specific origin including shared blood and genes as contributors to the exclusionary nature of the notions of the nation. It is at this juncture that scholars theorise the emergence of sexuality into nationalist ideologies and discourses. In similar vein, Ratele's (2009) contribution analyses the making of whiteness and its maintenance in South Africa as initiated by the apartheid government through laws and legislation aimed at the prevention of miscegenation among different races. Central to this discourse, scholars critically analyse the diverse ways that morality entered nationalist projects and discourses and women's positionalities in the construction of nations. In the case of South Africa, sexual acts between different races were restricted and institutionalised through the legislation of the Immorality Act (Musila, 2009; Nagel, 1998; Ratele, 2009). Ratele (2009) adds that it was through social stigma and legislation that sexualities became centralised in Afrikaner nationalism, aiding the apartheid state's agenda to regulate people's sexualities and restrict the social lives of the nation, albeit without success as reported in Ratele's investigation on various cases of interracial relationships and marriages between different races (2009). In fact, Mohanty et al. (1991) argue that the authority and identity of colonial projects were dependent on the sexualisation and racialisation of morality, thus positioning morality as the "practice of the power to punish" (p.139). Mohanty et al. (1991) further explain that practices falling outside of the oppressive state managers' purview, as in the case of miscegenation in apartheid South Africa, require policing by legislative means (Mohanty et al., 1991). Furthermore, women's lauded titles as mothers of the nation in the fatherland, their sexualities and sexual behaviours, became of prime interest to nationalist projects. Within nationalist iconographies women's purity became highly emphasised as the embodiment of family and national honour (Nagel, 1998). In this case, as Nagel observes, the men's honour becomes tied to women's sexuality, her respectability and shame (1998).

Ensuing from these discourses are the roles of women as boundary markers symbolising the “iconography of race and gender purity” (McClintock, 1995, p.377). McClintock avers that sexual purity became a dominant metaphor for racial, economic and political power (1995). Within the Afrikaner nationalism iconography, as alluded to earlier, white women’s prime responsibility was to remain sexually clear from sexual relations with other men so as to not destabilise the white superiority ideology and jeopardise their privileges, such as the claim to whiteness if she is associated with a race other than the white race (Ratele, 2009). To this end, Bawa (2018) asserts that nationalism discourses in post-colonial states have contributed to the destruction of women’s modes of sexual expressions and desires. Nagel (1998) refines the connections between women’s respectability and women’s sexual behaviours as analogous to shaming of the family, nation and most importantly the men folk. Below, Davis and Anthias (1989, p.7) summed up some of the core principle ways that need to be borne in mind when considering women’s gendered constructed roles in nationalist ideologies:

- As biological reproducers of the members of national collectivities;
- As reproducers of boundaries of national groups (through restrictions on sexual or marital relations);
- As active transmitters and producers of national culture;
- As symbolic signifiers of national difference; and
- As active participants in national struggles.

Musila argues in a similar vein to preceding scholars that nationalist projects and movements are borne out of “masculinised memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinised hope” (2009, p.43). Describing masculinised notions of the nationalist iconography, Musila (2009) points out what she observes as an apparent characteristic of gendered constructions of nations, one that positions the nation as either female or the land, and the state signifying and represented as either ruler or male. That is to say, these are scripts in which these entrenched gendered roles are predominantly inscribed by men, for men, and about men. They feature women by design as supporting actors whose roles reflect the masculine notions of femininity regarding women’s rightful place in the nationalism discourse (Nagel, 1998). McClintok (1995) reprises scholars that nations are commonly imagined through the iconography of the family and domestic space, for instance, Winnie Mandela was honoured as South Africa’s ‘Mother of the Nation’ and Mariam

Makeba was revered for her title as ‘Mama Afrika’, while in the Afrikaner iconography of nation women were reserved the title of *Volksmoeder* (McClintock, 1995; Musila, 2009). However, Gqola (2017) writes about the ways in which ¹Winnie Mandela rejected the burden of the symbolism of wifehood and motherhood in the nationalist iconography. She argues that Winnie Mandela failed the expectation of a dutiful wife as embodied in heroic nationalism, as her past is marred with murder and adultery. Below, Gqola (2017) alludes to the challenge that women’s bodies and sexualities pose to nationalist agendas and stereotypic roles for women:

“...Flesh and blood women pose a problem for nationalism since such women are interested in lives that are more than symbolic” (p.153).

Putting it differently, Boehmer (2005) makes the observation that the dominance of mother images within the socio-political domain in contexts of nationalism are an apparent expression of respect for mothers, presumably nurtured by social attitudes across different cultures. Within the national iconographies, McClintock (1995) and Boehmer (1995) shed light on gender disparities among men and women. The scholars reveal that men occupied the element of time that is future-focused and linked with change and progress; in contrast, women occupied static positions that were linked with the past and tradition. In addition, Boehmer (2005) attempts to make sense of the construction of sexual difference and concludes that this difference is connected to “symbol-making and signifying practices” (p.23). As an example, she offers the metaphors embedded in everyday nationalist expressions such as; “motherland” and “mother tongue”. Here the image of mother offers connotations of “birth, home, roots and nature” (Boehmer, 2005, p.23). At the heart of scholars’ arguments is gender and sexuality as organising principles in most nationalist projects. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the emergence and the subsequent construction of African nationalism was not exempted from the *phallogratic* nationalist iconographies emerging as a response to racial subjugation. The section that follows attempts to shed light on divergent scholars’ and political commentators’ debates on the genealogy of *phallogratic* nationalist

¹Winnie Mandela is reported to have had an affair with activist Dali Mpofu and other lovers while Nelson Mandela was incarcerated. She was also found guilty in 1991 for Stompie Seipei’s kidnapping and for being an accessory to his assault and subsequently leading to his death (Saba, 2018).

iconography in the context of South Africa and to further examine the ways in which African nationalist organisational structures became gender contested spaces.

African nationalism

In McFadden's (1992) insight, African nationalism is masculinist, and a male-constructed space rooted in patriarchal ideology in which women are cast as symbols and as bearers of the nation. She further advances the argument in tracing the genealogies of nationalist organisations in South Africa and points to the fact that males dominated leadership roles; in her analysis she highlights the masculinised organisations as, namely; the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the Unity Movement, and the Black Consciousness Movement (McFadden, 1992). Ginwala (1990), augmenting McFadden (1992), observed the masculinised nature of the organisations and subsequent exclusion of women's leadership roles within the ANC. She articulates the exclusion of women as expected given the era in which these organisations were formed. In her observation, she states as follows;

“The societies from which the white settlers originated and the indigenous societies they encountered in South Africa were male-dominated and patriarchal. In 1912, throughout South Africa, government and politics were generally considered to be within the exclusive province of men, and all women, black and white, were denied the franchise” (p.57).

Within the space of masculinised liberation movements, Magaziner (2011) quotes Ramphele, a political activist and a woman in the Black Consciousness Movement, as saying that being part of the movement in her view the aspiration was to be accepted as, “one of the boys” (Magaziner, 2011, p.48). Moodley (1993) declares that Black Consciousness contains limited literature on women within the movement, while consistently accentuating the contributions of the male ‘heroes’ and founding fathers of the movement such as Steve Biko, Harry Nengwekhulu and Barney Pityana. However, in recent years, Biko's supporters have worked hard to preempt the critiques against the movement (Magaziner, 2011). In Biko's defence, Kunnie (as cited in Magaziner, 2011) explicitly states that Biko, as with most of the freedom fighters, was a product of a different period, implying that, had he lived in contemporary times, he would have interrogated women's subordinated positions in society. Magaziner (2011) argues that we should rest in the notion that, had some of the liberation movement leaders lived in contemporary times, their views on gender equality would have fit into present day concerns. Ly (2014) brings to the fore that,

within the liberation movement groups, it was common for the male members to regress to entrenched hierarchical and oppressive patriarchal attitudes in their relationships with the women cadres. In other words, at the forefront of liberation movements were issues of race and class.

Centring the South African movements specifically was the liberation of the black race, contributing to subsequent delays in the politics of gender equality (Geisler, 2004). Osman (2014) illuminates that one of the main worries of military commanders about including women in combat military units has been that their presence will interfere with the male attachments, which are the core of military performance. Reportedly, in the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape) liberation movement, patriarchal male ideologies were frequently supported when some of the women fighters were perceived to be displaying signs of physical weaknesses on the frontlines (Ly, 2014). In the context of the African National Congress military force, namely, MK (Mkhonto Wesizwe), Cock (1991) identifies the organisation as a site for the maintenance of hierarchical ideologies of gendered roles. Cock (1991) as well as McFadden (1992) reveal instances of sexual harassment and rape on female combatants by senior male staff members and if the women fell pregnant they were treated more severely in comparison to the male partner. In an attempt to understand contemporary post-colonial women's embodied experiences of gender and sexuality within contexts of nationalism and nation-building discourses, the section that follows explores femininities and masculinities embedded in nationalist discourses and liberation movements.

3.2.2 The politics of gender: Femininities and masculinities within the liberation movements

Within the space of the cult of domesticity and masculinist national 'empires', McFadden's (1992), premise rests on the notion that politics within African culture became synonymous with a male sphere, thus, when resistance against colonialism emerged, it was taken for granted that it was a male responsibility. Such movements were led by the traditional leadership made up of chiefs and male elders (McFadden, 1992; Suttner, 2004). Elder men undertook the senior positions within the organisational structures as they were assumed to have obtained the necessary wisdom to rule over others (McFadden, 1992). Undergirding the maintenance and construction of community within nationhood are masculinist and militaristic ideologies, evident in expressions such as; 'honour', 'patriotism', 'cowardice', 'bravery' and 'duty' (Nagel, 1998, pp.251-252). McFadden (1992) concedes in arguing that men who lead or have led nationalist organisations are deeply entrenched

in the socialisation through patriarchal traditions of African patriarchy and the socialisation of sexist norms that relegate women into subordinate positions within the domestic space.

Echoing African people's socialisation and the tradition and cultural influence on gendered disparities between women and men, augmenting McFadden (1992), Ngcongco (1993) in her study of middleclass African women concludes and highlights that a good and respectable traditional woman within an African culture is one who occupies the subordinate role of caretaker for her families' domestic needs, one who allows her husband to make major decisions for the family. Attempting to act and think independently was observed as a sign that she was treading on male territory (Ngcongco, 1993). Ngcongco makes the provocative statement that within African culture and tradition allocation of tasks between boys and girls sets the precedent for contemporary gender inequalities between genders (1993). Furthermore, she concludes in asserting that women's liberation interests often clash with concepts of a good woman, as in African traditional setting the man leads and the woman follows (Ngcongco, 1993). Parallel to Ngcongco's (1993) findings, Ramphele (1989) observed in her study in African male hostels located in Cape Town, South Africa housing women and children that socio-political aspects played a pivotal role in subverted gender relations among men and women in the hostels. She further explained in her findings that the ideology of the concept of family and tradition served as a central site of men's domination of women and subsequently women's subordination. Ramphele (1989) further theorises that black males' social relations with women revealed males' patriarchal fragile egos as they mirrored their experiences of subjugation at the hands of the apartheid government, reinforcing the appeal to tradition as a means to legitimate practices which are ostensibly vital to African culture (Ramphele, 1989). Moreover, Lugones (2007) along with other decolonial and post-colonial thinkers discussed in chapter 2 frame the gendered differences as colonial constructions. She explains further that within the colonial context a woman's position is less than that of the man; her role is constructed as an important tool for the reproduction of the race. She further concludes in her latest work that in this modern or colonial gender system women's liberation is obscured (Lugones, 2010). It is somewhat unfortunate that the African nationalism iconography and liberation movements as well as other post-colonial African states continue to be entrenched in the prevailing colonial and imperialist governors' primitive and oppressive patriarchal gender principles. It is thus

Amadiume's (2001) contention that at the end of the struggle the progressive gender equality promises waged by African women and men of the liberation struggle and movements were broken, given women's current socio-political status in contemporary Africa. Coinciding well with the preceding scholars, Boehmer (2005) adds that, instead of radical gender transformation, the post-colonial independence resembles more of a take-over from the colonial administration. She affirms that the ostensible take-over offers an explanation of the strong patriarchal underpinnings of nationalist ideologies that have continued well into liberation and revolutionary movements (2005). Nkenkana (2015) adds that black leaders substituted the white ones. Thus, an argument can be put forward that equal futures for women in Africa will only be possible if there are changes in the systems and structures that do not perpetuate colonial thinking. Perhaps, this is attributed to the fact that it is the patriarchal male that shape and defined the meanings of their nationhood on behalf of "their people" (p.32), imagining the nation as a family arrangement in which the leaders occupied positions of authority as fathers akin to the maternal national entity (Boehmer, 2005). It is in this way, as Boehmer (2005) argue, that the revolutionary and liberation movements precluded black African women's full emancipation even with women's participation in politics. Ginwala (1990) rightly argues that the African nationalist leaders and liberation organisations adopted their predecessors' leadership approach and acted in a manner that would be deemed appropriate by white people, taking care to not isolate the white people. Augmenting Boehmer (2005), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) together with Ndlovu (2014) argue that the colonial tools with which the imperialists constructed Africa continue to plague the continent and are emulated by African leaders whom women have trusted to fight for not only the liberation of Africa but women's full emancipation as well. In other words, as Boehmer (2005) declares, nationalisms have demonstrated their reliance on the formative structures of their predecessors comprising of formations of a patriarchal family. In her analysis Boehmer observed that in former colonised as well as European states the nations were reared within contexts of the bourgeois family that was delineated by the identification of the home as a private and feminine space, with hierarchical structuring of the family as supposedly a natural structure. To conclude, Boehmer (2005) suggestively states that the notion of privileging mother symbols has not translated into the reality of empowering mothers. She continues that, instead, nationalism(s) became greatly entrenched and re-enshrined in the authority of 'fathers' and 'sons'.

3.2.3 *“The heroic female project”*

In spite of the oppressive patriarchal political spaces in which women found themselves, they did not become passive victims of their circumstances. Instead, they struggled for the rights of the black race, including the rights of women, and were triumphant in their actions. Aniekwu (2006) puts forward that African women have always challenged the unequal intersecting relationships that exist within their environments. These include cultural, racial, political and economic crises. Similarly, Anthony and Sylvester (2014) refer to ample evidence throughout the slavery and colonial era bearing testimony of African people continuously attempting to assert themselves and to break loose from colonial structures, including the use of silence as a mode of resistance. In a similar vein, Motsemme (2004) points to South African women’s use of silence as a means of both resisting and critiquing the oppressive apartheid state. She locates this in women’s conduct in their quotidian lives, manoeuvring within constrained spaces amidst terror and violence meted out against black bodies and refusing to succumb to the state’s harassment on the whereabouts of family members. Ramphela (2000) together with Mostemme (2004) extol women’s abilities to create and maintain an illusion of calm in their homes and communities amidst the persistent apartheid state’s violence against black people, including the patriarchal structures within the home, as a means of affirming the manhood of their male partners. This takes into account the nature of the iconography of nationalist projects as alluded to earlier in which the homeland is fashioned in the image of a woman or mother and the men constructed as protectors and defenders of the women and children of the nation (Yuval-Davis, 2003). Divergent to the positioning of women into ‘motherisms’ in national projects, Suttner (2004) points to the fact that this flies in the face of considerable numbers of young African women who joined the Mkhonto Wesizwe (MK) army which entailed working underground and waging war against the apartheid state. In this way, as Suttner suggests, the young women disrupted notions of the “heroic male project” (p.20) embarking on heroic activities to serve and fight for the oppressed black nation (Suttner, 2004). He cautions, however, that is not to say that the women were at times not subjected to ‘traditional’ feminine roles such as occupying the roles of typists for the organisation and performing roles of caretakers, such as ‘feeding’ fellow male members of the organisation (Suttner, 2004). Although they were not directly involved in combat, this does not take away from the fact that the women occupied and fulfilled important roles in a number of components within the organisation, such as planning and reconnaissance.

Suttner (2004) alludes to the threatening gender disparities among women and the men in combat, in ways that women had to negotiate their femininities in a masculine dominated space, for example, in contexts where women's femininity was called into question in cases where they performed tasks better than men or during weekends where women adorned themselves in feminine clothing, rousing male combatants' resentment and framing women's expressions of femininity as provocative (Suttner, 2004). Chris Hani, however, Commander-in-Chief in the MK organisation, in his inclusion of women in similar training as the males condemned the gendered stereotypical ideologies of femininity roles and insisted that women received equal training as the men as reported by some members of the MK organisation (Suttner, 2004). Nagel's (1998) provocation is then fitting that men and women's positionalities in nationalist politics are a major site for fulfilling the masculinity agenda. The most relevant for the purposes of this study are women's resistances to oppression. I am reminded of Tamale's (1996) contribution where she correctly asks questions pertinent to the purpose of this study regarding women's motivations to struggle or to resist publicly against oppression in cases of both colonial and post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa. In her contribution she attempts to locate answers to the following critical questions that have come to shape this chapter;

“Under what circumstances did African women decide to resist domination? How do African women conceptualise when they have been wronged and how do they then construct a sense of entitlement in their claim for rights and in challenging formal authority?” (p.6).

With what emerges in the case of South African women in the apartheid era, Ginwala (1990) describes women's resistance as starting from the grassroots – issues that disrupt the activities of their quotidian lives that may present negative implications for financial independence for themselves and their families. Ginwala (1990) eloquently points out that, while all black Africans were conquered subjects of colonial rule, women's experiences differed from those of men in terms of their political, economic, and legal status. It is noteworthy that under apartheid laws black women were considered legal minors to men. Augmenting Ginwala (1990), Tamale (1996) accentuates the point that the motivation behind struggles against injustice are shaped by such lenses as gender, social class, lifestyle and educational level. She thus maintains that threats posed to women's abilities to maintain their families propelled them to take militant and political action.

Not surprisingly, these differences formed the nature of women's struggles and responses to oppressive state laws and legislation (Ginwala, 1990).

Ginwala underscores that it was relatively easy to garner support to mobilise from other women who shared similar struggles (1990). Critical to women's struggles and subsequent marches, as discussed below, were complaints of high rental fees, bus fares and police harassment with regards to the pass-laws, thus epitomising the feminist tenant of the personal as political (Ginawala, 1990; Mkhize, 2000; Pillay, 1999; Zwane, 2000). As a result, Gasa (2007) argues that women's anti-pass law marches need not be viewed in the context of national liberation but in contexts of struggling for the public space. The legislation and sanctions imposed on the black race adversely impacted black people's economic means in which women bore the burden of financial care for the families rather than the men. This exacerbated both rural and urban women's plans to organise and march against the injustices of the legislations (Pillay, 1999). Evidence shows women's struggles against unjust apartheid laws, namely the pass law, begun as early as 1898 (Wells, 1983). For this study I limited my exploration to the beer hall protests and the pass laws, respectively.

3.2.4 A summary of women's protests

3.2.5 Pass law protests

Women's resistance and revolt against oppressive states' regulation and control of their movements and livelihood are reported to have begun in 1913 in the Orange Free State (Bloemfontein) where women protested against the legislation of pass laws. In response to women's protests the government relaxed the pass laws on women (Wells, 1983). However, in the 1950s women lost the battle against the pass laws as the first passes in 1956 were issued to African women who resided in small towns and rural areas (Wells, 1983). Once again, the women revolted against the unjust legislation of passes. Their resistance campaigns were mainly centred on the notion of the identification process as an insult to women's dignity and motherhood. Exacerbating women's anti-pass movements were fears of random police arrests and physical brutality, including the inconvenience of overnight detention in the search for the correct identity documents. Following this, women further resisted the state's legislation of classifying women as legal minors under the law, thus subjecting women to male dominance (Wells, 1983). Driven by the preceding struggles, Gasa (2007) demonstrates that women were far from being passive subjects of

oppression. She also asserts that the women of the 1950s defied both the apartheid state and the males of the liberation movements as they embarked on one of South Africa's most iconic marches on the 9th of August 1956 in which they were at the forefront of critiquing the apartheid government's unjust laws.

Echoing scholars' observations on masculinised African nationalism throughout this chapter, Zwane (2000) observes that women received limited support from their male counterparts within the National Congress, as politics were purported to be a male sphere. In addition, Lewis (2009) explains that women utilising their bodies as rebellion against oppressive power structures can be viewed as a political statement as it disrupts the foundations of hegemonic oppressive regimes. Furthermore, Goldblatt and Meintjies (1996) and Zwane (2000) draw attention to women's organising initiatives which drew from different races, trade unions and various political organisations to construct an only female organisation aimed at addressing the need to 'talk back' at the injustices faced by women as well as paying close attention to women's rights. The scholars highlight that these discussions assisted in the formulation of the *Federation of South African Women* (FEDSAW) in 1953 (Goldblatt & Meintjies, 1996; Zwane, 2000). Zwane (2000) highlights that not all the women within FEDSAW were involved in pass law demonstrations but succeeded in organising women in the communities to form alliances on similar struggles. It is noteworthy that in the absence of a general strategy for resistance and with the banning of the members the women's anti-pass campaign diminished in the pace it had begun with, resulting in African women grudgingly accepting the passes. The organisation succeeded, however, in its efforts to construct a communion among women who shared similar struggles (Wells, 1983; Zwane, 2000).

3.1.7 Liquor and homebrew protests

In a similar way, legislative sanctions on brewing of beer by Africans in urban areas proved yet another financial hurdle and a threat to black women's economic independence. The Natal Beer Act No 23 of 1908 was authorised by municipalities providing licences to Africans to sell and manufacture beer within their located towns. Zwane (2000) explains that provision of the licence to brew was issued under specific conditions that applicants had to adhere to, one of them being that an applicant had to provide proof of sufficient and honest means of livelihood. However, the decision by the town council to build municipal beer halls in the townships and make home brewing illegal ignited women's anger and led to subsequent protests as it presented a threat to

women's livelihood and independence (Zwane, 2000). Similarly, scholars observe that beer brewing afforded women opportunities to control and maintain their finances (Mkhize, 2012; Pillay, 2000; Zwane, 2000).

In spite of the choke-hold of the beer brewing bans, the women defied the laws and continued to manufacture and sell beer in their homes, more so because restrictions on beer brewing impinged on African people's ways of traditional expression and also intensified African people's economic challenges, particularly those of women (Mkhize, 2012; Zwane, 2000). It is against the background of women's dissatisfaction with beer brewing, liquor raids and harassment by police in women's homes, poverty and influx control legislation that the women of Natal decided to organise and protest in 1959 (Mkhize, 2012). Pillay (1999) along with Mkhize (2012) describe how, armed with sticks, cane knives and hatchets, the women marched to the municipal beer-hall in Cato-Manor intending to prevent African men from purchasing beer. In a similar vein, the women proceeded to present their grievances to the Mayor of Durban. Similar to their urban counterparts, rural women's socio-economic conditions continued to worsen, resulting in women's revolt against the government's policies on land shortage issues; "betterment schemes, cattle culling, cattle dipping and influx control" (p.66), which the women perceived to be the cause of high levels of poverty in their communities (Mkhize, 2012). Sadly, women lost their 'fight' for economic independence as the municipal officials and the police continued to arrest women who brewed beer in their homes. This led to women losing significant means of generating income (Zwane, 2000). Pillay (1999) critically analyses the central concept of Natal women's movements as Zulu women's assertion of their place publicly and in politics, defying the Natal code of Native law that enshrined women's subordinate status to men. Moreover, the apartheid state's 'victory' over the lives of the oppressed was to be short-lived. This was exacerbated by the economic pressures and the country's weak economic growth, proving that its nationalistic economy was unviable. This was compounded by violent countrywide protests leading to international sanctions and isolation. This loosened the 'grip' of the apartheid government over the country and its people and led to the subsequent collapse of the apartheid state (DeJager, 2015).3.2 A glance at the ANC's transformation from a liberation movement to a (ruling) political party

With the collapse of apartheid and the negotiation process between the NP (National Party) and the ANC (African National Congress) for a smooth transition came the 'birth' of the democratic

nation and transformation after the elections of 1994 with the ANC in the majority under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. Racial equality was promoted under the 'rainbow' nation and nation building initiatives by the ruling party birthed the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) that was designed to 'help' the nation to heal and work towards forgiveness and building 'one-nation'.

Describing democracy in South Africa, Southall (2003) points out that political leaders affix democracy on electoralism, which does not translate into actual transformation and socio-economic difference for ordinary South African people. In fact, Southall argues that the notion of equating democracy with capitalism remains unregulated, thus leading to the widening of inequality gaps among the country's citizens, such as higher rates of unemployment, low educational status and limited access to quality healthcare (Southall, 2003). Southall (2003) further argues that the electoral democracy stood to be viewed as a signifier of a "better life for all" (p.29) as espoused in the ANC slogan, yet it remains a disappointment to the country's disadvantaged groups. For the betterment of the people's lives, Southall (2003) suggests that the parties need to address the structural problems in the country. However, this may prove implausible. Arian and Barnes (1974, in de Jager & du Toit, 2013) observe that dominant party systems are ones in which strategic political decisions are made by the party elite and frequently to serve their interests. Manji (2019) illustrates the value of 'ordinary' people who Southall (2003) affirms are not reaping the rewards of liberation. Manji continues that these are the very people who helped to overthrow the oppressive state's power and constructed and informed the movements for national liberation in South Africa until the year 1994. Echoing scholars' observations cited in this work, Manji (2019) correctly points out that the struggle for the people's liberation in Africa was undergirded by daily encounters and struggles against oppression and dehumanisation by the colonial governors closely followed by apartheid rulers. Furthermore, Manji affirms that modernisation has been reduced to solely developing the infrastructure of capitalism allowing for the effective integration of former colonies into the world capitalist economy. The concept of development has efficiently provided an implicit barrier to progress (Manji, 2019).

Central to Manji's interpretation is the argument that it is imperial reasoning to propagate the notion of development as a panacea to all the problems that are plaguing Africa today. Sithole (2015) problematises that the thinking behind development is a call from outside of Africa located

in the template of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for development and propagating the notion that anything outside of these instruments does not qualify as development. This leads to Good's (2002) assertion that the liberal model of democracy is in itself flawed, and as a result is failing to meet the needs of Southern Africa's people. Good further argues that when political leaders elect to utilise this type of model, wherein political decisions in their entirety rely on the act of citizens' voting in cyclical election seasons, his cautionary note is that it is in this way that elitism and inequalities begin to thrive in a country such as South Africa (Good, 2002). Southall supports Good's view. He highlights the importance of citizens' votes for politicians but cautions that the act of voting for politicians and democracy itself is an inadequate act in terms of the empowerment of citizens and poses a challenge in regulating the elite whose motives are self-serving, as the very act of elections is to serve their interests and provide room for capitalism to thrive (Southall, 2014). Southall reproves that the brief actions of voting and tallying votes are susceptible to abuse either in the west or in Africa (2014).

In addition, the broad thrust of Southall's (2014) analysis lies in problematising the structural issues adopted by post-liberation governments with specific focus on the ANC as a political party. In their analysis both Southall (2014) and Good (2000) adopt two approaches in analysing the ANC and other liberation movements in Africa and their transition from national liberation movements to political parties in an electoral democracy, namely the dominant party approach and what he coins the *Fanonesque* perspective in Southern African contexts. The *Fanonesque* perspective draws on decolonial thinking, inspired by the prescient teachings of Frantz Fanon.

Southall (2014), however, adds a cautionary note that examining the ANC under the lenses of the preceding perspectives, proves unsatisfactory as the debates are solely based on the ANC and other national liberation movements (NLMs) and their national structures as opposed to examining all structures of governance, such as those at municipal and provincial levels. Divergent to Southall's caution, de Jager and du Toit (2013) suggest that the perspectives, particularly the dominant perspective as outlined in their contribution, provide a guide as to where as a country we are headed considering the given the atrocities experienced by the people of Zimbabwe under Mugabe's government, previously a NLM too. The dominant party system aptly describes the current ruling party (ANC) for reasons that, within a democratic setting, it reaps the benefits of continuous support from the majority of voters, regardless of its failure to implement effective service

delivery, its mismanagement of funds, its corruption and various other factors that would lead to the demise of any other political party (de Jager & du Toit, 2013). Likewise, I am submitting that it is useful to analyse the NLMs, in particular the ANC, through the *Fanonesque* perspective which is decolonial in nature, as it is through the decolonial lens that the study locates itself.

3.2.5 The dominant party approach

The ANC and other Southern African NLMs, according to de Jager and du Toit (2013), have earned their positions as dominant parties due to their involvement in significant historical revolutionary and liberation events and due to the maintenance of their governments in democratic regimes over extended periods. For these reasons, the parties are able to maintain their dominant positions as voters are more inclined to keep these parties in dominant positions as they brought the subordinated nations from subjugation to liberation. The parties' continued discourses on past revolutionary events also help to amass loyalty from voters (de Jager and du Toit, 2014). Seepe (2007) assigns this to shared identity, wherein those who experienced the atrocities under the apartheid rulers equate the ANC political party with emancipation and with human dignity. With the passing of generations, the scholars argue that, to maintain their dominance, these parties utilise varying political mechanisms to prompt and ensure voter loyalty (de Jager and du Toit, 2014). This became evident in the ANC's elections in the past years in its target of young voters by covertly enlisting popular celebrities' endorsements and gimmicks on most social media networks. As an example, the then acting president, Cyril Ramaphosa, can be seen in a video calling popular celebrities with significant social media following prior to the election to 'discuss' the importance of voting.

Good (2000) provides a sombre outlook on the operations of the dominant party system within the current South African context. Making reference to both South Africa and Namibia, Good (2000) observes that parliamentary inspection on executives as inscribed in the countries' constitutions have subsequently been nullified due to the dominance of ruling parties which, Good argues, function in a hierarchical and controlled manner. Good further observes that the centralisation and concentration of power of promotion within the presidency promotes autocracy, as demonstrated by some of the presidents' sense of indispensability. Good continues to include limited effectiveness and being accountable, creating a fertile ground for corruption and wasteful expenditure and proceeding unrestrained (2002). Good brings to the fore that in the dominant

approach the media are frequently regulated and in some cases intimidated, including the independent institutions that are established to enforce government compliance and restraint. They are purported to be weakened by the government. Southall (2014) positions the ANC within the dominant approach and makes the observation that the ANC has manifested itself as unaccountable in spite of its electoral majority in the polls, and thus Southall positions the ANC as posing a threat to democracy. In addition, Southall (2014) rests his argument on the notion that the ANC's extended centralisation of power ostensibly leads to abuse that only the presence of opposition parties can prevent by way of presenting themselves as alternative governments. Southall powerfully claims that the presence of alternative parties is required as the ruling government has become elitist, paying less attention to the ideology of democracy and is more focused on self-enrichment. As an example, Southall (2014) observes the South African government's complicity in their failure to intervene on the citizens' plight on human rights and constitutional violations in neighbouring countries, particularly countries such as Zimbabwe.

The South African political leaders stand accused of colluding with former President Robert Mugabe's government's violation of the people of Zimbabwe's rights. Southall (2014) argues that it reveals the African political leaders' collusion with the former president's abuse of power and violation of human rights of the citizens. Despite evidence by local and global observers, pointing to the Zimbabwean election as rigged, the African official observer groups and governments proceeded to declare the election as 'free and fair', and the ANC further congratulated the people of Zimbabwe for an effective election period - "This coming from the same government that only a few years ago was calling for international solidarity with the struggle for democracy in South Africa" (Southall, 2014, p.323). It is against the preceding arguments that Southall (2014) suggests that the ANC has effectively cast off its national liberation movement make-up and has abandoned its transformative ideology, as underpinned by the Fanonesque perspective below.

3.2.6 Fanonesque perspective

Southall (2014) articulates the perspective that those individuals who have been discouraged by the outcomes of the liberation struggles gravitate towards Frantz Fanon's prescient warnings and decolonial meditations. In what follows, Southall suggests very strongly that by virtue of their embrace of capitalism, South Africa's leaders have presented a disheartening picture of "false decolonisation" (p.334), dissipating what Southall phrases as a prospect of "world historic

proportions” (p.334). Scholars such as Manji (2019), Saul (2008) and Southall (2014) offer a Fanonesque description of nationalist leaders’ sell-out of the revolution through capitalism and development in order to occupy positions and live comfortably within neo-colonialism (Southall, 2014). Manji (2019) argues that blame cannot be placed solely on colonialism and imperialism for what has occurred after the independence of African states. Manji locates the responsibility for the complete emancipation and transformation of African peoples’ lives at the door of the national liberation movements’ (NLM) leaders, citing Cabral’s (1979, in Manji, 2019) reference to the African proverb as follows: “Rice only cooks inside the pot” (p.59). This means that blame for challenges that transpired after independence cannot be solely shifted to imperialist designs but that African leaders too require to take some form of responsibility for contemporary African challenges (Manji, 2019). Owing to this, Saul (2008) correctly questions, firstly, what transpired within these movements that undertook to liberate the nation among other promises. Clearly something happened to liberation movements that had promised so much. At the same time, Saul (2008) contests suggestions made by Manji (1998), Manji (2019) and Southall (2014) that the leaders of the various NLMs espoused capitalist tactics as the only way towards development and transformation of nations. Central to Saul’s (2008) provocation, Manji (1998) interprets that, in spite of the grassroots of National liberation movements that were motivated by the aspirations of working together with the oppressed for their liberation, in later years these actions were thwarted by these leaders in their perceptions as exclusive developers and as sole unifiers of the nations. This is observable in their role of centralising and controlling within the political space (Manji, 1998; Southall, 2014). Southall (2014) suggests that this happened due to the pressures experienced by nationalist leaders from the World Bank, IMF and western governments to join the global capitalist system, purporting that this may have been perceived as the only means of development. Manji (2019) affirms that the nationalist ideals that were embodied in nationalist projects, contributing to leaders’ possession of power over the state, were gradually viewed by the same leaders as an obstacle to the new ardent call for ‘development’.

