Constructions, Negotiations and Performances of Gender and Power in Lobolo: An African-Centred Feminist Perspective

by

Refiloe Euphodia Makama

submitted in accordance with the requirements for

the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the subject of

PSYCHOLOGY

at the

University of South Africa

Supervisor

Professor Kopano Ratele

November 2020

Declaration

Name: Refiloe Euphodia Makama

Student number: 56241631

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

Thesis Title: Constructions, Negotiations and Performances of Gender and Power in Lobolo: An African-Centred Feminist Perspective.

I declare that '*Constructions, Negotiations and Performances of Gender and Power in Lobolo: An African-centred Feminist Perspective'* is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

6 November 2020

Signature Date

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my grandmother Matshidiso Makama. From my first laptop to the gift of time, and every imaginable resource I could have needed in this journey; thank you.

And

My beautiful human being, Lesedi laka. You have brightened up this journey and remain the light I strive towards to becoming a better human.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank the many people who have contributed to the fulfilment of my thesis. Your calls, prayers, money, wine, hugs, pushing and encouragement have not gone unrecognised. I could not name every one of you I have met along the way.

To my supervisor Prof. Kopano Ratele, it has not been an easy journey I am grateful that we have seen it through. Your influence has gone beyond this document and will for a very long time remain a part of my scholarly development. Thank you for the support and opportunities that have helped me write this chapter of my life.

I would like to acknowledge the men and women who volunteered their time and experiences to be part of this study. Through the sharing of your narratives, you have breathed life into this project. I could never offer you in return what you have freely given me. I am eternally grateful.

To my family, what a blessing you have continued to be. You have allowed me to chase my dreams, provided the resources for me to do so. I am thankful for the two years you afforded me to focus on my thesis while you raised my human. I can't even imagine what this journey would have looked like if I did not have you. Would it even be possible?

To the family and friends, I have made at ISHS- Kasia Momsen, Rebecca Helman, Josephine Connell, Nick Malherbe, Abigail Simons, Sarah Day, Samed Bulbulia, Shahnaaz Suffla, Ashley van Niekerk, Naima Taliep, Annelise Krier, Ghouwa Ismael, Mildred Dreyer, Ntate Lekoba and

Mohammed Seedat. Zinzile Molo thank you for helping me with the recruitment process in Cape Town. I would like to make a special mention of the colleagues in the Johannesburg office that made the journey a whole lot more pleasurable.

- Mme Mashaba your efficiency and willingness to always go the extra mile made it so much easier to the work that needed to be done. Thank you for being such positive energy.
- Mam D. Thank you for always making me tea even when I didn't ask for it. For the fat cakes and porridge when I was pregnant.
- Ntate Rich, thank you for the flowers left on my desk every week.
- Sis Bongi, our friendship extended beyond the ISHS space. You always allowed me to vent even if you would tell me afterwards, I was being silly.

A special thank you to Neziswa Titi, you opened your home to me when I moved to Cape Town. Your kindness allowed me to settle down and to plant my feet firmly on the ground for the sprint that lied ahead. Thank you for your friendship.

To Sipho Dlamini, my dear, our friendship was beautifully orchestrated by modimo le badimo. I am so glad that even if I didn't get into the Rhodes Masters programme, that long taxi ride led me to meet you. I knew from day one that you were a special kind of human and I am glad to have journeyed with you through the PhD and every area of my life. I look forward to the many journeys that lie ahead, starting with that road trip we never got to take.

My friends, Boikhutso Maubane, Lucky Mawasha and Zoleka Lamakwe you never gave on our friendship after many missed dates and appointments. Every call and encouragements were well received. Mapula Muchudu and Thandokazi Maseti thank you for taking all my calls when I needed to vent.

It would be a miss to not especially thank the following superstars who found ways to put me together and carry me closer to the finish line. Prof Peace Kiguwa, every conversation with you so pedagogical and refreshing. Who knew that a class presentation on *Found Objects* would turn into a PhD? Thank you, Prof. Ratele, for encouraging me to pursue what was supposed to be a paper

idea. Thank you for availing yourself so many times. For reading through the rough ideas and finding gems. Prof Grace Khunou, I am so blessed to have you as a mentor. Your words are disciplining, encouraging and healing all the same time. Thank you for the countless times you encouraged me to continue. Prof Mogobe Ramose, from the first time I told you about my study you have not ceased to show interest in the development of the thesis and my wellbeing. Our long phone calls always full of laughter and such wisdom are priceless. Thank you for ending every call with a reading or two and above all reminding me to take care of my health.

I would also like to acknowledge my editor Carli Coetzee, your guidance added that layer of gloss to this thesis, I think it shines a lot more thanks to your fine polishing.

I would also like to thank the following institutions for their contributions.

- The National Research Foundation for their funding my MA internship scholarship and my PhD.
- The Institute of Social and Health Sciences (ISHS), Violence and Injury Prevention Unit (VIPRU), for providing the space (physically and psychologically) and resources (financial, intellectual and emotional) that allowed me to focus on the thesis while simultaneously engaging in a number of projects that have enabled me to carve out my own scholarly path.
- Departments of Higher Education for the Grow Your Own Timber funding programme.

Above all, I would like to acknowledge Jehovah God, he who blesses us with the desires of our hearts. My God from whom every good and perfect gift comes. I thank God for the precious gifts mentioned above and those that I have forgotten.

Abstract

This study aimed to explore how gender is constructed, negotiated and enacted in the customary practice of lobolo. Lobolo, sometimes incorrectly referred to as bridewealth or dowry is a practice that centres around the transference of wealth from the groom or a groom's family to the bride's family towards the formalisation of marriage. Framed within an African-centred feminist approach I analyse, through narrative discursive analysis, how 27 men and women ages 27 -71, from Johannesburg and Cape Town account for gender and power dynamics in their narratives of participating in lobolo. The African-centred feminist approach I employ critically engages with historical as well as present-day reproductions of patriarchy, capitalism, heteronormativity and other mechanisms of exclusion that are perpetuated through the cultural practice of lobolo. I show how masculinities and femininities are constituted, negotiated and disputed in the narratives of men and women who have participated in lobolo. By employing an African-centered feminist approach I show how gendered dynamics within the practice are shaped by historical and contemporary social, political and economic factors which enable and constrain the exercise of power in various ways. By exploring lobolo through an African-centered feminist narrative approach I demonstrate how the process is more than simply a transference of wealth but rather a complex practice that is used as an apparatus to exercise and expand power in the different stages of the lobolo process. Within this African-centered feminist approach, I argue that lobolo functions to legitimise particular gender positions that can be adopted through marriage; but it can also be used to challenge and contest these roles. The findings of this study suggested that the different stages and process of lobolo reflect a gendered script, which determines the position that men and women are able to adopt, and that this script sets the parameters for the ways in which these roles

may be enacted. I find also that the meanings and descriptions of lobolo are embedded within, and reproduce gendered identities but that these identities are not fixed but rather are constantly renegotiated. I conclude that lobolo is not only a custom for formalising marriages but also a tool used by men and women to perform a range of sometimes contradictory functions, including at times establishing and strengthening hegemonic masculinities and femininities but at other times challenging and dismantling these.

Keywords: African-centred feminism; Masculinities; Femininities; Power; Lobolo/a; Magadi; Roora; Customary marriage; African feminism; Feminist psychology; Narrative inquiry; Narrative discursive Analysis;

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

In Genesis 24, we find two stories about marriage. When Abraham, Isaac's father, was in his old age, he beseeched his servant to find Isaac a wife. Abraham instructed his servant not to find his son a wife amongst the people of Canaan, where they were currently living, but rather to go to the land of Aram Naharaim[1] to find a suitable wife for his son (Gen 24:3, New International Version). Abraham was a wealthy man, and he sent his servant off with lots of gifts to give to the bride and her family, should he succeed in this journey (Gen 24:10).

When the servant got to Aram Naharaim, he met a young woman by the name of Rebekah, who had come to fetch water at the well. When Rebekah saw the man, she offered to give him some water to drink, as well as draw some water for his animals. Once the servant and the animals had enough to drink, Rebekah invited the servant to her home. The servant went with Rebekah to her home, where she introduced the servant to her mother and brother Laban (Gen 24:19-29). The servant told them about his master Abraham, and the instruction he had given him. He also told them that he prayed for a sign and Rebekah's response to his request for water was a sign and as a result, he had come to ask for her hand in marriage (24:34-48). Rebekah's mother and brother agreed to this and asked Rebekah if she was willing to go with the man to be Isaac's wife, to which

[1] Biblical term for a region in Upper Mesopotamia along the elbow of the Euphrates River.

she agreed. Upon agreeing, the servant unloaded the gifts with which he had arrived. Some he gave to Rebekah, and some to her mother and brother, and they went on their way back to Canaan the next morning (Gen 24:53-61).

Five chapters later, in Genesis 29: 1-30, we are introduced to Jacob, son of Isaac and Rebekah, now in Aram Naharaim. These verses tell the story of how Jacob laboured to marry Rachel, the second daughter of Laban. In Genesis it reads, "After Jacob had stayed and worked in Laban's home for months, Laban said to him, just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be?" (29:14-15). Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel. He said to Laban that he would work seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage (29:18).

Genesis continues: "So, Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her" (29:20). However, on the evening of the wedding feast, Laban took his daughter Leah instead of Rachel to Jacob so that he may sleep with her. In the morning, Jacob realised that Laban had deceived him. He was upset but agreed to work another seven years for Rachel for he loved her very much. Jacob remained in Laban's house even after he was married to Leah and Rachel and worked for Laban as a hired herdsman.

I begin this thesis with the narratives that illustrate matrimonial customs similar to lobolo, that is, the establishment of a union through the offering of gifts (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; de Hass, 1987; Dlamini, 1985). Within these narratives, I was particularly interested in the construction, negotiation, and performance of gender and power through the marriage custom, as I am particularly interested in how femininities and masculinities are constituted within the practice of lobolo, as well as the negotiation and exercise of power amongst and between families.