Hudson (2019) sums up Manji’s argument that the colonial practice of capitalism in South Africa remains unchanged. He continues by making a strong suggestion that what has not changed, however, is the way that the country has become unconscious of its colonial form, concealed by liberal democracy and reproduced by capitalism. Indeed, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) articulates that contemporary South Africa is trapped in the “neo-apartheid” (p.434) age. He further illuminates

neo-apartheid as comprising of black people in political leadership who have provided little to no meaningful social change in the lives of the black majority (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). Owing to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's assertion, Hudson (2016) argues that in this way democracy has simultaneously accommodated and suppressed colonialism. This leads to the assertion of the notion of development as a signifier of joint interests between the African elites and those of imperial rulers (Manji, 1998). It is for this reason that Manji and earlier decolonial scholars in this work suggestively state that the very idea of the need to continue to struggle for emancipation became lost in the abyss of the hegemonic ideologies of development, modernisation and globalisation (Manji, 2019). In other words as Mignolo (2009) states:

“...modernity (development) ...is not the natural unfolding of world history, but the regional narrative of the Eurocentric worldview” (p.13)

Similarly, Fanon (1968) equated the reproduction of colonialism that is survived by coloniality as duplication without actual change. Drawing from scholars' critical observations, Southall (2014) alludes that subsequent to their attainment of political self-determination from the snares of the colonial authorities' liberation leaders were disinclined to accord similar privileges to its own citizens. In similar vein, Fanon (1968) argues that however prepared the nationalist bourgeoisie are to defend against racist ideologies, they nonetheless seek to live like 'him' and subsequently identify as 'him'. Fanon continues that, as a result, the nationalist bourgeoisie engages in “scandalous enrichment” and “immoderate money making” and hurling themselves into “the mire of corruption and pleasure” (Fanon 1974, pp.134–35). Given the scholars' interpretation of the failures and successes of the NLMs transition to political parties, it is then fitting to seek other African commentators and scholars on South African people's conceptualisations of citizenship and notions of belonging and/or un-belonging as well as the ruling party's successes and failures as managers of the democratic state. Kotze and Provost (2015) note successes such as the delivery of housing through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RD), as well as basic services such as access to water and electricity to areas that were previously disadvantaged. Also included are the construction of the social welfare grant system for the elderly citizens, persons with disabilities and orphans, and child grants for unemployed parents. The failures include, among others, poor public healthcare facilities and quality healthcare service.

3.3 South African women's gendered experiences of citizenship and belonging: a site for gender and sexuality research

3.3.1 On gender and nation-building (the TRC)

In line with post-colonial and African feminist ideals, Ndlovu (2014) articulates that for an all-encompassing and cohesive national belonging it has become imperative for the marginalised members of society in South Africa such as women, in particular black women, to reconstruct history from their own "*loci of enunciation*" (p.255), that is to say, to contextualise their lived experiences in a South African context. Echoing feminist scholars in chapter 2, Ndlovu (2014) notes that speaking from their own *loci of enunciation* will ensure a pluriversality of knowledges as opposed to the universal historical narratives. It is thus fitting that gender research in South Africa centres on South African women's experiences of belonging and citizenship undergirded by issues of sexuality and gender.

South Africa's first elected democratic government initiated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) through the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No 34 of 1995 (Kusafuka, 2009; Motsemme, 2004). At the start of the Commission people or their families who experienced gross violations and even death for political reasons were requested to come forward (Bazzoli, 1998), thus the Commission in its design was the investigation of "the nature, causes and extent of gross violations of human rights" (p.47) that were committed either within or outside the country between the period that the ANC was launched and the inauguration of the country's first democratically elected president, the years March 1960 to May 1994 (Kusafuka, 2009). The Commission was open to the public and received extensive media coverage (Kusafuka, 2009), premised on the understanding of building 'one' nation through the restoration of dignity of victims, "...and afford the perpetrators the opportunity to come to terms with their own past" (TRC of SA 1998, p.14.3) and understanding the nations' "divided pasts" and "the public acknowledgement of untold suffering and injustice" helps to restore the dignity of victims (TRC of SA 1998). One might question the elected route of seeking justice within a legal route for victims and families of those who were violently violated by the actors of the oppressive government.

In order to explore this fact, I turn to Motsemme's (2004) and Bozzoli's (1998) theorisation of the TRC. These authors frame the TRC as a public performance inscribed with visual images and

emotive language of people as they recollected their experiences in order to better appeal to its audience. This tied together with having victims and perpetrators of apartheid voice their pain and the former to display repentance. In addition, to complete this process, Bazzoli (1998) raises the point that the Commission contained within its function what she terms the “rites of closure” (p.186), that is the ritual of statement-taking and witnesses concluding their stories, thus reaching a point of closure and forgiveness. In this manner, Bazzoli describes the hearing as having a transformative purpose through the narratives of the witnesses. Das (2000) adds that the use of the narrative enabled the ‘story tellers’ the opportunity to narrate the manner in which the violent political government impinged on their everyday lives while also narrating the how and why of violent intrusions. This was performed while working towards carving reconciliation in the nation. The power of employing the public performance within the Commission, it is argued, aimed to privilege religious symbols of forgiveness and healing as opposed to going the legal route which in this context ostensibly festers feelings of vengeance and anger (Bazzoli, 1998; Motsemme, 2004). It is against this background that the TRC permeated nationalist and nation-building discourses. To highlight this point, Kobe (2017) cites Desmond Tutu at the start of the TRC as affirming a sense of belonging and at the same time inculcating notions of *rainbowism* and to rouse principles of Ubuntu among the citizens of the new democratic South Africa, emphasising the point that none shall be outsiders in the newly democratised state. Everyone, everything, belongs. None are outsiders, all are insiders, and all belong (Kobe, 2017). Alluding to the religious undertones of the Commission’s proceedings and its design, Bazzoli (1998) makes a reference to religious ministers appointed to lead the proceedings. The author further draws attention to the ways in which people were encouraged to make their private pain and anger public as catharsis by way of participating in rites of confession with the aims of instigating change throughout the nation as a means of generating social transition and subsequently social cohesion (1998). Given these insights Mamdani (2001 in Motsemme 2004) questioned the Commission’s excessive dependence on Christian discourse that was underpinned by the “victim-perpetrator outlook” (p.213), covertly masking the power relations that were operating during apartheid; as a result, Motsemme submits that the Commission failed to make the connection between power and privilege. In a similar vein, the TRC failed to acknowledge the gendered experiences of women during apartheid. Scholars have argued that the TRCs report on women’s experiences and their hearings constituted appendages of the Commission by not capturing the full meanings contained in women’s narratives

in their testimonies and subsequently decentring women's experiences of oppression to the periphery (Bazzoli, 1998; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2005; Kusafuka, 2009; Madlala-Routledge, 1997).

Drawing from these debates on neglecting women's gendered experiences, Godobo-Madikizela (2005) articulates that the TRC in its methods purposefully positioned women witnesses on behalf of their families. She continues that women were unofficially tasked with invoking narratives to engage others and as proxy for others. In similar vein, Motsemme (2004) asserts that it is these methods of relegating women to stereotypic roles such as those of secondary witnesses that have been instrumental in muting and marginalising women's voices and their experiences in the TRC discourse. Kobe (2017) suggests very strongly that the TRC's neglect of gender justice, specifically for women, illuminates the fact it was embedded in patriarchal interests, favouring the heroic male narrative. Divergent to this thinking, Madlala-Routledge (1997) cautions that blame cannot be solely placed on the TRC for omitting the gender lens as its design operated on the dictates of what the South African nation deemed to be the search for the truth. Thus, informing the meanings of what the TRC ultimately identified as gross violation of human rights included victims and families of victims whose experiences of violent experiences were politically motivated such as "killing, abduction, torture or severe ill treatment" (p.65). In this way scholars have argued that women's violent experiences of sexual violations were excluded from this list. It was only through the petitioning of civil society and gender activists that the term 'severe ill-treatment' in the TRC mandate was construed so as to include various abuses, such as rape and other forms of gender-based violence (Goldblatt and Meintjes, 1996). Madlala-Routledge (1997) thus asserts that is the meaning of truth that the nation 'provided' the Commission but excluded the experiences of women. It then comes as no surprise that the TRC has misinterpreted the truth of South Africa's past. Owing to this fact, authors illuminate that the South African media - both television and newspapers - was abundant with images of women as secondary victims mourning the deaths of their sons and husbands (Gobodo-Mdikizela, 2005; Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996). As a result, Goldblatt and Meintjes (1996), among other scholars and gender activists and feminists, highlighted that the exclusion of women's experiences in the TRC was located in its narrow definitions of what constitutes violence. The scholars further highlighted to the Commission that the kinds of torture that women endured, both physical and psychological, were inflicted differently compared to those of men (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996; Madla-Routledge, 1997).

Women's violent experiences of apartheid were further exacerbated by economic loss and the burden of disintegration of their families brought on by politically motivated deaths of their family members, including the sanctions of the influx control legislation (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996; Pillay, 1999; Mkhize, 2000; Zwane, 2000). Similarly, Madla-Routledge expresses that women's bodies of the oppressed groups are usually taken as spoils of the war as an expression of hate (Madla-Routledge, 1997). They thus recommended that the TRC take a gender sensitive approach in how they conducted interviews with women (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996). By and large, the activists in its meeting with the TRC argued that clear understanding of gender requires that gendered experiences of both men and women be examined, particularly because women were subjected to gender-specific violence during apartheid (Kobe, 2017). The range of representatives submitted these concerns and presented a submission by the University of Witwatersrand's Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) to the Commission (Goldblatt and Meintjes, 1996; Kusafuka, 2009). The gendered perspectives in the TRC mandate were further prompted by victims' disappointment with the statement takers who displayed inadequate sensitivity to gender-based violence and sexual abuse of women as reported by the CSVr and Khulumani Support Group (Kusafuka, 2009). Mmadlala-Routledge (1997) offers the poor media coverage of women's hearings as yet another example of the lack of sensitivity to women's experiences. She explained that, instead, assassination hearings took precedence over women's narratives. As this line of argument progresses, Kobe (2017) offers an example of one of the witnesses, Mrs Konile, to advance the argument of the insensitivity of statement makers to gender disparities and further positioning women as secondary victims. Mrs Konile defied the narrative structure of the TRC when she was expected to speak about her son's death. Instead Mrs Konile relayed her personal narrative of hardship during apartheid. Kobe (2017) suggests that because she centred herself in the narrative going against the TRC mandate, her testimony was rendered incoherent and not recorded amongst other statements of the Commission.

Moreover, Kobe (2017) adds that, through the promptings of psychologists and various gender activists, the Commission modified their statement-taking protocol and further trained its statement-takers to be more sensitive to women who were victimised and ask probing questions in order to illicit women's narratives about their experiences of apartheid (Kobe, 2017). Relevant to women being thrust onto the periphery during the hearings, Kusafuka (2017) highlights two cardinal points that must be borne in mind to illuminate women's notions of belonging and

citizenship and not leaving out the women empowerment rhetoric. Kusafuka critically observes how the Commission in its report under recommendations failed to address factors that are instrumental in violating gendered human rights. The Commission further failed to address women's socio-economic vulnerability (Kusafuka, 2009) driven by women's domestic and everyday lived experiences, a context which empowerment programmes fail to address as will be discussed below.

3.3.2 African women's empowerment: A smoke screen?

Part of the nation building and citizenship politics were empowerment projects (efforts at gender equality), with specific focus on women. However, as proffered by Gqola (2015), the 'hype' around women empowerment has been unsuccessful in yielding real conversations as the concept of 'empowerment' is premised on notions that only women require empowerment. Kabeer (2005) makes the point which resonates with Gqola's (2015) provocation of empowerment as a representation of the capacity to make one's own choices and thus the process of empowerment in Africa is advanced as a means of providing those who have been denied power the option to acquire such an ability. In this case African women are viewed as the disempowered gendered subjects who will benefit from this process. Bawa (2016) saw the problem of the weak and oppressed African woman that captured the imaginations of global capitalism, stimulating women-centred empowerment programmes that we see in Africa today. Women are targeted for such programmes because of the view of women as victims of unceasing poverty and underdeveloped socio-patriarchal traditional practices that require development. It could also be argued that gender as a category is attributed to women (Kolawole, 2004). It is therefore not surprising that problems of gender as well as empowerment programmes are solely focused on women. Before proceeding to analysing debates on the notions of empowerment in African and South African contexts, it is useful to consider the period in which empowerment gained its prominence. Bawa (2016) makes the claim that the concept of empowerment gained its popularity in the development discourse in the 1980s buttressed by the neoliberal economic structural adjustment programmes from the west. As already mentioned, empowerment carries with it the presupposition of disempowerment. Thus, as Bawa notes, 'women empowerment' gained its popularity (2016).

Understanding this, Sithole (2015) cautions that development and empowerment processes that rest on the dictates of institutions such as those of the World Bank and International Monetary

Fund (IMF) as development apparatus may not have the interests of the African people at heart. Instead, they continue to maintain their hegemonic colonial relations with Africa, and dictate and regulate the shape and form of the operations of development in Africa. Sithole drives the point home that this is a signifier of epistemic violence (2015, p.9). This inexorably undermines the already existing traditional and socio-cultural empowerment methods available to African women. Drawing on African and post-colonial scholarship, Bawa (2016) advocates for the localisation of women's experiences regarding empowerment within the development discourse. In similar vein, Mkandawire (2011) condemns the development discourse in Africa and perceives it as Africa catching up to the west and that it privileges western knowledges while repressing and degrading local (African) knowledge. Ampofo (2004) identifies both positive and detrimental effects of globalisation and the IMF-imposed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) on African women's position. Ampofo attributes the imposition of such programmes in Africa on the increased feminisation of labour in low-level positions, growth in sex work, increases in women's workloads and subsequent expansion in the feminisation of poverty (2004). Darkwah (2002, in Ampofo, 2004), in addition to the failures of globalisation, recognises some of the positive effects of globalisation in African women's lives. She pays special attention to Ghanaian women's exposure to transnational trade and how this enabled women to gain access to imported goods such as clothing. Pheko (1999, in Ampofo, 2004) adds on and acknowledges Kenyan and Ugandan women's access to non-traditional employment in exported orientated goods such as flowers and fruit. Given these insights, Kabeer (2005) in her contribution to empowerment programmes targeting African women argues that until the said policies on women empowerment begin to centre on women in the roles of decision making and monitoring the policy makers as well as holding other relevant actors to account, it becomes improbable for such aspirations to be realised. It is at this juncture that Bawa intimates the concept of empowerment as pervaded by modernisation discourses that narrowly over-emphasise economic capacity building for women (2016). Foregrounding her analyses on women's empowerment paradigms in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Kabeer (2005) illuminates that, of the eight objectives, gender equality and women's empowerment ranks third place. She continues that the target of this goal is to have it translated into eradicating gender inequalities among men and women in all levels of education.

Converse to this, Kabeer correctly questions how education will translate into empowering women on analytical skills that will enable them to critique and provide the courage to question unjust practices. Kabeer (2005) cautions that if education only provides women access to certain spaces, then women's level of education may not effect change on a larger scale. In similar vein, Nwonwu (2008) concurs and points out that the MDGs are systematic in that their focus lies in solely identifying problems instead of targeting symptomatic issues. Moreover, Kabeer recognises three intersecting dimensions on which to identify empowerment. They are agency, resources, and achievements (2005). Central to the concept of empowerment is the concept of agency which signifies a point in time where an individual is able to make a choice and put it into effect. Kabeer illuminates that agency is distinguished in two forms. Firstly, she identifies a passive form of agency referring to action taken where the individual perceives there to be limited choice; secondly, Kabeer (2005) identifies the active form of agency, where actions are performed purposefully. In addition to the two types of agency, she adds two concepts with which to 'measure' the outcomes (impact) of agency, namely, the effectiveness of agency is measured by women's greater abilities to perform their given roles and responsibilities whereas transformative agency refers to their ability to act on and challenge the constrictive aspects of these roles and responsibilities (Kabeer, 2005). Resources, then, became the tools that women use towards exercising agency and the outcomes of agency signify the achievements. Kabeer continues that achievements and resources construct individuals' abilities. She cautions that the concept of agency entails both positive and negative connotations. The latter refer to individuals' capabilities to act on and construct their own life decisions, albeit in the face of others' opposition. The former refer to actors who override the agency of others such as through the use of violence and various forms of coercion (Kabeer, 2005). Relevant to African feminist scholars' meditations, Kabeer adds that subordinate groups (in most cases women) oftentimes collude with oppressive structures (society) as a means of challenging the power relations (2005). For this reason, Salo qualifies that, to understand women's agency within African contexts, a detailed examination of African women and men's cultural expressions of gendered agency is required, while also acknowledging the multiplicity of power both nationally and globally that exert specific limitations on agency or on redefining it (Salo, 2007).

For this reason, Kabeer (2005) recasts empowerment as a process that should begin from within as the modes of legitimating inequalities are embedded in people's beliefs and values. She stresses

that empowerment is fixed on how people view themselves and their sense of self-worth and in turn is tightly linked to how others see them, thus MGDs should be propped up by individuals' sense of self-reliance as opposed to reliance on external factors for empowerment. As this line of argument progresses, Bawa (2016) raises a pertinent point relating to evidence on the sustainable results of micro-finance offered to women in the long term. She notes the limited evidence that points to micro-financing programmes as not successfully alleviating poverty (Bawa, 2016). Within this space of understanding women's contexts within empowerment programmes that involve capital, Bawa offers an explanation of the failures of the micro-capital programmes and affirms that women's ways of relating to capital is fashioned within various systems (of power) in women's contexts. These include the socio-cultural, traditional and gender system. In this way, some of Bawa's evidence qualifies that struggles for gender equality should in their design encompass "socio-economic justice" and "political empowerment" (2016, p.121). Moreover, in his contribution, Sithole (2015) movingly talks about the MGDs for the year 2020 as presumptuous reasoning fixed in coloniality in their construction that the future will be better than today. Sithole echoes Kabeer's analyses of the eight MGD targets, which will ostensibly be achieved by the year 2020. He admittedly states that the goals are significant in terms of illuminating problems that are plaguing Africa and subsequently informing political interventions. He cautions, however, that this does not take away from the fact that the goals are trapped in colonial matrices of power in that Africa continues to be indebted to the West that inevitably dictates Africa's development as the realisation of the goals is dependent on the World Bank, IMF and donor funding. It is against this background that Sithole (2015) scathingly criticises that:

"It is naïve for the being that is colonised to have the illusion that the future will be better than the past and the present. The future is not always good. To have the illusion that the future will be better is to be trapped in colonial subjectivity. Philosophically, there is no evidence that that the future will be better. Rather, these are projections that are earmarked on the future as if the future holds plausible prospects of the scenario of optimism" (p.13).

He concludes his argument by projecting that, if the goals are achieved by the year 2020, they are bound to be shifted once more for another year, as the focus remains in the future as opposed to focusing on issues that are plaguing Africa's people today. For this reason, Sithole concludes that these programmes are the colonial utopic registers that are not troubling themselves with decolonising Africa (Sithole, 2015).

3.4 “Women need to remain vigilant”: contemporary South African women and discourses of un/belonging

In recent years South African women of all ages and races have been increasingly bombarded by the media and authorities in the police department with messages of safety and warnings to remain vigilant at all costs as a result of the scourge of violent crimes perpetrated on women. These have been sparked by several high profile and publicised killings of women. These acts and messages as well as horror stories that women have heard of and seen in the media seem to send a message that women’s bodies do not belong to them. Fast-forward to the year 2019, the *femicide* levels in South Africa continue to rise. Statistics South Africa underscores *femicide* as, “the intentional killing of females (women or girls) because they are females” (STATS SA, 2018, p.24). Following this, between the months of April and December of 2016, the South African police service recorded a total number of 1,713 murders that were committed against women, some of which were committed by their intimate partners, totalling to murders of women every four hours (Makou, 2017). This means that there were 15.2 murders for every 100,000 adult women in South Africa (Wilkinson, 2019; Head, 2019). Again, the latest statistics on femicide rates in the country are estimated to be at 12.1% in every 100 000 South African women a year, a figure that Head (2019), describes as five times worse than that of the global average at 2.6%. This, however, excludes cases that may not fall under the umbrella term of *femicide*, leading Head (2019) to argue that the murder rate of women in South Africa could be higher than that reported under *femicide* rates. This is subsequent to the brain child of the Presidency, namely the Gender-based Violence and Femicide Summit held in May 2018. According to the Presidency, the aim of the summit was to draw attention to the violent experiences of South African women and to work towards implementing an ‘emergency plan’ to end gender-based violence against women and children.

This plan was to be achieved by the government working with civil society and various other government departments. Of interest here, in his opening address, President Cyril Ramaphosa tasked the Department of Basic Education to finalise its curriculum transformation programme that focuses on structural social issues such as sexism and racism as a means of mitigating the rising levels of various forms of violence at grassroots levels (Ramaphosa, 2019). In his address, he continued to emphasise that one of the key prevention strategies to gender-based violence is the empowerment of women, which has been vehemently criticised by scholars in earlier sections,

who argue that the empowerment rhetoric is merely a ‘smoke-screen’ that further subjects women to subordinate positions as empowerment programmes are mainly aimed at women and perpetuate the thinking that if women are empowered then they will not fall victim to various abuses and violent threats meted out against them or that they will be empowered enough to leave unsafe situations.

3.4.1 Body politics and the theory of coloniality of violence in South Africa

Feminist theorisations on body politics aver that women’s bodies are seen as entry points for political engagement (Schlyter, 2009). Talking about women’s experiences of violent intrusions by the apartheid officers in their homes and body searches, Motsemme’s (2004) point becomes pertinent as one analyses the empowerment rhetoric and women’s sense of belonging and citizenship. She articulates that when women’s ‘private’ spaces are threatened, they are most likely to experience feelings of inadequacy that may surface when these boundaries have been forcibly transgressed, leading to women feeling a loss over their own lives which puts into question the viability of the empowerment programmes outside of the ‘home’ that the president makes references to. This echoes Schlyter’s (2009) point that citizenship and women empowerment projects overlook the harsh sociocultural and economic challenges as well as the challenging realities that South African women face (Schlyter, 2009). Central to the discourse on empowerment, Hassim (1999) contests the perception that struggles for democracy in South Africa will result in political change, particularly in the eradication of various intersecting inequalities of gender and socio-economic inequalities. Implicit in Hassim’s (1999) argument is that a sense of citizenship and belonging is not only attained through access to the vote. Salo (2007) concurs that, in order to effectively foster citizenship among the nations’ citizens, the political leaders’ quest for citizenship needs to be advanced by the pursuit of complete socio-economic, political and gendered transformation. Segalo (2015) prompts that democratic states fail to recognise that by virtue of granting all its citizens the privilege to vote does not translate into automatic cohesion and equal access to resources. Indeed, Moodley (1993) has observed that women cadres within the NLMs have long held the belief that expressions such as ‘anti-sexist’ or ‘non-sexist’ contained in the constitution served as a confirmation to women that the leaders’ concerns lay more with the movements’ overall transformative image than with genuine concerns for the subjugated roles of women within patriarchal societies.

Lillian Ngoyi (n.d in Gasa, 2007, p.216) articulates the patriarchal ideologies of women's subordination in contexts of liberation movements declaring that, "The husbands speak of democracy but do not practice it at home". It is against this background that I concur with Hassim's (1991) contribution that the patriarchal state has successfully managed to delegitimise women's concerns on inequalities and subsequently fuels violent atrocities committed against women in this country. Strauss (2009) suggestively makes the point that it is not only justifiable but also logical to transform the nation, considering the erstwhile state's expression of governance was by silencing and subjugating black people. The president continued to quote studies that have proven the 'empowerment' project as effective in empowering women to avoid violent intrusions:

"Studies that were conducted here in South Africa show that where interventions are linked to the economic and social empowerment of women, intimate partner violence is decreased. Where women become more economically, socially and culturally empowered they develop greater capacity to extricate themselves from abusive situations" (Ramaphosa, 2019).

The president is right in arguing that the socio-economic and domestic spaces in women's lives need to be paid attention to as it is in these spaces that unequal gender relations thrive. However, what he neglects to mention is that it is not the women who need empowerment but rather the transformation of these spaces is needed and the transformation of social attitudes about women's place in society. Schlyter (2009) eloquently underlines that restrictions on women's 'active' citizenship are undergirded and organised by patriarchal household relations within women's private spheres, including those of their communities and, ultimately, national politics. In addition, the president made a pertinent point here to the scholars' arguments (as already noted), mainly by Bawa (2016); Kabeer (2005) and Sithole (2015). He highlighted that, despite the country's "progressive" laws and South Africa being a signatory to international instruments such as the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, these 'instruments' have proved ineffective in ending gender-based violence, as the earlier scholars have argued that the instruments are but remnants of colonialism that are driving coloniality as they are not contextually based in Africa's interests and also, as Hudson (2019) articulated, South Africa remains a colonial society as the leaders are serving the interests of global capitalism. He makes a good observation that, as a nation, there needs to be ways in which we re-examine how the discourse of violence against women and children reflects societal norms. Of interest here are

Merten's (2019) analyses as she challenges these enunciations on the proposed 'emergency plan' to end gender-based violence that is yet to be released. She describes the presidency's proposal of such a plan as a mere PR exercise and a regurgitation of previous declarations and speeches that have brought little to no change in the fight against gender-based violence. Echoing Merten's sentiments, IFP Member of Parliament, Liezl van der Merwe, vehemently argued in parliament as follows:

“(T)he disjunction between what our women endure, and what our government does in response, has been alarmingly inadequate. We were promised a National Council Against Gender-Based Violence in 2012. It didn't happen. Year after year, during the State of the Nation Address, we are promised interventions to fight gender-based violence, most of which have come to naught” (Merten, 2019).

Merten (2019) continues to argue that these public theatrics are performed by political leaders when they have a sense that they are losing their grip on the nation, following protests. Merten (2019) reported on what had transpired in parliament over a few days as public anger was expressed as news emerged of the rape and killing of student Uyinene Mrwetyana by a post office worker; the killing of boxing champ Leighandre “Baby Lee” Jegels by her policeman ex-boyfriend; the discovery of the body of 14-year-old Janika Mallo, who had gone missing in Heinz Park on Saturday, buried in a backyard; and the killing of student and church youth leader Jesse Hess. Merten (2019) observes that the president appropriated the phrase, “war on women” expression used by #Am I Next protest marches. Of importance, he asserted that boys and young men were “daily exposed to patriarchal attitudes and practices and are often encouraged to prove their masculinity through domination and violence”. I am inclined to agree with preceding arguments that, despite the promises made by politicians subsequent to a violent crime committed against a woman or women, the threat of violence and rape continues to plague women. This was evidenced by the hash tag #Am I Next on social media after the brutal death and rape of Uyinene Mrwetyana at a post office, a public space where the threat of violence or rape never occurred in women's minds but, given the circumstances of the deaths of women, women were forced to think if they are indeed next to be murdered or raped.

Dosekun (2007) refers to this threat of rape or death as the “female fear” (p.90), while Gqola (2015) coined it as the ‘Female Fear Factory’ (p.78). The scholars continue to assert that the threat

of rape proves to be a successful way to keep women in check and remind them of their vulnerability to violent crimes (Dosekun, 2007; Gqola 2015). Dosekun adds that these threats succeed in limiting women's movements. Thus, male violence impacts women to the extent that they fear violence and perceive it as a constant threat. Consequently, unwanted sexual looks, calls and gestures from men aim to remind women of their gendered subordination to male sexual power (Gqola, 2015). This depiction is common among most South African women who board taxis and have to go to a taxi rank. Walking past or inside the taxi rank is an uncomfortable space for women to navigate as this is where one gets to experience the male bravado in all its glory play itself out. As a woman, you are often reminded that the taxi rank is a 'man cave' and you will accept our sexual advances and calling out because, if you do not, we will call you names, insult you and possibly harass you. In addition, Armstrong (1994) and Gqola (2015) consider coercion as having played a major role worldwide in young women's sexual debut; predominant to South Africa was the practice of jackrolling, an act that involved the abduction of young women and forcing them into sex: this practice condoned rape by young men in the townships. Similarly, Simamkele Dlakavu, a Fallist² and a feminist, and a fellow female activist, took to the streets in May 2017 with hidden cameras and filmed their experience of walking around in two of Johannesburg's popular taxi ranks. The aim of this social experiment was to raise awareness of the abuse women endure all in the name of masculinities and violent patriarchal ideologies against women; this was to also show the manner in which the men and their behaviours impinge on women's rights to bodily integrity and freedom of movement. In such instances women view this behaviour as harassment whereas men see it as normal gendered interaction (Quinn, 2002). Patriarchal societal norms socially condition and dictate to men that in order to preserve their masculine identity they should disregard a woman's pain and distort her opinions (Quinn, 2002). Consequently, men neglect to convey empathy to women because masculinity impedes them from taking the position of the woman. Gqola (2015) illustrates this point eloquently in the excerpt below:

“In the winter of 2013, feminist Lebo Pule shared a story about being in a shop in the Johannesburg CBD where a young man harassed a young woman. The familiar site where violence, gender and sexuality rub up against one another. The young man tries to get the young woman's attention by

¹ Fallists are students and activists who participated in the Fallist movements advocating for a free decolonised curriculum in institutions of higher education, respectively the Fees Must Fall and Rhodes Must Fall movements.

calling out to her, addressing her in increasingly direct ways. When she continues to ignore him, his aggression grows, he starts to goad her...she communicates her disinterest in his attention through her body language ...he persists and she tells him to go away. He responds by saying, ‘That is why we rape you’” (p.80).

Goldblatt and Meintjes (1997), affirm that women cannot fully contribute to society if violence and fear continue to plague their daily narratives. Given women’s daily narratives of violence, it can be argued that this impedes women’s full participation as citizens of this country. Schlyter adds that women’s rights to their bodies should be the primary foundation on which citizenship is built (2009). She continues by stating that women’s citizenship is embedded in bodily negotiations in their daily experiences (Schlyter, 2009). In addition, Manicom (2005 in Oldfield and Salo et al., 2009) compellingly argue that, “the onus is therefore on feminists to relentlessly render visible and contestable the different makings of gendered political subjects, and the ways these inform and are integrated within policy, rights and political practices.” (p.3). It is for this reason that scholars find it suitable to investigate body politics of citizenship in their contribution as governed by the contested interplay between women and men as they occupy and negotiate their gendered spaces located in broader socio-political and national economies (Oldfield & Salo et al., 2009). I attempt to make sense of South African women’s plight against violence, this coming from a people that experienced the most violent atrocities, namely those of colonialism followed by apartheid. To do this, I turn to the thinking of scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) and Maldonado-Torres (2007) who have utilised Fanon’s (1963) prescient warnings in order to advance the notion of coloniality in post-colonised states (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). As argued by scholars such as Hudson, (2019); Maldonado-Torres, (2007); and Mignolo, (2009) among others, that colonialism did not end but rather it is survived by coloniality. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) advances the thinking that the persistence of violence in post-colonial eras can be understood through the ways in which the imperial period entrenched “coloniality of being”. He further locates the concept of coloniality as rooted in the violence of post-colonial peoples propagated by western modernity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012).

Similarly, Fanon (1963) offers that it is the violence of colonialism that has influenced the colonised subject to become violent and to manifest the violence that was dispensed onto ‘him’. Fanon (1963) cautions that that the battered subject, “manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people” (p.40). He continues that as the colonised person

encounters the “colonial order of things” this locates the person in a “permanent state of tension” (p.41). Fanon has also argued that the manner in which the violence was utilised during the colonial struggle does not fade away (1963), but rather it is reproduced in national life. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, augmenting Fanon (1963), asserts that this atmosphere is explained in the aggression and vexation of nationalist political leaders in their speeches. Bearing testimony to this is the Zuma rape trial as it functioned as a mirror reflecting a tense relationship between women’s sexual rights and a culture of patriarchy and misogyny in South Africa (Robins, 2008). The trial provided a painful reminder that women’s bodies do not belong to them (Gqola, 2015); the former deputy president (Jacob Zuma) and his defense counsel argued that Khwezi (the rape accuser) had seduced him by wearing ‘revealing clothes’, and that as an African man it is not permissible to leave a woman in a state of arousal. The implication is that Khwezi and other women experience sex passively and thus require a man to decide that a woman is now aroused and because she was wearing a kanga, that was her passive way of initiating sex; consequently, as a man he had to take charge of the situation to help control her sexual urges. Outside of the courtroom, Zuma’s supporters proceeded to burn photographs and figurines of Khwezi and chanted ‘burn the bitch’ (Gqola, 2015; Robins, 2008). In fact, Gqola (2015) argues that Zuma made no effort to detach himself from such display, thus compelling Khwezi to pursue state protection for the duration of the trial and was forced into exile by its outcome. Zuma’s actions and his choice of struggle songs and chanting located him in a space of militant masculinity, thus rendering his prosecution unjust (Gqola, 2015). Gqola continues to argue that Zuma and some leaders of the ANC ensured that the trial was a signal that anyone who went against the leaders of the liberation movements were enemies and that they had betrayed the struggle. Following the thinking of the decolonial and post-colonial thinkers, below I trace scholars’ debates on the genealogy of colonial violence against black women throughout the history of oppressive states, while also analysing the reproduction of the coloniality of violence as in post-colonial and post-apartheid states as discussed in the preceding debates. The violent intrusions in Africa women’s sexualities and African culture were rooted in colonial masters’ plans to civilise the continent and to regulate the uncontrolled and primitive sexualities of Africans (Becker, 2004).

3.5 Chapter conclusion

An in-depth engagement with the literature in this chapter has aided me to explore questions of gender and sexuality and how these intersect with colonial milieu and the democratised state. In my engagement with literature, I explored the ways in which the democratisation of the country paradoxically led to the dispossession of women's basic human rights, and also how this covertly informed scholarly debates on gendered bodies and sexuality in South Africa. A significant amount of literature reviewed in this chapter has provided a rich resource for exploring the entanglement of sexuality and socio-political dialogues in South Africa. The next chapter discusses the methodology used and the actual fieldwork done to navigate women's understandings of sexual expression.

Chapter 4: Research Design

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides insight into the research design of the study, target population, sample selection and research instruments. The study uses the qualitative research approach. The chosen research design is based on the theoretical perspective in order to find answers to the research questions stemming from the stated research problem. I deemed it appropriate to employ this paradigm since my interest lay in understanding the narratives of rural African women's experiences of sexual expression in the contexts of their daily lives. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) add that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, while endeavouring to understand the phenomena in terms of the meanings that people attach to them. My research plan for this study was to uncover and describe the beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behaviour of the Nkomazi district social group. My position in this study was to learn about women's conceptualisations of sexual expression within patriarchal contexts and the transition of women's sexuality from the colonial and apartheid South Africa to present-day South Africa, especially in Mpumalanga.

The conceptualisation of sexual expression is an example of a multifaceted social activity shaped by the beliefs, attitudes, and experiences of the Nkomazi community. Sex is an integral part of any community setting where it occurs and is best examined within that specific context. Rather than attempting to impose a definition of sexual expression from the research literature, the purpose of this study was to learn how Nkomazi women and the community come to understand and describe their experiences of sexuality and sexual expression. In addition, Babbie and Mouton (2010) affirm that qualitative research is particularly suitable for exploring topics where experiences and behaviours are better understood within the context in which they occur and in a constant process that cannot be anticipated. Drawing on narrative inquiry I was able to examine women's stories by utilising probing questions which in turn are declared by scholars to facilitate the understanding and experience of the subjective world of participants as opposed to explaining that world (Wang and Geale, 2005). By the same token, Riessman (1990 in Fraser, 2004) constructs narrative inquiry as creating ways of understanding participants' language, including non-verbal cues.

Furthermore, my attention was focused on the type of stories that the women narrated, how they presented their stories and why they chose to narrate those specific stories, particularly those relating to their girlhood and some of their experiences of becoming a young bride (Gilbert, 2008). Thus, narrative inquiry was best suited for this study as it utilises storytelling as a way of communicating the participants' realities and allows for an in-depth account of these experiences and an exploration of the meanings that the participants gain from their experiences (Wang & Geale, 2015), thus allowing participants to speak of their experiences without imposed external limitations. Nadar (2014) advances this thinking and suggests ways of conducting and utilising narrative research in a black and feminist manner: firstly, she suggests by way of utilising stories as tools of knowledge gathering and knowledge sharing, and, secondly, she suggests that stories by their design object to objectivity by privileging subjectivity. Bakere-Yusuf (2003, as cited in Tamale, 2011) raises a pertinent point that the denial of the intercultural exchange and rejection of all theoretical imports from the west also constitutes a disregard of the continuous contribution of various Africans to European cultural and its intellectual history.

In addition to the narrative inquiry design, I found life histories as suited for this study as they are utilised to gather stories about all aspects of women's lives (Reinharz, 1992 in Letherby, 2003). I found the life histories method especially suited for the older and elderly women's stories about their gendered lives in apartheid and democratic South Africa. This is because life histories are argued to elude universalism and instead focus on individual stories, potentially making them become 'potentially potent' (p.110) in dealing with the specifics of women's oppression in varied contexts (Humm, 1995 in Chege, 2011). An additional advantage of the life-story research method regarding the personal stories of the elderly and older women is that the concern lies more with the connection between personal biography and social processes, past and present. Gilbert adds that these may involve the transformation of a place that is the socio-political climate in South Africa and mapping personal changes and a way of life for the women (2008). I have also taken care to focus on how the elderly women are socialised into particular social classes and how they adapted to change in circumstances (Gilbert, 2008). Like the stories of elderly women in the study, life histories are described as an account of 'group lives' (p.90) where the narrator weaves her story with those of her significant others such as her children, some parents, her partner, and friends. Thus, individual life histories often provide insights into the lives of many (Scott, 1998 in Letherby, 2003). Gilbert suggests that researchers who conduct pre-designed interviews in order

to elicit participants' narratives may utilise a combination of broad questions (2008). For instance, in order to elicit narratives from the women in the one-on-one interviews I asked them broad question such, "Describe your experiences growing up as a young woman during 'those times'" (colonialism and apartheid). Prompts were utilised to encourage the relating of specific examples such as "tell me what happened" (Gilbert, 2008). In their life stories, the elderly and older women's topics included but were not limited to the following:

- Experiences of marrying young.
- Traditional femininities.
- Women's 'small' resistances against the oppressive state.
- Effects of apartheid on 'working mothers' and their children.
- Traumatic psychological impact of apartheid and its effects in the present.

In addition, Chege (2011) advises that in our methods used to answer the questions of 'what' and 'why' about women's subordination, it is imperative that our inquiry as feminist researchers include the question of 'how' this subordination comes about. To answer the research question of 'how' is women's subordination created, this study was centred on the intersecting axes of power in women's lives such as the socio-political factors, gender, sexuality and class that play a central role in women's gendered experiences of sexualities and expression (Kiguwa, 2019). In the group the rejection by the participants of the use of sexual words in the local languages, in this case the women, may be a reflection of a subconscious need to distance themselves from the immoral, lascivious and primitive frameworks that they connote (Mateveke, 2017). Similarly, silences are also regarded as important as noise in research and the interpretation of silence is as important as the interpretation of what is being said (Parr, 1998 in Letherby, 2003).

In keeping with the feminist theoretical underpinnings of this study, Fraser underlies narrative inquiry as promoting a plurality of truths (2004). It is for the preceding motivational factors that I elected to utilise feminist methodology. I chose African feminism and the decolonial framework to underpin the study and research process in order to shift from hegemonic frames, and to allow myself the opportunity to cultivate a rich understanding of local frames (African) (Grosfogel, 2007 in Segalo, Manoff & Fine, 2015). Similarly, I draw from the contestations of LaFrance and Wigginton (2019) on dominant discourses in some instances as inadequate for expressing women's experiences. The scholars argue that these discourses are inclined to reflect patriarchal interests.

Moreover, feminist research centres on women's experiences and accounts of being gendered subjects within society while allowing the researcher to be reflexive in her positioning within the research process (Kiguwa 2019). Central to this thesis, Kiguwa highlights that feminist frameworks allow researchers to observe how women may be differentially positioned within multiple axes of power that may in turn influence how they embody gender (2019). I elected to foreground the experiences of Nkomazi women within post-colonial African and decolonial frameworks as I have struggled to identify and engage with the disconnections between western academia and specific disciplinary methodologies with the realities that I have encountered in the field in the community where I was raised (Smith, 1999).

I utilised purposive sampling based on my knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of the research objectives (Babbie, 2011). I am thus declaring that this type of sampling is influenced more by my subjective considerations than by scientific criteria (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 2006). I favoured this type of sampling on the basis that I worked with the women during my master's research which highlighted a problem that I desired to explore in this study. This proved advantageous as the women possessed the confidence required to delve into issues of women's perceptions about sexuality and some of them also encouraged women similar to themselves to participate. Another advantage of employing purposive sampling in this study was that I managed to build successful relationships with some of the elderly women; thus, rapport had already been established making it easier for them to share their personal narratives with me. The sample was selected on the basis of the information that I required. I handpicked the participants who I knew had the knowledge or experiences to answer the research questions based on their experiences working with the foreign funded health organisations (Tong, Sainsbury, Craig, 2007). Their jobs entailed talking about sexual health matters openly with other women and other members of the community. I further utilised snowball sampling by requesting the participants to assist in recruiting other women who might be interested in participating in the study and be open to talk about matters of sexuality and sexual health and would not find it offensive if they were asked questions about sexuality or their sexual experiences or others' experiences. Babbie (2011) states that a snowballing technique is appropriate when members of a population are difficult to identify. This type of sampling also served the purpose of minimising researcher bias as the participants and I would not have had contact prior to the discussions before the research. Below I present a profile of the study's participants:

Profile summary of the women who participated in the research:

Pseudonym	Age	Level of Education	Employment status	Marital Status	Number of children
A	18	Grade 12	In school	Single	None
B	25	Grade 12	Unemployed	Single	2
C	18	Grade12	Unemployed	Single	None
D	72	Form 4	Unemployed	Widowed	5
E	24	Matric	Cleaner at a nearby hotel	Single	2
F	31	Matric	Cleaner at a nearby bed-and-breakfast	Single	3
G	18	Grade 11	In school	Single	None
H	18	Grade 11	In school	Single	None
I	21	Matric	Farm worker	Single	None
J	19	Matric	In school	Single	1
K	34	Matric	Farm worker	Single	3
L	49	ABET	Unemployed	Married	5
M	76	ABET	Unemployed	Widowed	2
N	54	Diploma	Unemployed	Married	3
O	80	None	Retirement	Widowed	8
P	58	Grade 7	Unemployed	Married	4
Q	56	Grade12	Unemployed	Single	None
R	67	None	Unemployed	Widowed	4
S	74	ABET	Retirement	Widowed	4
T	82	None	Retirement	Widowed	7

4.2 Exploring through African feminist and Decolonial lenses

Similar to Segalo's (2015, pp.343-344) contribution, this study attempted to represent the critical voices of the women and also highlight how women's continuing challenges might be understood better within their historical context while also acknowledging the colonial subjects' experiences. Drawing from Bosch and Holland-Muter (2012) who, in their contribution, argued that by using feminist action research methodology they deliberately endeavoured to de-centre the interpretive authority of the academic researchers and to generate polyvocal texts through which the researched would present their own perspectives. Tamale (2011) adds that feminist theoretical frameworks

deconstruct and challenge the colonial tradition of researchers as all-knowing. In other words, centring the voices and experiences of the oppressed subjects has become one of the foundations of feminist research and praxis (Kiguwa, 2019). However, scholars caution that the outcomes of ‘new methods’ do not necessarily result in more ‘valid’ forms of feminist research, but certainly raise issues of voice and reflexivity and encourage a research ethic that involves creating and nurturing reciprocal relationships to create empowering forms of ‘knowledge’ (Bennet and Perreira, 2013). Similarly, Oakley (1971, as cited in Reinharz & Davidman, 1992) instructed us decades ago that neutrality or objectivity in the research process is simply a cover-up for patriarchy. Furthermore, Hubbard (n.d., cited in Reinharz & Davidman, 1992, p.261) concurs that objectivity is a position of a white privileged male, thus revealing more about the “investigator than the subject being studied”. Therefore, I am inclined to agree with Gordon (s.a., cited in Reinharz & Davidman, 1992) in her standpoint that giving our experiences a voice in the research process is a necessary exercise because otherwise “we perpetuate the historic silencing of women researchers’ active and often passionate reactions to our own research” (p.63), thus breaking the silence perpetuated by colonialist ideologies is a recurring theme in this work. Hesse-Biber (2006) stated that feminist research empowers women in that information collected challenges gender biases as is the case in many South African contexts, and sets the record straight about African women’s sexuality.

The rationale behind grounding this study in this type of framework is that conventional theoretical and methodological frameworks often fail to reflect African women’s perspectives (Hesse-Biber, 2006) which often echo violent, colonising projects of history. It is for this reason that Smith (1999), writing from a standpoint of a colonised indigenous Maori tribe, states that the term ‘research’ conjures up bad memories. While Kiguwa (2019) highlights a pertinent feature of feminist knowledge production to this study as seeking to unsettle the apolitical meanings of gender and sexuality that handle gender as an impartial variable sans the social and political history that informs it. This is similar to Fraser’s contention that conducting narrative feminist research involves linking the personal with the political and understanding the effects of social issues in ways that do not hyper individualise, vilify, and pathologise the people experiencing them (2004). In keeping with African and post-colonial feminist tenets and theorisations, Chege (2011) forwards that feminist research acknowledges that there is no universal womanhood or femininity as these are variously constructed and grounded on women’s varied contexts, experiences, desires, and

interests that are influenced by class, race, ethnicity, age and culture which are subject to change. Gill, Purru and Lin (2012) capture that the researcher's contributions to the colonial notion of giving somebody a voice, in fact, contribute to the silencing and othering of participants. Zavala (2013) concurs that when discourses of western or modern research seek to "visibilise" (p.66) the experiences of the historically-marginalised, communities often end up silencing their voices. Similarly, Segalo Manoff and Fine (2015) in their contribution illuminate postcolonial researchers' criticism in augmenting the voices of others by stating that this is where research often falls into 'soft' colonialism (Segal Manoff and Fine, 2015). Reflecting back on my 'conversations' with the Nkomazi women, I am convinced that the works of decolonising and African feminist scholars such as Grosfoguel (2011), Lugones (2006), Maese-Cohen (2010), Maldonado-Torres (2007), Mignolo (2000) and Smith (1999) have impacted me in my interviews with the women to pay attention to "two of the deepest and most hurtful wounds; epistemological and ontological colonial wounds" (Gill et al., 2012, p.11) produced by western colonial institutional regimes that often feel de-humanising and objectifying to 'our' participants. My duty in the field was to facilitate debates around the discourses of sexuality, gender and sexual expression (Batisai, 2013).

Relevant to this study of women's trajectories of oppression through colonisation, the apartheid regime to contemporary South Africa, as part of our struggle for self-determination, 'we' are urged by Smith (1999) to "rewrite" and "re-right" our position in history, to "tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways and for our own purposes" (p.28). As a result, this study has as its focus the liberation of women and feminist research as a method of conducting research. It is against this background that Tamale (2011) skilfully reminds us that, although it is important to be aware of the dangers of uncritically using theories that are constructed in the global north to explain African societies, African scholars need to take cognisance of the fact that "contemporary codes of sexual morality" and most laws pertaining to sex in the "statute books" (p.39) of post-colonial countries are rooted in the history and traditions of former colonising European nations. Bennett and Pereira (2013) underscore issues of research methodology in the field of sexuality and gender studies as challenging and thought-provoking as the findings and new theorisations themselves. (Bennett and Pereira 2013, pp.9 -10). The preceding scholars' contentions correlate well with the principles of decolonisation in that the 'master narrative' (colonial) is not privileged over the African people's narrative but rather the two sources of knowledge complement each other. Smith (1999) in addressing the indigenous people accentuates that indigenous people and

the previously oppressed must set the agenda for themselves as opposed to taking action on western agendas. De Vault (2006) explains feminist research as based on collecting and representing the perspectives of informants. In so doing, the participants are able to express themselves in a language in which they feel most comfortable expressing themselves. In fact, multilingualism is one of the principles that is employed in decolonial research so as to 'destabilise' the colonial imposition of English as the dominant method of communication (Falcón, 2016, p.10). In order to foreground the experiences of the Nkomazi women, this study utilised narrative inquiry. Gabrium and Holstein (1998) conclude that this process allows the participants to shape their stories by also telling their listeners how they can or should be heard. As a result, participants or storytellers are not tied to a fixed narrative perspective. The women became the authors of their narratives as well as editors, by way of constantly monitoring, modifying and revisiting their stories. Gabrium and Holstein (1998) add that this form of editing confirms that the participants or storytellers are never narratively "frozen" (p.171) as authors of the texts they produced.

4.3 Participants

As highlighted in earlier chapters, the researcher who identifies as feminist (pro-feminist) needs to choose a method which enables women's experiences and voices to be distinct and discernible, and this does not only mean choosing an appropriate method (see chapter 4) but also adopting a flexible research approach which adapts to the emerging data (Letherby, 2003). I recruited 30 women from the Nkomazi community that were between the ages of 18 I needed to add 10 more so as to ensure that if some women pulled out, I would still have the desired sample for the study. Moreover, I elected to utilising women between the specified age and above is premised on the notion that older groups of women may be more inclined to discuss issues relating to sex, while women who are younger than the specified age may have required parental or guardian consent for participation. This may have potentially impacted participation due to the nature of the topic, including social attitudes towards sex-related topics. Those under the age of 30 are also referred to as the 'Born Frees'. Of the 30 women, only 26 accepted the invitation and four declined the invitation to participate in the study upon learning that they would be interviewed alongside older women. Some young women also declined as they would be discussing sexual matters and experiences in the presence of 'elders'. The rationale behind the chosen generations of women was to gain an understanding of women's gendered experiences of gender, sex, sexuality and the modes

of sexual expression as they change over time through the changes in socio-political contexts. The number of women was sufficient as the target number for sampling was 20 as I had to take time constraints into consideration. The number of participants gave me the opportunity to obtain an in-depth analysis of the stories of the women. Cameron (2001) with regards to a small sample adds that when the data is “lived experience” (p.14), a small sample allows every respondent ample time to relay the story of her life from her own viewpoint for purposes of discourse analysis. Thus I wanted to keep the groups small to allow most of the women the opportunity to talk about their experiences in a small circle. One can speculate on what would have happened if I had a different demographic in the focus group discussions (FGDs) such as separate group discussions with only younger women. There would have been a different outcome as in this instance the hierarchical nature of the group may have influenced or affected the responses of both younger and older women. However, the sampling and the manner in which it was conducted suited the nature of the study at that time as the aim was to understand how these different generations of women co-construct meanings of sexualities and sexual bodies of women in their daily lives. This also provided an opportunity to be a part of a discussion about women’s intersecting challenges centred on their bodies in the presence of varying generations of women, which is a rare occurrence in some traditional settings in African communities.

Moreover, I explored the experiences and perceptions of sexual expression in this group of women as they were born or grew up after the end of the apartheid era. Furthermore, ten older women from the age of 49 and above were also recruited; this group of women is an equally interesting focus of research as some of them experienced the injustices of the apartheid era. I am also of the opinion that older women are custodians of traditional customs and practices in relation to the sexualities and sexual bodies of women. Thus, two FGDs were conducted with the 20 young and older women, thereafter proceeding with ten individual in-depth interviews with the ten individual older women aged 49 and above. I elected to conduct one-on-one interviews with only the older and elderly women as my interest lay in understanding how, through the story-telling method, older and elderly women signify issues of race, tradition, gender, sexualities and womanhood during South Africa’s most tumultuous political periods. Letherby (2003) declares that single interviews may be used to inform focus-group discussions or the other way around (Letherby, 2003). The one-on-one interviews were particularly helpful as they provided a guide to facilitate the group discussions in interviews that were conducted after the group discussions due to elderly

women's availability. It also served as an advantage as the women proceeded to have follow up discussions on what was discussed in the group. This was helpful for some of the women who may not have had the opportunity to engage fully in the group discussions. In the focus group discussions I elected to combine the two generations of women to explore how women co-create meanings of their gendered experiences of sexualities, tradition, gender and womanhood in the context of contemporary emancipated South Africa. This served the purpose of exploring the differences and similarities of the previously oppressed pre-democratic generation of 'young women' versus the emancipated contemporary young women who some infamously refer to as the 'Born-Frees'.

4.4 Assembling narratives

4.4.1 Interviews

In this part of data collection, I employed unstructured interviews (also referred to as open-ended or narrative interviews) with ten older women aged 49 and above. Davies (2003) and Kelly (2006) explain that unstructured interviews are very close to a naturally-occurring conversation, making it ideal for this research study. Similarly, Corbin and Morse (2003) add that unstructured interviews allow researchers and participants an opportunity to come together to create an informal and intimate conversational space in which participants feel comfortable in narrating their stories (Corbin & Morse, 2003; Ramos, 1989). In agreement, Kvale (1984) states that talking with another person who shares similar interests as you, is authentic in understanding your viewpoint, and is uncritical may be a worthwhile experience for both the researcher and participant. Relevant to the study's objectives, Davies (2003) asserts that in cultures that are ever changing it therefore becomes crucial for the researcher to examine the manner in which individuals construct their identities and social environments given their intricate lives. This piece of information was crucial as I embarked on a journey of life histories, narratives and the dialogues of the elderly women's experiences of sexuality and sexual expression. I agree with Pack (2011) that the way towards understanding people's unique experiences and perceptions of the world is through those individuals' own voices (Wang & Geale, 2015). The interviewing process seeks not to find facts through rigid question and answer interviewing, but rather to allow the interviewees to bring forth

information as they see fit. For this reason a very open-ended question was phrased to the participants in order to allow them the freedom to ‘voice’ their experiences without being restricted by predetermined questions. The structure of the interviews was flexible enough to permit topics to be covered in the order most suited to the women. The open-ended nature of the research questions was aimed at providing the women with an opportunity to recount their pivotal and meaningful experiences without being compartmentalised into homogenous categories (Patton, 1990; Babbie, 2011). This was aimed at capturing the elderly women’s representations of their experiences of gender sexuality and tradition. For example, “Please tell me about some of your experiences as a young girl journeying into womanhood”, followed by probes. During the interviews the elderly women offered in-depth representations of both personal experiences and those based on their observations. In order to achieve depth of answers in terms of exploration, probes were utilised. Wang and Geale (2015) add that narrative inquirers are not primarily concerned with uncovering the truths of storytellers’ accounts, but rather the meanings depicted in the form of a story. Thus, the purpose of narrative enquiry is to uncover the meanings of the women’s experiences as opposed to objective truths devoid of context (Wang & Geale, 2015). I also made use of follow-up questions in the interviews so as to obtain a deeper and fuller understanding of the older women’s perceptions and experiences of womanhood and sexual expression (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003).

In addition, I selected a biographical approach as a research method; the approach is defined by Corbin and Morse (2003) as an oral account of the participants’ life experiences in the form of stories in a connected narrative as told to the researcher. This research method allowed me an opportunity to understand the cultural milieu as well as the social worlds of Nkomazi district older women through their personal accounts and narratives of gender and sexuality in the contexts of oppression such as apartheid, while providing them free rein to shape their own narratives (Legard et al., 2003). Moreover, the women were able to denote their personal journeys and interpreting other phenomena that they perceived as constructing their lived experiences (Mbilinyi, 1992; Batisai, 2013). Punch (2005) adds that the merits of the biographical or narrative approach are embedded in the realisation that qualitative data can take a story format and can also be gathered in that format. The biographical method was suited to this study as it held the potential to claim silenced histories as well as position the colonised nation as creators of their own past (Pack, 2011). As a result, I realised that the feminist interviewing methods were best suited to this study as they

are more reflexive and interactive with the aim of taking a non-hierarchical approach. The narratives of the women are of great significance to the study's findings in terms of understanding the manner in which individuals' sense of self and those of nations are constructed or reconstructed as they change in response to changing circumstances (Batisai, 2013). To capture the meaning of what I observed, the conversations were audio-recorded with prior permission from the participants. The interviews were conducted in *isiZulu* (one of the 12 official languages in South Africa) as most of the participants understand *isiZulu*. The interviews were transcribed in *isiZulu* and then translated into English. For some of the words and idioms I had to use direct translations. Some of the words when translated into *isiZulu* were at times received as vulgar and inappropriate to question elders. However, every question I posed to the elders was executed with the utmost respect, while also emphasising that the main reason for my presence in the community was to learn from them and to understand their perceptions of their environment.

4.4.2 Focus group discussions

Focus groups involve small groups of people with distinct characteristics assembled for a focused discussion on a specific topic to obtain information on the beliefs, attitudes, or motivations of participants on a specific topic (Krueger & Casey, 1994; Morgan, 1997). In this method I utilized an interview guide containing seven open-ended questions. I had the freedom to explore, probe, and stimulate discussions among the women (Linhorst, 2002). It could be argued that the focus group discussions did not occur in a natural setting as I had in my possession a list of questions that I wished to explore. However, I ensured that the discussions appeared spontaneous for the women, even though they had been carefully selected as a function of the expected information (Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkis & Popjoy, 1998).

I aimed at recruiting 20 women for the discussions both young and older women aged 18 and above. Frith (2000) and Hollander (2004) define a focus group as an interaction between research participants that enables the exploration of under-researched topics and provides insight into the participants' common discourses on sexual matters. According to Kitzinger (1994), the anonymity of a group of strangers, or the presence of empathetic others divulging similar experiences or ideas might encourage candid responses because it provides a sense of community. Hollander (2004) suggests that FGDs reduce experimental demand as the researcher is permitted to disappear into the background allowing the participants to take control of the discussion. Hollander (2004) also

adds that, compared to other research methods, focus groups emulate the kinds of discussions participants might have in their daily lives. I believed that the focus group context would benefit the women because they were able to understand that their experiences are shared by others, and affirm their experiences and views (Frith, 2000; Madriz, 1998). My aim in utilising FGDs was to gain insights into women's perceptions and meanings of the notion of sexual expression. In this activity, I recruited twenty female participants; ten were young women also known as the 'Born Frees' between the ages of 18 to 34 years and another group of ten women consisted of older women aged 49 years and above. I elected to conduct group discussions with young women to explore the ways in which the structural permeates the personal, while simultaneously investigating the shifts in elderly women's perceptions and narratives of pre and post-apartheid South Africa. The group discussions were better suited to understanding contemporary young women's perceptions and experiences of the post democratic state. This is due to the fact that they do not possess first hand experiences of pre-democratic states and that their perceptions may be influenced by elders as well as the media, thus, their narratives would not have yielded richer narratives in comparison to those of older women. The two focus groups allowed a space for the diverse generations of Nkomazi women to come together and create meanings of sexual expression. Moreover, the FGDs were audio-recorded with prior permission from the participants and were approximately two to three hours long. As anticipated, the FGDs provided participants with a platform on which to respond and debate on less sensitive and non-personal questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). The interviews in the two focus group discussions included a list of seven questions followed by probes that were dependent on the information that the women divulged and also a list of follow up questions. In my line of exploration, I was guided by Chege's (2011) suggestion of feminist questioning and questions to explore. I had the following questions in mind as a guide to my inquiry and as a means to contextualise women's experiences to their location. Chege (2011) advises feminist researchers' inquiries to be guided by the questions that follow:

- What entails women's oppression in a particular context?
- What are the sources of this oppression?
- What should be done to eradicate the oppression and bring about empowering change for women?

In anticipation of the responses, the questions were classified into the categories as outlined by Krueger (1994 in Freitas et al., 1998) as follows:

Opening questions served the purpose of easing participants into the discussion about topics relating to sex. This line of questioning allowed for quick answers and enabled the identification of characteristics or views that the women had in common. For example, the question asked was, “*How would you define sexuality?*” This was followed by the question, “*Describe some of your definitions of sexual expression?*” Following this, *introductory questions* were asked to introduce the general topic of discussion and to provide the women with an opportunity to contemplate previous experiences. For example, the question asked was, “*What are some of your perceptions of women’s sexualities, bodies and sexual expression?*” In the *transition questions*, the conversation moved toward the key questions of the research project. As an example, “*Describe some of the cultural beliefs and values for sexual bodies that women have adopted*” This was followed by *key questions* that addressed the study, for instance, “*Describe some of South African women’s experiences of embodying (female) gendered bodies in the context of a democratised (emancipated) country.*”

To conclude the session *ending questions* were asked. Here we considered everything that was said, allowing the women to consider all of the comments shared in the discussion and to identify which were the most important ones and the women were also thanked for availing themselves and ‘stripping’ themselves bare for this project. Here, I summarised in a few minutes the key questions and main ideas that emerged during the discussions, allowing the women a few moments to reflect on what was discussed. In the *final question*, following the summary and ending question, I briefly explained once again the purpose of the study. To close our sessions, I asked the women if there was anything they would like to add and if we were “forgetting anything” – some of the women raised follow up statements made by other group participants. Others suggested that such discussions need to be had more often as they had learnt skills on being active sexual agents in their relationships by listening to other women’s experiences of sexual relationships. One of the women in our on-on-one sessions referring to the group discussion added as follows:

“This discussion helped because it prevented me from doing the wrong things, sometimes you might think what you are doing is right and all other women are doing the same, whereas you are harming yourself and exposing yourself to diseases.”

Here she was referring to the practice of dry sex. This question assisted and enhanced the questions to explore in the next focus group.

Frith (2000) outlines significant advantages of focus groups for sexuality researchers as follows:

- Focus groups discussions are beneficial for exploration of under-researched topics.
- They allow the researcher to acquire knowledge on the language and the vocabulary that is normally used by participants in talking about their sexual activities.
- They provide a space for participants to feel comfortable in talking about sexual experiences and encourage people to talk about sex.
- Focus groups allow researchers to assemble diverse opinions, experiences and perspectives at a single sitting. The unstructured format of focus groups allows for the disclosure of unanticipated issues.
- Focus groups can tap into previously undervalued topics because participants have the platform to navigate into discussions that are of personal concern to them.

Below I highlight some of the limitations and disadvantages of focus group as outlined by Kitzinger and Barbour (1999 in Lindhorst 2002, p.223):

1. The number of questions that can be addressed in focus groups tends to be small because of the time-consuming nature of group discussion and the probing into new or related areas that inevitably takes place. Furthermore, analysis of focus group discussions has been identified as complex and time consuming. It may also prove challenging identifying individual voices, particularly when they talk over each other. I pre-empted the dynamics of interviewing a group of individuals. Thus, in addition to the voice recorder, I noted down discussions where individuals talked over each other and some of the women who made side comments.
2. It takes a considerable amount of time to review audio recordings, written transcripts, or written notes from focus groups, and then the researcher must interpret the discussion within the context of the group interaction.
3. The logistics of organising and conducting focus groups can be difficult – it proved near impossible to get all the women in one place as they all had differing schedules that clashed with some of the dates that we had all agreed on.

4. Selecting participants - the challenge was deciding on who forms part of which group as some of the women pre-judged the participants based on appearances as either too 'strict' or too 'shy' to engage in matters relating to sex. I explained the nature of the study and that it was a part of the study design to have the women combined as opposed to only interviewing a specific group of women alone.
5. Finding a comfortable location was difficult, especially one that would accommodate us for the two sessions of the group discussions and on specific dates. The venues for the one-on-one interviews were easy to secure as most of the women preferred being interviewed in their own homes. For purposes of fairness and neutrality, we opted to get a neutral venue in efforts to avoid bias and also one that was central to all the women to avoid travelling costs and to save everyone time from travelling to and from the venue. We were left with two options to choose from, one was the church to which some of the women were opposed as discussing sex in church appeared inappropriate. The second option we were presented with was the HBC centre – we requested that the senior staff including the manager excuse themselves from the discussions. We also considered the times that the centre would be available and where most of the staff would not be present.
6. Chief among the limitations, according to Kitzinger and Barbour (1999 in Lindhorst 2002, p.223), is maintaining confidentiality, which is considerably more difficult in a group setting - these were more based on the participants' perceptions and trust among group members. Once trust was established the participants were at ease. We explained that some of the women have been part of studies before and have never divulged information about the participants, and others explained being a part of health programmes exposes them to people's sensitive information such as individuals' HIV status. Most of the women were well versed on issues of confidentiality and trust in research settings.
7. Dominant voices – we could not escape dominant voices in the discussions, particularly when elderly women utilised their authority as elders to 'drive' the discussions. To manage this we developed a stick method - whoever possessed the stick could talk for a certain time and then pass it on to the next speaker. It did not eradicate the 'problem' but it helped to manage the discussions seamlessly.

4.5 Credibility in qualitative narrative feminist research

Quality concerns are central throughout all steps of this research process from the inception of a research question to conducting the interviews, the analysis and the presentation of the research outcomes (Ali and Yusuf, 2011). Ali and Yusuf affirm that quality must be an essential and obvious part in qualitative inquiry (Ali & Yusuf, 2011). I reflected on the number of participants involved and the insights that their testimonies would yield. I reflected on the reasons some of the stories were taken up, and also in what ways and also what makes a testimony convincing and relevant. Which of the women's stories resonate with others, how and in what ways? Lastly, utilising my own criteria of honesty, transparency and accountability, the trustworthiness of the stories could be determined (Fraser & Taylor, 2016 in Fraser & McDougall, 2017). In addition, Popay et al. (1998 in Horsburgh) identify that the main criterion of good qualitative research is the provision of sufficient detail to enable the reader to interpret the meaning and context of what is being researched and disclosing the research the experience as a process, enabling an 'audit trail' of the research process. While readers may not share the interpretation of the research findings, they should nonetheless be able to discern the means by which it has been reached (1994).

4.6 The research process

Upon receiving ethical clearance from the University of South Africa (Appendix A), I then proceeded to contact the two women from Nkomazi whom I had worked with in previous projects as well as in my master's research project. I had prepared them when I registered for this PhD project that, if possible, I would like their participation in my latest project. They were keen to work with me once again and assured me that they would assist me in the recruitment of more women. Initially I had recruited ten older women and I needed to add five more so as to ensure that if some women pulled out I would still have the desired sample for the study. Most of the women who participated in the previous master's project became the promoters I contacted one of the women who is currently a manager at a home-based care centre where I worked as a President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief fellow for over a year.

I contacted her to request assistance in securing a venue for the FGDs as well as a central venue for all participants to meet and so I could also meet the older women who would participate in the in-depth interviews. In a little over a month, the venue was confirmed as well as the number of

participants for the study. I then proceeded to travel to Mpumalanga for my first meeting with the women. Upon my arrival, I was assured by one of the elderly women that the Chief was aware of my presence in the community and had no qualms as I grew up there and the women expressed to him the usefulness of the research project as they felt it would be beneficial to the young women as well as their small youth project. I arrived in Mpumalanga in the morning, but our meeting only started later in the afternoon as we were waiting for the grandmothers to finish their daily chores and some had to wait for the grandchildren to come back from crèche. Upon their arrival, I quickly realised I had to keep the meeting brief as it was very noisy with all 20 women in one place and some had brought their grandchildren along. I explained the nature of the research, although most of them were already aware as the woman I had enlisted for recruitment explained it to them since I had forwarded the consent form to her and requested that she brief the women so that when they came for the meeting they already knew what to expect. All went well: most of the women were willing to participate and we charted dates for the in-depth interviews as well as the two FGDs. I circulated a roster with dates and requested that the women indicate their availability. We resolved to have two FGDs as it was a large group. The older women had reservations upon realising that they would have discussions with younger girls about sex. Some expressed that it was unbecoming to have such discussions around ‘children’. The young women felt the same – they expressed that the ‘gogos’ would judge them and even tell their parents if they possessed more knowledge than they should about sex. The manager of the HBC project as well as her assistant who was in her 50s were able to connect with the older women on their level and assured them that, if at any point they felt uncomfortable, they were not obliged to stay and that no references would be made to their sexual experiences directly.