The narratives illuminate issues of gender and power within matrimonial processes, two related issues that are central to this study. The matrimonial processes discussed in the two biblical narratives illustrate how femininities and masculinities are constituted within matrimonial customs such as lobolo. In the two narratives, the marriage process is dominated by male presence, namely that of Abraham, his servant, Isaac, Jacob and Laban. The female characters do not appear to have an active role in the processes, except in the initiation of the marriage process, and not in any processes beyond that. Similar to lobolo, women appear to not be too involved in the lobolo negotiations.

In the first story, there was Abraham the man who provided the resources for the gifts, Isaac the groom and the servant, who may be called umkhongi in isiZulu, munyai in Shona, or maditsela in Sesotho, who is a family representative or negotiator in the lobolo process. The role of the negotiators is central to ensuring that there is an agreeable outcome of the lobolo negotiations.

The practice illustrated in the first story is similar to earlier practices of lobolo where the father or elderly male relatives would provide lobolo for a young man. In this way, the young man would be given resources to start his homestead (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Dlamini, 1985). In the first story, gifts are offered to Rebekah's family as a token for her hand in marriage. Abraham, Isaac's father, provides the resources for Isaac to marry Rebekah. The second story of Jacob resembles the present-day practice of lobolo. Today, men work for long periods to accumulate the money needed for lobolo (Ngema, 2013; Rudwick & Posel, 2014).

It can be seen from these narratives that matrimonial customs are not only about the bride but, similar to lobolo, the customs are also a platform for negotiations and enactments of masculinities

(Makama, 2018). In these stories, the female characters, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah are presented as pawns in the negotiations of masculinities and power. The use of women as pawns is more explicit in the second narrative, where Laban uses Jacob's love for Rachel to work for him for over fourteen years. Jacob agreed to work for seven years in order to marry Rachel, but was deceived into marrying Leah. Even after Laban had deceived Jacob into marrying Leah, he still held on to Rachel as a manner of bargaining chip to get Jacob to work for him an additional seven years (Oden, 1983). The relationship between Laban and Jacob demonstrates power dynamics within the negotiations of marriage practices.

My interest in this thesis is in how lobolo is used as a tool by men and women to construct particular masculinities and femininities, and how men and women position themselves in relation to culturally prevalent masculinities and femininities through participation in lobolo. The thesis explores how 27 men and women aged 27-71, from Cape Town and Johannesburg who have participated in lobolo construct talk about masculinities and femininities in their narratives of participating in lobolo. I examine how men and women from different socio-economic status, ethnolinguistic backgrounds negotiate and exercise power, take up, reject, or challenge certain gendered subject positions.

1.1 Research questions and aims

In this study, I aimed to understand how gender is constructed, negotiated and enacted through the customary practice of lobolo. I was interested in how lobolo is a gendered and gendering practice. I employed an African-centred feminist narrative enquiry methodology. African-centred feminism in the thesis was taken as a feminist approach that seeks to critically engage with the structures

within African politics, societies, cultures, and norms that perpetuate gender oppression, inequality, and marginalisation. African-centred feminism recognises the impact of colonial and political history on both men and women and seeks to challenge the manifestation of patriarchy in Africa today in cultural, religious, political practices with the intention of moving towards the liberation of women and men. I used narrative inquiry, a theoretical and methodological approach, to explore how women and men are spoken about in narratives about lobolo. I discuss the theoretical framework and methods in greater detail in chapters 3 and 4. Using an African-centred feminist narrative approach I explore the accounts of men and women who have participated in lobolo so as to understand how gender is constructed through the practice of lobolo, and how men and women take up particular positions that enable them to exercise power in the gendered interactions that occur within the customary practice of lobolo. I aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How do women and men who have participated in lobolo, narrate their position in the process of lobolo?
2. How do men and women use lobolo as an apparatus for constructing or negotiating (take up, challenge or reject) hegemonic masculinities and femininities?
3. How does lobolo serve to legitimise particular gendered relationships and the positions assumed in those relationships?

1.2 Structure

This thesis is divided into eight chapters, namely the introduction, context, theoretical framework, methods, three rich analysis and discussion chapters, and a conclusion chapter. In this introductory

chapter, I have sought to provide an overview of the research topic as well as the approach to the study.

The context chapter, chapter two, focuses on the recognition, regulation and legitimisation of marriage. I discuss there the Acts with a particular focus on Recognition of Customary Marriage Act No. 120 of 1998 (from here on referred to as RCMA), as it is the only one that speaks to lobolo. I consider in my discussion the contributions and limitations of the RCMA, including but not limited to its consideration of lobolo. In the last section of the chapter, I discuss lobolo as a legitimizing matrimonial custom. There I focus on how lobolo is an apparatus for the construction, negotiation and enactment of gender and the exercise of power.

Chapter three is dedicated to the theoretical framework: African-centred feminism. In the chapter, I outline the work by a range of different scholars who have informed the development of the approach. The chapter begins with a discussion of African feminisms and Western feminisms. I then discuss African-centredness, focusing on Ratele's conceptualisation as a foundation for thinking about African centeredness in African-centred feminism. I conclude the chapter with an overview of what African-centred feminism is, its objectives and its possible applications.

Chapter 4 deals with the methodology and analysis used in the study. By methodology, I refer to narrative inquiry as a conceptual framework for the tools adopted in the study. I commence with a discussion of narrative inquiry and its applicability within an African-centred feminist study. I also outline the guidelines of feminist research. Following this, I outline the research process, including the recruitment and selection of participants, and how I conducted narrative interviews as a method for data collection. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of narrative discursive analysis.

Chapter 5 is the first of three analyses chapters. In the chapter, I present what I call “the gender theatricals” in the lobolo process. By theatricals, I refer to the gendered performance throughout the lobolo process. I analyse the inter and intra-family interaction in order to elaborate on how these interactions serve as a platform for men and women to negotiate and enact gendered roles that.

The second analysis chapter, chapter 6, focuses on how lobolo is used as an apparatus for constructing heteronormative gender roles. In this chapter I explore participants’ descriptions of what lobolo is, highlighting how these descriptions of lobolo reproduce (as well as challenges) particularly gendered discourses.

Chapter 7, which is the last analysis chapter, deals with the power of lobolo. In that chapter, I aim to show how the exercise of the power of the practice of lobolo rests in the power of lobolo as a legitimising custom. In the chapter, I discuss lobolo as a means to legitimate marriages. I focus on discourses of lobolo as culture, doing the right thing, belonging, and acceptance.

The conclusion, chapter 8, brings together the main arguments of each chapter and summarises the main contributions of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Recognition, Regulation and Legitimisation of Marriages

2.1 Introduction

Marriage is a social and legal contract recognised by society and the state that offers many benefits, from practical solutions to social and psychological benefits (Harding, 2019; Mohlabane, Gumede & Mokomane, 2019). What constitutes legal or legitimate marriages varies across countries, cultures, ethnicities and religious groups. Customs and ceremonies appear to be the common elements that mark the establishment of a matrimonial union. The ceremonial customs (and/or bureaucratic procedures) speak to cultural, religious, ethnic, and sometimes national ideologies (Monger, 2004). These customs, such as the exchange of engagement rings, henna nights, bridal showers, or marriage payments, could be as sentimental as the wedding and may play a significant part in the formalisation of the union (Monger, 2004). While these matrimonial customs may be culturally, socially and religiously recognised, the legality of the marriage and the legal privileges thereof are determined by the states (Harding, 2019).

The South African law recognises three types of marriage: 1. civil marriages registered under the Marriage Act (MA) No. 25 of 1961 as amended; 2. customary marriages registered in accordance with the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (RCMA) No. 120 of 1998; and 3. civil unions registered under the Civil Unions Act (CUA) No. 2006. In May 2019, it was proposed by the South African Law reform commission that there is a need to reform current marriage law (Business Tech, 2019). The commission proposed an investigation of the validity of a single statute to replace the Marriage Act of 1961, the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998, and the Civil Unions Act of 2006 (Business Tech, 2019). The Department of Home Affairs was reported to have

acknowledged that “despite the number of amendments to the marriage legislations there are gaps in the current legislature” (Business Tech, 2019, par.8).)

Before the implementation of the RCMA, the Marriage Act of 1961, was the only law that provided recognition for civil marriages (Budlender, Chobokoane & Simelane, 2004). The Marriage Act was established through Roman-Dutch law (Hlophe, 1984; Posel, 1994), and is therefore embedded in the Christian understanding that marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman through a relationship with God (Bujo, 2009). According to the Marriage Act, marriages that were not solemnised in a church or by state-appointed marriage officials were not recognised as valid marriages (Moore, 2015; Nhlapo, 2019). Customary marriages, which were only recognised in some parts of KwaZulu-Natal under the KwaZulu Act in the Code of Zulu Law 16 of 1985, and in the former Transkei under the Transkei Marriage Act 21 of 1978 (Kovacs, Ndashe & Williams, 2013), were considered a deviation from what is considered moral marriages (in other words Christian marriages), due to their tendency of being polygamous and entered through the payment of lobolo (Lugg, 1945).

In this chapter, I focus on two points. First, I will discuss the regulation and recognition of customary marriages as outlined in the legislature that governs marriage in South Africa. In the first part of the section, I will focus mainly on the RCMA as it is the only Act that speaks to lobolo as a necessary custom in the formalisation of a marriage. In the section, I also discuss some of the contributions of the RCMA in awarding customary marriages the same legal stature as civil marriages. I then delineate some of the loopholes of the RCMA, particularly as it relates to lobolo as a component of the matrimonial process. The second part of the chapter narrows down to focus

on the function of lobolo as matrimonial custom. While I focus on South Africa the custom of marriage payments is not unique to South Africa (see Gray, 1960; Maitra, 2007; Nwoke, 2009).

2.2 The Regulation of Marriages

Since the late nineteenth century there had been numerous proposals tabled for the regulation of marriages between "natives", Africans or those who currently referred to as black people through the colonially constructed and orchestrated customary law (see Britten, 1930; Dlamini,1983, 1985; Hlophe, 1984; Posel, 1994; Sheik, 2014). In the paper titled *Traditions of power and the power of traditions: The State and African customary marriages in South Africa*, Posel (1994) outline numerous attempts by the colonial and apartheid Government to regulate customary marriages. The first administrative attempts to register customary marriages were outlined by the then Secretary of Native Affairs, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, in his "Instructions to Native Administrators in Natal, No.1 of 1869", which stipulated the official process for the registration of "marriages between native and native (sic)", as well as limits for lobolo payments (Posel, 1994, p. 3).