She further assured them that this was a good opportunity for both older and elderly women to connect on issues that impacted them daily and deeply such as their gender and sexuality. She continued that mothers as well as grandmothers do not have these opportunities to talk about sex with the young women in their families – hence we were seeing so many girls being abused by “sugar daddies” and some falling pregnant while still at school. She also said that this project aligned well with the objectives of their organisation which aimed to serve the children in the community. They wanted to find out from the young people themselves what programmes worked better for them and what the AIDS programmes could improve on, and that discussions on matters of sex would help guide the questions and open up a dialogue in many families within the

community as well. The young people added that this might be a good idea as they often felt judged by their elders who made them feel like they were reckless and were the faces of HIV. This might be a good opportunity for them to voice their concerns as, when these were raised in different contexts, elders might take them as disrespect or misread them. Most of the women who participated in the previous master's project became the promoters of the study and emphasised its usefulness and the freedom it allowed. One of the women said:

“I did not realise women loved talking about sex so much until I was involved in Tinyiko's thing. You get to learn what women do in private in order to enjoy sex unlike if you isolate yourself, then you don't learn anything new and maybe you may be doing harmful things to your vagina thinking that's what we all doing.”

I emphasised that lunch would be covered for those who had to travel from some distance from the venue and that grandmothers could bring their grandchildren along as we would have a dedicated 'babysitter' to mind the children while we were busy in discussion. The young women who were in school agreed that they would participate after their examination period and that we should not go beyond 16h00 as some of them had to go back home to prepare dinner for the family. Confidentiality was emphasised and consent forms were signed as confirmation that they understood what the study entailed and that they were aware and informed of their 'rights' in the study and that this was not a binding contract as they could pull out at any stage. All was in order and thus the research journey began.

4.6.1 Reflections on the research process

Instabilities and uncertainties are often the grounds from which the most interesting insights and intuitions about realities and possibilities for change emerge (Bennett and Pereira, 2013). It is with this in mind that I begin to detail my experiences of the research process. Thus, Ampofo argues that feminist narrative research demands that feminist researchers be reflexive about their positioning as researchers in the field (2009). Reflexivity refers to active acknowledgement by the researcher that their actions and decisions unavoidably influence the meaning and context of the experience under inquiry. By means of reflexivity I understood that I am an integral part of the 'world' I was studying and also that it is impossible to detach myself in relation to assembling of the stories, analysis and the interpretation (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993; Porter, 1993; Mason,

1996). Phiri and Nadar (2010 in Nadar, 2014) add that being reflexive signifies that one recognises that the process of research is as vital as the product.

I therefore I agree with Ampofo's contention that we are only able to maintain 'our' own strength as feminist scholars and activists through constant reflection in both the personal and communal contexts as well as appreciating 'our' privileged and also disadvantaged positions in some contexts (2009). Instead of setting aside our emotions and ethics from the process, Ampofo encourages that we embrace them as a part of the process, as emotion and intellect are argued to find a meeting space in narrative research (2009). Similar to Ampofo (2009) Collins (2000 in Nadar, 2014) discerns emotion as a measure of the validity and credibility of an argument. Most importantly, Ampofo illuminates that, when it comes to the lives of women on the continent, often these are our daily experiences or that of our mothers, aunts and sisters, which could possibly lead 'us' to offer a more sensitive outlook (2009). In addition, Reinharz and Davidman (1992) explain that the strong connection between the researcher and the participant is an indication that the relationship had "left" (p.263) the realm of research and had entered into the personal lives of participants. Thus, it is in these contexts that feminist research takes on political action (Chege, 2011). In addition, reflexivity is argued also to be reflected by the researcher's use of the 'first person' when describing parts of the research in which personal involvement is evidenced (Webb, 1992, 1996). Given the involvement of the researcher in the research process, Horsbrugh points out that the question will not be whether the information is biased, but rather to what extent the researcher has rendered transparent the processes by which data was collected, analysed and presented (2002). Moreover, reflexivity in research also means considering the implications and myriad ways of posing research questions, framing particular issues and experiences as 'problems' that require intervention, and the powerlessness of participants in framing and presenting their own issues and concerns (Boonzaier and Shefer, 2006 in Kiguwa, 2019).

Reflecting on my experience in the 'field', I was not prepared for what was to come, although I had convinced myself that I had done all the necessary preparations for the fieldwork. I had interview guides with me so as to ensure that I remained within the boundaries of the topic, and I was convinced I possessed all the good skills to proceed with the interview process, coupled with the knowledge I had gained from the literature consulted. I resumed fieldwork with the intent to collect and thereafter analyse the data. On hindsight, I realise that my approach was not that

different from how the colonial researchers approached research as well as their relations with the ‘subjects’ of their enquiry. Similarly, researchers elsewhere in this work refer to this manner of conducting research as dehumanising to the research participants (Smith & Coombs, 2003). In fact, scholars have problematised terminology such as the ‘collection of data’, ‘research’ and ‘data analyses’ as dehumanising to participants and their experiences (Roy & Starosta, 2001). As a result, I maintain that the manner in which I approached the research process as well as the participants positioned me in a state of arrogance and privilege, resembling that of a colonial gaze into the lives of the subaltern.

Furthermore, it was in my first one-on-one interview that I came to the realisation that my journey with the Nkomazi women was taking a different turn from the one I had envisioned. I was bitterly disappointed and grappled with the fact that I perceived the participant as not answering my questions nor comprehending the probes I was providing her. What stood out was the barrier we experienced in terms of the language used to describe sex-related questions and experiences; the terminology contained in the questions was a direct translation from the English language. As the interview progressed, the participant was tense as some of the words relating to sexual experiences sounded vulgar and taboo when expressed in an African language. Similarly, Tamale (2011) in her work on researching sexualities among African women cautions that, in terms of language, it may be challenging to translate words that may be non-existent in the research language. Given my experience, I paused fieldwork for some time in order to reflect on what I perceived to have gone wrong and came back to Pretoria from the research site in Mpumalanga. Fortunately, my academic supervisor had set up an appointment for us to meet in order to discuss my fieldwork experiences and to map a way forward. I was relieved at this opportunity as I could discuss what I had perceived to be an impasse in my project.

Cameron and Kulik (in Mateveke, 2017) illuminate that the language that the women have access to for representing issues of sex and sexuality exerts a noteworthy effect on what is taken as possible, normal and desirable. Cameron and Kulik further argue that there is a relationship between the linguistic representation of sex or sexuality with power relations, and language serves as an important element in the political struggles around sexuality (in Mateveke, 2017). The discussion challenged my views on how I perceived research and the participants. It was through this project that I had resolved to reverse the damage that research has caused to indigenous

people's lives and the manner in which they perceive themselves due to 'our' interference. After much introspection, I resumed fieldwork with the intention of having conversations with the women instead of viewing my encounters with them as research interviews. I was prepared to journey with the older women and the young women in their narratives; they are individuals who had seen me grow up and some had observed my growth as a child and into the woman I am today. It was at that point that I experienced relief and could express myself and also allow the women to take their stories wherever they wished with no boundaries set by a list of questions or an interviewer gazing at their responses as if to make a 'discovery' and to pathologise their experiences. In this instance, I draw from Harrison's (2008) advice that key to conducting narrative interviews is learning to listen, and providing the participants the space to talk. In the process of conversing with the women, I soon became aware of my 'imperial privileged' position. I did not view myself as such due to my background in that area as well as the people. However, I found myself constantly renegotiating my insider position in the discussions. I had to accept the fact that I was a university student studying towards a qualification, thus presenting me as a researcher much like other researchers who had also come into our communities to conduct research. In some instances, I was referred to as a psychologist or a social worker "*sent by Zuma*" (government) through the university to identify problems in the community in order for the Department of Social Development to come and assist that community. I recall during the focus group discussion with both young and elderly women that one of the older women proceeded to say the following:

"I am speaking to you young people, a psychologist has come as far as Pretoria to address you and to find out what your problem is, why are you having so many children while you unemployed and unmarried. Tell her; she is here for you."

The above extract indicates that individuals still view research as a quest for pathology in underprivileged communities; they do not perceive themselves as possessing intellectual knowledge that we seek to learn from. Furthermore, my journey with the women highlighted the fact that "issues of survival and struggle take precedent over issues of knowledge production" (Zavala, 2013, p.66); as an example, in the in-depth interview that I had with one of the older women she expressed that the community was tired of research institutions coming to "*take information from them and not coming back to them with solutions for their struggles*":

“You know they open up this well of pain and then leave you like that and not come back to assist you based on what you told them. I am only talking to you because you are like my grandchild; otherwise I don’t want to hear from those people who exploit our pain just so they can write big reports and forget about us.”

These thoughts resonated in me that we cannot continue to conduct research and leave the community without having made an impact; thus, decolonial scholars and thinkers encourage researchers to view research journeys as invitations to dialogue. Moreover, participants had conflicting emotions regarding the research process. In a focus group discussion, one of the older women instructed me to switch off the recording device because my professor did not need to “hear this” and that, as my elder, she did not wish to misrepresent the community. The participant further expressed that it was now up to her to represent me well in the eyes of the academic community that I belonged to so that they could see that “*I come from a decent area*” and that I was raised well. In our in-depth discussion, some of the older women often questioned my presence in the area: “*Why come here, now? This area is not what it used to be. I wish you had come at a better time.*” The views of the community of women that I interacted with echoed Smith’s (1999, p.1) sentiments that to indigenous people “research has become a dirty word”.

In addition, I have also had to contend with the idea that I am a young African woman raised in a context that forbade discussions around sex with elders. In cases where such discussions do occur, they are done in a discrete environment; in some cases, the ‘talk’ was reserved for young women who were initiates or women who were entering into marriage. Thus, sex in my family and in most circles in my community is considered a taboo topic. In contrast, during the in-depth discussions that I engaged in with the older women and in the FGDs, the older women were quite pleased to divulge details around sex as well as their experiences. In fact, during these discussions, the elderly women took the liberty to educate young women on matters relating to sex:

“Young women know nothing about sex, although you think you do. It is our job to impart that knowledge. No matter how educated you are you need to know the power your sexuality holds. Ask us – we’ve been there.”

Furthermore, I found my fieldwork journey a humbling experience as well as enlightening. Particularly with the in-depth discussions I had with the older women in their homes, I experienced

a connection far deeper than that of a researcher-participant relationship. Interestingly, I was viewed as one of the children in the home; the older women would come to me with complaints about their grandchildren's wrongdoings as a grandmother would to her eldest grandchild. In the process of conducting the in-depth discussions, I was praised and affirmed as a strong black woman who had done her family and community proud. In most cases, upon my arrival for the interviews, I would often find the women busy with their daily chores including taking care of their grandchildren which often took precedence over our interview. In most cases, I assisted with the chores; this proved advantageous as we could ease into the topic and it would quickly turn into a normal conversation. For instance, while busy doing laundry, I would learn about "my grandmother" as she recounted stories of resilience and being a young black woman in the confines of tumultuous political periods in South Africa.

4.7 Analysis

Relevant to the study's aim, Kiguwa (2019) adds that feminist narrative analyses aim to explore women's accounts of their everyday and social worlds with a view to understanding and making visible how women navigate socio-political, economic and other relational dimensions of power in society. For example, in the context of this study, this would entail exploring how women navigate their gendered roles in hetero-patriarchal relationships and society as well as low economic social status. In so doing, it illuminates interpersonal networks of power that exist outside of the margins of research, engaging with a marginalised community and demonstrating structural inequalities in the women's daily lives (Kiguwa, 2019). The objective of this study was not only about the accounts of the women's experiences of sexual expression within the context of a democratic South Africa. Rather, it was viewing their stories as a way of imagining a decolonised South Africa. Similarly, Hardy (1987, as cited in Robert & Shenhav, 2014) reflects this core idea: "We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticise, construct, learn, hate and love by narrative" (p.5).

Furthermore, narrative analysis is said to be making the choice of re-righting the power imbalances between the so-called experts and the research 'subjects' (Robert & Shenhav, 2014). Furthermore, Kim (2016) advises that researchers should not confine themselves to one model so as to ensure that they are able to extract the richness of the lived experiences of the research participants. Kim

(2016) observes that narrative analysis is an attempt to describe the manner in which narrative researchers “story the world” (p.198), centring on construction of meaning of events and experiences through the researcher’s telling and retelling of stories. Kim (2015) points out that data analysis involves interpretation which influences the manner in which the participants’ stories are represented. Kim (2016) further suggests that these concepts work in tandem because narrative information is analysed in order to provide a space that allows the researcher to gain knowledge of the meanings participants give to themselves, their social environment, and to their lived experiences through their storytelling. A narrative approach is concerned not only with the storytelling components or characteristics of an account, but also with the social interactions between interviewer and interviewee that encourage and influence the way that an account is presented. To adopt a narrative approach is to choose to understand and analyse interview information from that perspective rather than, for example, focusing solely on the content of what interviewees are saying or the conversational forms and rules that underlie the interaction (Gilbert 2008, p.8).

In order to get a “meaningful act” of narrative analysis, I drew from two approaches, namely, the approaches of faith and suspicion (Kim, 2016). The approach of faith is based on the belief that what the participants are telling me is a story that is accurate and significant to their sense of their personal experience. Therefore, this approach aims to represent and explore and understand the subjective opinions of the participants and their feelings about the social and historical spaces they live in (Josselson, 2004, as cited in Kim, 2015, p.193). In contrast, the interpretation of suspicion along with the interpretation of faith assists the researcher to go deeper with the analysis and interpretation. Kim (2015) emphasises that the approach is not about being suspicious of what the participants are telling us is true; rather it is about deciphering the implied meaning that may have been overlooked.

Moreover, after much research I discovered that narrative analysis, particularly feminist narrative analysis, is not governed by formulas or recipes. As Fraser argues, this design by its nature is not intended to be governed by such ‘formulas’ and ‘recipes’ (2004, p.186) Thus, for analysis I followed some of Fraser’s (2004) suggested tentative narrative analysis phases, and to contextualise the women’s experiences and stories to African contexts I was guided by some of the questions suggested by Chege (2011) to consider when analysing African women’s stories in feminist and gender research. In the phases that follow, thematic content analysis was performed

and emphasis placed on ‘what’ the women said. Reissman (n.d) highlights that this thematic approach becomes valuable in identifying common thematic elements across research participants and the events they report, such as the women’s experiences of marriage and navigating the workplace and the city life under the oppressive state and also young women’s common experiences of the exclusionary nature of democracy for individuals located on the periphery of the pleasures of service delivery. Equally, I paid attention to the ways in which the women narrated their stories, the ways in which the women in selecting particular narrative devices made their stories persuasive. Here, I looked for the varying and at times similar ways in which women narrated experiences of embodying female-gendered sexual bodies and their expressions thereof and the language that the women utilised to describe their experiences and perceptions of women’s sexualities and sexual bodies. I further paid attention to moments where I believed myself and the storytellers co-created meanings; storytelling is by its nature a process of co-construction. This involved question and answer exchanges between myself and the women. As an example, in one of the focus groups I interacted with the women to gain clarity as to what they meant when they said “women’s bodies lose value”. This approach was more prominent in the group discussions in order to facilitate a discussion among myself and the participants and to follow up with questions on topics or points that the women wished to explore themselves. This line of questioning was possible because narrative research is orchestrated around storytelling, allowing the use of a conversational style of interviewing (Coates, 1996; Riessman, 1993 in Fraser, 2004).

In this co-construction, stories are woven within the interaction of telling, listening, and conversation, rather than representing a single truth through the recounting of a specific time or event (Fraser & McDougall, 2004). Evident in the women’s narratives, Fraser and McDougall add that feminist narrative researchers analyse the manner in which language may be utilised in order to normalise or resist gender stereotypes and express condemnation or support (2004). Similar to the contributions of Fraser and McDougall, I also noted how the women were appearing to interrupt each other, often talking at once and often finishing each other’s sentences, even though most were not known to each other prior to the group (2004). Rather than read these utterances as impolite, I viewed this as ways in which collaborative stories were being built, reflecting shared knowledge and experience of embodying a female gendered sexual body in otherwise patriarchal contexts (Fraser & McDaugall, 2017).

Below I refer to phases that were followed in order to assist with the analysis process outlined in Fraser (pp.186-195) and Chege (2011, p.115) and alluded to in the preceding discussion. The research should ask (Chege, 2011, p.115):

- What are the women saying?
- What are the women actually doing?
- What gender differences can be observed through the research?
- How does the research issue affect women differently?
- What role do gender relations play in various contexts?
- What power relations have been observed through the process of conducting the research? What about between the researcher and participants?

What about amongst the participants themselves?

Below, I describe some of the phases that I followed in the analysis of women's narratives, as outlined in Fraser (2004, pp.186-195):

4.7.1 Interpreting individual transcripts

In this phase I noted some of the specific themes for each of the women's stories, including the group discussions. This involved identifying the directions of women's stories, as well as any contradictions, for instance to emphasise the changes in time, such as the country's political climate and to separate themselves from young women of today. To reflect the status quo of the country, the stories circled around the mischievous behaviours of young people of today and unrestrained behaviours of contemporary elders in comparison to those of the previous generation. These stories were narrated in order to drive a point home about the stark differences between young people of their times to those of today. I further noted some contradictions in the women's narratives in terms of the 'then' being better than the 'now'.

They emphasised that the young people are misusing the freedom afforded to them and that then people's behaviours and movements were more restrained and opportunities were not available for black people. In the group discussion, the women appeared to be colluding with oppressive patriarchal ideals regarding women's bodies and behaviours but at the same time resisting and

condemning the very same patriarchal ideals for sexual bodies of women. The language and tone of voice in the stories were also viewed as significant. For instance, in the personal narratives when the women referred to their experiences of working for white families, they would still refer to being a domestic worker as working in the *kombuis* – an Afrikaans term referring to kitchen – thus touching on racist ideologies that referred to domestic workers at the time as ‘kitchen girl’ and the word *ikhafula* also known as *kaffir* (a derogatory term used to refer to black people in apartheid times) was used by the women to refer to themselves as they narrate how the white people at the time perceived them. I noted that when the women storied their conversations with their previous employers it was mostly done in Afrikaans and the one young woman in one of the group discussions had an Afrikaner friend, so she mostly storied her interactions with the friend in Afrikaans. Women also used demeaning terms when referring to sexualities and the bodies of people who were labelled as not supposed to be sexually active as a mechanism to silence those people’s sexualities or to shame them. I also found it significant that the elder women particularly in the discussions utilised ‘vulgar’ language more than they did in the one-on-one interviews. The tone of voice would change in the discussions when the elderly and older women were counselling the younger women in the group and when they were referring to the mischievous behaviours of young people. Topics relating to sex stimulated a lively discussion and at times an emotionally charged discussion as the women disagreed on some topics. Women also utilised collective words to refer to each other as women or as the elders in the community.

4.7.2 Scanning across different domains of experience

Central to the decolonial framework and African feminism(s) is the preclusion from fixating on one dimension of life and avoiding (hyper-) individualism. This was achieved by examining and interpreting women’s stories from different domains of their life experiences (McCabe and Bliss, 2003; Segal, 1999 in Fraser, 2004). Women’s personal stories were examined for their intrapersonal, interpersonal, cultural and structural aspects, i.e. seeing women’s lives as intersecting with various aspects in their lives.

Intrapersonal aspects of stories may be seen to be those that involve intra body-mind experiences (Simon, 1996 in Fraser, 2004). For example the intrapersonal aspects were reflected in some of the personal narratives of D who, referring to an incidence wherein she witnessed a young woman being violated, stated, “...and I thought to myself, what they are doing to this poor girl?”

N said, referring to young men making debasing comments to women who do not accept their sexual advances “... *I said to myself why is he referring to her as a dog, as if she’s eating off bones from their family’s table?*” Sometimes they are evident through narrator self-talk and may involve rehearsing possible courses of action or ‘confessing’ to thoughts and feelings that are concealed. Interpersonal aspects of stories are quite literally those that involve other people (Gagnon and Simon, 1974; Simon, 1996). Sometimes they appear through lines in stories that involve ‘reported speech’, for instance, ‘I said, he or she said’. Cultural aspects of stories often refer to larger groups of people and sets of cultural conventions. Dominant discourses were significant in women’s arguments and perceptions of themselves and their bodies, thus making references to their class, gender, ethnicity as well as other modes of social organisation (Mullaly, 2002 in Fraser, 2004). Thus, Chege (2011, p.110) highlights the importance of context in exploring the settings and the reasons women have continued to experience what they experience - as women in relation to men - helps to validate women’s claims about their worlds. Such settings and reasons constitute the contexts of women’s lives that entail history, political economy and material realities, all of which need critical examination singly and jointly. In examining these contexts, it is imperative to ask guiding questions such as how come unhelpful but dominant stereotypes are held in place even when they lack scientific basis? Further, in order to understand context, feminist researchers are bound to raise the question: how it is that women find themselves colluding with ideas that hurt them? Or what are women up against when they try and resist or act differently from stereotypes that hurt them? Further, what are women’s successes and triumphs and what are the necessary conditions for these to thrive?

4.7.3 Linking the personal with the political

Over many decades, feminists have underlined the importance of ‘linking the personal with the political’ (Fraser, 2004). At the heart of this study lies the exploration of women’s experiences across different domains of dominant discourses as constituting an interpretative framework (Fraser, 2004). Here I explored how women made sense of politics in their personal lives. Also I looked at what the women’s stories say about their multiple lived experiences of class, gender, race, sexualities, ethnicity, age, pre-democratic South Africa, democratic South Africa and their geographical locations. Thus, I focalised the plurality of African women’s situations (Sheeba 2013) as a key characteristic of African feminism(s).

4.7.4 Looking for commonalities and differences among participants

In this phase I examined the transcripts for commonalities and differences that exist among the women. Similar to the work undertaken on individual transcripts, this was done by comparing and contrasting the content, style and tone of the narrators, while also noting the uniqueness of each of the women's stories. For instance, I classified the women's stories using themes within broad headings for discussion. I then short-listed the stories that I intended to analyse line by line. I short-listed stories that, (1) illustrated how women interacted with dominant stories of contemporary women's sexual bodies and sexualities and behaviours, (2) demonstrated how patriarchal socio-cultural sex scripts were reproduced and transgressed by the women, and (3) highlighted some of the connections between young women's debut romantic relationships and abuse and sexual coercion and fears of early pregnancies. These were relevant to understanding the social roles of the women within their local area so as to embed the stories in their social contexts. Historical considerations, such as the times the women experienced particular social conventions, were also included (Fraser, 2004).

4.8 Ethical considerations

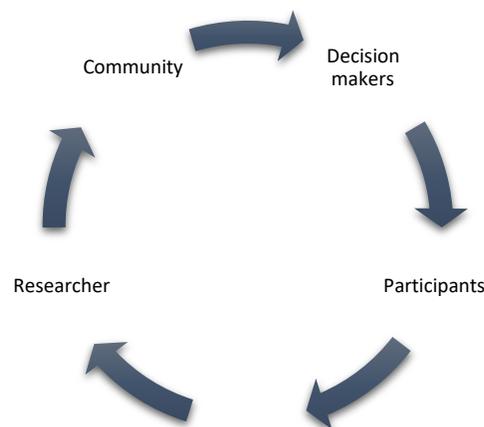
In accordance with the ethics guidelines in academic institutions as well as research that involves human subjects, it is standard ethical procedure to obtain informed consent from all qualitative interviewees (Miller, 2007; Punch, 1994). For this project, ethical clearance (Appendix C) was granted by the research committee at the UNISA based on the fact that the research project emphasised confidentiality and informed consent (Appendix B) for participants interested to participate in the study. I concur with Punch's (1994) contention that a professional code of ethics is a valuable guideline that forewarns researchers about the ethical dimensions of their work, particularly prior to commencing the research project.

In terms of informed consent, the participants were made aware of their rights and the uses to which their stories may be put. In addition, as my supervisor may well have access to the interviews, we also touched on the possibility of being identified. We further discussed that they would have an opportunity to comment and review copies of their transcribed interviews so as to ensure that they had been represented well (Miller, 2007). This was done in order to eliminate the element of betrayal on reading or learning of the publication. Bulmer (1982, as cited in Punch,

1994, p.93) explains that in such a case the participants may feel “cheated and misled by someone in whom they reposed trust and confidence”. Similarly, in order to minimise the aforementioned harm I indicated to the participants that the thesis will be a public document lodged in a library and open to the public (Wallis, 1977, as cited in Punch, 1994, p.93). Reiss (1979, as cited in Punch 1994, p.94), contends that the main cause of harm in social science research are the detrimental effects of the disclosure of personal information. Furthermore, I observed that some of the women were apprehensive about taking part, particularly when they had to sign to signal their consent, which seemed binding. They were thus assured that they could withdraw at any time of the study and had the right to refuse to participate. In order to guarantee confidentiality, the participants were assured that their identities and personal information would not be made public and that pseudonyms would be utilised to ensure anonymity in terms of the presentation of the research findings. We resolved to use letters of the alphabet in place of fictitious names as the concern was the commonality of African names that may expose participants’ identities (Miller, 2007). Likewise, at this juncture I was prompted by Bar-On’s guidance (1996, as cited in Clark & Sharf, 2007) that researching the personal is “a delicate kind of research, because we hold the meaning of people’s lives in our hands” (p.402). As a result, the consent process was a continuous negotiation; however, care was taken to not obstruct the flow of the research process (Clark & Sharf, 2007). Clark and Sharf (2007) emphasise that researchers owe it to their participants to give voice to their experience as fully and accurately as possible, while also making efforts to partner with them in the construction of new understandings. Following Punch’s (1994) line of argument about ethics, academic researchers should not “spoil the field for others” (p.93).

This is supported by Smith’s (1999) poignant statement underpinning the methodology of this study that research has become a dirty word among the indigenous people. This is because the oppressed possess diminutive power and thus their accounts of reality are discredited by the ‘experts’ who possess power such as social scientists (Stanley & Wise, 1993). It is for this reason that I concede with Stanley and Wise (1993) that “social science or other ‘expert’ versions of reality (including feminism as an expertise) should have no privileged status vis-à-vis those of the people who live in the ‘situations’ which are being researched” (p.173). Research has been part of colonisation, carrying stereotypes of primitive and the diseased and fecund sexualities of African people [women] (Olsen, 2016). It is for this purpose that I refused to conduct and write up my research in a similar manner to my predecessors because “the role of research in the colonisation

of indigenous communities and territories is not a thing of the past, but of the continuing present” (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Mkabela (2005) reasons that research has overlooked, misinterpreted and marginalised the value of African indigenous communities. In response to the complicity of academia in the marginalisation of black African women’s voices and the exploitation of black Africans for research purposes, I thus position my thesis among scholars’ debates in the need for indigenous and decolonising methodologies (Olsen, 2016). Since research is political, as such, this thesis is responding to the political context in which it takes place, that is the marginalised voices as well as narratives of sexuality and agency of stories of rural South African women. Borrowing from the Afrocentric paradigm named “Afrocentricity” by Molefe Asante (1987) that declares, “a profound need for African people to be re-located historically, economically, socially, politically, and philosophically” (Mkabela, 2005, p.179), I thus relocated the African as a subject of study. Upon fulfilling the ethical requirements of the university, I then embarked on the “collective ethics” (Mkabela, 2005, p.185) of my community in the research project, namely “ubuntu” which always stresses humanness that is characterised by generosity, love, maturity, hospitality, politeness, understanding, and humility. Figure 3.1 illustrates the spiral method of data collection that I followed. As advised by Mkabela (2005), grounding the spiral method is an ubuntu principle.



The spiral method of data collection

Source: (Mkabela, 2005, p.185)

According to Mkabela (2005), the principles of ubuntu and the diagram above translate as follows in terms of ethics:

1. An appreciation of the importance of all individuals in the research group
2. An understanding that research is part of a very complex (community) whole
3. The respect of heritage authority – I requested one of the participants, an elderly woman, to consult the Chief’s advisors on my behalf explaining my presence in the area as well as my intentions to conduct a study.
4. The inclusion of elders and cultural committees in the research process – I elected to include elderly women as part of the study. Traditionally, elders are regarded as the custodians of knowledge. Young women as well as older women are leaders in some of the community’s dance and cultural groups that focus on educating young women on ‘traditional feminisms’ as well as self-care.
5. An understanding of the interconnectedness of all things (including the spiritual) and a required long-term perspective in dealing with research issues.
6. Researchers must act in an appropriate and respectful way to maintain the harmony and balance of the group (community). In the focus groups as well as the personal narratives, in spite of my positionality as the ‘expert researcher’, I was still a child to my elders along with the other young women. As children, we knew our place and when to allow the elders to speak, being mindful of certain issues that cannot be expressed in the presence of elders.

4.9 Chapter conclusion

The chapter has presented the theoretical aspects and practical realities of engaging in a decolonial feminist research framework. The dominant discussion involved the selection of data collection and data analysis methods, identifying a research site and research participants, interrogating my positionality, and co-creating participants’ subjective meanings of sexual practices and experience. Underpinning the methodological processes were historical and intergenerational engagements with Nkomazi women’s diverse stories of growing up in South Africa and their experiences of growing old in contemporary South Africa, including their reflections on the status quo of women in the country. Furthermore, the age of the women provided the foundation for examining the narratives that are undergirded by the recognition of a connection between the phases of life and women’s experiences of gender, sexuality and political transition (Batisai, 2013). Ethical considerations were discussed, and are particularly important, given the sensitivities of the research.

Chapter 5: Making sense of political shifts in the personal

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents women's conceptualisations of socio-political shifts in South Africa in the context of their quotidian lives. The first themes of this chapter examine elderly women's experiences of motherhood, employment, separation from their families and confrontation with apartheid authorities' reinforcement of gendered and racial disparities in the city. The chapter also presents women's experiences of the country's political transition from apartheid South Africa to a democratic country. Attention is given to young women's interpretation of the transition into a democratic state as they interrogate and 'problematise' the 'Born-Free' and the rainbow nation narrative. The theme of the last section is about the diverse ways in which women interpret the changes in contemporary youth conduct as influenced by modernisation and the aftermath of the emancipation that came with democracy. Overall, the chapter deals with the changing socio-political landscape in South Africa and how these changes are conceptualised by gendered and racialised bodies.

5.2 Trajectories of working mothers and 'states of the nation'

In this discourse, elderly women interpret questions about their experiences of being gendered female during South Africa's most tumultuous era, that is, the apartheid state. Emerging from their narratives are elderly women's reflections on motherhood, navigating the employment space and the burden of policed black bodies in the urban public space. S reveals the challenges faced by young mothers at the time when they were exacerbated by the restricted movements imposed by apartheid authorities. S recounts marrying a man from a different province to that of her home which subsequently led to her difficulty locating her family members. As she experienced difficulties in her marriage, S longed to return home; however, with the nature of the political climate at the time she experienced difficulties in successfully returning home earlier as she had spent a little over five years to locate the whereabouts of her family members:

... I panicked because I could not remember their address properly; remember I was not sending the letters to my birth home ... no I was sending to where my aunts worked. My

*mother's siblings were scattered all over so that gave me stress, but we serve a living God, right? We wrote several times, we wrote them for months and no response, after some time I got a response and they sent money for me to come back. In the letter, I explained that I am was not happy where I am ... I'm asking that they send me money so I can come back home. I lived with Mamncane [aunt] in Gauteng, there was a town called (*concealed) where she worked ... I don't know what it's called now. I was very fearful of travelling that time. These children laugh at me because I'm scared of using trains ... it's because I was almost killed ... there were riots when students were fighting there in the schools and also people were getting mugged in trains, others killed [pause]they were burning trains [one-on-one].*

In addition, below S interrogates and interprets the narrative of 16 June 1976 that solely centres on the struggles of the youth and has in turn dominated and silenced the experiences of ordinary working mothers and fathers in an oppressive and violent state. S makes sense of citizenship and belonging by revealing how the identification documentation restricted her movements. This documentation permitted black bodies to move around albeit under restrictive conditions. However, S lacked the required identification documents meaning that she did not belong in the city and that exacerbated her chances of harassment from law enforcement officers and even violence:

So, this chaos made me fear travelling. I see on TV they talk about June '76 [only] it was bad before and even after ... people were fighting, sesi ... The situation in South Africa was not good ... I did not have a job waiting for me in Gauteng or work to go to so I feared aboswayini bamaphoyisa [police] were going to give me problems ... Luckily, I didn't stay long without a job because my aunts knew a lot of people [one-on-one].