Before the adoption of the Instructions to Native Administrators, the documented payment for lobolo in KwaZulu-Natal would rarely exceed five heads of cattle (Dlamini, 1983; Lugg, 1945; Posel, Rudwick & Casale, 2011). During the time of King Shaka (1816-1828), a distinction in the number of cattle paid for commoners (three heads of cattle) and the women from higher classes (10 heads of cattle) was made (Dlamini, 1983). During the reign of Dingane (1828-1840), who succeeded Shaka, the number increased to 40 or even 150 heads of cattle for the daughters of chiefs or those of a royal bloodline (Dlamini, 1983). According to Dlamini (1983), although limits were

set from the days of Shaka for the maximum number of cattle that could be requested, generally this rule was not adhered to.

According to Lugg (1945), the lack of regulation of lobolo (by the state) led to the exploitation of the custom, which resulted in a lot of disputes in the Natives' Court. To mitigate these disputes regarding lobolo, the Natives Affairs Commissioner Theophilus Shepstone fixed lobolo to 11 heads of cattle for a commoner's daughter (Dlamini, 1983). The 11 heads of cattle are still considered the standard number for a complete lobolo (Mgwaba & Maharaj, 2018). The standard for an induna's[2] daughter was 15 heads of cattle; 22 for a chief's[3] daughter; between 44 and 60 for a prince's daughter, depending on the ranking of the prince; and up to 110 for a king's daughter (Dlamini, 1983). Following the payment of lobolo:

> An official witness approved by the magistrate should attend the celebrations of the marriage, and ask publicly at the ceremony whether the bride had freely consented to the marriage; an official record would be made of the amount of lobol[o] paid, the colonial

[2] Induna is an advisor or a spokesperson of the King (Masango, 2006).

[3] The chief is the head of a tribe or clan (Dlamini, 1983).

> state having stipulated ceiling on the amount that could be paid under any circumstances (Posel, 1994, p. 3).

The codification of lobolo and the stipulated "official" process for marriages "between native and native [sic)" was done, according to Shepstone, for administrative and moral registration of "native marriages" (Posel, 1994, p. 3). Administrative procedures referred to lobolo disputes and the moral component referred to the non-Christian ways of the Zulu people. For Shepstone, the regulation of customary marriages was a strategic move to gradually shape "Zulu opinion into a rejection of what 'civilized' Christian people regarded as the evil excess of customary ways" (Posel, 1994, p. 4) in a way that does not alienate the chiefs or challenge their positions within customary law.

Following the regulation by Shepstone, there were numerous attempts in different parts of the country to regulate customary marriages. For example, in 1883 and again in 1903, the Natives Laws and Customs Commission of the Cape considered regulating customary marriages (Posel, 1994). However, this idea to regulate customary marriages was abandoned as it created tension between traditional leaders and the State. The state's reluctance or inability to regulate customary marriages outside Natal and the Transkei resulted in numerous challenges for the State. For example, according to the Natives Act of 1923, it was the state's responsibility to provide housing for married couples living in urban areas (Parnell, 2002). Consequently, there was an increase in what was considered convenient or house marriages, that is marriages where men and women claimed to be married under customary law in an effort to obtain housing (Parnell, 2002; Posel,1994, 2006). The problem of convenient marriages was later attributed to what was referred

to as “undesired and undesirable”, “unattached native women”, who “had journeyed to the cities for the purpose of illicit liquor-dealing and prostitution” (Posel, 1994, p. 5).

Within a patriarchal society, it was unsurprising that the so-called “deterioration of the African family” was attributed the to the problem of “unattached native women” who lured men and thus made them difficult to control (Posel, 1994, p. 5). This concern over loose women, in Johannesburg in particular, suggests that while the state is concerned with the overall control of all people, it delegates the control of black women to black men through customary law. Malandain (1996) maintains that the state still exercised control of black people by determining what can be categorised as customary and what can be left to the control of the people.

In response to the problem of deterioration of African families in urban areas, African men and the state formed an alliance to control so-called unruly women. The registration of customary marriages was considered by both the state and African community leaders as a necessary action to mitigate these challenges (Moore, 2015). However, by the 1940s, there was still no law set in place for the regulation of customary marriages outside what was then Natal. The alliance posed a threat to the authority of the state in regulating the lives of the African people (Posel, 1994).

In 1943, the then Secretary for Native Affairs Smit proposed new conditions set for the registration of customary marriages (Moore, 2015; Posel, 1994). Smit, like Shepstone, evoked a moral need for the regulation of customary marriages. However, unlike Shepstone, Smit was less concerned with the gradual shaping of the “natives” into abandoning their “uncivilised” ways [sic]. Instead, Smit was more concerned with the accommodation of customary law within a Christian framework. This meant that a requirement for a valid customary marriage was that both parties

should consent to the marriage. This was put in place to discourage polygamous marriages as well as the practice of ukuthwala which were associated with customary marriages (Osman, 2019). Ukuthwala refers to the custom of forcing women into marriage by abduction (Mwambene & Kruuse, 2017).

The intervention by the colonial administrator was less motivated by support for women's rights in as much as it was interested in the control of anything that seems contradictory to what was considered acceptable marriage processes, making the state "the moral custodian as well as the legal guardian of the institution of marriage" (Posel, 1994, p. 15). In addition to the bride's consent to marriage, Smit suggested that the Native commissioners, instead of chiefs, should oversee the formalisation of customary marriages (Posel, 1994). In this way, Smit's proposal addressed the problems of traditional authority as well as the issue of abuse of the custom for housing in urban areas. Although there was great judicial support for the proposal, the motion was never passed, due to great resistance by the chiefs of the time (Posel,1994). Posel adds: "... in the case of the proposed customary marriages register, Smit was clearly unwilling to risk incurring the wrath of the chiefs" (1994, p. 10). Smit opted to abandon the whole matter, rather than to accept the chiefs' counterproposal, which was in favour of registering customary marriages only if they, the chiefs, remained overseers of the custom. Smit's proposal saw power shifting from the chiefs to the native commissioners. Smit's rejection of the counterproposal illustrates the intention to further limit the role and authority of customary law in regulating marriages (McClendon, 1995; Posel, 1994).

The matter of customary marriages was revisited in 1946 at a Native Affairs Commissioners' Conference, just before the Apartheid Nationalist government came to power. The main concern

of the Nationalist government was influx control (Posel, 1994). The Nationalist Native Affairs commission, chaired by De Wet Nel, urged the government to restore the value of the family that was threatened by the rise in so-called "house marriages", which have been a "problem" since the 1920s (Posel, 2006, p. 58).

In 1955, the Dutch Reformed Church appointed its own commission into the investigation of these marriages (Posel, 1994). The report produced by the commission revisited some of the so-called "problems" of juvenile delinquency and loose women problems observed in the 1920s and 1930s. As such, the recommendations tabled were consistent with the recommendations that were tabled at the Juvenile conference held in Johannesburg in October 1938 (Janisch, 1941). The report reiterated the findings of the conference, citing the unstable marriage unions of "Bantu" people as one of the social problems in South Africa (Posel, 1994). The recommendations of the report, like the recommendations made at the conference, called for the government to look into rolling out the then Natal system of registering customary marriages should be implemented nationwide (Posel, 1994).

In 1968, following a series of meetings between the chiefs and the Bantu administration, Section 22 of the Bantu Administration Act of 1962 was passed regarding the voluntary registration of customary marriages outside Natal (Osman, 2019). The regulation of customary marriage was not a result of the recognition of customary marriages as valid marriages but was rather a strategic move by the colonial and apartheid administration to regulate the lives of black people (Dlamini, 1983; Sheik, 2014). According to Osman (2019), there was provision made for the regulation and

possibly the recognition of customary marriages for tax purposes. However, this attempt fell short, due to the lack of legislature recognising customary marriage as valid marriages.

2.3 The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act

The introduction of the RCMA is considered a move by the post-1994 government to rectify the limitations of the MA. It is interesting to note that while Shepstone's regulations were successful in Natal, and components of it were used in the numerous attempts to regulate customary marriages outside Natal, Shepstone's ideas were never successfully replicated in the rest of the country. It appears that Shepstone's template for regulation and recognition of customary marriages seem to have inspired the current law regarding the registration of customary marriages. The requirements outlined in the RCMA for a valid customary marriage are similar to those outlined in "The Instructions to Native Administrators in Natal, No. 1 of 1869" mentioned earlier in this section. Section 3 of RCMA stipulates the following requirements for a valid customary marriage: (a) the prospective spouses (i) must be over the age of 18; and (ii) must consent to be married to each other under customary law; (b) the marriage must be negotiated and entered into or celebrated in accordance with the customary law, that is, in accordance with the customs and traditions observed amongst the people. The customs and tradition referred to are inclusive of but not limited to the payment of lobolo. The process must follow the customary rituals recognised in that culture, such as the handing over of the bride to the husband's family.

Twenty years after the implementation of the RCMA, there was still some uncertainty regarding aspects of customary marriages. An example of this uncertainty is evident in the case involving South African music artist Jabulani Tsambo, also known as HHP, which made media headlines in

October 2018 (The Journalist, 2018). A few days after HHP's death, there were news reports that there was a legal battle over his remains (Mathe, 2018). A case was brought before the Gauteng High Court. The case attracted a great deal of social commentary regarding customary marriages, particularly what constitutes a valid customary marriage (see Makgabutlane, 2018; Mguni, 2018; Ntuli, 2018). In the matter brought before the Court, Sengadi argued that she was the deceased customary wife. She argued that her family and the Tsambo family had followed all the requirements for a valid customary marriage. That is, lobolo was paid to Sengadi's mother, following which there was a celebration at her home. The Tsambo family argued that they did not recognise Sengadi as their late son's customary wife, since they had not completed the process to receive her as their bride (*Sengadi v. Tsambo*, 2018). The ruling by Judge Ratha Mokgoatlheng was in favour of Sengadi, recognising her as the widow of Jabulani Tsambo. It appears from the *Sengadi v Tsambo* case there is still some ambiguity and disagreement regarding customary marriages, even two decades since the enactment of the RCMA. And while the RCMA has also arguably made a positive contribution towards the protection of women's rights, there are limits which I discuss below.

2.3.1 The contribution of the RCMA. The RCMA may be considered a response to the culturally biased Marriage Act. The RCMA allows for the recognition of marriages that have been formalised through customary rites, thus giving customary marriages the same legal recognition as civil marriages (Monareng, 2014). In so doing, the surviving spouses in customary marriages have the same legal recognition as surviving spouses in civil marriages. The lack of legal recognition of customary marriages meant that the surviving spouse and their children were left in a vulnerable position without proof of their union and with no legal claim to the deceased's estate

(Monareng, 2014; Peinaar, 2003). The RCMA is considered particularly beneficial to women in customary marriages. For example, the Act allows for the surviving spouse access to the estate of their customary spouse (Kovacs, Ndashe & Williams, 2013; Monareng, 2014).

Another significant contribution of RCMA is that it affords women in customary marriages equality with their husbands. According to the Natal Code of Zulu Law of 1985, a woman in a customary marriage was regarded as a minor under the guardianship of her husband (Moore & Himonga, 2017). This meant that women in customary marriages could not enter into contracts on their own accord nor had the right to own property in their name (Moore, 2015; Peinaar, 2003). It is important to note that the juniorisation of women was not a unique attribute of customary marriages, but rather, a reflection of society's views of women as inferior to men, thus in need of guardianship (Posel, 1994). According to Section 6 of the RCMA:

> A wife in a customary marriage has, on the basis of equality with her husband and subject to the matrimonial property system governing the marriage, full status and capacity, including the capacity to acquire assets and to dispose of them, to enter into contracts and to litigate, in addition to any rights and powers that she might have at customary law.

Even though we recognise the challenges with regards to achieving equality in society as well as between men and women in marriage, the recognition of women as equal to their husband may be considered a positive move towards gender equality in customary marriages. This law allows women to live as independent parties even if they choose to get married. In this way, it enables women to make decisions without the intimidation of losing property or goods that they may have

contributed towards accumulating. Additionally, this law allows for women to accumulate their wealth without it being subsumed as their husband's property.

2.3.2 The limitations of the RCMA. While the RCMA makes provision for the protection of women within customary marriages within the legal framework, this provision seems constrained at family and community levels by factors linked to lobolo (Mamashela, 2004; Mbatha, Najama & Bonthys, 2007; Moore, 2015). For example, according to RCMA all spouses in a customary marriage are considered equal, meaning that a husband is equal to his wife or wives. Yet the RCMA fails to make provision for the hierarchy that exists amongst women within polygamous relationships (Moore, 2015).

Another example of the limitation of the RCMA that is linked to lobolo is that, even though the legislation states that lobolo is a necessary component of customary marriages in accordance with customary law, it fails to stipulate the function of lobolo in the formalisation of the customary marriage. Perhaps it would be amiss for the RCMA to attempt delineating the function of lobolo, as this function varies across cultural groups, communities, and even families. While some recognise lobolo as the formalisation of the marriage (Osman, 2019), others regard it as the initiation of the process of formalising marriage (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). While this consideration for diversity in the practice of lobolo is consistent with the country's liberal constitution, this has resulted in interfamilial, communal disputes (Baloyi, 2016; Radebe, 2016), as well legal disputes that have needed to be settled by the High Court (see *Gumede v. President of the Republic of South Africa*) and that are inconsistent with Chapter 2 of the Constitution which states that "the state may not discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone…". The minister

stated that “current legislation does not regulate some religious marriages such as the Hindu, Muslim and other customary marriages that are practised in some African or royal families” (SA Government, 30 August 2019). The anticipated legislative reform referred to earlier in this chapter address these and other discriminatory effects of the current marriage laws.

2.3.3 Marriage Acts. While the debates regarding the legal recognition of marriages are beyond the scope of this thesis, it is necessary to ask: what is the significance of having multiple laws for recognising matrimony? What does it mean to have a separate law for same-sex couples, instead of an amendment to the existing laws to accommodate same-sex marriages? In addition to that, what does it mean in legal terms to call these marriages “unions” rather than marriages? What about the recognition of customary civil unions?

During colonial and apartheid rule, legitimate marriage was considered to be between white men and white women. All unions that were not white and heterosexual were considered not to be real marriages. The Commission of Native Laws and Customs stated that “we [The State] recognise the essential element of marriage to be a contract between men and women and we hold that the Christian law of marriage sets forth the truest and purest idea of such a union” (Posel, 1994, p. 15). It seems that the RCMA, as well as the MA, appear to be consistent with what was articulated in this ‘Christian law’ in that in both Acts marriage is defined as a union between a man and a woman.

The Native Administration Act of 1927 differentiated what it termed a “marriage” and “a customary union entered into by Africans”. As Brandel (1958) puts it, “marriage has a clear legal definition; the act or acts which complete a marriage have been legally established, as well as the act or acts by which a divorce becomes a fact. A customary union, at least in the Transvaal, has no

such clear legal beginning, nor end" (p. 36). I would suggest that these multiple laws, which reinforce distinction, may serve to set boundaries of legitimacy: "A state's failure to recognise certain types of marriages … undermines the validity of such relationships and may leave more vulnerable spouse without appropriate legal protection" (Harding, 2019, p.XX).

In the same vein, even though in the constitutional dispensation civil unions are afforded the same legal recognition as civil and customary marriages, it is worth asking what it might mean to classify partnership as a marriage and what it might mean to classify another as a union. Perhaps the use of the term union in the CU does not hold the same connotations it does when used in the Native Administration Act, which served to render marriages of black people illegitimate.

In the next section, I discuss lobolo as a practice that extends beyond the matrimonial process. To illustrate this, I begin by discussing its functions and significance in the marriage process. Following this, I explore how lobolo as a legitimising process acts as an apparatus for construction, negotiation and enactments of gendered identities and power.

2.4 Lobolo: Legitimizing marriage

There has been much debate amongst earlier social scientists regarding what to call lobolo in English, in order to study it. Most writers settled for the terms such as bride price or bridewealth (see Dalton, 1966; Evans-Pritchard, 1931; Randeria & Visaria, 1984; Torday, 1929). In a 1931 article entitled *An Alternative Term for 'Bride-Price'*, Evans-Pritchard discusses the debate regarding the naming of lobolo. He argues against the term *bride price* as it may be misunderstood as it relates to wife purchase, which is similar to the practice of wife purchase that was common

in Europe (Evans-Pritchard, 1931). In contrast to the term *bride price,* Evans-Pritchard proposes the term *bridewealth,* which he states has less ambiguity about what the practice entails. In 1998, the South African Law Reform Commission also opted to adopt the term *bridewealth* so as to avoid using any of the terms used in African languages, as this would create a perception of a favouring of one ethnic group to the exclusion of others (Ngema, 2013).

It is my view that both bride-price and bridewealth are erroneous terms to capture the meanings of lobolo, a view shared with Bayi and Hawthorne (2018). They suggest that this erroneous understanding of lobolo can be attributed to the issue of translation. They note that the English language is limited in its ability to capture the original meaning of lobolo. For this reason, and the African-centred approach in this thesis, my preference is to leave the term lobolo untranslated. What was peculiar in the paper by Evans-Pritchard is that even though he was aware of the term lobolo, he dismissed this term. He claimed "[o]n the whole, it is far more convenient from the popular and scientific standpoints alike to employ an English portmanteau word to denote wealth used in this special cultural situation" (Evans-Pritchard, 1931, p. 36). Rendering the term lobolo as unscientific and unpopular in favour of English terms such as dowry, earnest, indemnity and bridewealth is evidence of Evans-Pritchard's privileging of English and economic logic, which limits lobolo to a transaction. Evans-Pritchard's dismissal of the word is not only on a linguistic level but reveals a disregard for how African people understand and name their world. I prefer to use the perfectly good name, instead of using the available terms, which only serves to maintain the superior Western gaze on African practices, and is in fact colonising.

Lobolo, sometimes spelt lobola or ilobolo, is a Nguni term derived from ukulobola (Makiwa, 2004). Ukulobola is the act of offering property in cash or in-kind (ilobolo) by a prospective husband or the head of his family to the head of the prospective wife's family in consideration of a customary marriage (Recognition of Customary Marriages Act). Lobolo is a multi-stage interaction between families that offers the two families an opportunity to get to know one another and to form a relationship (James, 2017; Yarbrough, 2018). Historically lobolo was not considered to be a once-off transaction but rather as an establishment of a lifelong relationship founded on good faith (Baloyi, 2016; Dlamini, 1983; Semenya, 2014). Additionally, there was no specific time in which the amount needed to be settled and the couple could wed without ever settling the full amount. This is in line with the Zulu saying "umuntu akapheli" (you cannot buy a person) (Dlamini, 1983, p. 84). The unsettled amount was also supposed to ensure the longevity of the union (Kalule-Sabiti, Palamuleni, Makiwane & Amoateng, 2007).

Today, while there is a shift in the process of lobolo possibly due to the shift from cattle to cash, lobolo remains a significant component in the process of getting married; for example, Mohlabane, Gumede and Mokomane (2019) found that 70% of their participants expressed that lobolo was an important part of getting married, with 62% adding it was necessary for strengthening family ties between the two families. The families are considered to play a pivotal role in the formation of the marriage, the maintenance of the marriage as well as in the event of the dissolution of the marriage (Dlamini, 1983). For example, the matriarchs and patriarchs from both sides of the family are not only involved in the lobolo negotiation, but they also play significant roles in grooming the couple to be a husband and wife as prescribed by lobolo (Semenya, 2014).

While much of the literature focuses on what Yarbrough (2018) describes as the core of the "multi-stage interaction" process, that is the offering of wealth to a bride's family, this focus does not allow for a broader discussion on the social significance of the custom. Yarbrough (2018) states that there are various interactions between the couple and their family members in preparation for the day. I propose that these interactions provide a good platform for exploring how lobolo acts as an apparatus for the construction, negotiation and enactment of gender and power.