Similar to S, O highlights that the apartheid era's ideologies of nationalism and citizenship were inculcated in young children as well. O reveals her personal experiences of employment and the contrasts in working for an Afrikaner family as well as an English family. She explains that the English families appeared to be treating black people less harshly as compared to their Afrikaner counterparts, “*amaNgisi [English families] were better, their children were well disciplined ... but amaBhunu [Afrikaaner families] ... yeyi! [exclaims] those children were bad I don't want to lie to you ... I don't ever want to work for those people*”. In addition to an era that endorsed the inferiority of the black race, central to women's stories are glaring examples of women's experiences of the

gender disparities inherent in their daily city lives. The women highlighted that for working mothers in the city the danger of imminent violence was a regular occurrence by virtue of being gendered female. Similarly, the city is painted as an unsafe place for a woman. S in her narrative reveals how she was almost killed while travelling by train in the town due to the riots and violence that were rife in public transport commutes. Other women relay varying stories of violence meted out against women in the city that dissuaded some women from leisurely walking around the city as well as limiting their commutes. Part of being a working mother was wrestling with the irreconcilable guilt of being away from one's children. The elderly women talk about being working mothers as well as absent mothers interchangeably. Thus, the personal lives of these women were woven into the larger tapestry of the South African nation state and the many forms of domination that have marked its unfolding – white over black, rich over poor, old over young, male over female. Not only did the women have to confront these historical forces in their daily struggles to 'make a living', but had to do so in the midst of the chaos and violence resulting from the battle between the apartheid state and those who were trying to overthrow it.

5.3 Separation of families

The motivation for most of the women for being away from their children for extended periods was the fact that they were providing for their children what they lacked as children, while the political climate at the time coupled with the limited financial means of the women made it nearly impossible to move with their children or have frequent home visits. O prides herself for opening a clothing account with one of the popular branded clothing stores at the time, *Sales House*, for her children and maintaining payments with the money she was able to save from her salary. For most of the women, they perceived being 'absent mothers' as a sacrifice for ensuring that their children were exposed to better opportunities through an education as a way out of oppression and poverty. In O's case, her children's school supplies came first, "*Ngamane sishodise kudla sesi*", "we'd rather skimp on groceries than school supplies". For these women, the perceived rewards far outweighed being away from their children as well as the financial sacrifices. However, O highlighted that this was not always the case, "*...I did not mind because I knew they would grow up and take care of me one day ... but now what thanks do I get?*" [one-on-one].

O [one-on-one]: ... *I posted money for them [children] every month and be left with nothing not even a proper underwear or petticoat, even a decent dress to wear for shopping ... and let me tell you, boMmake [domestic workers] from eMakhishini [domestic workers from the cities] wore ama-mini [dresses and skirts] and those things what did we call them again... eheee! bell bottoms ... [Interviewer and Gogo laugh] ...eya, they loved nice things... I did none of those things, why ... because I wanted to take them through school ... well I know they'll [her children] say the money was too little to pay for college but I know they could at least have pocket money and other school things they required, I only earned R40,00 at the time ... heh, you laughing, Tinyiko [refers to interviewer], R40,00 did a lot in those days. [Smiles]...So you see, I was pleased I could buy them things they required for school [One-on-one].*

Reasoning similar to O, M narrates similar challenges and sacrifices she had to undertake as a working mother. Reflecting in some distress on the status of her relationship with her two children - now adults with their own families - she fears that perhaps her children are harbouring feelings of resentment towards her for her absence during most of their childhood. The analyses reveal that, what may be considered as 'normal' adolescent behaviours, M identified as mischief and rebellion for her absence and a loss of opportunities to instil values and discipline in her own way as opposed to someone else taking her place:

... and not this woman of the house [refers to daughter], who is constantly moody and is running after boyfriends ... I didn't like what she had become, maybe if I was around she would have turned out differently. You know when you don't raise children under your own rules such things happen, people don't care they'll say, 'Hhaai, her mother is having a nice time in the city while we raising her children ... that's how your children's lives are ruined...Our children will never understand the tough times we had to endure. They [her children] are parents too, right? They will feel the pain I'm feeling one day, when I'm no more, these children will grow up... just watch ...

Comments such as “*she is having a nice time in the city*” dominated the separation of family discourses as women expressed that their families back home did not sympathise with their struggles in the cities: first, the hardship they endured at the hands of oppressors both in their

private space of work as well as in the public space and, secondly, the agony of being away from all that is familiar to them and the loss of the connections with their children.

5.4 Eating off porcelain plates: dehumanisation and resistance in domestic employment

O's narrative reflects the inferiorisation, dehumanisation, and the exclusion of black citizens and how these disparities played out in interactions with employers. The word '*ikhishi*' or '*e-kombuisini*' is a common phrase in their narratives referring to their places of employment, while '*emakhishini*' is an informal phrase, loosely translated as 'kitchen' to refer to domestic work. A kitchen is a 'safe' space in the home where the warmth of a home is experienced, where meals that bring families together are prepared. However, in the context of the elderly women's narratives, it is a space where racial subjectivities and symbolic violence were common place. O discloses how in the same kitchen she was allocated her own crockery and utensils as it was perceived inappropriate to occupy and share resources with a black person, thus reflecting the segregation struggles that the black race experienced in public space. She reflects on the constant reminders of the inferiority of her race by the aluminium cutlery that she was provided. In the same way, O asserts that the children of the employers were socialised to make the black employees feel inferior:

...Heyi ...mmmk... You know the pain [pause] ... being disrespected by a white child who is much younger than yours even same age and for them to call you by your name; "Martha" some of them didn't have manners they would call you "Girl [One-on-one].*

O's discontentment with the children's treatment of black employees reveals how in some African traditions it is taboo and unheard of to refer to an elder by name, as elders in African communities are revered and held in high regard. In the communities where O came from at the time she and her counterparts would be referred to as *u-Ba-be* or *Mkhulu* or *Mma-ke* or *Gogo uMmake*. However, because they were in a place where race imposed its presence through subjugating another, the black race was reduced to the status of a child.

Finally, O decides to defiantly purchase and use the crockery of her employer, resources she was perceived as undeserving to utilise due to her race and her role of servitude:

“...Heh! Sesi, you couldn't even sit in their sofa to watch TV or even eat in their plates. But I used them ... when they were not at home I would use them [the employer's plates] but when they were around the home I used those ugly aluminium plates they gave me ... I saved up a few cents and bought my own porcelain plates, and made sure they saw me eating in them, what did they take me for? I was showing them that this Khafula [Kaffir - a derogatory term previously used to refer to black South Africans] also has nice things”.

Similarly, R suggests that white people were no different to black people and in fact black people were in a better position to question white people's 'humanness':

“How are they [white people] better than us, if we are the ones cleaning up after them. Let's say I take a week off without coming to work you will see the filth, we are much neater and cleaner than them” [one-on-one].

Drawing comparisons of 'then' to 'now', acknowledges the changes that the government following apartheid made with regards to issues of discrimination and equality between the races. R cunningly juxtapositions the administration of Mandela which is associated with freedom and reconciliation with that of former president Jacob Zuma whose administration has been riddled with media reports on corruption and mismanagement of funds, possibly highlighting the narratives of despondent youth in the FGD with regards to the rates of unemployed youth in the area as well as a perceived lack of opportunities for obtaining higher education qualifications:

It's better imagine how a man feels being called 'boy' you know a head of the family someone's father, just imagine what's that...that's in the past now, Mandela saved us unlike Zuma [One-on-one].

5.5 The paradoxes of being 'Born-Free'

Drawing on the preceding excerpt, some of the elderly women acknowledged the fulfilment of some of the promises by liberation leaders in the democratic state and associate liberation from the subjugation of apartheid laws with the legacy of the first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela. This is in comparison to the presidential leadership under former president Jacob Zuma that is marred with allegations of corruption, thus contributing to some of the women's lack of faith in the ethos of democracy under his leadership. Emerging from their reflections in the

focus group discussions are elderly and young women's daily experiences of residing in a democratic state and making sense of the politics of the new South Africa and nationalism. E's narrative below highlights this fact, exposes the paradoxical nature of the 'Born Free' narrative, particularly among the youth who were born after 1994, and also the 'rainbow nation' mantra. E reflects on her childhood, living in suburbia in Gauteng in a middle class family. She relays a story of discrimination, and criticises the same public space that has called for the equal rights of its citizens, and she brings into question the equal rights discourse. She describes that, while her family had assimilated with the 'white culture' – thus occupying 'their' space and for her assimilating into or adopting the culture of the dominant group at the time such as learning to fluently speak their language - ultimately she was made to feel that she was not a part of the nationality that dominated her neighbourhood and school.

E, being one of two black learners in the school, talks about how, even at a young age, when one is not expected to articulate discriminatory behaviour, she talks about the exclusion that she and the other young black boy experienced in the form of school concerts wherein they were 'silenced' by being often allocated what she perceives as insignificant acting roles due to the colour of their skin, thus sending a message that their presence was not welcome in that space (occupying a space that is not meant for her and interacting with a nationality that was previously viewed as superior to her own):

So, let me talk about this black boy I shared a class with ... what was his name [pause] oh yah, Robert I think. For school concerts, me and this black boy we were always dressed as either flowers and he as a tree, I mean he hardly moved, I could at least wave my hands and wiggle my body a bit. For me, that was racism at its core [Focus group discussion].*

E relays that, as she progressed in her grades, the discrimination she had experienced prior to Grade 4 lessened. However, the trauma that she had experienced of discrimination and subjectification of one due to one's skin colour has remained, leading her to the conclusion that, even though a woman of her age is free due to being born in a free state, those ideals were not translated into her private space which has led her to believe that being born in that era does not translate into one experiencing the equality rights and forgiveness that was preached to the nation, leading her to feel traumatised:

Well, it got better from Grade 4 upwards but still I was traumatised as a kid because I always wanted to play the fun roles and I could not understand why, imagine your mom paying to see you standing like that the whole time and these things lasted a week.

For E crafting citizenship means feeling accepted when occupying public spaces and the freedom to occupy spaces that were reserved for nationalities regarded as superior to the black nation. For F freedom and citizenship imply access to education and thus leading to bettering oneself. Contrary to E's sentiments, F, a 31 year old who has had two of her children while in school and managed to complete with the support of family members, acknowledges the success of democracy and a rights discourse. This was due to South Africa's acquired freedom that stipulates the rights of young pregnant women to schooling while pregnant as opposed to the challenges her elders encountered regarding attending school or even completing their studies should they fall pregnant:

I think freedom is right because we can go to school, get an education and have a bright future. In the past women couldn't attend school... once you fell pregnant, you would stay at home and raise your child [FGD].

One of the elderly women, T, added that in earlier times young pregnant women were prevented mostly by their parents from attending school due to their pregnancy because they would teach the other young women 'imikhuba' - loosely translated as being a bad influence on other young women. "Kwamele uti decidele sesi kuthi ufuna kuba ng'Mmake kumbe 'mfundi", S added. You will have to decide whether you want to continue with schooling or you want to take on a role of a mother and neglect the role of a learner. Young women G and J, who are both still in school, make sense of the politics of freedom, democracy, and the country's political transition. They make comparisons of the availability of educational opportunities between themselves and their predecessors. As a result, the young women conclude that contemporary youth emancipation is borne out of these opportunities that their predecessors were denied and it is an individual's decision to accept or obstruct chances of obtaining full emancipation that education promises. Similarly, unplanned teenage pregnancies among contemporary youth are a dominant discourse in the discussions as reflected in later chapters:

Yes, we have changed. Yes, today's conditions are different from those of the past. Things that people did back then are not done anymore. In my opinion, it is right [democracy]. Of

course, it is right because I don't want to live under oppression. I see it as right because I enjoy freedom because I have opportunities to get an education. It's just that I am wasting all that myself, because we have the right to freedom, we are able to do what we want to do [and] at the right time [FGD].

J hints at what she perceives as the exclusionary nature of democracy or 'freedom' for the youth living in rural areas; however, she remains determined that as long as she makes the right decisions such as avoiding falling pregnant while in school and getting good grades, then she will not be bound by her location:

I also feel that 'modern' democracy is right because one is able to do whatever one wants to do. In the past, one would be forced into things against one's will. Now I am OK. There are opportunities available for us now, like you get to do whatever you want without any fear from government telling you where to go or things like that. I can also add to what sesi is saying [refers to A]. She's right that some of the opportunities miss us because we are staying here so at least the guys that are in Joburg have an advantage, but it's not impossible I mean there are some people from here who have done well for themselves. You just have to tell yourself that you want to get out and as long as you work hard you will make it but if you tell yourself that once I finish matric I'm gonna stay home and have children and leave them with Gogo then that's what will happen [FGD].

For young women, making sense of politics is also through their everyday lives and everyday narratives and in making sense of that the two young women's narratives of despair come to mind. The two women have just completed school and are younger and are faced with the 'horror' of having no opportunities available to them despite the work that one has done. E has been looking for bursary opportunities and 'suitable' jobs since the completion of her matric but has had to resort to an unimaginable job for herself as a cleaner in order to support her two children. There is a discourse surrounding working hard and obeying parents' wishes in order to yield a better life or for better opportunities. For them it is the fear of completing high school and having no other career prospects as if you have not gone to school at all and the efforts of getting good grades are thwarted by a lack of opportunities around them. There is also the shame and fear of facing the very people one left sitting at home when going to school and now having to join the growing ranks of the unemployed and non-school goers. There are few or no resources or programmes

aimed at empowering in school as well as out of school youth or assistance for structuring their career choices as opposed to what is assumed is available in the so-called urban areas. What drives the despondent attitude and fears of some of the young people is hearing some of their peers who have completed school narrating stories of hopelessness and disappointment in a system that has promised better opportunities for all and freedom.

A: You know what, sesi [refers to interviewer]. For me, democracy means ... ok let's say for us neh as girls face a challenge ... actually you fear finishing let's say matric because there are no opportunities for us here, you can see for yourself ... Living in a village, you like don't have a choice but to stay at home after completing school. Why... because there are no opportunities here, there is no library or even a youth centre where at least they can help you apply for a bursary or even help you get better marks so you can apply for a bursary to go to tertiary. I mean there is no way my family can afford those fees and also who do I stay with once I get there, what do I eat, what do they eat if they [family] are sending me to school, you see. Some of the girls who quit school and are at home now, they sometimes laugh at you when you complete school and stay at home just like them, they will say, 'What was the use of going to school because now you are doing lok'shion management' [Slang for unemployment or not attending school], it's painful shame, I don't wanna lie [FGD].

Emerging from young women's narratives is the interconnectedness of emancipation and financial security, which a formal educational qualification is considered to provide. If deprived of the latter, the young women vocalised that it may position them to undertake the vulnerable role of 'sugar babies' in transactional sex relationships in order to experience some degree of financial freedom. The paradox of freedom for individuals that do not possess the (financial) means to participate in a democratic country such as ours is to remain in oppressed conditions. E expressed feelings of despondence as she expected better outcomes in the daily lives of contemporary young people in comparison to the youth of earlier times who lived under an oppressive state:

So Ok, I hear the Gogos are saying, now it's better, there's freedom and what-what, but for me it's like OK what do I do with that freedom, if I am destined to be poor just like them? [FGD]

There is a consensus among the women about a perceived excess of freedom leading young people, particularly young women, to engage in risky behaviours that lead to early pregnancies, as elderly women express that contemporary youth are ungovernable due to the children's rights embedded in a democratic state.

5.6 Being choked by the law: complexities of disciplining children

In our one-on-one S described how things could go wrong when the law takes precedence in contemporary young people's lives, displacing the procedures and guidance of the family and again the family is left to pick up the pieces because the law does not operate in ways that serve young people in terms of being reared in family principles, values and discipline. Since young people are not properly educated on the use of their rights, this creates a separation between themselves and their families. This is due to the fact that most of the elderly women regard criminal charges laid against them by a child they have nurtured since birth as an insult and as the ultimate disrespect. S went on to contrast ways of discipline in earlier times as a child herself wherein a rod was used to discipline a child and this was not considered as abuse. It was also performed as a means of disciplining children and not to harm them physically.

Ncobile's actions described in S's excerpt below are considered taboo and disrespectful. S is convinced that the young girl in her care was pressured by friends to ignore the law in her home and instead looked to the judicial system. S asserts that because eNcobile utilised the law for her own selfish means as a way to evade accepted traditional procedures when a young woman has a child outside of wedlock, she opted for an easy way out. Thus, the law further widened the gap between herself and her family:

*The children of today ... I remember I was fighting with *Ncobile...Ncobile* will stay in different people's homes like a beggar and before long, when she came back, she was pregnant. When you follow up ... the other day I looked all over for her ... People saw me looking for her and she was at the Mahlangu* home. That boy came out and said, 'Heh Mmake, go and look for her at such and such a place'. I thought to myself maybe he's right she's not with him ... I searched the whole veld looking for her while she was hiding just nearby this boy's house. It was only when she felt like coming out to talk to me and what-you-call ... and I ... At times, I would reprimand her just by talking. She gave birth and I*

*said to her, 'OK, let the baby stay with the boy's family' and we agreed with the baby's paternal family. But what did she end up doing? She took us to the police station at *Hazyview. I just got a phone call from a police officer. He said, 'Mmake, you are under arrest, it was reported that you stole a baby'. So, when the baby was in her paternal family home, I spoke to my niece and the baby's paternal grandmother ... we discussed the issue of where the baby will be staying. So, it was decided that it is important that the baby stay with the paternal family as they would like to perform cultural rituals on the baby. So, the baby will need to stay with them for 3 months after which the baby will come back to our home, because they have not yet paid lobolo for her and so she would need to wait and and only join the family according to tradition. Right there we talk and agree ... and yet, sesi [engages interviewer], you find yourself having to go to court just for that. Oh no! [Claps hands]...And she claimed her child had been kidnapped and the police said, 'Make, you do not have a right ... well she's 18 [years old] and she is saying you people took her baby'. Then I asked him, 'Then what are you going to do?' then he says, 'We are taking the baby', I responded, 'When you take the baby away, where are you taking it?' The boy [police officer] said, 'We'll take it to the social workers' [One-on-one].*

P emphasised in the group discussions that the ways that they have known to discipline their children are considered unlawful under judicial law and the children are utilising this for the fulfilment of their unjustified means. P reflects public law as taking precedence over private laws in the home. Additionally, P juxtaposes the learners of earlier times with contemporary youth. Her assertion is that in earlier times children were disciplined both in the home and in school, and teachers commanded respect and discipline. She sharply contrasts contemporary youth as bad-mannered towards their teachers and the parents as enablers of such conduct:

We could do something to control our children but the problem is that we are also bound by the law makers up there. You may lay down your own rules and tell your child, 'This is how we do things in this house... we do 1, 2, 3'. Then the child goes out to mingle with the other children that believe in these so-called rights... Also, nowhere do you hear the law saying we as parents can also go and lay charges against them [children]. Yes, that's the way it is and where the problem lies ... the people that came up with these rights also said children may not be beaten. They should leave us alone so we can punish them in our own

way. Even when you try to punish them ... The biggest issue is that even if I may lay down my own rules the authorities higher up have already laid down theirs [FGD].

The rights of children should be respected as human rights to protect children from abuses in both the public and their private spaces. The argument is that the children are misinformed about their rights and also they are still developing and they require the guidance of their parents. As a result, children end up misinterpreting the purpose of their rights. They in turn utilise them as a form of rebellion against parental guidance and rules:

... The child is still too young to have the ability to make their own decisions. The child is still mentally immature. It's a bit better at 18 [years of age]. That is where these so-called rights prove to be a big disturbance in our lives. Children don't handle these rights correctly ... They handle them upside down ... they misuse them. Also, the case of those rights, like that of a 12-year-old child has a right to make their own decisions [S, FGD].

S further interrogates the western judicial system as interfering, disrupting and displacing the families' ways of rearing children and their own values and mores, leaving the matter unsolved and a cause of destruction in parent-child relationships:

Even if they live with you in the house, you will find that they lay a legal charge against you. But where it's problematic is when you say, 'Rather go and live with those that made this law that forbids your parents from hitting you'. They [lawmakers] too encounter an obstacle because you are the one who brought this child into the world ... It looks like they too face problems in handling these children.

L argues differently. She views the judicial law as a protective barrier between perpetrators and victims. She acknowledges the blurred lines between discipline and child abuse and states that the omnipresent judicial law is there to correct some of these wrongs:

Our problem is that we don't give them a few lashes, we kill them. I can't take a thick rod for beating Luyanda [pseudonym for youngest grandchild] one that is fit for fighting a criminal. One that you wouldn't even use on an intruder who's breaking into your house, surely you can't use it on a child ... there's clearly a difference there. You will be cleared of the charges in a magistrate's court if you beat a child with a twig. [silence]... It depends on how you beat the child, sesi [refers to interviewer].*

The elderly and young women make sense of the shifts in the socio-political landscape through the changes in contemporary youth behaviours in comparison to the youth of earlier times. Democracy and modernity are positioned as drivers of youth destruction. F below amplifies the condition of youth as follows:

I think this new democracy has given us this freedom which, in turn, has messed up our future because we do things that end up hampering our success. We end up having unplanned children having disease and dying before their time [FGD].

Arguing similarly, C makes the assertion of the interconnectivities between democracy and the sexual morality of youth. Below, C reveals how the youth are enjoying the freedom acquired through democracy to the excess. She interprets this through young women's inappropriate ways of dressing and sexual immorality that are perceived as bringing dishonour to their bodies and families:

I think democracy has changed things very much because these days we no longer obey our parents. We do as we please, you see. It has changed us ... we no longer respect ourselves. We dress the way that we do and go to taverns. Of course, things have changed a lot [FGD].

In addition to C, T carrying a financial burden for her grandchildren as well as great-grandchildren, emphasises that the hedonistic lifestyles of youth in the name of democracy and freedom hamper those around them, particularly those young women who erred by having early pregnancies:

Eh, these rights hamper our lives as boGogo, children no longer listen to us. If I can tell you ... about this child ... my great-grandchild ... my child's grandchild ... When she went to get [conceive] this child [points to a toddler across her] my leg was broken and I was walking on crutches. She would just go out and leave me behind, you see. When I tried to stop her, she refused to listen...whenever I spoke she would say it is none of my business, you see. When others tried to reason with her she would hear nothing of it. She went away and came back pregnant. That's exactly where the problem lies because we can no longer discipline them...once a child gets pregnant and has this baby whether you like it or not you are forced to stay behind with this baby... ehm, you see ... it's painful to us as parents ... we are being abused [FGD].

Contrary to arguments on the interconnectedness of democracy and the destruction of youth, some of the elderly and young women emphasised that the socio-political environment has little to no influence on the morality of individuals, reducing democracy to an abstract entity. R's excerpt below accentuates this argument. She represents young people as agential subjects in their own lives and are not influenced by external factors:

I also want to leave out Mandela a bit. Mandela is not in this. Mandela ... Mandela is not your heart ... Your heart decides 'this is what I want to do'. Mandela is not your heart. It's your heart that tells you what to do. You see, this is what I was talking about ... are they friends? [Points to young boy and girl walking down the street across the FGD venue].

5.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter captures the political processes and changes that shape women's gendered experiences, multiple positions and identities within private and public spaces of apartheid and democratic South Africa (Batisai, 2013). In this theme, gender mainly comes into the stories of the women in relation to having children and mother-daughter relationships. Men do not appear much as major characters in the stories, other than as absences. Elderly women reflected on their lived experiences of negotiating citizenship under strict limitations in South Africa's most tumultuous political era, mainly through the glaring class, racial and age differences in relation to their positioning in the work environment under the apartheid state laws and legislation. Similarly, contemporary young women conceptualise full citizenship in a liberated state as one that is characterised by economic emancipation, thus driving the point home that citizenship should be foregrounded by a focus on socio-economic transformation, in addition to gender transformation (Salo, 2007), and for young women 'trapped' in the periphery of the democratic state, the future appears bleak. Although an era apart, both young and elderly women in their contexts have negotiated power relations or 'body politics' (Salo, 2007; Schlyter, 2009) through their bodies' restricted movements in the apartheid era and the silent resistances against the oppressions of the employers; and for young women through the everyday realities of gendered inequalities and unequal opportunities. Finally, both young and elderly women perceive democracy, modernisation

and westernisation to be precipitators of destruction and the loss of control over contemporary young people.

Chapter 6: Then and Now

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the ‘then’ and ‘now’ discourse: the diverse experiences of the erstwhile youth and now elderly women that have shaped their personal narratives as they move back-and-forth through the changes in South Africa’s socio-political context. The women read the socio-political changes through gendered experiences of race, sex, sexuality, class, apartheid, democracy and tradition. In this discourse older and elderly women distinguish ‘then’ and ‘now’ through men’s interactions with young women as well as harmful perceptions of young women’s bodies. The comparative discourse of ‘then’ and ‘now’ serves to reinforce the disjuncture between elderly and present-day young women. In this chapter I also present women’s varied relationships to time.

The central theme in this discourse is the condemnation of present-day young women and also challenging oppressive patriarchal norms on subjects that are gendered female, analysed through themes such as contemporary young women’s brazen sexual behaviours and challenging mainstream patriarchal prescripts on proper women. Secondly, the discourse revolves around the subthemes: guiding and educating contemporary young women and contemporary women’s interpretations of transactional sex relationships which are entangled in the socio-economic context. Thereafter, the analysis shifts towards a discourse predominantly among elderly women on the invasion of young women’s bodies. Tied together, these themes provide ways of imagining women’s meanings of belonging and citizenship in South Africa through their gendered experiences of gender, race, class, sexuality, sex and politics.

6.2 Trekking through time

Elderly women trekked back and forth through time to interpret the changes in their socio-political contexts. At this juncture, change is interpreted by means of the perceived negative influence of modernity on traditional mores and values. In the excerpt below, Q distinguishes the ‘then’ and ‘now’ with regards to modern older males’ improper gaze on adolescent girls and young women in the community. She asserts that in the past such conduct was punishable by gatekeepers of the normative laws and regulations. She firmly juxtaposes the practices of the erstwhile era to present-

day society's complacency in the normalisation of the blurred boundaries between the elders and the youth:

A modern older man will tell a 15-year-old child that he loves her. He wants to show a small child grey pubic hairs. He does not want to hide them and respect himself. In the past, such things were not there. If they ever discovered you are having sex or asking out small children, you would be taken to the Chief and charged with a serious offence. Yes ... now [pause] there is no longer a distinction between young and old... We are now all the same ... just the same thing. No one is better [one-on-one].

Arguing similarly, M reads the changes in time through her experiences of the changed behaviour of the males in her generation. She emphasises how elderly men overtly sexualise young women in the presence of elders. In the excerpt below, she presents her great-grand-daughter and her encounter with the improper conduct of older men towards young girls (adolescents):

Their [older males] behaviour has changed. One came to me at home about Laticia[great-grandchild]... pause... he said to me, 'Give me this child, I will teach [sex] her for myself'. This is a small child that he says he wants to teach for himself [one-on-one].*

In keeping with the 'then' and the 'now' discourse, T's narrative distinguishes a shift in drawing comparisons between themselves and the mischievous behaviours of contemporary young women. Her assertion is that "...in the past, youth conduct was much better". To contrast sexualities of the 'then' period and the 'now', T recollects a traditional practice wherein sexual bodies were compartmentalised and matched as a means to regulate sexualities and sexual conduct:

As a young maiden, you might be referred to as 'iNgcugce' that is you are now marriageable you see, or you are a 'Mtalakane' meaning you have a child. Some call it 'iJikamlenze' ... so if you had a child the elders would not allow you to be in a relationship with a boy that does not have a child. Same applied to widowed women, you wouldn't be a match with someone who is not widowed you both had to be widowed.

Moreover, she notes that this practice was performed by members of the community as a means to prevent misfortunes for the couple and their families as well as to maintain social equilibrium. T's excerpt accentuates hetero-patriarchal societies' fixation with regulating and controlling sexualities and sexual bodies by way of compartmentalising such bodies under the guise of finding

a 'fit' for them, thus reinforcing the societal norms that make inferior those who are gendered female due to their life experiences. As an example, women often bear the brunt of some of societies' harmful expectations and mores, whereas men who are widowed or have had children outside of wedlock are treated differently to women who have had similar experiences by virtue of being a woman. As is evidenced in later sections, women's bodies are perceived differently to men's bodies in accordance with traditional mores and norms of that community. The social scripts written on women's bodies differ from those inscribed on men's bodies. Contrary to the past, T below concludes that present-day individuals are plagued with misfortunes due to the disregard of such traditional practices, reviving the stereotypical historical narratives that constructed unrestrained sexual bodies as inducing misfortune and disease:

There were classes but now people are doing as they please. You see, in the olden days they prevented these abnormalities, these are things that bring about certain diseases and illnesses. Then there are these things called condoms, if things were kept with those categories many deviant things would be prevented [one-on-one].

While admitting disadvantages inherent in traditional practices, in this case Q like T below presents the benefits of some of the traditional practices, by way of contrasting their sexual relationships to those of contemporary young women. She reveals that regulating sexualities as well as sexual bodies was beneficial to the couple as both parties would be aware of one another's sexual histories so as to pre-empt future maladies that may be presented by individuals' relationship histories and if a partner has had any children outside of this relationship, whereas present-day youth are perceived to have displaced the traditional customs that regulate individual choices of sexual partners:

If I had a baby while still at [parents'] home, I would not date a boy that has not fathered a child. You can see just how good it was. But you don't get that anymore ... These days this young boy just carries on with her, you see. So yes, tradition has its advantages and disadvantages [one-on-one].

To advance the division and the wedge among the generation of women and to cement that sexual pleasure is defined with reference to marriage and a committed partnership, below elderly women

reflect on their trajectories to becoming a wife as a means to differentiate themselves from the uninhibited behaviours of contemporary young women.

6.2.1 Journeys to becoming a wife

6.2.1.1 ilobolo

Remarks such as “*a young maiden might appear to be hard working in the family home...that is how lobolo is paid for you*”, are central to elderly women’s reflections on their journeys to becoming wives and to also accentuate the ‘us’ and ‘them’ divide. These thoughts trace the analysis towards the theme of *ilobolo* as a path through which elderly women explore the correlation between the dishonourable conduct of contemporary young women and their unwedded status. The elderly women frame the model of *lobolo* and marriage as a context wherein gendered hierarchies were contrived and strengthened. They depicted how as young girls they were assigned domestic roles in the home, and the preparation of the female gendered body serves to appeal to male suitors and their families by presenting qualities of a diligent wife. In contrast, young men were allocated ‘masculine tasks’ while others were away from home in the cities working to provide for the family. In such cases, the young man’s family would proceed to choose a wife for him who they found to be suitable for their child. The preparation of genders for distinct roles reinforced the already existing heteronormative gender disparities among men and women, thus inherently locating women in subordinated roles due to their domesticated and nurturing roles in the home.

Below, recollecting from her personal experience of transitioning into wifedom, M, echoing experiences of some of the elderly women’s trajectories prematurely entering into arranged marriages often to a partner unfamiliar to the young bride, stated:

... Take me for instance a young maiden might appear to be hard working... [pause] Well that’s how my lobolo was paid by the family that paid it. 'Because she is now grown up we will be aware who she is with'. He [potential husband]. Things would be set right that way, he and you are far away from each other he is at work. That is how I got engaged. Ah, I didn’t pay attention. Maybe I was too young ... or even if I was of age those days our

understanding was rather limited maybe. I carried on with school and the man [fiancé] came back from where he was [place of work in different province] one-on one.

Furthermore, M claims that her desire was to complete her secondary schooling prior to committing to marriage; however, due to multiple suitors who came to her family home asking to pay *lobolo* for her, she felt compelled to accept one of the proposals as her family advised that it would not be a good image for a young woman to have a sundry of suitors after her. Similarly, the elderly women reasoned that in some cases young women of the earlier era were married off prematurely, due to the families' anxieties regarding the emerging sexualities and sexual bodies of young people, locating experiences of sexuality and sex in the presence of a male and (sexual pleasure) within the context of a heterosexual marriage. To accentuate this point, during our one-on-one engagement, T divulged that for young women of her era, "*Being sexual and about styles (sexual) you learn when you have arrived there (marriage)*" [one-on-one]. This reverberates with patriarchal societies' impulse of surveillance and control of women's sexualities and sexual expression.

Erstwhile young women who married young reflected on their anxieties on marrying young which were exacerbated by marrying someone unfamiliar to them and he would come back home after months so that the young woman would be married to him without having any knowledge of her husband. Standing out in this discourse is T's narrative as she recollects her experience of the anxieties surrounding her marriage to a 'stranger'. She describes being a virgin at the time and her fears were centred on the experience of her first sexual encounter with this unknown man, with heightening curiosities regarding the size of his manhood:

In the past, we would simply agree to marriage based on nothing ... just agree. Whether you would see an animal or whatever it didn't matter. They have already paid lobolo, your family has already eaten the cows. You wouldn't be able to say you don't want him anymore, you would just have to agree [one-on-one].

An analysis of the discourse of *ilobolo* and marriage in the earlier era reveals how South Africa's socio-political climate, such as apartheid, disrupted the process of being a wife. Firstly, young women's experiences of courtship were obliterated as the men were away working in a province far from home. Secondly, the process of *ilobolo* was finalised prior to couples formally meeting

each other as betrothed. Thirdly, due to restricted movements in the cities and identification issues, some of the women were not permitted or able to live with their partners in the city. Instead, they were left alone at home to support the family as the husband came home only a couple of times in a year. M recalls how her husband would not return home for months. She learned that he had been co-habiting with *'abomashesha'* (refers to women in the city who cohabited with married men for financial gain). It was in these cases that women's domestic roles that were assigned to them at home sustained them and their families. These domestic roles were stereotypically viewed as insignificant, or as a sign of weakness but were positioned to assume independent roles in order to support their families when the men would not return home. Others sought work outside of the province as evidenced in Chapter 5 in order to provide for their families. They ventured into the unknown province of Gauteng - riddled with political violence - to find work for their children. Thus, young women of the past generation were reared to become independent responsible women. To draw further distinctions between the young women's sexualities of the earlier era to those of contemporary women, P counsels young women to remain restrained and sexually pure in order to attract suitable suitors and to ensure their marriageability, highlighting that there is otherwise no motivation for the boy to pay *ilobolo* for her as he has already broken her virginity:

He hasn't paid any lobolo for you. Of course, he has tasted you. The boy gets up and goes to see others... [FGD]

Arguing similarly, O in her personal narrative juxtaposes the conduct of women of her generation with that of contemporary women's conduct, framing young people's emerging sexualities as 'mischief'. In the excerpt below she declares how interactions between young women and young men have changed with time:

...they would lock him up until his parents come. He would have to tell the truth, "I was 'stealing' [sleeping with her without the parent's knowledge] this girl because I want her". They would then make arrangements for him and his family and start making plans for him to marry the young woman.