For instance, there was a dominant discourse of "bride purchasing" in some Western writings on lobolo (see Evans-Pritchard, 1931; Gray, 1960; Rajaraman, 1983; Randeria & Visaria, 1984). The discourse of bride purchase tends to reduce lobolo to a transactional patriarchal practice that fostered male domination over women through the idea of "wives for cattle" (Ansell, 2001, p. 700), or the sale of women to the highest bidder (Shope, 2006). Bayi and Hawthorne (2018) note that focus on the offering of wealth has led to the view of lobolo as a contractual obligation in a customary marriage (Dlamini, 1985; Horn & van Rensburg, 2002; Mofokeng, 2005). Bayi and Hawthorne (2018) argue that lobolo has many functions unrelated to contractual obligations. They argue that the recognition of lobolo as a contractual obligation is evidence of an attempt to understand lobolo within a colonial legal framework (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018).

Even though this idea of bride purchase was rejected as early as 1929, for example when Torday (1929, p. 7) expressed the view that "whatever it be, it cannot be as bad as 'bride-price' or 'purchase-money, which suggest marriage by purchase, which the Bantu unanimously declare not to be practised by them. The native word never implies buying and selling". Yet lobolo still tends to be considered a transitional practice.

Today, lobolo continues to be a topic of interest in local and international academic spaces as well as public forums. Discussions cover a wide range of topics, for example, how lobolo is implicated in social issues, such as children's rights, burial rights, and domestic abuse, to the practice of lobolo across different cultural groups, amongst queer couples, to even some discussions of doing away with the practice (see Anderson, 2007; Baloyi, 2014; Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Dlamini, 1983; Huffman, 1998; McKaiser, 2017, 2019; Ngema, 2013; Posel, Rudwick & Casale, 2011; Walker, 1992; Yarbrough, 2018). Despite the numerous debates and commentaries, the answer to the question posed by de Haas in 1987, "Is there anything more to say about lobolo?" is yes! This is based on the following reasons. Firstly, the dominant view of lobolo through a Eurocentric lens limits us from seeing the nuances in this practice, some of which I have already alluded to in the previous sections. There is still a great deal of misunderstanding regarding lobolo, its function, and its significance in contemporary society. Secondly, the current scholarship on lobolo does not deviate greatly from the early scholarship that represented lobolo as a problematic African practice used to oppress women in the name of culture (see Ansell, 2001; Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010; Chiweshe, 2016; Mwamwenda & Monyooe, 1997; Shope, 2006; Wagner, 1999; Walker, 1992). Thirdly, there has been little attention given to how the process of lobolo is a site for the performance of gendered identities and negotiation of power. In this study, I explore how lobolo is used by men and women as a platform for constructing, negotiating and performing gender and the exercise of power.

2.5 Lobolo and gender

Gender is a social construct. This means gender is socially constructed by individuals regarding what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

According to Lorber (1991, p. 13), "gender is created and recreated out of human interaction" through socialisation and reinforced through discourses that are embedded in cultural, religious, political, and other institutions such as marriage. According to Atkinson, Greenstein and Lang (2005, p. 1138), marriage provides "a structural context of opportunity for husbands and wives to behave in ways that validate their identities as male and female, that is, to display the visible aspects of their gender ideologies". Similarly, Miller and Sassler (2012) and Lamont (2014), argue that couples who are cohabiting (rather than married) are more likely to be egalitarian. It seems the abandonment of conventional relationships moulds of husband and wife allows couples to escape the social expectations that come with the conventional relationships and more likely to "engage in role complementarily with regards to the division of domestic labour and paid work" (Sassler & Miller, 2011, p. 85).

According to Ryan-Flood (2005, p. 201), "heteronormative practices and assumptions are manifested in diverse ways according to the cultural context in which they occur". Lobolo is also rooted in this heteronormative construction of marriage. Heteronormativity is related to a worldview that promotes heterosexuality and family traditionalism as the acceptable way of being (Oswald, Blume & Marks, 2004). In a heteronormative practice of lobolo, there is the assumption that only heterosexual men and women can form a legitimate union, and within that union, men provide for and protect the family and women bear children and take care of the home (Groes-Green, 2009). Men and women who are perceived to transgress the heteronormative boundaries are punished, marginalised and stigmatised. Compliance with gender norms is socially rewarded, which allows for the maintenance of some forms of masculinity and femininity (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012).

Even though lobolo has evolved with the times, the conceptualisation of gender norms within the practice does not seem to have shifted. Traditional discourses of men as providers and women as homemakers remain prevalent in contemporary discussion of lobolo, even within contexts where these roles are not as dichotomous as presented in lobolo discussions. For example, in urban South Africa, women are more likely to be working outside the home compared to women in rural areas, who may still occupy more heteronormative roles as homemakers (Ansell, 2001; Shope, 2006; Van der Vliet, 1991). Similarly, men's roles as (sole) providers have also been challenged due to a decrease in employment opportunities. Black men, in particular, are involved in low-income positions as labourers or casual employees (Casale & Posel, 2010), making it difficult for most to satisfy the heteropatriarchal expectations of lobolo. At this point, I would like to indicate that I see lobolo as a cultural site in which both men and women are active participants in the construction of desirable masculinities and femininities that speak to the geographic and temporal context. My interest in lobolo is therefore mainly towards elaborating how femininities and masculinities are constructed through the participation in lobolo. What I am trying to explore is how lobolo is used as an apparatus for constructing, negotiating and enacting hegemonic femininities and masculinities.

2.5.1 Masculinities in lobolo. Lobolo is a male-dominated custom, practised through the negotiation of the male representatives of each family. In post-1994 South Africa, the perception of new and better education and employment opportunities has raised the expectation of black men as financial providers even more (Posel & Rudwick, 2014a). Unfortunately, with the ever-increasing cost of life, lobolo has become an additional burden on black men. Also, compared to other racial groups, black men are less likely to be employed; and amongst those who are

employed, they are more likely to be employed as casual labourers (Casale & Posel, 2010; Malinga, 2015; Montgomery, Hosegood, Busza & Timaeus, 2006; Posel & Rudwick, 2014b). According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) in 2016, compared to the other racial group, only 65% of the working-age (15-64 years) group amongst black South Africans were employed. This economic marginalisation of black men in urban spaces has made it difficult for black men who want to pay lobolo and/or get married. The payment of lobolo, which is often R20 000 and higher, and almost three times the monthly salary of the majority of working-class men. Lobolo thus can act as an obstruction to marriage for black couples (Rudwick & Posel, 2015; Semenya, 2014). Both males and females in a study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal by Posel and Rudwick (2014b) expressed the view that although marriage was desirable, they felt it was unattainable due to the price of lobolo. The male respondents added that they needed to be in a better financial position before they could get married.

There is a Zulu saying "umkwyena isisgodo sokuqhuzula" (a bridegroom is a log for clearing the way), which means that in a time of need, the woman's family can expect the groom to assist (Dlamini, 1983). Over and above the requirements of lobolo, men are also expected to take care of their immediate as well as their extended family (Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2019; Rudwick & Posel, 2014). Dlamini (1985) notes that a good relationship between the groom and his in-laws rests on the bride's family requiring a fair amount for lobolo. Reporting on the comments from callers on a South African radio show, James (2017) states that most of the male callers said that they felt that lobolo was a way for the bride's family to hold them to ransom. Today, parents have been known to attach a monetary value to their daughters, thus increasing the amounts requested for lobolo (Mubangizi, 2012).

In 2017, the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper conducted a survey on Facebook and on Twitter where they asked questions such as "how much is enough for lobolo?" and "how much have you paid for lobolo?". A third of the 51 respondents said R10 000 or less was a reasonable amount for lobolo, yet the average lobolo paid by the 51 respondents was R61 340 (4 August Holmes, 2017). A respondent to the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper survey (2017) said:

> In my culture, lobolo is a lifetime commitment. Even if you paid the whole amount, you will forever financially take care of your in-laws one way or another, for example paying for their burial, and [other] needs. All this requires one to work hard and not take short cuts.

The inability of a man to pay lobolo is seen as emasculating (Posel & Rudwick, 2014b). Conversely, the ability to pay lobolo without any assistance is viewed to represent amandla wendoda (strength of a man) (Dlamini, 1983). Some grooms are unable to save up the required money and turn to debt to pay lobolo, which may lead to resentment of the bride's family, if not the bride (Ansell, 2001; James, 2017; Yarbrough, 2018; Walker, 1992). If the relationship does not fail during this process of paying off debts incurred for the lobolo and the nuptial festivities, a hostile marriage can result (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010). Even though the amounts requested for lobolo are quite high compared to the average income of a black household of R92 983 per annum, as reported in the Living Conditions Survey (StatsSA, 2017), some men take pride in their ability to meet this cultural demand of establishing marriage unions (Ngema, 2013; Rudwick & Posel, 2015). Men who cannot pay lobolo due to unemployment or low-paying jobs (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2017; Casale & Posel, 2010; Malinga, 2015; Mhongo & Budlender, 2013; Ngema, 2013) are

unable to realise the heteropatriarchal expectations of lobolo and are therefore seen as not real men, and as such are unable to get married and establish their own homes (Hunter, 2016a, 2016b).

Lobolo is a demonstration of wealth or the ability to provide but also serves as a channel through which men can get access to fatherhood. Between March 2018 and April 2019, there was ongoing violence between Qungebe, a village in the Eastern Cape and Mkhandlweni in KwaZulu-Natal – around 450 km apart – over lobolo disputes. The violence resulted in 16 deaths and 11 arrests (Fuzile, 2019 a, b; Ngukana, 2018; Sifile, 2018). The killings were reported to have been sparked by the dissolution of the marriage between Peter, a man from Mkhandlweni and Peliwe, a woman from Qungebe, due to Peliwe's alleged infertility.

Following their separation, Peter sent his lobolo delegates to retrieve his cattle, but they were unsuccessful, claiming that Peliwe's father had attempted to give them old cows, which were not the cows that they had delivered to him. Following this, Peter sent a second delegation, who managed to steal the proper cows from Peliwe's home. A few days later, the cows were stolen back, this time by the men from Mkhandlweni. When the Qungebe men tried to retrieve the cows, they were ambushed, and six men were killed. In this way, a year's killings began. The fight for lobolo moved from being a dispute between two families to being a war between two villages (later joined by neighbouring villages).