By acknowledging that time and ways of doing things have changed, elderly women frame young women's sexualities and bodies as rampant and unrestrained compared to how they learned about sex and the abilities of a sexual body in a context of marriage. Elderly women caution young

women that engaging in sex prematurely is a breach of sexual norms that bestow respectability. Additionally, elderly women emphasise that young women are revered for their sexual purity, particularly in the case where the practice of the 'white sheet' is performed on young maidens about to get married. In that case, her virginity will be a marker of an honourable wife.

6.2.1 Virginity testing

Elderly women's dialogue on differentiating themselves from contemporary young women is further explored through the emerging sexualities of young women inferring that sexualities are ostensibly influenced by the shifting socio-political contexts in South Africa. The anecdotal experiences of elderly and young women reveal divergent views on sexuality in contemporary South Africa. The elderly women depict how young women were admired for their sexual purity. The virginity of young women represented sexual purity and good morals, signifying qualities of an honourable woman in the eyes of her family and, subsequently, her marital family. Below, T illuminates the widening generation gap between themselves and present-day young women and suggests that, since sexualities in contemporary times remain unregulated, young women's virginites are 'broken' outside of appropriate traditional customs and mores:

Unlike today, the boy opens me [breaks my virginity] and my parents don't know that I have been deflowered. I come back home as if nothing happened... [one-on-one].

T's understanding of changes in time refers to the displacement of the customs that celebrate young women's transition from girlhood into womanhood. In keeping with the virginity testing discourse, below is T's recollection of the journey into becoming a wife that young women of her time undertook:

They wanted a white sheet... so they could tell if you were a virgin! [raises voice]. The day that you went into the bedroom with this boy there would be older women waiting. Well ... when you went to bed with the boy for the first time, you will be torn open [the hymen] and some blood would come out onto this sheet. On getting up in the morning, the boy would roll it up and give it to them. By the way, they have already paid lobolo for you. Hmm ... he gives it to them and you will hear them ululating [Gogo ululates] saying you were deflowered by this boy who has paid lobolo for you [one-on-one].

A stained sheet is a significant marker of a woman's purity rooted in gender disparate hetero-patriarchal norms' preoccupation of surveilling and controlling the sexual expression and sexual bodies of women. This marker of purity serves as an indicator to both families that the young woman has maintained her sexual purity, making her an honourable bride, while also conveying a message to her family that she has respected the rules and customs put in place for young women. What stands out from T's narrative is the notion of elders awaiting results of the virginity 'inspection' from the male. This declaration paints the practice as one that subjugates women while aggrandising males' sexual abilities and those of finding honourable wives. Consequently, this reinforces the prevailing patriarchal design that upholds the repression of women's sexualities outside of the marital context in order to circumvent dishonour onto the family if the sheet is found to be 'unstained'.

Central to the 'then' and the 'now' of this discourse is the sexual conduct of contemporary young women with the intention to concretise the 'us' and 'them' narrative. In efforts to bridge this separation, elderly women created opportunities to counsel young women on crafting and constructing traditional femininities which entail sexual purity so as to enhance their marriageability. To decrease the separation from young women of today, S in the excerpt below recounts how she counsels her great-grandchild in cautioning her against public interactions with boys as a gateway to future private interactions with unpleasant consequences. This echoes the 'then' generation of young women's engagements with elders on the interactions with boys as well as their relationship with their sexual bodies tainted by fears of reproduction:

You can see that you are now getting monthly periods. If you play with boys, my child, that is not right. She says, hmm, I said to her, 'There is a girl in the neighbourhood who got pregnant ... do you remember how she was crying?' She said, yes, Gogo and I said to her, 'Grow up, my child and when you have completed school as long as I'm still alive I will tell you. But when I am dead and not of this world and a boy comes and tells you that he loves you, don't just sleep with him and say, I love you too, that's not right my child.

Reasoning similarly, M in a group discussion with young women attempts to counsel young women on sexual purity and accentuates the mischievous nature of contemporary young women's

emerging sexualities as contributing to their loss of respectability as young traditional women. Recollecting on her experience as a young woman, she depicts how contemporary young women's virginites and sexual bodies have become valueless and their vaginas left devoid of dignity as these activities occur in a space where elders have not communicated with elders, thus invalidating the prospects of marriage:

He dumps you and has broken your virginity, left you wide open. Even if the elders spread out the white sheet nothing will come of it, because he has torn you open out there in the wild. These days our children are torn open out there in the streets, they run to unknown places or is that a lie? (ask young women) [FGD].

6.3 A discourse on guiding contemporary young women

While acknowledging the inherent gender disparities between men and women, in this discourse women's sexualities and sexual bodies were replete with contradictions. The analysis of the discourses of elderly and young women reveals separation between elderly women and the assumed bad morality of young women. In an effort to preserve and restore traditional femininities in young women of today, both young and elderly women journeyed together to find 'the root cause' leading to young women's bad morality. Emerging from the women's discourses in this theme is the principle of *Ubuntu* that is apparent in elderly women's engagement with the youth and the bad morality discourse and the discourse of guiding young women. Below, M attempts to bridge the separation between themselves and contemporary young women. She opens up the subject as follows:

Okay, let's turn this matter around – we don't want to go the way of long ago, right? [FGD].

P utilises her experience of working in a programme with out-of-school youth reflecting and guided by the principles of *Ubuntu*. The experiences of the 'then' reflected that life was communal and linked, where the community compassionately viewed the other person's struggles and accepted the other in sharing their burden, while emphasising qualities of interdependence (Jolly, 2011):

You see we are now after the root cause, that which causes all this... eh ... eh. I think now that things have already happened ... let's say a girl in the house has already made a mistake ... no one will be killed, right? Even when a wrong has happened we can now see where things went wrong ... not so, my children? [refers to young women in the group discussion]. As for me, I think all of us here are now teachers to the other children ... We will get up and try to show these children the right way ... We will meet with them and talk ... That, this is what causes this ... What can we do to get out of this situation? [FGD]

Since women from early ages are assigned caregiving roles, as echoed in this chapter, their engagement in assisting youth and the need to go back to how things were in the past may be deemed as empathetic caring as well as taking collective responsibility in assisting youth in efforts to bridge the widening gap between themselves and young women.

To make sense of young women's improper behaviours, M intimates that forming group discussions for young women will aid them to voice their deep psychological hurts while assisting the elders to investigate the source of young women's delinquency:

I think we can form support groups. Those troubled by a particular thing we group together separately. They can discuss among themselves... We discuss how we can get out of the situation we are faced with, you see? I think this is what can help us make progress. That way we might be able to address this pain that influences me to do wrong in some cases. You may find that she is doing things that are out of the way, things that cause pain. Maybe she is in pain or harbouring anger inside of her which we may not be aware of. She is trying to vent out this pain by the things she is doing... ya, something like that can be helpful.

In this context, elderly women make sense of the changes in South Africa's socio-political climate with the perceived disruption of youth morality. Similarly, N admits that, although daunting, group discussions or support groups with young women are a welcomed solution for refashioning youth conduct, "Maybe we will succeed [pause] Well, I don't know because they say a slaughter animal dies kicking [pause] dies kicking. Let us give it a try" [FGD]. Echoing N's sentiments, D adds that, "Most young people won't come because they think you are ruining their fun ... they want to go where their heart takes them".

To bridge the gap between themselves and young women, N and S highlight that it is not only young women who transgress but elderly women do as well. Reflecting the principle of *Ubuntu*, N encouraged the young women present in the focus group discussion to form communal relationships with other young women as a means to reflect solidarity:

We older women also do not always do right. You [older age group of young women in the FGD] have already experienced an example [pregnancy]. You need to sit down and tell them [younger girls] your experiences, maybe they will understand [FGD].

In an effort to eliminate further isolation of young women from themselves, S revealed the flaws of elderly women as well, while emphasising the importance of communal relationships that promote morality among elderly women:

We counsel one another too as boGogo. It is not like all of us are good, we counsel one another... We can fold our arms and look on but that would not be right [FGD].

To interrogate the prevailing gender disparities governing young women and men's relationships with their bodies, Q in the excerpt below intimates that young men as well as young women require a similar intervention with regards to their sexual conduct:

I think these older men should also form [similar] groups ... because they are the ones that cause trouble with these children. While we are talking, there could also be a meeting for boys where the youth coach and counsel one another ... That would be fine, but now we will focus on giving counsel to you, girls, and you may find that these boys carry on unrestrained, am I lying, Mmake? (asks older women in the group) [FGD].

M, in an effort to reconcile the differences between young women of today and those of her time, revisited the custom of *umbhoshongo* of the earlier era wherein young adolescent girls were initiated into the passage of (honourable) traditional womanhood. In this practice young girls were counselled by elderly women on sexual purity, through such activities as traditional sketches and dance, and they would make crafts using beads, etc. She intimates that such a practice would ease the notion of control and surveillance of contemporary young women's bodies:

We can make an effort to educate these children... get them to do things make them do these traditional things, involving boGogo and boMmake. I have no doubt that the children

will benefit ... rather than have our children doing the wrong things secretly... where they have sex with them in hiding.

Reasoning similarly, D views the revival of the practice of *umbhoshongo* as a worthy activity to share collective responsibility and to ensure that the youth live right in their relationships with the community. To affirm her argument, D singled out and reprimanded a young woman from the group whose brusque giggles could be interpreted as having a blasé attitude towards the challenges discussed:

Let us give it a try and see how far we go. You can look at me, girl I am telling the truth ... It looks like you are the kingpin of this situation. It's good for you to go out and teach them.

Similarly, based on their personal experiences of working with young women and girls, young women K and E assert that the practice of *umbhoshongo* will be beneficial in keeping young women distracted from wrongdoing, particularly if the activities are entertaining. This echoes the notion of guiding young women's relationships with their bodies towards socially accepted behaviours and norms:

K: These children will get nowhere [in life] ... we could try to distract them from these acts [engaging in sexual activities] if they participate in traditional dance activities and plays [FGD].

E: Even if one decides to go and do something bad, they will remember that sesi Thelma did teach us [FGD].*

As the two generations of women endeavoured to reconcile the differences between themselves, the involvement of the elders of the community as well as the traditional leaders of the community becomes a recurring theme in this discourse. The women's discourses mirrored some of the principles of *Ubuntu* in their engagement with young women and also in their future plans in fostering interconnectivity among community members. Similar to the earlier era, the perception of the elders in the community and the chieftaincy leadership as custodians and the gatekeepers of the customs and traditions of the community remains unchanged. In this context, the role of the elders is to restore the traditional mores that have been displaced due to changes over time, while at the same time affirming a sense of humanness and identity in young people.

D and R's excerpts below illuminate their perceptions of changes over time by integrating the traditional means of solving problems and the contemporary manner of doing things, such as the inclusion of the westernised modes of seeking help, including social workers and the justice system. This reveals issues that occur in community members' private spaces and discloses them in the public sphere. Similarly, this includes instilling the principle of communal life and interconnectivity with the public sphere and sharing one another's struggles:

D: It would be ideal to have a social worker or maybe a police officer along. Then it won't be like we are talking now ... We will be able to move forward and see how it's progressing. If we go to the Chief maybe the Chief will send his right-hand people. I think in that way things will go a bit faster than when we do things on our own, Mmake [refers to elderly woman in the group] .This thing must happen and there must be collaborators. If I'm lying just say: "You're lying, Gogo". There should be collaborators working with us [FGD].

R: We are lucky that we still have boGogo with us... because those we can sit down with and say 'Here, our world has degenerated to this state ... how we can get it right?' [FGD].

In the discussions about the community collectively repairing displaced traditional practices, customs and mores among contemporary youth, women's relationships to their bodies came to the fore, and promptings on contemporary young women's sexual modesty and sexual abstinence become recurring themes. The efforts to homogenise the 'us' and 'them' divide transcend the narratives of elderly and young women on the traditionally appropriate time to access their sexual bodies.

6.3.1 The politics of waiting

The societal gendered disparities reflected in women's narrative are central to women's distorted views of their sexualities and sexual expression as they are framed in the moral discourse, while young boys and older males are exempted from the discourse of waiting and remaining sexually inactive. The sexual morality burden rests on women to act morally right to symbolise respectability and honour to their bodies. In the excerpts that follow elderly women set out appropriate and expected (sexual) conduct for young women embedded in the moral discourse of traditional femininities framed in societal and familial expectations. Moreover, the threat of early

unplanned pregnancies in young women and girls coupled with a threat of sexually transmitted infections are central to legitimising control and surveillance of young women's sexual bodies. B and N re-echo the discourse of counselling and guiding young women on socially appropriate conduct for young woman. According to B below, talking amongst themselves and guiding each other would prove to be more beneficial as they are all of a similar age group:

"...we have to advise and teach each other on how to conduct ourselves and behave appropriately" [FGD].

N reflects on her personal experiences in raising young women and claims that the delay in accessing their sexualities and sexual bodies will be beneficial in avoiding early pregnancies and destabilising their secondary schooling, while the rewards of remaining sexually restrained will retain for them *"...a good future. That is to say, your own family will multiply and have a good life"* [one-on-one]. In addition, D expresses that it often displeases elders when young girls violate the familial and traditional rules of sexual modesty as this threatens the possibilities of *"a good future life"*. In the excerpt below, she offers an example of a conversation she would have if one of her grandchildren were to violate the stated rules:

It is not pleasant, if she goes against my rules, I will sit her down 'Where are you coming from, my child?' 'Well, Mom or Grandma, what else could I do?' 'But can you see that what you are doing is not good?' [FGD].

Similar to D, R articulates that often as young girls reach puberty the elders in the family are protective of them within their socio-cultural context as their developing bodies present vulnerabilities to early pregnancies and a threat of sexually related diseases. R's assertion of such repressive norms and values governing women's bodies that determine the time of accessing sexual bodies and sexualities of women highlights the prevailing stereotypical patriarchal notions that women's sexualities require control to prevent misfortunes:

Your family and also where you come from are often possessive about you, I want to hear nothing about my child [girl]. I can also add about these children that are in this world if she carries on running around with boys, there are many diseases in the world... [one-on-one].

In addition, S's assertion is that the surveillance of young women's sexualities and sexual bodies will cease once the family is satisfied that she is at an age that is deemed socially appropriate. This is determined by her age as well as completion of her schooling and subsequently her employment governs her financial independence:

“Well, all I can say is that what frees a person sexually is after obtaining an education ... she can then do as she pleases because she is in the right place” [FGD].

Like S, L reiterates the age and education discourse to emphasise how young women will acquire freedom from their families to express themselves sexually once the conditions that determines one's sexual readiness have been met:

As your parent, my wish is for you to finish schooling and only thereafter may you marry. Someone you will live happily with. So, those are the parents' expectations but oftentimes children violate all that. However, as a girl, you need to know that your family wishes for you to get an education, finish school, and thereafter you may marry and then have sex [FGD].

Similarly, T's personal narrative highlights distorted patriarchal justifications for the control of young women's sexual bodies by adding that young women's early access to their sexual bodies and sexualities presents negative consequences for herself and also thwarts the family's aspirations for her, *“Maybe she was going to become a doctor, a schoolteacher ... it's a loss”*.

B concedes and advises the young women in the group discussion that obtaining parents' consent to engage in sexual relationships brings sexual pleasure, implying that she is at a phase where the parents and community find it appropriate. Referring to a context where the young woman has had *lobolo* paid for her or she has found employment, B asserts that anything other than the former “does not make sense”:

If you obtain your parents' permission and blessing. I am saying there's no freedom, there's nothing ... Let's not deceive one another as girls about things that don't make sense [FGD].

Reasoning similarly, P contrasts the sexual conduct of young people of her generation with contemporary young women. P contends that young women's violations of traditional rules and norms governing sexualities and bodies show disrespect to their elders:

What I can say is that if one wants to be free one can stay away from sexual activity, in other words, one can abstain until it is the right time for engaging in sex. As for us [older generation], we were well-behaved towards parents because we normally went into marriage [FGD].

I, reflecting on her personal experience in her adolescent years, intimates that the manner in which the stringent societal rules and norms regarding young women's relationships to their bodies impaired her ability to initiate interactions with boys of a similar age:

So say a girl has reached the phase where she now wants a boyfriend. She can't tell him how she feels. But you'll see by her actions that she wants a boyfriend, she'll start dressing up 'sexy' ... dress in such a way that she looks attractive. Then boys will talk to her. Even if she wanted to initiate that conversation, she can't, because it's traditionally unacceptable. So, you see it plays a role in silencing us [FGD].

The messages of caution that young women and girls with developing sexual bodies receive are to evade interactions with boys, due to the presupposed inherent vulnerability of women to male sexual advances. As a result, women are socialised to experience sexual fulfilment in a context of a committed sexual relationship and find displeasure and experience manipulation and worthlessness if a male partner exits the relationship after the first sexual encounter. These experiences are embedded in the conception that sexual pleasure is solely obtained in a context of marriage.

6.3.2 Sex and the male commitment discourse

Women's engagement on debates about gendered experiences of sex and sexuality and the relationships with their bodies were marred with contradictions in their negotiated societal scripts of how women's sexual bodies are expected to behave. Women's narratives on their bodies and sexualities revealed that their socialisation affirms the prevailing hetero-patriarchal discourses that

shame unrestrained sexualities of women who violate societal mores. Similarly, in the excerpts that follow, women reveal how they have been socialised to believe that commitment to and respect from potential male suitors is earned if a woman is considered restrained and she is perceived as 'loose' and unworthy if she gives in too soon to a sexual encounter. Similarly, young women described the contradictions entrenched in dating young as a space that is plagued by the guilt of violating moral codes of conduct set out for young women as well as the common sexual scripts that govern heterosexual relationships. Below B highlights this conflicting view on dating young as the belief is that in their age group young boys are merely seeking out a once-off sexual encounter and never a commitment:

A boy has sex with you and you tell yourself that he loves you ... and you find that he doesn't love you. All he wants is to taste and dump you. So, as a girl, don't tell yourself that the boy loves you and then have sex with him. He's only using you and tomorrow he will dump you and leave you with a child. We have been left behind with babies. We are just being chased after for sex, nothing more.

She refers to a time in her relationship when she experienced loving feelings from her partner which in turn created a safe space for her to 'break' the rules and have sex with him. As the relationships ended, B drew the conclusion that it was due to her being viewed as 'easy' that later led to the abrupt end of the relationship. As a result, young women utilised B's narrative as a means to guide one another to remain sexually restrained until they had reached an appropriate stage. The analysis in this section reveals that women experience sexual fulfilment when their male partners remain in the relationship and a sense of regret, blame and worthlessness once the partner leaves. Moreover, the societal rules or teachings enforce the notion that sex before marriage is morally wrong and it goes against societal rules and norms and does not guarantee the male partners' commitment, thus positioning women's freedom of sexual expression at the mercy of the male partner. Reasoning similarly, young women I, A and F put forward that the challenge for contemporary young women seeking romantic relationships is discerning the authenticity of male suitors' intentions for their pursuit for a relationship with the young woman. F below succinctly describes the nature of young women's vulnerabilities with regard to false intentions of male suitors:

...Nobody will ever come and say, 'Girl, I don't love you, I just want to have sex with you, impregnate you and thereafter dump you', never! So, you will never know if this person loves you or is just playing games [pause]. The thing that causes us to be abandoned with children. We don't check. Each and every one will promise you heaven and earth [FGD].

Thus, echoing societal constructions of the vulnerability of women's sexual bodies and sexualities, young woman I below dichotomises young women as either 'bad' girls or 'good'. The former are those who engage in sexual relationships without considering the negative outcomes that may impact their futures and the latter as those who are focused and understand that the presence of the male in their lives will corrupt their innocence and, subsequently, disrupt their futures:

It all depends on what you personally want out of life and we cannot escape that reality [FGD].

Both older and elderly women emphasised their disapproval with young women's relationships with their sexual bodies. Elderly woman O's statement below stands out from the discussion among older women as they initiated an opportunity to counsel young women on their sexual conduct:

That's where the problem lies, my child. You have said you like this one, right? And when another shows up, will you say you love him too? The following day yet another one comes. Do you love him too? Again, another shows up, do you love him too? How many are these people? [FGD]

Depicting her relation with time and also to reveal the disjuncture between the generation of women, B speaks back at discourses that negatively label women with a history of multiple sexual partners as transgressors of social normative standards for proper women. B reflecting on her experiences in past relationships with men highlights changes in time and juxtaposes young women of an earlier era with how contemporary women perceive romantic partnerships and trajectories to being a wife:

Gogo, that's how things are in life, you don't just date and then straight into marriage ... No. You need to get your heart broken first. So that when you are one day married you will be able to say, "They broke my heart like this or like that". Otherwise ... you rush into

marriage and when things get too much for you, go back to your parents' home. As a girl, allow boys to break your heart – it's a stage we have to go through. [FGD].

D expresses a divergent view to that of B that the rules and guidelines for women's sexual bodies in their time were to ensure that young women's bodies retain respectability by having their virginities intact. She continued that the rules were maintained to prevent women from having multiple sexual relationship and also to retain their sexual desirability to male sexual partners:

I hear what you [girls] are saying. When you want to marry you meet another boy, when it doesn't work out you get another one. Now you children, you don't weigh things up. You line them up like ants coming out of a hole, right? You no longer know how this one feels. You are like the girl that says this one [man] finds it like this, and another like that. [Uses hand gestures to describe penis sizes] Their manhoods all get inside of you and what are you now? A 'lirhobosha' [whore or someone that is loose]? The last one to come to you will get no pleasure out of you.

The elderly women tried to understand changes over time in terms of the divergent ways that sexual relationships are established in contemporary society compared with those of an earlier era. Of particular concern to them are the escalated violent intrusions into women's private spaces whereby the young women are coerced into entering sexual relationships with young boys.

6.3.3 The invasion of young women's private spaces

In their criticisms of the perceived indecent behaviours of contemporary young women, the elderly women are not discounting the realities of the gendered power dynamics intrinsic in interactions between young men and women as well as older men. In her observation of the connections between coerced sex and violence as dominant in contemporary quotidian interactions of youth, D recounts how older boys from the nearby secondary schools entice young girls in lower grades into interacting with them by offering gifts such as money and food in exchange for a sexual relationship. She posits that when the young boys' sexual advances are rejected, the interaction escalates to physical violence and sexual coercion.

Another thing is that the boys from Sibuko [High school] and Nkambeni [Primary school] schools, some of the boys from Sibuko approach young girls from Nkambeni and tell them they love them. You can't tell a standard 3 or 4 child that you love her while you are in

standard 7 or 9. What do you want to show this little girl because she is so young? They approach our little girls and show them how things are done. Also, you girls present here, I don't want to hide anything from you, and I want to tell you the truth. Well, I just say things as they are, that's me. [D playfully instructs the interviewer to switch off the recorder as she does not want the Professors to hear vulgarity coming from uGogo] This one little girl said yes and another one was crying... I will relate it as it is, as vulgar as it may be. This boy hits her and he wants them to go away together, when the girl returns home she starts talking. He hits her and this boy demands that she goes home with him. The little girl talks when she's back with her mother at home ... when she comes to the parent she says this boy has hit and violated her [sexual assault]. [Pause] ...do you hear the story? This young girl does not know anything yet [about sex and relationships]. She was pressured to say yes. They saw him take out the money to buy things for the girl. Let's go, I want to fuck you'. The girl hesitates and wants to go home ... she comes home swollen.

D's excerpt reflects how young boys' conduct depicts deviant patriarchal normative practices that entrench the personhood of women and reduces their social status to that of subordinate subjects vulnerable to violent male intrusions. The behaviour of the young men mirrors the nature and perceptions of transactional sex relationships in some adult relationships where one is entitled to a woman's body when gifts or money are exchanged albeit by violent means. Thus, it is socialising women from a young age that, by virtue of being gendered female, their bodies present imminent threats to violent intrusions. She frames young women's emerging sexualities as vulnerable to the risks of male corruption and positions young girls who have debuted early into sexual relations as recruiters in the coercion of sexually pure young girls into sexual relationships. This re-echoes the dominant narrative of some young women's sexual debut as coerced sex and in some instances resembling a sexual assault. Furthermore, D offers another example of young boys' coercion of young women. She refers to goading and harassment that young girls and women are subjected to by young boys who perceive themselves entitled to the girls' attention. In this instance as well, when the girls ignore or reject the unwanted sexual advances, the interaction escalates to verbal insults. This reverberates the violent patriarchal discourses of males' entitlement to women's private spaces:

He meets a girl and says 'I want you' ... 'No, I don't want you'. 'Hey, you dog [refers to the young woman], who's gonna ask you out then? I heard them ... As an old woman sitting along the street I hear them. You hear them say, 'This bloody dog' and then you just wonder if she is a dog... is she some mongrel that feeds on the bones that fall off his family's table... whatever their state [FGD].

S below relays how young men abduct young girls into sleeping with them and, once the girl is abducted, the boy now considers them a couple. This tactic is used to send a message to other girls to not refuse the sexual advances as this will escalate to them being abducted, thus coercing them to agree to avoid the abduction which could affect one's grades. The abduction most of the time occurs if the girl has refused sexual advances from this boy several times. This is done as a way to punish the girl and also boys use this as a way to assert and exert their power over the young women:

“She [grandchild] once came back from school and told me a boy "took" [abducted] a girl and two days passed with her not going to school ... and she's of her age group” [FGD].

Furthermore, to emphasise the boys' entitlement and ownership of young women's private spaces, L observes that for young girls who reject these unwanted sexual advances, derogatory statements are made relating to the state of the young woman's vagina as it is considered one of the qualities that deem a woman attractive to the male counterpart:

Yes, that's the things they say and they add and say, “This rotten cake [refers to her vagina] of yours... you don't want to give it to me” [FGD].

M adds that the constant goading and shaming of young women and their sexual bodies and 'exposing' the undesirable state of her vagina is a strategy to coerce young women into accepting their sexual advances to cease the harassment and public humiliation. This act is often performed in the presence of other boys in an effort to discourage sexual attraction to her. Similarly, in the excerpt below, the word *ispatjhi* (wallet) is used. It is a popular derogatory term utilised to insult women with the implication that they get into relationships for monetary gain or that they have sex for money. In this instance, it is implied that the young woman dates men - older men in particular - for monetary gain, hence she is not paying attention to her peers:

I once heard a young man swearing at a girl. He was calling her and she did not come. He then says, “Voetsek [piss off], go away... get off you are acting like you are special just because your parents have given you ‘ispatjhi’ [wallet, slang for vagina] that you use to go around collecting money, go away, voetsek” [M, FGD].

I said to myself, Oh! These people... does that girl’s refusal warrant him to refer to her vagina as a wallet? [P, FGD].

G, a dispirited young woman, responded, “Boys really insult us, shame!” and all the women agreed. What was striking for me is that most young women shared their personal experiences in this regard, but others relayed how this is how one meets one’s boyfriend in some cases. The older women as well shared their experiences as well as stories relating to this issue. What was striking was the normalisation of this behaviour. It is something that the community knows and turns a blind eye to because it is what boys do or what contemporary youth do to initiate relationships, no matter how harmful the practice is. It appears to be enabling harmful perceptions of women’s sexual bodies as well their sexualities and position in society. It further takes away women’s agency. M, in the statement below, explores the relationship between alcohol, sexual assault and coercion of women. She relates how young boys and older men purchase alcohol for young girls at local taverns and coerce women into sex in order to pay back the money using their bodies. In other cases the young women engage in sex with the males as a means to thank them for a good time, while others do so to avoid violence against them:

You see here ... these taverns in the neighbourhood! Lots of things happen there, I can just talk about those who are there at the taverns now. Do you disagree? (“No” [young women responding]). You sit at a corner like this. Just watch and you will see wonders. Some of the young women are violated [euphemism for rape] in the toilets. I kept it as my own private secret I never said it before ... I am sharing it for the first time. They lean her against a wall like this [demonstrates], and while she was in that position they raised her one leg ... on the one side ... with the other leg standing on the ground. They did not even care that she was tired. One of them is standing as a lookout man. When one leaves her, another comes in. All the time her one leg is up in the air. Where will she go because they have closed her in a tight corner? She is not screaming or anything. When she tries to...

they tell her 'shhh' and she shuts up. Our children are truly up to no good, you may try to sit her down and counsel her or do whatever [FGD].

In the light of the above excerpt, statements such as, “*The young people of today like nice things*” frames the discussion on transaction sex relationships and how young women are lured into such relationships, implying that young women and girls risk their safety in order to seek out a lifestyle they cannot afford, such as frequenting taverns to attract male attention and to be supplied with alcohol. Elderly women as well as young women problematised this conduct but contradicted themselves in cases where women seek out sexual relationships for material gain as a means of providing for the needs of their families.

6.3.4 Women on transactional sex relationships

The elderly women located their interpretations of emerging young women’s sexualities in the relationship between sex and money. This discourse centred on both older and young women’s meanings of transactional sex relationships as well as perceived motivation for engaging in this practice. Intergenerational relationships among young women and younger girls came to the fore, with older men suspected of initiating such relationships due to their social and financial status. As an easier way to lure young women into such relationships with them, they use the young women’s financial situation at home as a motivating factor. Literature identifies transactional relationships as the provision of sex in exchange for material goods, money and food items to supply the demands of each partner, one that is material and the other sexual (Formson & Hilhorst 2016). Literature has also found that constructions of transactional sex relationships are dependent on the contexts in which they occur. Most research performed on this practice has identified a significant association among rural woman between poverty, illiteracy and the low status of women. In the context of the rural Nkomazi district women were sampled for this study. Young women do not perceive their relationships as a transaction process but rather one that is between boyfriend and girlfriend and is branded as a romantic relationship. Regarding the exchange of money or gifts, young women perceived it as appreciation from the male partner and as an act of showing love and proving their commitment to taking care of the woman. They also perceived this as the freedom to select one’s partners and have the agency to choose whom to have sex with without feelings of pressure or coercion from both the partner and their families. However, what

was defined as transactional sex were the relationships between younger men and older women and older men as well as young women – intergenerational relationships. Both young and older women were not convinced that the couples indeed had feelings of love towards each other but one of material gain on the side of the younger partners, as well as sexual satisfaction for the older partners. Others identified the motivation as intentionally infecting partners with sexually transmitted infections and others to ‘renew’ their youth - feel young again, sexually rejuvenated - through dating a younger person.

6.3.5 Motivation for engaging in transactional sex relationships

N, re-echoing the discourse of guiding and educating young women into adhering to normative constructs of traditional young women, positions young women’s developing sexual bodies as vulnerable to the older male sexual gaze. She intimates that in some cases the dire financial situation in the home may entice young women into intergenerational relationships to gain luxury goods sex that the parents may not be able to afford in exchange for sex. This thereby reinforces the stereotypical patriarchal construction of women’s motivation for involvement in transactional and intergenerational relationships by eliminating women’s personal choice and replacing it with being impelled by financial obligations at home:

I can say that we teach these children how to conduct themselves when they get to that stage [adolescence]. The problem is that once there are shortages at home. Then sugar daddies with money emerge on the scene. He buys her all the things you don’t buy for her [FGD].

A below locates young women as agent subjects with the power to reject unwanted older males’ sexual advances, in particular those that offer material possessions in exchange for a sexual relationship. Reverberating the discourses on male conduct of an earlier era, A contends that older males’ sexualisation of young women and girls is a transgression against the societal norms and guidelines. She reiterates traditional mores that order social interactions among elders and youth as those between a parent and a child, associating young people perceiving the naked bodies of the elderly as a shame and a taboo:

The other thing is ... We as young people ... we as girls who are here. We have a duty to tell these old men that it is a sin. How will I listen when I see an old man's bum right here? You see. [laughs around the room from young women... elderly women nodding in agreement with the young woman]. *Seeing someone's buttocks is scary and imagine looking at an old man's bum. We are the ones to say no to these old men, it's wrong. Why don't they want people of their age group [young women shout] and coming to us?* [FGD].

M, reasoning similarly, reflects that older men do not experience feelings of shame in exposing their nakedness to young girls as young women may not view the experience as taboo due to the material and financial gain from the relationship. She illuminates that because the love of money is the root of all wrongdoing, she frames women on equal footing to anyone who is motivated to wrongdoing due to the love of money:

When he pulls out his old withered and rusted penis and show it to the child, what must the child do? If he gives her money the young child won't refuse because she sees money. Well, they say, [sings song] '...mali mali yezono, siyabulalana ngenca yakho' [money, money cause of all sin... we kill one another because of you] ... they are not lying. Is there anyone here who does not want money? [All young women] "No" [FGD].

In contrast, E echoing the sentiments of N, highlights that for some young women their involvement in transactional relationships is one that is motivated by the financial situation in the home. E articulates that for some of these young women their sexual experience in these types of relationships may also be seen as a way of displaying appreciation to the man for taking care of her:

I think it is often the situation [at home] that leads to them to having boyfriends. He takes her and they end up engaging in sex ... And you often see the situation because it is difficult at home ... So, some young girls just give themselves over to boyfriends, for them to give them some little help [FGD].

6.3.6 *The nature of transactional sex*

In this discourse, the nature of some of the transactional relationships are interrogated, particularly older women's standpoint on young women's involvement in transactional sex relationships.