What appears central to this violence is the construction and presentation of masculinities within lobolo. In Peter's case in the example above, paying lobolo was an opportunity for him to be a husband and father, what Hunter (2005) refers to as "umnumzana" (pp. 394-395). Umnumzana is derived from the word umuzi, meaning a man with a wife or wives and children, which is arguably

the most desirable form of masculinity amongst other masculinities in Zulu culture (Hunter 2005). The status of umnumzana can be linked to what Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 832) referred to as the most 'honoured masculinity'. The status of umnumzana is attainable through the establishment of recognisable (legitimate) marriage, which is the payment of lobolo. Hunter's (2005) conceptualisation of masculinities, although focusing only Zulu men, illustrates the significance of marriage and perhaps even the role of lobolo as a rite of passage. In a society that recognises marriage to be "a significant personal, social, cultural and economic way to accord value to [people's] lives" (Singh, 2013, p. 23), lobolo becomes the means through which men may realise a more desirable masculine position. Men who are unable to meet this social demand to formalise the relationship are relegated to a position of isoka lamanyala, a masculine position that Hunter (2005) describes as undesirable. Isoka lamanyala refers to a man who has sexual relationships with multiple women with no intention of marrying them. The payment of lobolo allows a man to move from one masculine position to the more desirable position of umnumzana.

To return to Peter's case, I suggest that he believed that he was cheated out of realising this status of umnumzana - a man with a wife and a child. For this reason, he demanded his lobolo back. The subsequent fights were a result of wounded masculinities. The dispute over the return of lobolo is not unusual, especially with regards to instances of infidelity or impotency (Nhlapo, 2019). Kuper (2016) argues that the foundational role of the lobolo was the transference of the rights born to a woman, therefore should a woman be unable to have children her family would be obliged to return the lobolo. While the details of this case involving Perter and Peliwe are still censored due to the case remaining pending, from what can be deduced from the public media, the killings that took place, in this case, suggests that lobolo can be linked to masculine pride.

The story of former South African president Jacob Zuma's relationship with Nkanyiso Conco illustrates the association of masculinities with lobolo. In 2018, reports of the relationship between Zuma (76) and Conco (24) were laced with this discourse, suggesting that there was something scandalous about the relationship between the two, where Conco was reported to become the seventh and youngest wife of Jacob Zuma (see Breakfast, 2018; Wicks, 2018; Zungu, 2018a). The age difference became a significant point of contestation concerning the legitimacy of the "mooted" union. However, despite the controversy surrounding the fifty-two-year age gap between Zuma and Conco, it was reported that the pair had commenced with arrangements to get married. The sentiments expressed by Zuma are consistent with findings by various researchers (see Hunter, 2016b; Posel, Rudwick & Casale, 2011; Shope, 2006; Yarbrough, 2018), who found that both men and women believed lobolo was a demonstration of a man's commitment to the relationship (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). This idea of demonstration of commitment by men without the reciprocated demonstration by women may be linked to the discourse of hyper-sexualised masculinities that was later drawn on by Zuma's younger brother Khanya Zuma, who, in a comment about the relationship between Jacob Zuma and Nkanyiso Conco, announced he too would be taking a second wife (Zungu, 2018b).

Khanya Zuma was quoted as saying "there is absolutely nothing wrong with it because we are not hiding these women; we are making them feel proud by marrying them" (Zungu, 2018b para.11) he added, "The Nxamalalas are amasoka (Casanovas). We love and take good care of women and we don't hide that fact like other men do" (Zungu, 2018b, para.13). Khanya naturalises their love for women and adds that they also take good care of the women they love, perhaps alluding to the

discourse of the male provider. In other words, because the Zumas have resources, they should be allowed to love as many as they can "take good care of them".

It appears that despite the public's fascination regarding the age gap between Zuma and Conco, a more salient matter to the families was the issue of lobolo. It would seem that lobolo was used as an apparatus to legitimise the relationship between Zuma and Conco, but also as an apparatus to construct Zuma as a good man. This position later challenged by Mr Fortescue Conco, Nkanyiso's father, who alleged that Zuma had failed to pay lobolo for his daughter. Fortescue Conco disputed Bkehumizi's claim, where Conco alleged that Zuma had reneged on the promise to pay lobolo (Mahlangu, 2018; Nair, 2018). Conco told *Isolezwe* newspaper that he was angry as Zuma had "disrespected him by not fulfilling his promise" (Nair, 2018, para.4).

a sentiment expressed by Khaya who suggests that woman should be proud to have lobolo paid for her. While this may be true, as expressed by the participants in Shope's (2006) study, "Lobolo affirmed women's value; it was a symbol of respect [sic]" (p. 66). It seems from the Zuma and Conco example the respect is offered by the husband as a symbol of commitment to his wife to be, and a symbol of respect for his future father-in-law.

It is interesting to note that, although not much was said about Nkanyiso Conco in the texts, her image was used across the different media reports (see Breakfast, 2018; *Citizen* reporter, 2018; Zungu, 2018). For example, in an article published in the *Citizen* (16/July 2018) entitled "Nonkanyiso Conco's father 'angry' that Zuma 'hasn't paid the lobolo'" her image was used, yet she was not in the story. While relatives, specifically male representatives both from the Zuma and Conco families, were quoted in the numerous publications of the relations, Nkanyiso's voice was

absent. This can also be seen in another article “Who is Zuma's new bae, Nonkanyiso Conco?”, a cover of who she is, where she is from, did not feature any direct commentary from her, or mentions of attempts of trying to get hold of her. In this way, we never got to read her side of her story. We are told much about her and the relationship she was reported to have with the former president (see Zungu, 2018a) but not much about her as an active participant in the narrative. The use of Nkanyiso’s image in the stories illustrates how femininities have been centralised in the public as well as in academic narratives on lobolo. The scholarship that focused on the experiences of women (see Gray, 1960; Knoetze, 2000; Lowes & Nunn, 2017; Shope, 2006), has covered a wide range of topics, highlighting the objectification of women through lobolo, thus constructing brides in the women as by standers in the process. In the next section, I will discuss the ways femininities

2.5.2. Femininities in lobolo. According to Dlamini (1983), the lobolo negotiations were based on the bride’s father’s social position. Today lobolo negotiations are negotiations of femininities. Lobolo negotiations are based on what the delegates assume about the bride’s upbringing, her sexual history determined by whether she has children or not, her ability to do house chores such as cooking and cleaning, her level of education, and her employment status (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Chiweshe, 2016; Rudwick & Posel, 2015). In this way, lobolo has been seen as a custom that objectifies and ranks women, constructing them as “valuable property initially owned by their fathers and brothers”, and later by their husbands (Kalule-Sabiti, Palamuleni, Makiwane & Amoateng, 2007, p. 2). The association of lobolo with the bride instead of her father can also be seen in the focus on women in the scholarship on lobolo.

This criticism of lobolo has been subsequently rejected by some women, who assert that lobolo is a part of the culture that affirms their worth as women in marriage (Ansel, 2011; Ngema, 2013; Rudwick & Posel, 2015). It is necessary to point out that it is rather unfortunate that, for some women, their sense of worth is affirmed through a custom that ranks women. However, given the sexist and racist nature of most societies, black women find themselves at the bottom tier of both the racial and gender hierarchies and lobolo appears to give some women a sense of worth. In a study on lobolo and womanhood, Rudwick and Posel (2015) found that the women in their study viewed lobolo to be a reward for their "good conduct" (p. 290).

Some scholars have argued that the unilateral token of appreciation is not only about how women are brought up but also about recognition of an understanding of lobolo as compensation for the value of the bride's domestic and reproductive labour, which is transferred to her husband's family after marriage (Nhlapo, 2019; Parker, 2015). Traditionally, the first payment was made before the wedding and the rest was paid after a woman had proved her "womanhood" by having children (Rudwick & Posel, 2015). If the new bride could not bear children, the groom had the right to demand ilobolo back or take his wife's younger sister as his second wife (Rudwick & Posel, 2015).

In her reflexive essay titled "Gender and the politics of the Basotho blanket" Mathabo Khau (2012) reflects on these expectations as a newlywed Mosotho girl. Khau (2012) reflects on her relationship with her in-laws and the role that her female in-laws played in ensuring that she conforms to what is expected from a Sotho Makoti. Khau (2012) is expected to dress in a specific way and to fulfil her wifely duties, including household chores, taking care of her husband sexually and bearing children for her in-laws. She adds that the traditional Sotho makoti (bride) attire (the blanket) made

it difficult for her to fulfil her duties regarding the household chores. Added to the household duties, there was an expectation for her to be "a good blanket" for her husband, referring to her ability to satisfy him sexually, as well as referring to the absence of pregnancy in her marriage. Khau's essay highlights how constructions of good womanhood in marriage are tied to reproduction, with women only being regarded as "truly women" once they have given birth, preferably to a male child. What is interesting in Khau's reflection is the role of the women in maintaining heteropatriarchal femininity. Nganase and Basson (2018) elaborate on the relationship between a makoti and female in-laws, focusing mainly on the relationship between makoti and her mother-in-law. Nganase and Basson (2018) argue that the relationship between new brides and the mother-in-law can be central in determining how a new bride experiences marriage. Female in-laws are responsible for socialising new brides into the family but also tend to police them in their marriage. For example, it was her in-laws who questioned her womanhood when she did not conceive soon in her marriage. Unlike the humiliation associated with a woman's inability to conceive, male infertility is treated with less contempt. If a man was infertile, his bride would be expected to conceive through her husband's brother or a male relative (Rudwick & Posel, 2014), re-inscribing domination over women's bodies (Chiweshe, 2016).

Even though there is social capital associated with marriage and having children (Singh, 2018) there are other avenues for men to attain social capital, such as occupying a senior position at work (Jaga, Arabandi, Bagraim & Mdlongwa, 2018). Men occupy more senior positions in the workplace and earn more than women even in the same position (Sinden, 2017). Chisale (2017) notes that, beyond marriage and motherhood, there is little opportunity for women to gain social capital. Marriage is constructed as a significant milestone for women through which they can attain

the epitome of womanhood, that is wifehood and motherhood (Kyalo, 2012; Mupotsa, 2015a). Chisale (2017) notes that even for women who have attained higher qualifications or are in senior positions, there is still an element of failure if unmarried.