Young women and some older ones were particularly perturbed by older women's acceptance of such relationships. In their defence, elderly women assert that if women are involved in sexual relationships, it is more desirable and acceptable if she is able to obtain financial gain, particularly in the case of women who are single mothers. In contrast, young women argued that they perceive romantic partnerships as serving the purpose of gaining companionship and not one that is motivated by financial gain. C below interrogates elders' intentions of tainting their romantic relationships by monetising young women's involvement, thus appearing as a compulsion for her to meet the financial needs of the family through her involvement in the relationship:

There are Gogos who'll [pause]... okay, I am dating this guy ... when it's month end. Gogo will ask me, "Didn't he give you money?" So, if he gives me money, is it transactional or are we just having fun and having sex as a couple? [FGD]

To make sense of the changes in time and to amplify the separation between themselves and young women, elderly woman S argues differently, highlighting that the trend with contemporary young women is to 'sell' their bodies. This frames young women's sexual experiences in relationships as premature and resembling sex work as their partners gift them with money or material possessions. This locates women's sexual bodies as tools to exercise not only for pleasure but also as a means to gain financial agency. This is predominantly because they are not coerced but operate in a space of implied consent and a cash transaction for sex is not straight forward. It's merely using their romantic relationship for gaining money to support their children. She juxtaposes contemporary women's positions today with that of her time and states that she too 'sold' her vagina albeit through marriage for financial stability for her and her family. Research evidence suggests that the exchange of sex for material goods in some relationships comes as an expression from a man as a token of appreciating the woman's value to him. In this context those young women with children are advised by elderly women to explore their worth in order to support themselves financially. According to S:

You too, sell your vagina because selling is now a new fashion [among young women] and feed your children. If you are able to sell and come back with plastic bags for taking care of your children, then it's fine. If someone sells her vagina for her children, it's right. They must not live off my pension [state grant]. They must survive using their vagina money. As

for me, I 'sold' mine [vagina] when I got married. They paid lobolo for me and now I look after my children [FGD].

E agrees with S that this is done due to the financial burden on boGogos and thus enables them to supply the economic needs of grand-children and in some cases great-grand-children as well. E maintains that, if women are able to find themselves in such relationships, they would be afforded the means to support their children, thereby easing the burden of nurturing on boGogo. E stated:

As for me, I support Gogo when she says let a person sell her own vagina, for who? ... her own children. If you could go to houses here in the village, sesi [addresses interviewer], you will find that many Gogos are suffering from poverty. They [grand-children] take their grant monies ... I don't blame Gogo when she says go and sell your vagina for your children. That [grant] money is hers ... [FGD].

Contrary to E's contention, a disheartened F examines elderly women's contradictory views with regards to societal expectations of respectable traditional young girls and women. She asserts that in some families the elders are complacent in reprimanding young women's involvement in transactional sex relationships as it benefits the family as well:

But you'll also eat, Gogo. If you know I am unemployed, what do you think I bought that plastic bag with? [FGD].

In addition, T indignantly affirms that she finds transactional sex relationships acceptable if the young woman possesses a fecund sexuality with limited means to provide for her offspring:

Oh! You breeding these children for me, an old woman ... I have to be the one struggling to take care of these children ... so, I must suffer because of your vagina! [FGD].

B, echoing the discourse on guiding contemporary young women, interrogates the parenting skills of the same women in the group discussions that appear to be advocating for the involvement of young women in transactional sex relationships:

If you are a sensible parent and your daughter shows up with a plastic bag ... and she's over age [means underage] ... ask her, 'Where did you get the parcel you're carrying because I did not give you any money'. That's if you are a sensible mother ... but if you're a heartless parent, you will accept [the food] and eat [FGD].

6.3.7 Perceived risk factors associated with transactional sex

D shares her discontentment with elders who overtly encourage mischief from their daughters with regards to their involvement in transactional sex relationships with the aim to cater for the family's financial needs. While also highlighting the gendered disparities embedded in transactional sex relationships, D perceives this as a form of abuse as young women are coerced to purposefully seek and engage in transactional sex relationships:

I want to reprimand boMmake. There is an older Mmake around here... I won't say her name. Her child stays out at night jolling ... when she returns in the morning ... this girl has small children ... the woman says to her, 'How much did the boy give you?' ... did you hear that? If her response is; 'Nothing' then the mother will respond and say, 'So, what was the point of going out to him if he gives you nothing ... what do you think your children will eat?'. The children of this woman, in the morning ... when they go out with multiple boys, not one boy ... the girl may be taken by this one and the mother will be happy. She just wants her to come back with something [groceries]. If the girl returns with bread or a braai pack [frozen chicken pieces], the mother is happy as long as there is something to cook. This tears you up as an old woman like myself [FGD].

Similarly, some of the young women in the group highlighted risks of sexual coercion and physical harm that are discerned to be a foundation of some of the transactional sex relationships. This discourse reflects the nature of some transactional sex relationships wherein women occupy subordinate roles and wherein the risk of abuse is heightened, thus constructing women's status as agentless subjects. N stated:

I get that but ... It is wrong only when the child that sells her vagina goes out and then gets murdered [FGD].

6.4 Chapter conclusion

The elderly women's discourse is replete with what were efforts to understand young women's sexualities and sexual bodies. As a result, both elderly and young women engaged in a debate and theorised on the developing sexualities and sexual bodies of contemporary young women. As the elderly women's narratives trek back and forth between what was 'then' in comparison to the

'now', the discourse on sexual immorality and the mischief of young women emerges. What unfolds are collective agreements between the two generations of women to establish the source of contemporary 'youth disobedience' in violating socio-cultural prescripts and mores. This occurs as the women attempt to reconcile the lived realities of 'then' to those of the 'now'. Emerging from the analysis is the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* that emphasises being human through other people (Manyonganise, 2015). In this context women theorise about reinforcing unity among community members and its leaders to "*join in the struggle*" in rectifying what has gone wrong with contemporary youth, while also rejuvenating solidarity with young people that share similar struggles (Mawere, 2012).

A proposal to revive the traditional practice of *umbshoshongo* is a recurring theme aimed at restoring the displaced moral teachings in women. Collective responsibilities on actions taken in the community are evident in the ways that young people are counselled by elders and traditional leaders on moral, traditional and customary practices for that community (Masolo, 2004). Women's ideas on involving the community to re-right individual youth wrongs stem from the premise that a good society comes about from the contributions of members of that community, as formations of personhood is considered to be influenced by the person's surroundings (Msolo, 2004). This is contrary to the studies' findings on the community's complicity in the violent invasion of women's bodies and discriminating against those individuals who do not conform to the set values and moral codes. Relevant to this study, scholars have criticised the communitarian philosophy of *Ubuntu* as replete with whims of patriarchy, authoritarianism and guilty of complicity in gender stereotyping (Mangena, 2009; Msolo, 2004; Manyonganise, 2015). Therefore, elderly and some of the young women's views on their bodies and behaviours and the need to regulate such behaviours are rooted in hetero-patriarchal standards and rules for sexual bodies and behaviours, individuals that transgress such communal standards and regulations set by 'gate keepers' of socio-cultural mores are collectively ostracised and their behaviours are labelled as immoral.

Chapter 7: “Whose Body is it, Anyway?”

7.1 Introduction

This chapter reveals how women derive meaning from their lived experiences of gender and sexuality across different contexts. The dialogues construct contemporary women’s interpretations of their sexualities and sexual expression as shaped by hetero-patriarchal sexual scripts. As the chapter progresses, the women present conflicting views and perceptions of their bodies; generating a robust debate about the female sexual body. What emerges are elderly women’s comparisons of sexualities of young women of an earlier era to those of contemporary young women. Contemporary young women’s agential sexualities and sexual expression are framed as mischievous and as transgressing against traditional mores and guidelines. The last section of this chapter pays attention to how women confront stereotypical constructions of traditional femininities, sexualities and sexual bodies of those gendered-women. Finally, this chapter is based on the interplay between women’s relationships with their sexualities and bodies and societal prescripts for these bodies.

7.2 Discourses on women’s sexual bodies

In this discourse both elderly and young women frame their personal experiences of developing sexual bodies in contexts of silence located in social anxieties on the emerging sexualities of individuals that are gendered female. Women’s diverse personal experiences of their pubertal phase as young girls, illuminate mutual feelings of confusion and distress associated with a developing sexual body. In the excerpt below, F reflects on her personal experience, recounting, on how she demystified what appeared to be rapid changes occurring in her body, her preoccupation with personal grooming as well as the fascination of gaining the attention of the opposite sex:

You’ll see her dressing up and grooming herself [pause] you fix yourself up in front of the mirror for hours on end before stepping out. That’s a sign that she wants a ‘friend’ [boyfriend], even the clothes say it all. [FGD].

F continues on to echo one of the myths that have been constructed by the socio-cultural contexts of women in order to survey young women's emerging sexualities and to dissuade them from violating the social mores and standards. This myth is associated with some of the intimate changes that occur in young women's bodies, such changes as enlarged breasts, broader hips. The women recount that they have been conditioned to believe that elders are able to observe a loss of sexual purity through the changes that have occurred in young women's bodies:

Let's say you walk in on her while she's bathing, she'll be frightened and feel embarrassed and ashamed as if you notice something in her body [started having sex]. I [an elder] would not see anything, only she sees that [FGD].

E as well as J reveal that there are hidden sexual meanings attached to elders' counsel of pubescence young girls as they talk about personal hygiene:

The elders don't talk about anything sex-related; they'll just tell you how to dispose of house trash when you get to the age of menstruation. Your older sisters will need to teach you...If you don't have any, you will just be on your own and learn along the way.." [FGD]

E's assertion suggests that for some young women who are unable to read the elders' connotations of the emerging sexuality may rely on older siblings to decipher the changes occurring in their bodies. For the unfortunate young girls who may not have older sisters, E describes that, "You may come running, saying 'I am injured' when you actually have no injury...Well, because you don't know about this thing." Re-echoing E's assertion of the confusing and anxieties with regard to the unexpected bodily changes, J expresses that, "No one advises you that as you grow up, something like this or that will happen. You come home crying saying 'I am injured' [Menstrual blood] when you have no injury" [FGD]. The familial silence frames young girls' sexualities and sexual bodies as enigmatic, thus, serving a catalyst to women's distorted perceptions of their sexual bodies and sexualities as evidenced in subsequent subsections.

Similarly, the below excerpt reveals D's narrative on an incident regarding her great-granddaughter who mispronounced the pubic hair in *siSwati* that she had seen on her adolescent sister. D as well as the little girl's *Mamncane* (aunt) chuckled at the girl's error sans correcting her on the appropriate terminology. This echoed young women's experiences of puberty as a confusing phase. As a result, the act of not being able to name one's body parts constructs the sexual bodies of

young women as mysterious and fostering the embarrassment of naming these body parts and fostering shame at her nakedness:

“The little one says 'Gogo' and I say 'yes' and she says 'Delia has grown tinta' [pubic hair]. She wants to say tindala [pubic hair]. I said: 'What did you say, my child?' [smiles]. She tells her Mamncane [aunt] the same thing... she says, 'hey, Mamncane' [aunt] and Mamncane says 'yes' and she says 'Delia has tinta' Her Mamncane laughs and asks 'where?' and she says 'they are here' [pointing at genital area]. She was struggling to pronounce the word” [laughs].

Conversely, M juxtaposes the diet of young people of the earlier era to that of contemporary young people. She frames modernisation as central to the changes in contemporary young people’s processed food diet and as accelerating the premature pubescent phase among contemporary youth. She maintains that modernisation has contributed to the displacement of the traditional practices that reserved certain foods for specific ages in efforts to prevent early puberty:

These feelings kick-start in her body and to the boy the voice box changes. Girls start developing breasts and the body will signal that it has changed. It is also conditions [such as] the food we eat. These children eat eggs. In days gone by the onset of sexual activity was delayed because they were told that children don’t eat eggs, meat ... because they were protecting them from these things (premature adolescence). Now they eat things like Rama [margarine] and cheese [FGD].

Elderly women contend that the silences on young people’s emerging sexualities is largely due to contemporary young people’s rapid adolescence. The silence in the home is constructed to deter young women from indulging their sexual bodies. Elderly women express that in their time dialogues on young women’s sexualities were reserved for initiates in the context of initiation schools. The young initiates were deemed to be of age in order to be engaged in sexual matters and in practices that were designed to prepare her sexual body for sexual encounters with men such as the practice of *ukudonsa amalebe*, labial stretching. Contrary to contemporary times where modernisation and religion has displaced the custom of initiating young girls into womanhood, the sexual activities of young people are recognised as disobedience and mischief as they are performed outside of the approval of elders. Consequently, impacting young women’s

relationships with their sexual bodies and attainment of sexual pleasure is framed in the context of a violation of social mores and rules. As a result, both young and elderly women locate the reproductive functions of young women's bodies as a consequence of deviant sexualities and behaviours.

7.3 Young women and the entanglement of the 'forbidden fruit'

In this discourse the young women acknowledged the elders' attempts on silencing their emerging sexualities. However, they contend that the silence has not deterred some of the young women from uncovering the enigmatic abilities of their sexual bodies and deriving pleasure from them. K succinctly captures the young women's contentions that they are agential subjects of their own sexualities:

What we are saying is that we do not wait until the parents say, "You are OK now, you are ready". You decide for yourself who you want to sleep with ... It's just feelings...what I can say is that my family has no influence on what I do with my body [FGD].

Reflecting on her personal experience, P posits that the framing of young women's sexualities and sexual bodies as enigmatic has contributed to her feelings of discomfort in her sexual body and her sexual expression. She asserts that this conditioning impacts women's relationships with their bodies and how they choose to express themselves sexually. As a young bride she experienced difficulties in deriving and providing sexual pleasure as the functions of her sexual body were previously 'hidden' to her. As a result, she highlights that contemporary young women may be disinclined to attend to their sexual health by visiting healthcare centres:

...Yes, we are liberated somehow but still an uncomfortable feeling [engaging in sex] when you get married. They [teenagers] would ask one another about sex... They're not comfortable going to their parents and they are not comfortable going to clinics [One-on-one].

P contradicts this silence on young women's emerging sexualities because as a married person one is expected to pleasure the male sexual partner and not become a passive recipient of sex. However,

this presents a challenge for women who as young girls were prevented from exploring their bodies and sexualities:

They tell you ukuthi [that] you must be a church wife outside but you must be a whore in the bed. Isn't that our African 'songs', neh?

Reflecting on her experiences working with young girls and women in foreign funded health programmes, P infers that women's sexualities and bodies are replete with contradictions. She argues that on the one hand young women are encouraged to be sexually assertive and to be sexual agents of their own sexualities. In contrast, P asserts that young women that elect to express their sexuality and bodies are judged harshly by society, in particular, by women who educate them on sexual agency in the contexts of condom use in sexual relationships. As a result, she makes the connection that the chokehold on social sex scripts contributes to women's sexual dissatisfaction in relationships as the activity is centred on male pleasure and enjoyment:

Kuthi [It's like] we preach women empowerment, women this, we are the very same people that are mocking that are very... [incomplete sentence]. So sex is powerful to validate us, like there are very few... like if you do research, there are very few people that reach orgasm. Ask yourself why? So if you can answer that, why does 80% of women not reach orgasm. It's not about you [as a woman] and women will not take charge because they are scared to open up [One-on-one].

D highlights the parental assumptions that silence on emerging sexualities of young girls will translate to young girls' repressions of sexual urges. However, this is not the case as young women covertly get involved in sexual relationships and the unsuspecting parents learn of the sexual relationship when the young woman is pregnant. D emphasises that young women are having sex in the daytime as parents would not expect any wrongdoing, particularly if it occurs in a school week:

... They have sex during the day, don't you often see them walking two by two on the way from school during the day? Where do you think these pregnant bellies come from? They are made in the daytime [FGD].

Similarly, E, reflecting on her experience on becoming a young mother, adds that her elders at the time were unsuspecting of her sexual relationship as she was of a school-going age. E reflects on

how she created ways of spending time with her boyfriend which often occurred on school days in order to evade suspicion from elders. She playfully talks about how she ensured that the risk of being found out was worth it, by attaining sexual pleasure out of the relationship. However, she regrettably describes her early pregnancy as a consequence of the concealed relationship:

Obviously, at home they will never allow it, so I steal any chance I get during school time [weekdays]. Immediately after school, I grab a chance to see my boyfriend and I must use this chance on my way from school, and I made sure I got what I wanted out of it. The painful thing about it, is the consequence ... is a baby [FGD].

Reasoning similarly, F, a mother of three children, relates how she found sex to be a pleasurable experience and as a result was not deterred by the potential risks of pregnancy. She coyly describes the experience of the tugging feeling of the sexual experience despite the looming ‘punishment’ of pregnancy:

I would leave the baby with my grandmother and carry on [having sex] and just continue and get another one [baby]... Even when my grandmother passed away, I was still just bringing them [children]. What must one do, Gogo, with the stolen fruit? [shrugs shoulders][FGD].

This is similar to prominent figures in the Bible, Adam and Eve, who indulged in the forbidden fruit from the Garden of Eden and thereafter were befallen by dire consequences. In the discussions that followed, sex is described as stolen fruit that results in negative consequences for a young women as it is against the wishes of elders for young unmarried women, particularly those of a school-going age. Thus, the punishment presents itself in the form of an early pregnancy for some women, revealing what has been hidden, that is, the sexual relationship.

Furthermore, D finds in F’s narrative a teachable moment for young women in the group, gazing at them, she says, “*You are telling the truth, my child, stolen food is not right ...*” [FGD]. Responding, to D’s comment the two 18-year-old young women C and A acknowledge that pregnancy is an inherent risk for young women indulging in the act of the ‘stolen fruit’. However, for the young women the risk of pregnancy does not outweigh the perception of sex as a pleasurable experience. C, sheepishly glances at D and says, “*The act of getting a pregnancy is an*

extremely pleasurable moment, Gogo” [smiles]. Agreeing with C, A exclaims, “*You feel like raising your legs in the air!*” [smiles].

Subsequent, to modernisation and religion is the displacement of the custom of initiating young girls and women into womanhood. Thus, emerging sexualities and the contemporary young women’s sexual agency is framed in mischief and condemnation. Notwithstanding, the chokehold of societal expectations and perceptions of obedient young girls and women has not deterred young women from expressing their sexual bodies and pursuing sexual pleasure. In fact, for some of the young women, indulging in the ‘forbidden fruit’, violating social norms and values presented a more pleasurable sexual experience. However, the women acknowledged that in spite of becoming agential subjects of their sexualities and sexual bodies, societal perceptions of young agential sexual bodies that are gendered-female are viewed negatively as compared to males of a similar age group, thus influencing both young and elderly women’s imaginations of their sexualities and bodies as expandable.

7.4 The sexualities of ‘ama-cherrie’ and the absence of ligaments

The subject of women repressing their sexual urges and allowing males to initiate courtship or take the lead in sexual advances arose. Some of the older and younger women expressed concerns in young women’s inability to repress their sexual urges, thus leading them to behave in ways that are perceived as improper by both younger males and elders in the community. For this section, N’s narrative regarding women’s improper behaviour stands out. In her narrative, she implies that young women are forward in terms of relationships and boys perceive them as easily lured into sexual relationships by material things, and are tested by using food as bait for the relationship.

...Our children now ... indeed, you court these boys. You know, you do court them... And once you say to a man passing by over there 'hey, could you please buy me some chips'. That's how things start... with chips. It starts with a cold drink. Once you ask, he will see it as a sign that this one wants it. He comes with the chips and you take them [FGD].

T adds a perspective that young women’s lack of sexual restraint frames them as more lascivious than boys of a similar age group, agreeing to every suitor that may come along:

Listen... these young girls [of today] are lascivious because they hardly ever say no to sex or male advances. You see, it's like those nodding bubblehead dogs that white people used to keep in their houses. The type that always used to do like this ... you'd find it moving its head up and down like this [displays movements] [FGD.]

A from the group adds on that young women of today are indeed lascivious, displaying lack of control of their sexual urges as can be observed from the number of suitors they accept sexual advances from, “*There are no ligaments!*”. R, from her empirical experience, draws comparisons between young girls’ and boys’ sexualities and concludes that young women are more lustful than boys of the same age, highlighting society’s bias in the normalisation of boys’ sexualities while ‘demonising’ those of young women, “*Boys are lustful but girls are far worse!*”

Moreover, young women A and H reason that the need for young women to remain restrained in regard to expressing their sexualities and carrying their sexual bodies is due to physiological differences between men and women. This drives the stereotypical accepted norms that sexual bodies of men are predestined to withstand multiple sexual partners and relationships and remain unaffected, whereas women are not ‘built’ for such a purpose and their bodies stand to amass significant damage over the years should they adopt similar sexual practices as men. A brings pregnancy into the spotlight as a factor that prevents women from following similar sexual behaviours as their male counterparts:

The thing is that boys don't get pregnant. He can impregnate but you will have the baby. He is not affected; you, the girl, are affected because you must raise the child

As alluded to in the preceding statement from H, younger men whose bodies remain unchanged with regards to their sexual history find young women who have been observed to be in more than one relationship as distasteful sexual partners because there would be noticeable changes in their bodies that signal their involvement with multiple sexual partners.

OK, we as 'ama-cherri' [girls] and like 'ama-owthi' [boys] are very different. As for us ama-cherri, if you do it [have sex] with a lot of boys, you will get thin and lose shape, and they too will no longer find you pleasurable. They don't lose anything, they stay the same. [FGD].

In efforts to explore more views on this, I probed further on the narratives of women's sexual bodies deteriorating due to sexual excess.

Interviewer: *"You're saying girls start losing weight. What is the cause of weight loss among sexually active girls?"*

R responded in saying that it is mostly the differing sizes of the penises entering women's vaginas that affect the size and appearance of her vaginal 'hole'. These are one of the strategies that both young and older women utilised as proof that early sexual debut and sexual excess for young girls is damaging to their bodies, as over time one's history of sexual partners grows, leading to the eventual deterioration of sexual attractiveness of her sexual body.

Well, today it's a small penis, tomorrow a big penis and so on. Well, this thing [vagina] has its own given size, so you end up shrivelling and become distasteful to men [FGD].

Similarly, B maintains that whereas males' sexual bodies with a growing sexual history gain sexual prowess, women's sexual bodies lose sexual value, including a loss of respectability among male suitors and in the community. *"But a guy's value remains unchanged, even if he has multiple lovers, uyanabetisa"* [it's just pleasure all the way] [FGD.]

N reveals that often it is not the physiological changes in sexually active young women that make them distasteful sexual partners, but rather societal views and perceptions that shape the negative stereotypes attached to the sexual bodies of young women, thus exposing the binary patterns utilised to construct gendered bodies. Both young and older males in some contexts are revered for their sexual prowess, whilst both young and older women's sexual bodies are denigrated for similar behaviours:

...You, as a woman... once you have a few [sexual partners], you will hear how people talk. 'This one is a prostitute... she does this or that'. So, it means it is just the natural order of things that a man is called 'Ingamla' [ladies' man] but a woman 'Ingwababane' [whore]. Mostly we as women or even girls, we lose value quickly. If you're a girl and when you start dating, one, two three [boys], you no longer look attractive [FGD].

In addition, S alludes to individuals' socio-cultural contexts in shaping and normalising certain behaviours and rejecting others:

Another thing is our [cultural] background as black people. A man [deep sigh] may have many girlfriends, wives and all. You'll never hear people say that man is a whore [FGD].

I followed up with a question to try and gain insight into women's views on the social stereotypes surrounding the sexual bodies of women, and whether women's internalisation of such views contributes to their current perceptions of their sexualities and sexual experiences as well as attaining sexual pleasure:

Interviewer: *"May I ask why men and women are socially viewed differently when it comes to sex? How come women are judged so harshly but males are not?"*

T, in her response, echoes the sentiments of the two elderly women's preceding statements regarding cultural expectations as well as perceptions of sexual bodies of women. Most of the women in the group discussions and others in the one-on-one session alluded to tradition as dictating the manner in which women behaved both in their public and private spaces:

"From tradition. I would say way back where traditions started ... that is a woman ... you see ... it's just something from the ancient past where things started ... tradition" [FGD].

Young women's bodies in particular are surveilled and expected to follow the counsel of the elders and the traditional mores and guidelines as they are perceived to be for the sake of preserving their sexual bodies. Similarly, K a mother of three reflecting on her personal experience suggests that if a woman has more than one child out of wedlock, that woman is viewed negatively in her community. In addition, K asserts that males often find such women distasteful as the pregnancies or the children amplify her sexual history, contributing to the debasing statements and assumptions about the appearance of her vaginal area:

Yes, if in the community you have two or more [children], you are not a good example. As a girl, it is important that you conduct yourself properly, use condoms and find ways to protect yourself at the clinic. Also, don't keep getting babies, because even the same boys also start commenting, 'Ey, that one.' [FGD].

Similarly, G recounts some of the negative comments and at times the taunting of young girls by males. These women are deemed to be lascivious and as ‘disposable’ objects solely for the male’s sexual release:

“These boys now abasak’nabeli [find you sexually unattractive] ... When you are walking there, they’ll just say: ‘Oh no, that one, we are only going to court her just so we can have sex with her, ejaculate then leave’. It’s because when they get to you, they find a big hole [spreads arms wide to demonstrate] ... yes, when they come to you, they find a gaping hole. These boys just look at you knowing that ‘that one has no brakes, is just uncontrollable’, you see.” [FGD].

The societal constructions and categorisation of women and their sexual bodies is evident in women’s perceptions and their experiences of sex and their sexualities. At the same time, young women in discourses on the rampancy of their sexualities maintained that the elderly women ought to lead contemporary youth by example regarding sexual behaviours. Discourses on women’s sexualities and sexual bodies were replete with contradictions, with the societal chokehold on young women’s sexual behaviours. However, the socially constructed labels of women’s bodies and its functions continue to dominate women’s dialogue on the female body. Young women highlighted the gender disparities embedded in the labelling of sexual bodies of both men and women. It is through these internalised constructed societal labels that the generation of women vilified one another for their non-conforming sexual behaviours and bodies to the predetermined compartmentalised societal norms and guidelines for ‘proper’ traditional women. Juxtaposing the sexual conduct of young women of the earlier era, contemporary women frame the sexualities of contemporary elderly women as immoral, symbolising a degenerating label of *uGogo* and *Mma-ke*. What follows are young and elderly women’s denunciations of contemporary elderly women’s immoral sexual conduct as a violation of the norms and values that they have instilled in their ‘children’.

7.5 The embodied burden of the ageing sexual body

The different generations of women debated various issues pertaining to women’s bodies. Among issues of citizenship in the focus group, discussion topics such as societal expectations of the

female sexuality, expression and the body as well as elderly women's sexuality came to the fore. In a discussion about older men utilising their resources to lure young women into relationships with them, C gestured that older men should not be blamed for pursuing relationships with younger women and girls because their peers (*boGogo*) of contemporary times are doing the same:

Let us not blame the old men [only], the old women of today also want Ben 10s [younger boyfriends]. When you meet an old woman in the street and say 'greetings so and so's Gogo' and her response will be 'do I look like your Gogo?' [Loud laughs in the group] That's because she has spotted a boy walking there [and does not want to be referred to as Gogo in the young boy's presence]... These Gogo's of today are also the same as the grandfathers [All women talk at the same time, FGD].

H, currently completing secondary school, makes a similar reference that intergenerational relationships among older men and younger women are normalised and encouraged due to older women's relationships with younger men. She maintains that the old men no longer view young women as their 'daughters' but rather as potential girlfriends. "*So what does this old man see in me, for him to come and approach me?*" (FGD). C, of a similar age, in frustration responds, "*He sees that your mother has taken your man*" [young boy]. Emphasising the loss of respectability of elderly women by competing with men of the same age, A exclaims, "*Eh! Then I will also take her man*". In this context, elderly women are viewed as respectable and moral figures of the home and the community. The image of these women being sexual beings is one with which the young women are unwilling to reconcile, particularly when the elderly women are seeking sexual relationships with younger boys. Heteronormativity and gender disparities are at play in the case of older men's bodies and sexualities as they are not questioned as much as women's ageing bodies are questioned and frowned upon. This is due to the age-old stereotypes that it is acceptable and even encouraged for older men to prove their virility by dating or even marrying younger women.

Due to this widely accepted and occasionally encouraged practice for older men, most young women as well as some older women debated that it is up to elderly women to uphold the moral status of the elderly in the community; that includes the perceptions of the elderly as moral and asexual beings and caretakers of the family and community. The general argument of the groups was that the current generation of elderly women are tainted by changing times. As a result, they are unwilling to accept that their sexuality and sexual bodies have reached their 'expiry dates'.

Instead, the group vehemently argues that these old women are chasing after young boys in order to rejuvenate their youth and chasing after what they have lost – that is, their sexuality and youth:

“There are old women who go out with [young] boys. As an old woman, what are you doing with a boy? The old woman imagines that she is being rejuvenated through boys” [E, FGD].

P, in her response to young women’s condemnation of elderly women, nonchalantly reveals young women’s inconsistencies in their gendered disparities among elderly men and women: *“Yes, we might as well renew ourselves [date younger boys]. These old men are also dating their own children, so we also dating our children”*. What stood out for me in her statement was her reference to elderly women’s young boyfriends as our children, which is a phrase that young women use to appeal to elderly women to stop dating their children, thus emphasising the saying common in African communities and families that a child is everyone’s child with regards to older individuals. Similar to the preceding reference of elderly women dating their children, D narrates a story to express her shock at how unashamedly *bo-Gogo* of today pursue sexual relationships with ‘their children’. The common word utilised to describe and condemn such behaviour by elderly women is *ukungcola*, meaning dirt or unclean. I gathered that this is to emphasise young women’s repulsion of elderly women’s openness in expressing their sexual bodies and sexualities in relationships and in their interactions with young boys. It no longer represents a relationship between an elder and their child.

Heyi! [tries to restore order in the group]. *There was this old woman, I found them at Gideon’s spaza shop. This old woman took out her pension money [state grant] that she had drawn. She gave it to a boy as he was walking alongside her; she speaks to this boy in seSotho, as you know we have many Sotho speakers here [village]. She’s busy following this boy around and says to him ... [pause]. This change belongs to the older woman and this boy decides instead to buy himself cigarettes and takes the rest of it [money], places it in his pocket. As he puts it in his pocket, this Gogo grabs the young boy by his crotch [demonstrates by grabbing crotch] and says; 'Are you going to screw me?'. She spoke in seSesotho because there are many seSotho speakers here. You know, this boy looked at me and I looked at him back and gestured [displays looks of disapproval]. You know, I felt a shiver and a fright like this [shakes hands and feet]. This old woman of about my age is*

asking a small child of less than 20 years [old] to have sex with her. Thina boGogo singcolile! [We as old women can be filthy.] Is that right? [a resounding 'no' can be heard among the women in the group][FGD].

Similarly, T surmises the growing phenomenon of *boGogo* who are refusing to accept their fate - their ageing bodies and completed sexual lives - in their efforts to attract younger boys. "*BoGogo just like me, old women from around here ... once you say someone is uGogo, they will cuss you. They want 'Ben 10s' [young boyfriends], right? They hook up with young boys.*" The elderly women's reactions referred to in this instance bear testament to the archaic and stagnant image that is embodied in images of *boGogo*, representing a completed sex life and awaiting one's death, which these elderly women are refusing to embody. The burden that represents this title appears to be hampering elderly women's sexual lives and opportunities to seek companionship in young men. A distressed F from the group discussion highlighted that mothers of young women as well as elderly women who are engaged in such relationships lose their respectability among young women, because one must practice what one preaches:

In that case, how can an older woman counsel me when I start dating this boy? Just what advice can she give me? ['Yes' can be heard from young women in the group.] If my grandmother decides to date a boy my age, what should I say? Of course, boGogo like young boys and our mothers bring young boys into our homes and you can't disapprove anything because it's her house.

For young women in the group, for some of *boGogo* to openly date young men or boys, they are overtly communicating that they are sexual beings, thus contributing to their loss of respect and decaying image as counsellors of young people in the home and community. In these discussions, some of the comments were inaudible. The discussions on this topic were emotionally charged from both generations of women. The women were speaking at the same time, with some relating their own experiences of such conduct, while others made reference to their family situations of mothers bringing young boys home. Some made references to friends who have been kicked out of their homes due to the disapproval of their mothers' relationships with young lovers. The general agreement was that *boGogo* engage in these relationships as a way of restoring their youth and longing for what has past. K articulates: "*They are just greedy ... they want to return to childhood in their old age and be like youngsters... They are chasing after things that have gone by.*" [FGD].

S attempts to make sense of young men's attraction to older women. In her observation, she concludes that the attraction cannot possibly be physical due to the perception of 'ageing' bodies as unattractive, rather the attraction is that of financial or material gain:

The thing is that I may be financially well off. I take money and give a car to the boy for him to drive around, as long as he is not my own [child], just a boy. He's also excited about the car [FGD].

To recuse herself from the 'dirty' Gogos, D reconstructs the image of a 'proper' elderly woman:

You see, I don't drink alcohol ... I never go to a tavern. My alcohol is this snuff ... On Christmas day at 6 o'clock in the evening, I get into the house and sleep [FGD].

N in agreement commends her conduct as one that is expected of women of their age group, compared to contemporary Gogos who do not act according to the societal standards set for women their age:

Eh, ya ... ung'Gogo kahle [you are a proper Gogo]... haai, boGogo banamuhla labangcolile [not Gogos of today who are filthy].

Young women interject, responding to N's provocation: "*They want young children!*" [FGD]. D, pleased with being validated with the image that she has constructed of herself as *uGogo*, specifically by someone of her generation "[smiles] ... *Ya, that's what I've been saying all along ...*" [FGD].