Mupotsa (2015a) describes femininities as perpetually becoming. She argues that the wedding serves as a space for the potential closure of not only the romantic narrative but also a culmination of hegemonic femininity. While other scholars such as Fairchild (2014), have explored how weddings serve to reproduce heteronormative hegemony, Mupotsa's (2015) focus on black women and white weddings[4] offers a unique approach to thinking about the nuances in constructions and performances of femininities in matrimonial customs. While Mupotsa (2015) focuses on the constructions of femininities through the customs and activities in white weddings, the observations she makes may be useful in thinking about the rituals and activities in lobolo. Lobolo, like the white wedding, is a gendered space but also a gendering space. As a bride, a woman is a representation of ideal femininity and performs this identity.

Lobolo, as a patriarchal game of negotiating masculinities through the femininities, offers a platform for men to negotiate their position as fathers (including uncles), grooms, and fathers-in-law (Makama, 2018). While lobolo is predominantly male-dominated, it is important to note that it is a game played by both men and women. In this study, I consider how men and women who

[4] White weddings are weddings that draw om western wedding traditions such as the white wedding dress and the exchange of vowels

have participated in lobolo talk about masculinities and femininities in the practice of lobolo. I am interested in how these subject positions might allow them to negotiate the different relationships formed through lobolo.

2.6 Lobolo and power

Power is often understood as a force that operates from one person or group of the other (Allen, 2004). Smart (2002) suggests that power is fluid and that as such, it is not a property of a single group or single person but rather functions through different individuals, groups or institutions at different times. Within lobolo, power is always implicated and oscillates within and between families, along gender and generational axes. While this form of power has been explored, mainly concerning the power dynamics between men and women through the customary practice of lobolo, there has been little attention beyond legal interest in the role and function of lobolo as a matrimonial custom. In other words, how lobolo can act as a legitimising matrimonial custom, and serve to render some gender positions legitimate and others as illegitimate. Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, Allen (2004, p. 19) suggests that rather than thinking of power as "something which radiates from an identifiable central point, with a reach that is effortless", it would be more beneficial to consider power as a "relational effect of social interaction". In other words, instead of focusing on lobola as an acting force, recognising that power exists and is maintained through the social agreements people enter into with one another. I use Allen's (2004) conceptualisation of power to think of power in and of lobolo.

2.6.1 Power of lobolo. In the opinion piece titled "Lobolo for my love", Mupotsa (2008) reflects on her experience of lobolo and asks: "What are the implications for the woman and the

man involved when money is transferred for the purpose of a legitimate marriage? What is being 'negotiated' and what are the terms on which this marriage will be agreed? Who decides?" Mupotsa moves away from these questions and offers a personal reflection that illustrates some of the complexities of going through lobolo. Mupotsa constructs lobolo as a means to an end, or rather multiple ends: a rite of passage into adulthood, permission to get married, and as a mechanism for unifying two families. Here, Mupotsa speaks to what I refer to as the power of lobolo. By this, I mean specifically the legitimising power of lobolo.

Allen (2004, p. 23) argues that power "acts like a normalising force that works its way through people's lives, shaping their very being". The power of lobolo as custom lies in its effects on the formalisation of marriages. As mentioned in Chapter 2, while lobolo is not a prerequisite for the legal registration of marriage, it has been cited as an obstacle to marriage (Monareng, 2014). Lobolo serves to secure the cultural legitimisation of marriages which may be more significant than the legal recognition. Lobolo holds cultural significance, for example even amongst individuals who may reject the heteronormative discourse embedded within the practice may still recognise lobolo as a culturally significant practice (Mkhize, 2019).

The idea of cultural legitimacy speaks to Allen's (2004) assertion of power as a relational force that is maintained through an acceptance of the "'truths' of the arrangements in which they find themselves, then those arrangements provide a guide as to what kind of behaviour is thought acceptable and what is not" (p. 23). These arrangements may be in brick and mortar institutions such as clinics and hospitals, or abstract social institutions such as cultural identity. Even though lobolo holds power as a culturally legitimising custom, it seems lobolo's power is limited to those

who believe in its "truth" and believe that there are proper family formation channels that include marriage and/or lobolo, which serves a significant spiritual function in the matrimonial process, this relates to the joining of families at an ancestral level (Mkhize, 2019; Ratele, 2017b).

On 17 July 2019, Eusebius McKaiser, the host of *The Eusebius McKaiser Show* on Radio 702, facilitated a discussion around the issues of who may or may not participate in the custom of lobolo. The discussion was framed around two questions. The first had to do with whether same-sex couples can participate in lobolo. The second was to do with the role of women in the negotiations of lobolo. In the first part of the discussion, McKaiser asked Kgosi Mokoena, the president of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA), what CONTRALESA's position is on the topic of same-sex couples participating in lobolo. To this Kgosi Mokoena responded that CONTRALESA recognises the constitutional rights of same-sex couples to get married but as an organisation CONTRALESA they "cannot support an issue like this". Mokoena added: "We are not going to interfere with them but as an organisation, there is no way we can promote this one because it's not part of our culture. You know in our culture, marriage is between two people, male and female".

Mokoena speaks to the heteropatriarchal nature of lobolo, where the man pays lobolo for the woman. Mokoena stated that same-sex marriages do not meet this criterion to participate in lobolo. Same-sex marriages disrupt the cultural rules set within the practice of lobolo. Mokoena also explained what the payment of lobolo signifies for the relationship of the married couple as well as the relationship between the two families of the married couple. At the core of Mokoena's responses was that one's sexual orientation compromises one's ability to participate in the practice

of lobolo (Mkhize, 2019; Ratele, 2017b) as well as the regulations of what constitutes acceptable relationships between men and women as well as the acceptable positions that people can adopt in these relationships.

The views presented by Mokoena were not left unchallenged. Callers of the show and a fellow guest Moude Sape Maodi-Swartz argued that if lobolo is about uniting two families the sexuality of the couple should not be used to deny them the opportunity to participate in this culturally significant practice. Maodi-Swartz went on to say that lobolo is a part of one's identity and to be denied participation is a rejection of her personhood. Maodi-Swartz sentiments are supported by Mkhize's (2019) study. The participants in Mkhize's study also expressed that lobolo is a part of their identity.

Therefore, cohabiting couples, or those who were married without the payment of lobolo, may be treated with scorn (Posel & Rudwick, 2014b). Goldblatt (2003) notes that while cohabitation is a choice for middle-class women in the Global North, in South Africa it seems that it is the only option available to poor women. Despite the view of lobolo as an obstacle to marriage, lobolo has remained a central component to the matrimonial process, as it is believed to create an ancestral bond, and to legitimise children that may be born from the union (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010; Hunter, 2005; Yarbrough, 2018).

2.6.2 Power in lobolo. Given the centrality of lobolo in forming these unions, it is unsurprising that the custom has been subjected to manipulation and distortion. Yarbrough (2018) notes that the agreed-upon status of lobolo, that is what the assumed function and role of lobolo is, "allows elders to maintain legitimate oversight, via lobola, of younger generations' family

formations" (p. 3). The matriarchs (paternal aunts) and patriarchs (paternal uncles) are responsible for making all major decisions during this process (Ansell, 2001).

Mupotsa's reflection focuses mainly on the day of lobolo negotiations, highlighting the theatricals of the day, which she describes as a performance by multiple actors, who all – that is, the bride, the groom, the "many mothers" and "many fathers" (2008, para.11) – play a significant role in ensuring that all actors play their part correctly to ensure that the negotiations lead to a positive outcome for all parties. The theatricals of lobolo as a negotiation day described by Mupotsa speaks to what I refer to as the power within lobolo. By power within lobolo, I mean the exercise of power that is possessed by individuals and groups and allows them to act and make decisions. Mupotsa's reflection offers insight into the role that seniority plays within the practice of lobolo. Although speaking from a Shona experience, where women are more involved in the lobolo process, the interactions she describes between her and her tetes (aunts) is common across different cultural groups.

In this thesis, I argue lobolo is a gendered and gendering process. In other words, not only is the process of lobolo based on heteropatriarchal assumptions about men and women, but lobolo also provides a platform for men and women to perform these gendered norms. The theatricals of lobolo that Mupotsa (2008) describes in her reflection of her experience of lobolo, offer an analysis of how gender positions are challenged, accepted and negotiated. Mupotsa explains that as the bride, her role was to be "a desirable maiden: the cherished prize for my husband-to-be", where instead, she chose to abandon this role and to "slave away" preparing the banquet for the day, a task that her "(many) sisters (cousins included) should have been at the forefront of" (2008, para.11). This

reflection offers an illustration of how women and men are positioned, and how they may accept, challenge, or in the case of Mupotsa, resist these positions.

Moore (2015, p. 821) echoes the arguments by feminist scholars such as Patricia Collins (1990) and Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1991), who call for a more nuanced investigation of the "interwoven nature of power dynamics". Moore (2015) adds that, in order to consider the interwoven nature of power, one needs to consider the different variables of power operating in any given situation. In this thesis, I consider the variables of gender, ethnicity, seniority, and socio-economic status in the context of lobolo. I explore how lobolo provides a platform for these power dynamics between men and women, amongst men, amongst women, and between families.

I propose that the power within lobolo oscillates within intra-family and inter-family relations, between inter- and intra-gendered lines, as well as along inter-generational axes. The theatricals around the negotiations create a picture of how individuals (the bride, the groom and their family members) are positioned within the practice, and what they may and may not do, depending on their position within the practice. In this thesis, I explore how men and women negotiate and exercise power in the narrations of their participation in lobolo.

Chapter 3: Towards African-centred Feminism

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to develop an explanatory framework of the gendered power relations within lobolo. In building this explanatory framework I draw mainly from outside of psychology. In this thesis, I privilege an African-centred feminist approach that builds on various articulations of feminisms, while simultaneously critically challenging the dominant approaches to gender studies in Africa.