Elderly women's sexuality is dissected and labelled as wanting to rejuvenate themselves and that they cannot reconcile with the fact that they have aged and possess a completed sexual life. Contemporary, elderly women's sexual behaviours are labelled as the cause of the depraved behaviour of contemporary young women and older men that seek sexual relationships with young women. Juxtaposing the sexuality of young women of the earlier era, both young and elderly women frame the sexualities of contemporary elderly women as deviant and are losing the respect of contemporary youth. Contrary to the negative perceptions and labels attached to women who deviate from the social norms, both elderly and some of the young women are determined to defy the socio-cultural norms that box women into specific labels when they do not act according to the predetermined norms and values of traditional femininities or women.

7.6 Chapter conclusion

The preceding analysis discusses women's interpretations of their bodies and sexualities as governed by societal categorisations and titles for women. Emerging from the narratives of both generations of women on the female body are socio-environmental meanings that are attached to women's sexualities and bodies. Moreover, the analysis in this chapter offered insights into the women's engagement with biased gender disparities with regards to the bodies of men and women. Similarly, the women challenged society's normalisation and at times the encouragement of males' sexual prowess, while vilifying women who ascribes to similar behaviours. In discourses of young women's emerging sexualities and the ageing sexualities of contemporary women, the cultural scripts inscribed on the bodies of men vary with those on the bodies of women (Tamale, 2017). Similarly, hetero-patriarchal views on gendered sexual bodies became evident in the dialogues of women's sexual expression and pleasure.

The discourses around women's sexuality and attaining sexual pleasure was described by some of the women as a normal and culturally appropriate practice, if expressed and controlled within the confines of a heterosexual marriage or a relationship. The analysis reveals how women in the discourse of the female body and sexuality interchangeably became proponents of women as agential subjects of their sexualities to espousing roles of hetero-patriarchal societies' gatekeepers of sexual scripts for individuals who are gendered female. Since some of the young and elderly women elected to 'own' their sexualities and sexual bodies sans the 'permission' of 'cultural power brokers', Bawa and Ogunyakin (2018, p.13) assert that such behaviours are considered morally reprehensible and un-cultural. This is evidenced in phrases utilised by women to refer to the transgressors, such as *ukungcola*, filth in elderly women, and young women's '*lack of ligaments*'. To conclude, in spite of the chokehold of societal expectations of sexual bodies both young and aged, the women present ways of how they covertly sought sexual pleasure, either during school hours or during the day, while others brave the sneers of society by overtly expressing their 'lascivious' sexualities and rejuvenating an ageing sexuality and body.

Chapter 8: Discussion of Findings

8.1 Linking women's experiences to literature

The previous chapters critically discussed the connection between the overarching decolonial and African feminist thinking and the storied narratives of the lived experiences of Nkomazi women. This discussion also re-echoed scholars' insightful arguments in chapters 2 and 3 on the intersections of gender, sexuality, colonialism, apartheid and nationalism, and integrating them together with the findings presented in chapters 5, 6 and 7 to unveil what I found to echo the study's research objectives. Furthermore, the thesis endeavoured to enhance the understanding of how the lives of Nkomazi women are continuously woven into the tapestry of South Africa's nationalist discourse. What emerged in women's debates on sexuality, gender and nationalism were women's attempts to carve 'new' identities within the post-colonial state together with notions of belonging and conceptualising what it means to be a South African citizen.

Central to this thesis, I drew from scholars' arguments presented in chapters 2 and 3 who assert that traces of nationhood can be located through the discourses of gender, sexuality and race (Batisai, 2013; Lewis, 2009; McClintock, 1995; McFadden, 1992; Musila, 2009; Nagel, 1998; Shafer & Ratele, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2003). In similar vein, the foregoing scholars hold a common view that, during the oppressive eras in Africa such as the apartheid era preceded by colonialism, sexuality became central in the making, the maintenance and oppression of subjugated nations (Batisai, 2013; McClintock, 1995; Musila, 2009; Nagel, 1998; Shafer & Ratele, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2003). Reverberant postcolonial and decolonial scholars throughout this work have gone as far as arguing that colonialism has never left postcolonial Africa but it is survived by coloniality through colonial organising principles such as gender, sexuality and race among others that have come to frame the everyday sexuality discourses of post-colonial peoples.

8.2. Reading socio-political changes through women's quotidian lives

In this theme the women unveiled their relationship to time through the lenses of South Africa's socio-political landscape as highlighted in chapters 5 and 6. Central to the discourse of time, the women made sense of the socio-political climate in relation to what occurs in their daily lives, thus bearing relevance to feminist theorisations of women making sense of their gendered experiences

in the personal domain through the public and political. This parallels the thinking of authors like Ginwala (1990), Mkhize (2000), Tamale (1996) and Zwane's (2000) articulation that protest actions of 'ordinary' women against oppressive laws and legislation were motivated by its disruption of their quotidian lives. By the same token, in some of their reflections of working under the apartheid system as alluded to in chapter 5, women revealed small resistances against the oppressive state's ideologies that permeated the domestic space for those employed in domestic work. Such resistances included utilising resources that were reserved only for white people, while others purchased similar items as their white employers to affirm their place as humans too. It is in such intimate spaces that women experienced the effects of racial subjugation and dehumanisation under the system of oppression. Describing the conduct of their employers and their interactions, the women vehemently pointed out that they did not perceive qualities of superiority between themselves and the white employers. In fact, the women dismantled these racial differences by also reducing the white employers to a status of minor state, as the system had done to the black race, by avowing that those houses would fall apart sans the intervention of the black 'servants'. This located black labour as the anchor of the successful functioning of the apartheid system.

The women's preceding narratives are rooted in women's initiated protest actions and staging of stay-aways as mentioned in chapter 3, as a response to the apartheid legislation on influx-control of black labourers in the towns. This initiative saw many black people not reporting for duty, compelling employers and government to revise this legislation to negotiate the return of the workers. In addition, what I found striking and was moved by was the 'invisibilised' positions of men in women's lives. The women spoke at length about how apartheid impacted their lives. They struggled through the chokehold of apartheid laws on their livelihoods, coupled with moving to different provinces leaving behind their children in search of better economic opportunities for themselves and their families. What I found common in women's stories featuring men, were narratives of overcoming - overcoming an unpleasant bad marriage and in some cases overcoming the burden of an absent father and husband. In their 'victories' of overcoming familial and spousal challenges and providing a good life for their children, the women lamented on their absences in their children's lives attributing precariousness of their parent-child relationships to the effects of their absence in their childhoods.

However, most of the women did not regret their decisions to leave their children behind in search of a better life, framing their sacrifices as the foundation of their children's success today, while others have highlighted that they are making up for lost time with their children through their relationships with their great-grandchildren and grandchildren. Zwane's (2000) argument becomes pertinent here, as she argues that similar to women's pass law campaigns and men's inaction in the planning stages, women were forced to take action, ostensibly due to men's inaction in women's activities. Furthermore, similar to Batisai's (2013) contribution on elderly women and discourses on nationalism and sexualities, time was a recurring theme as the elderly women juxtaposed tradition and modernity. The elderly women collectively drew comparisons between themselves (the erstwhile youth) and contemporary youth, in particular contemporary youth's conduct and interactions between young boys and young women. Likewise, the elderly as well as older women in the discussions of youth conduct and the dissipating of morality in youth due to democracy (modernity), collectively criticised the government's interference in their parenting of young people, leading some of the youth to "misuse" their rights and commit acts that are not approved by the elders and the community. This presents a challenge as the elderly women experience the chokehold of the law compounded by notions of un-belonging and loss of control as they attempt to carve new roles and identities under the democratic state. In keeping with constructing new identities, young women raised similar concerns as the elderly women, citing challenges of the paradox of democracy that comes with the 'Born-Free' narrative that ostensibly signifies freedom, abundant opportunities and exemption from injustices experienced by erstwhile youth. Furthermore, the young women were perturbed by this ideology that perceives young people born at the advent of democracy as Born-Frees and the expectation that they should assimilate the project of democracy. The women contested this notion and described democracy as an unequal system that only caters to a few elites in the major cities, leaving rural people in the periphery of 'progression' and 'development'. What further emerges from young women's narratives on democracy is that they are caught in a double bind between the traditional and modern ways of being. The former allows the women to be accepted and respected as a part of the community adhering to traditional mores and standards within the context of traditional femininities. Embracing the latter for the young women represents progression and self-autonomy outside of the communal beliefs and systems, allowing young people to explore their environment. This is at times, however, to the detriment of their relationships with elders as it clashes with

communal norms and values, thus widening the gap between the elderly and the young. As a result, the group discussions became contested spaces resembling the manner in which women are in constant negotiation of their personhood, gender and sexualities within their everyday hetero-patriarchal spaces as evidenced in the theme that follows.

8.3 Constructing meanings of democracy and empowerment

This theme has revealed the intersections of various socio-cultural and political factors impeding the women in this study's full attainment of emancipation and empowerment. The same empowerment rhetoric was orated by the previous national liberation movement leaders and present-day African leaders and politicians. Among the issues that women raised relating to their indifference towards the project of empowerment and democracy were fewer women possessing land to build homes. Many women have waited 'to be empowered' and some have even reached their age of retirement. There were promises that were made by the liberation movement leaders and reiterated further in the advent of democracy to emphasise, "a better life for all", a declaration made by the ANC as alluded to in chapter 3. On the other hand, as they work towards carving new personhoods and identities as the 'Born-Frees', young women too expressed their indifference with the empowerment rhetoric and the project of democracy.

They contest that it is unequal and is reserved for the few elite, leaving rural youth on the periphery of progression, development and empowerment. In particular, the young women ardently spoke about a lack of opportunities and places of higher educational learning as well as professional employment. For the youth of Nkomazi district, their fate resembles that of their elders, wherein possession of such opportunities requires that they leave home for the city. The most popular places that some of the Nkomazi youth go to that are closest to home are Pretoria and Johannesburg. Compounding Nkomazi women's socio-economic challenges is the constant negotiation of their sexualities, gender and personhood that have been neglected by the empowerment rhetoric. Thus, Salo (2007) correctly states that for transformation to occur and the nurturing of citizenship in the nation the project of empowerment needs to be all-encompassing and incorporate ideas of gender transformation in addition to socio-economic empowerment. This highlights various scholars' arguments throughout this work that merely positioning women to assimilate into the corporate environment and government offices means that the provision of 'equal' access to tertiary

education will not transform these spaces or women's positions in society, as evidenced in widening gender disparities between men and women in private and public spaces (Gqola, 2007; Hassim, 1991; Kabeer, 2005; Nkenkana, 2015). Kabeer (2005) points out the involvement of women in policy making and decision making as one of the ways to effect change through women's positions in these patriarchal spaces.

8.4 Meanings of violence

Scholars as stated throughout this thesis have consistently argued that often it is in 'private' spaces that unequal power relations between men and women occur. Women in this study have stated that these spaces include places of entertainment such as taverns, schools and in the streets close to women's homes where notions of 'female fear' play out. These are described by Gqola (2007) and Dosekun (2007) as efforts by men to limit women's movements, sexual autonomy and bodily integrity. In keeping with the women's notions of belonging/un-belonging, Motsemme's (2004), observation becomes pertinent as she articulates that when women's private spaces are threatened and forcibly transgressed, they are most likely to experience feelings of inadequacy, signalling a loss of control over their own lives.

This echoes some of the young women and elderly women's narratives of sexual coercion and goading and calling young women debasing names at the hands of young boys in the neighbourhood and for younger girls within the school. In reference to young women's experiences of male violence, older and elderly women expressed their limited power in controlling these situations. They cite young women's modesty and being 'careful' so as to deflect negative male attention, implying that 'boys will always be boys' – meaning they can do whatever they please to women sans any consequences. The responsibility lies with young women to keep themselves in check to avoid negative attention. For this reason, some of the women have highlighted that victims of such violence - either sexual or physical - do not report these crimes for fear of judgement, because often the assumption is that she either provoked him or has accepted gifts from him which entitles him to access her. In addition, Baderoon (2011) explains that these popularised curse words or denigrating phrases explicated by women in their narratives as indicated in the results chapter are used by these young boys and men to gain control of the person they are directing them to. With regards to the sexual coercion which in some cases escalated to

rape of young primary school girls by high school boys, Sathiparsad (2011) in his study with high school boys found that the execution of sex and violent acts on their girlfriends and other young women formed a vital part of relationships and was used to 'discipline' young women. Furthermore, I am reminded by scholars' prescient warnings in their report to the Department of Education in 2006 that South African schools that are located in what are classified as economically poor areas are violent spaces, particularly for young girls, with daily threats of sexual violence (Boyle, 2006 in Moletsane, 2007). This parallels Ratele's (2008) observation that men's conceptualisation of masculinity is co-dependent on interactions with their sexual partners, marital partners and other interactions with people in accordance with the men's social standing within those interactions. This bodes well for scholars' arguments on women's full attainment of empowerment and emancipation that gender transformation discourses are not only for the empowerment of women but men as well which can translate to the transformation of social attitudes on gender and its intersections.

8.5 Conceptualising sexuality and its expression

Both elderly and young women articulated meanings of sex and sexuality in varied ways including the development and the physical changes in young women's bodies that signal emerging sexualities, observable through young women's preoccupation with personal grooming and an interest in male attention and interactions. Similar to young women, elderly women identified sexuality and sex in relation to heterosexual sex. Sex was also described as an act performed in contexts of long-term romantic relationships including marriage. For both elderly and young women, embodying sexuality entails the act of having sex with a man brought on by feelings of sexual arousal and reserved for the exploration and pleasure of the male partner in a heterosexual relationship. For both generations of women, growing up as a young woman in the home, sexuality and the pubescent changes occurring in young girls' bodies were rarely discussed by elders in the home. This is apart from cases where the young woman's family tradition allows for her to be initiated, that is, attend initiation school. During their stay in the initiation school, for those elderly women who were permitted to attend, topics such as sexuality, sexual pleasure, traditional femininities, including education on cultural and traditional mores and standards, were covered as

a traditional means of preparing women for womanhood and how they should handle themselves in adult sexual relationships with the emphasis on performing such acts in the context of marriage. For young women who did not attend initiation schools, talks about sex and their developing bodies were accomplished through comments and through criticism from elders and counsel on how a woman should interact with boys (Diallo, 2004). Preparation of the woman's sexual body entailed pulling of young women's labial for sexual pleasure of the male to 'play' with the excess tissue to enhance his sexual pleasure. The elderly women added that young women whose labials were pulled were criticised and called debasing names and called 'loose' because their "holes were wide enough for men to drown in". Women who participated in the initiation school were proud to be a part of this communal practice as it symbolises a respect for elders and traditional practices and mores and preservation of their bodies for a good future, including being marriageable (Chisale & Byrne, 2018; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). Salo puts forward that participation in communal practices or adherence to the norms and standards of that community earns respect that is accorded to worthy persons (2003). The elderly women are adamant that this respect has been lost by the 'lascivious' contemporary young women who are 'opened up' (breaking of their virginity) in the 'veld' by boys without their families' knowledge which contributes to growing cases of unmarried women because the 'men have tasted'.

There are also risks of unplanned pregnancies and fatherless children because the man is not known to the family, thus increasing chances of him not taking responsibility for the child. Furthermore, a common thread among the women was that men as well as boys denigrate sexually experienced women, relating to 'hypervisibility' of black women. The women further highlighted that the bodies of sexually experienced women with more than one partner physically deteriorate, and men then do not find them marriageable. As a result, both generations of women emphasised the regulation of women's 'dangerous' sexualities and sexual bodies whilst they are still young to increase respectability and marriage. The stereotypes and shaming of sexually experienced women by men and even women themselves may be attributed to notions that sex and sexuality are marked as a male territory with males as perpetual teachers and women subordinate and inexperienced subjects of sex. Elderly women interpret sex prior to marriage as disrespect. Therefore, elders' silence on the emerging sexual bodies of young women ostensibly represents elders' interpretations of the young women as too young to participate in sexual activities and should not

‘entertain’ feelings of sexual pleasure or their bodies physiologically change with the ‘awakening’ of this sexuality.

The elderly women insisted that a lot of things are crooked with the lives of contemporary youth, because they have strayed from the teachings and counsel of the elders. This resonates with scholars’ findings on research with young people and sex (Unterhalter, Bhana & Moletsane, 2009). The young women in this study experienced the tension between pleasure and danger when it comes to their sexual relationships. Some of the young women held on to the teachings of the elders that if they have sex they will get pregnant. The danger was in the parents finding out that the young woman was sexually active, and the danger of disease also was looming. Elderly and older women were not exempted from such societal sexual scripts by virtue of their sexual status accorded to them by society and their contexts that determine the who and when of women’s sexual expressions. This represented a contested space as young women were navigating and negotiating their sexualities and the freedom to express themselves sexually with their partners, as well as elderly women who were contesting societal notions of elderly women’s age as representing a completed sex life. Elderly women in these relationships were not viewed as seeking sexual pleasure and enjoyment but rather as attempting to rejuvenate what they had ‘lost’, meaning their youth. In the same way younger women were opposing elderly women as sexual beings and the timing of their expression thereof. This bodes well with young women’s experiences regarding societal judgements on their emerging sexualities and the timing of their sexual expression, as they too are perceived as asexual beings in accordance to societal predetermined ages for inception and expiration date of sexualities and its expression.

This reveals that the freedoms of women’s expressions of sexuality are only acceptable in accordance with the norms and standards set by the ‘gatekeepers’ of culture and tradition. Notions of what constitutes respectability were discursively debated as the elders appeared to be proponents of transactional sex for women who do not have the means to financially care for their children, burdening the already constrained finances of boGogo. The statements of elderly women regarding transactional sex and relationships angered young women, who argued that elderly women gain pleasure in ‘selling’ their daughters and granddaughters so they can also eat good food. In response to young women’s disapproval, the elderly women emphasised that they do not view such relationships as a dishonour to young women but as one of the ways that women are able to fend

for their children. Similarly, other scholars have found that a woman loses her respectability and claims to motherhood for failure to fend for her children's social and economic needs more than one who is not sexually modest (Hungwe, 2004; Haram, 2004). By the same token, the women revealed that African women, specifically rural women, are not passive subjects of sex and sexually transmitted diseases but are active agents in their attainment of sexual pleasure and strive to possess material things by using their sexualities and sexual skills. These include sensualities involved in sexual acts in order to 'gain' control of the male or the sexual experience. Elderly women highlighted that in the past women utilised *titatariya* (a bead belt) that was tied around their waist in order to enhance sexual pleasure for both her and the male partner. *Titatariya* are also described as encouraging women to take the lead during a sexual experience (Arnfred, 2015). Despite the many traditional and societal restrictions that are posed on women's sexuality and expression, a resounding agreement among the women was the attainment of their own sexual pleasure, even if it means initiating sex, "and not just lie there...if you feel an itch, then you must scratch it, don't wait for him".

8.6 Chapter conclusion

Examining the dominant feminist and decolonial scholars' interrogation of gender and sexuality politics has assisted me in recognising how women's freedoms remain on the periphery in post-colonised nations. In choosing varying generations of women for this study, I was able to uncover meanings women attach to their bodies in different contexts, first in South Africa's apartheid era and then in contemporary, democratised South Africa. I was able to achieve the above by listening to the personal narratives of the elderly women's lived experiences as well as the everyday narratives of young women. I have thus reached the theoretical conclusion that women's talk on the discourses of gender, sexuality and race reveal that even in contemporary South Africa women's sexualities are plagued by erstwhile phallic nationalist ideologies on sexualities, race and gender. Additionally, I have learned that by localizing women's experiences of sexuality and their expression minimizes erroneous, simplistic and essentialist views of rural women's sexualities, particularly those sexualities of older women. On reaching this conclusion, I am aware of the idea that discerning the position of women through listening to their discourses in the context of South Africa does not present a straightforward process, theoretically nor empirically (Batisai, 2013).

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a reflection of the entire research journey, where I will be retracing and reflecting on the theoretical, analytical, methodological processes I undertook; this will also include the resounding scholarly arguments and theorisations on the intersections of African (post-colonial) women's oppressions. Of significance in this journey, I will highlight some of the contributions of the reverberant voices of this study's participants. Their contribution facilitated my understanding of the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, colonialism, apartheid and nationalism in rural South African women's conceptions of sexual expression and the gendered meanings of citizenship. Furthermore, this research project was motivated by the realisation and knowledge that research as well as its praxis, particularly among black women who are purported to be among the 'vulnerable groups', contributes to the advancement of the colonial project in subjugating women to subordinate roles based on their gender, race and often their locale.

In addition, this work is positioned as a contribution to the post-colonial debates on the disruption and the decentralisation of simplistic views of African women's gendered experiences of sexuality and its expression, together with highlighting *pluriversalities* in African women's experiences and knowledges of sex, sexuality and its expression. The arguments as well as the contestations presented in this thesis shed light on the fact that sexuality varies and presents abundant elements, at times within a similar socio-cultural (and racial) group. Clearly, sexual mores, practices and standards present varying meanings to different persons, influenced by and dependent on their socio-cultural locale (Helle-Valle, 2004). This thesis was born, in part, from my desire to understand the ways in which women's sexualities and modes of sexual expression are constructed, negotiated and renegotiated across time and how women of varying age groups experience these through the changes in socio-political contexts. It was through contextualising the Nkomazi women's gendered experiences of race, gender, politics, tradition, culture, sex and sexual expression that I was able to address the overarching research question in this thesis. Below I present my evaluation of the research and end this chapter by stating the research limitations, closely followed by the theoretical conclusions of the research and the recommendations for future research on this topic.

9.2 Evaluating the research

While regarded as collecting ‘information’, the positivist paradigm has been criticised for its “context-stripping” nature as it seeks to explain human experiences quantitatively, thus running the risk of losing women’s experiences (Wambui, 2013, p.1). It is for this reason that I elected to utilise feminist and narrative qualitative methods for their contextual nature as well as the non-hierarchical relations between the researcher and the participants (Miller, 2000; Wambui, 2013). Therefore, the primary goal of qualitative interviewing, including semi-structured interviews, is not to elicit a collection of facts; instead, the primary goal is to gain insights into the participants’ subjective construction of meanings (Miller, 2000). This has become beneficial to challenging the limited accounts of the gendered lives of both women and men (Wambui, 2013). Moreover, narrative research involves stories lived and told; stories told by grandmothers have become lauded as moral guidelines by which one should live. I witnessed the education provided to us by the elderly women.

The stories had the intention to educate the young while also reminding them of the old appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in the context of culture and tradition (Brown & Strega, 2005). Brown and Strega (2005) articulate our focus-group experience clearly in stating that, “stories handed down from grandmother to granddaughter are rooted in a deep sense of kinship responsibility, a responsibility that relays a culture, an identity, and a sense of belonging” (p.240). These include cultural, traditional, educational, spiritual, and political topographies. The scholars further add that the stories teach indigenous people about resistance to colonialism (Brown & Strega, 2005). It is in this context that Chege describes feminist research as taking on political action (2011). In addition, African and post-colonial scholars, as consulted in chapter 4, argue that post-colonial, decolonising and African methods of research are critical communication strategies that engage study participants to examine the previously oppressed people’s lives and societal institutions in ways that challenge dominant perspectives. By the same token, I drew from Mkabela’s (2005) appeal in chapter 4 (Section 4.8) to African researchers to embody the ethics of *Ubuntu* in their research in tandem with the ethics of the *Euroversity*, particularly in exploring African contexts. In addition to Mkabela, I further drew from three of Smith’s (1999) 25 decolonising research projects that summed up my research experience with the Nkomazi women.

The projects listed below presented additional elements into the research study that enhanced my understanding of the marginalised cultural knowledge, practices, and identities of Africans.

Indigenising – This involves centring the previously decentred African knowledges and practices in line with feminist research and critical approaches to research while also privileging indigenous voices (Smith, 1999).

Vocation - It is not ethical to walk away. During the interviews, there were disturbing narratives of violent sexual assaults and rape of young women in the community. It was during the focus groups that we took the decision to form support groups (that will be facilitated by young women) for survivors of sexual assault. Both young and older women resolved to also include men in the support groups, so that they can understand the pain that their peers or sons are inflicting on women. We further created a WhatsApp chat group wherein employment and scholarship opportunities are shared among young women who then communicate the messages to other women in the community. The elderly women have also suggested leading the process of reviving the *umbhoshongo* in the community, including traditional community leaders, to address the social ills that are impacting the youth negatively while also encouraging young women and the community to report cases of sexual assault. Thus, scholars such as Kuokkanen (2007, 2010) and Wilson (2001) have asserted that mutuality, accountability and ‘giving back’ to indigenous communities are defining characteristics of a decolonising methodology. This assertion is in line with that of Lawrence and Raiti (2016) who also point to the importance and responsibility that we need to carry as researchers towards contributing to the betterment of lives of those whom we encounter in our scholarly endeavours.

Story-telling – Stories are the oral histories of women’s trajectories through the tumultuous socio-political periods in South Africa. The perspectives of the elderly women became an integral part of indigenous knowledge regarding African women’s sexualities through the change of time. “These new stories contribute to a collective story in which every indigenous person has a place” (Smith, 1999, p.144), thus legitimising indigenous methods such as storytelling as a way of sharing knowledge (Brown & Strega, 2005). As I move towards a conclusion, I would like to reiterate that utilising decolonial and African feminist thinking and methodologies and ethics contributed to the enhancement of my understanding of the ways in which Nkomazi women view the world (Mkabela, 2005). In addition, my choice of “collective ethic” (p.185) embedded in both approaches

is affirmed by Flaherty's (1995) argument that western researchers' inclination to adopting neutral roles in the research process contributes to reminders in the community that they are participants in their own stories as opposed to being co-creators.

In support of the stance of the thesis, according to Olsen (2016), western research ethics are by nature underpinned by othering and colonising of research participants, thus contributing to stereotypical policies and guidelines to research due to views of indigenous communities as vulnerable and possibly weak. Similarly, I was also driven by Alcoff's (1991) advice to avoid speaking for participants as this practice has led to the oppression of the spoken for. Thus, Alcoff (1991) advises that continuing to speak for participants would be to practise a discursive violence. Thus, Gill et al. (2012) pose a question to researchers speaking for others: "who provides researchers the authority to give someone a voice?" (p.12). This parallels scholars' assertion echoed in chapter 4 that the act of amplifying and representing people's stories in research is where the research process has entered the throes of colonialism (Segalo et al., 2015). Finally, it is for this reason that I concur with scholars that by advocating Afrocentric, indigenous and decolonial methods, researchers are not driven towards vilifying western methodology; however, the call, as explained by Mkabela (2005), is to re-examine the thinking that credits unwarranted western superiority at the expense of disregarding African knowledge.

9.3 Limitations of the study

This section discusses what I identify as limitations in this research. The limitations stem from researching African sexualities. Many scholars, including Tamale (2011) and Arnfred (2015), saw the problems of representing African women's voices in matters of sex and sexuality and their entanglement in stereotypic discourses. What remains a challenge for many researchers, including myself, is researching the sexualities of African women without the colonial artefacts of what African sexualities, traditional practices and culture entail. In light of the foregoing scholars' observations, I adopted the process of constant reflection in my interactions with the women and the position of being reflexive of my positionality as a researcher in the field as outlined by Ampofo (2009) among various feminist research scholars in chapter 4. I also acknowledge that in my actions and decisions I am their actions too, unavoidably influencing the meaning and context

of the experience under inquiry (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993; Porter, 1993; Mason, 1996). Given the ‘limitations’/complexities encountered during the research process listed below, I still believe that the depth and richness of the narratives of the women’s lived-experiences are indisputable:

- In terms of the methodology of the study, the limitations/uneasiness stems from the intricacies of researching sexual discourses. This also includes my positionality as a researcher. I had to take cognisance of the age gap between the elderly women, young women and myself as well as the group dynamics embedded in the FGDs. There were concerns and questions among elderly women about how they should navigate their personal experiences and issues relating to sex with ‘their children’. However, we were able to reach a compromise due to my insider identity and given the experiences of women in working with youth on issues of sexual health. The elderly women slowly opened up, as they perceived the discussions and personal interviews as a way of imparting knowledge as well as to counsel young women. The young women also perceived the FGDs as a platform to educate elders on contemporary youth’s perceptions of the world.
- The elderly women deduced my presence as a researcher commissioned by the Presidency or the Department of Social Development to diagnose the community ‘problems’ and ultimately ‘fix’ them. The elderly women’s major concerns were youth behaviour and conduct. These were related to early unplanned pregnancies. In this instance, I was reminded of Smith (1999) in methodology chapter 4 that research has come to represent a dirty word among the indigenous people. My presence in the field was perceived as coming to diagnose the ‘problem’ with the intention to ‘fix’ what has gone wrong as opposed to the women viewing my presence as there to learn from them.
- My role as a researcher was seen as reproducing or complicit in the prejudicial discourse that I was contesting. Scholars argue that it is through the embodiment of the ‘self’ that limitations to the research ostensibly occur, that is the women may have been limited in their narratives about their sexualities and expression. In the ways that I embodied my sexuality and gender, perceiving my sexuality as heterosexual and I as a heterosexual researcher, may have allowed for what Braun (2000 in Lafrance & Wigginton, 2019) coined “heterosexist talk” (p.9). I thus reflected on how my body will be perceived including stereotypic perceptions of how different kinds of sexualities are embodied. To minimise such limitations, I was open to disclosing my

sexuality if asked so as to not limit sexuality debates solely based on heterosexual sex. This provided a space wherein women were free to explore varying understandings of sex, sexuality and sexual expression.

9.4 Theoretical conclusion

While some scholars may argue for a more significant means of analysing contemporary women's conceptions of sexuality and its expression located within nationalism and national iconographies, this thesis arrives at a conclusion that women's gendered experiences of citizenship, belonging, sexuality, race and gender are political and it is through such representations of women's experiences that debates on sexual expression, patriarchy, nationalism and democracy are engaged. Women's experiences of freedom begin with their gendered bodies through which they conceptualise and experience their realities of contemporary South Africa. It is the country's oppressive political past and the daily threats of violent intrusions into women's private spaces that linger in the construction of the gendered experiences of citizenship, belonging and formations of 'new' personhood and negotiation. The narratives of the women in many ways shape our understanding of the experiences of being a contemporary South African woman living in a neo-colonised state.

9.5 Recommendations for further research

As South Africa in particular, and Africa more broadly, continues to re-imagine women's positions in society and their space in the world as sexual beings, I wish for more work that will continue to explore the multi-dimensional and intersectional notions of what it means to be a woman in Africa in the contemporary moment.

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Appendix A: Ethical Clearance

Ref. No: PERC-16033



Ethical Clearance for M/D students: Research on human participants

The Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa has evaluated this research proposal for a Higher Degree in Psychology in light of appropriate ethical requirements, with special reference to the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Psychologists of the HPCSA and the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.

Student Name: Tinyiko Chauke **Student no.:** 44446012

Supervisor: Prof. Puleng Segalo **Affiliation:** Research and Graduate Studies, Unisa

Title of project:

Women's conceptualisations of sexual liberation in patriarchal contexts of a democratic South Africa: An ethnographic study of a rural community in Mpumalanga

The proposal was evaluated for adherence to appropriate ethical standards as required by the Psychology Department of Unisa. The application was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology on the understanding that –

- All ethical conditions related to voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality of the information and the right to withdraw from the research must be explained to participants in a way that will be clearly understood and a signed letter of informed consent will be obtained from each of the participants in the study;
- Information will be treated as confidential and no identifying information through which the sources of the information can be determined should be made available.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P Kruger".

Prof P Kruger

[For the Ethics Committee]
[Department of Psychology, Unisa]

Date: 21 September 2016

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the Psychology Department Ethics Review Committee.*
- 3) An amended application should be submitted if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*
- 4) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

Please note that research where participants are drawn from Unisa staff, students or data bases requires permission from the Senate Research and Innovation Committee (SENRIC) before the research commences.

Appendix B: Invitation to participate in research

PO Box 5071

Halfway House

Midrand

1685

Dear Ms.....

AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT FOR A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PSYCHOLOGY (PhD).

You are hereby requested to participate in a research project that is undertaken as a requirement of a PhD in Psychology degree with the University of South Africa (UNISA).

The title of the research project is: Women's conceptualisations of sexual expression: A narrative inquiry of a rural community in Mpumalanga

Empirical research will be primarily done by:

1. One-on-one interviews.
2. Focus-Group Discussions (FGDs).

You are hereby requested to participate in both the interviews and the FGDs. The objective of the study is to understand women's perceptions and experiences on sexual liberation. The duration of the in-depth interviews is estimated to be 1 to 2 hours long and the focus group is estimated to be between 2 to 3 hours long. The participation and input obtained during the research will be treated with extreme care to maintain confidentiality. The recordings will be kept in my flash disk and will be stored in a lockable cupboard in my home where only I have access to them. Real names will not be divulged in the final report to ensure anonymity. The final product of the research will

be published and also kept on the library shelves at UNISA and some online journal publications. Participation in this research is voluntary, should you wish to withdraw at any time you will be free to do so. Please be assured that I will adhere to all ethical obligations and considerations.

However, should you feel any discomfort or concerns resulting from participation in this study. You will be referred to a Psychological Counsellor closest to your home. You may also contact me on the details below.

If permission is granted may I request that you sign the attached consent form.

Kind Regards,

Ms Tinyiko Chauke

Cell: +27 83 2160 504 and email 44446012@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Appendix C : Informed Consent Form

Women's conceptualisations of sexual expression: A narrative inquiry of a rural community in Mpumalanga

Informed Consent for Participants

I Ms (Full name and surname)

..... do accept to participate in the research process with Tinyiko Chauke a PhD student in Psychology at the University of South Africa.

- 1. I am aware that my participation in this project is entirely voluntary.
- 2. I am aware that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any consequences.
- 3. I understand that my personal information including recordings and narratives will be kept confidential. I understand that my true identity will not be divulged in the final project to ensure anonymity.
- 4. I understand that I will receive no payment or compensation in the study.
- 5. I give permission for the audio-recording of the interview and focus-group discussions.

Date.....

Signature of applicant.....

Signature of researcher.....