African-centred feminism is inspired by various articulations of African feminisms, as articulated by Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi (2010), Lilian Atanga (2013), Peace Kiguwa (2004), Desiree Lewis (2001, 2008), Amina Mama (2011), Pinkie Mekgwe (2007) Gwendolyn Mikell (1995), amongst others. African-centred feminism proposed here is inspired by African-centred scholarship, specifically Ratele's (2017a, 2017c, 2017d) conceptualisation of African-centredness as applied to psychology. I also build on the conceptual foundations of African feminism and black feminism in the United States of America (USA). In this way, African-centred feminism does not seek to reject all feminist approaches, even those from the West, but remains sensitive to the meanings and cultural practices inherent in contemporary African societies.

In this study, I was interested in the narratives of women and men who have participated in lobolo. I contend that the contemporary practice of lobolo is still embedded within heteropatriarchal gendered norms. While the expression of these gendered norms through lobolo may be unique, they are still embedded within broader dominant discourses of heteropatriarchal masculinities and femininities, such as the male provider and the submissive female. An African-centred feminist

approach to the practice of lobola allows for the interrogation of how history, politics, economics, and cultures allow or prohibit women and men in their interactions with one another to negotiate, challenge or accept these gendered discourses.

Below I expound on the different illustrations of feminisms used in developing the conceptual framework on African-centred feminism. I commence with a discussion on African feminism, highlighting its significance and challenges. The discussion dwells on African feminism as a deliberate attempt to disrupt the dominant narrative of feminism which starts in the global north and continues to emanate from the north and is applicable to the rest of the world. In this first section, I highlight the nuances of African feminism as activism and scholarship as attempts not only to represent and write from Africa but to present Africa as a cite of knowledge production. Following this, I offer a brief discussion of western feminism highlighting how an uncritical translation of theories, methods and approach can be marginalising. Lastly, I discuss African centredness and African-centred feminism.

3.2 African feminism(s): The significance of naming

African feminism as it is popularly understood privileges those issues affecting women in Africa (Geisler, 2004; Oyěwùmí, 2005b). According to Atanga (2013, p. 304), African feminism can be understood as emanating from a rejection of Western feminism as:

> [M]ost […] women (feminist or otherwise) face the dilemma of challenging conservative patriarchal practices while being seen as 'African women' i.e., without being accused of having been 'colonised' or influenced by western feminism.

Atanga (2013) rejects the assumption that African women are unable to recognise and challenge the oppression in their lives, and thus were propelled by Western feminists to act against injustices in their context. Atanga (2013) adds that this assumption fails to give "[African] women credit for thinking critically, reflexively and independently" (p. 304). Long before the introduction of the term feminism in Africa, women in Africa mobilised against their marginalisation and oppression without employing the term feminism (Arndt, 2002; Atanga, 2013). Chisale (2017) noted that African women have always and continue to resist patriarchy in feminist ways through music, poetry, scholarship, even if they do not name their activism or scholarship as feminist. For example, Akin-Aina (2011) describes the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake, a women's emancipatory group in Kenya, as embodying "the tensions and transformations inherent in African feminism" (2011, p. 66), yet rejects the label feminists as it is understood to be anti-religion and anti-man.

The rejection of the title feminist seems to be with regards to what feminism has to come to represent, rather than the actual politics of feminism. A challenge with dominant forms of feminism for some in Africa is what Arndt (2002, p. 27) recognises as the tendency to be presented as "hatred of men, penis envy, the non-acceptance of African traditions, the fundamental rejection of marriage, and motherhood, the favouring of lesbian love and the endeavour to invert the relationship of the genders". As such, feminism may be seen as a Western attempt to negatively destabilise the relationship between men and women in Africa by challenging their practices, cultures, and beliefs. Emecheta in her rejection of the title feminism asserted that she does not subscribe to "the feminist idea that all men are brutal and repressive" (cited in Mikell, 1995, p. 335). In her essay, *We Should All Be Feminist*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014, p. 11) says:

> The word feminist is so heavy with baggage, negative baggage - you hate men, you hate bras, you hate African culture, you think women should always be in charge, you don't wear make-up, you don't shave, you are always angry, you don't have a sense of humour, you don't use deodorant.

Adichie (2014) further says she rejected the term feminist at first and opted to call herself a happy African feminist. She explains that the title of feminist invokes the image of the angry woman or something that is equally foreign to African women. Adichie highlighted the politics of naming, naming of the self or of one's politics. The politics highlighted by Adichie seem to have plagued other African scholars, such as Buchi Emecheta, who opted for feminism with small 'f' (Mekgwe, 2002). Emecheta asserted that, while she acknowledged that some people may see her work as feminist, she did not identify as a feminist, because it appeared to her not to be concerned with issues affecting women in Africa (Mekgwe, 2002).

Despite the reluctance by some African scholars to adopt the feminist label, there has been a lot of effort from scholars (who may or may not identify as African feminists) who have taken the task of theorising feminism, feminist activism, and what feminist research looks like in Africa (for example see Atanga, 2013; de la Rey, 1997; Gaidzanwa, 2013; Gqola, 2007; Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018; Kiguwa, 2004; Mekgwe, 2007; Mama, 2011; Mangena, 2003). While these works and this scholarship have provided a framework for understanding African feminism, as well as illustrated what African feminist work is, African feminism is still characterised by "ongoing processes of self-definition and redefinition" (Akin-Aina, 2011, p. 66).

Nnaemeka (2005) notes that African feminism is not just a matter of renaming the praxis, but rather a matter of reclaiming the practice. I contend that to be a feminist in Africa is not the same

as to be an African feminist. While African feminism speaks to a sense of African identity, feminism in Africa speaks to the notion of someone who is located in Africa but is not identified with Africa. To be a feminist in Africa is no different than being a feminist in China, or indeed a feminist on the moon. The mandate is set out by the feminist articulation that one identifies with. For example, Marxist feminism identifies the sources of gender inequality in the oppression of women in capitalist societies (Kiguwa, 2004). Radical feminism, on the other hand, would argue that because society is inherently patriarchal, inequality is inescapable when men and women interact (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). However, it is possible to see how both Marxist and radical feminist strands have roots in the experiences of women in the Global North, particularly white women, whose experiences of oppression was based on their sex. To be an African feminist approach can be understood as an acknowledgement of an identity that precedes one's position as a feminist. Arndt (2002, p. 19) questions that given the "ethnic plurality of Nigeria and South Africa, it would be appropriate to speak of Yoruba-feminism or Zulu-feminism, for instance". To this, she added that while this might be an interesting exercise, it would be a futile exercise as there is diversity even at a national level. So, therefore, African feminism does not attempt to synthesise the experiences of African women into one collective. However, to speak of an African feminism is to recognise one's relationship to the material, psychosocial, political, historical world that one is living in or writing from. This, however, does not always translate to how one is epistemologically orientated. Therefore, it is necessary as part of reclaiming the praxis as an Africa feminist to not simply translate theory, but to be critical in our engagement with it.

3.3 Western Feminism(s)

Before I proceed perhaps it will be useful to offer some discussion of the Western feminist orientations. In this section, I present a synopsis of dominant feminist agendas, highlighting what each prioritised in its efforts towards the emancipation of women. As African-centred feminism is not a complete rejection of western feminisms, I will take aspects of the vocabulary and tools offered by other, earlier feminist movement(s), and simultaneously elucidate aspects that these movements failed to prioritise.

There are many articulations of feminism across geographies, for example, Global North versus Global South, and across ideologies such as liberal, Marxist, and radical, premised on what they regarded be fundamental issues affecting women in a particular place and time (Kiguwa, 2004; Mama, 2007). Although there are various expressions of feminism, "[t]he development of various waves or strands of feminisms, across space and time tend to converge to produce a singular feminist narrative" (Makama, Helman, Titi & Day, 2019, p. 2), that produces a universal relationship between and amongst men and women.

Feminist movements, such as liberal and socialist feminisms, argued that gender differences are only a matter of biology (Lorber, 1991). Liberal feminism was founded on principles of equality (Kiguwa, 2004), in other words, social justice means that men and women ought to be allowed equal opportunities to work and education. Liberal feminism was instrumental in exposing the extent to which women were discriminated against. However, this movement failed to expose the issues of power that sustains the unequal gender relations (Kiguwa, 2004).

Unlike Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism identifies the sources of gender inequality in the oppression of women in capitalist societies (Kiguwa, 2004). Marxist feminists also draw attention to the fact that, even if a woman worked outside her home, she was "still expected to fulfil her domestic duties, and so she ends up working twice as hard, and usually for a lot less pay" (Lorber, 1991, p. 11). By exposing the private and public material conditions of the oppression of women, Marxist feminism was able to argue for the economic freedom of women in both the public and private spheres (Jarrett, 2016), e.g., the recognition of the contributions of housewives as valuable to the economy of the home and society. Liberal and Marxist feminists failed to recognise the "micro inequalities of everyday life" (Lorber, 1991, p. 16), which makes it difficult for women to occupy spaces that are made available for them. This failure is rooted in the focus on equality, rather than giving credence to equity.

Speaking against the limitations of liberal and Marxist feminisms, radical feminism argues that women do not have a space in society, because society is inherently patriarchal (Jarret, 2016). Radical feminists argue that inequality is inescapable when men and women interact, whether it is in public spaces such as work, or private spaces such as the home (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). A major contribution of radical feminism is the efforts to create women-only spaces that are vital for theorising gender inequalities (Desai, 2007). While radical feminism makes one acutely aware of the misogyny in society, it is simultaneously disabling, as it does not provide a way for society to deal with the anxiety produced by this acute awareness. In radical feminism women in large part cannot escape the relationships they have with men, where, even if as a society we could "dispose" of all men, patriarchy is not only embedded in men's consciousness but rather, is reproduced and

maintained by women as well. Additionally, radical feminism fails to take into consideration the hierarchies and inequalities that exist amongst women (Kiguwa, 2004).

In *Feminism is for Everyone: Passionate Politics,* bell hooks narrates how some women came into the feminist movement in the USA. hooks (2000 p. 67) states:

> Individual heterosexual women came to the movement from relationships where men were cruel, unkind, violent, unfaithful. Many of these men were radical thinkers who participated in movements for social justice, speaking out on behalf of the workers, the poor, speaking out on racial justice. But when it came to the issue of gender, they were as sexist as their conservative cohorts. Individual women came from these relationships angry. And they used that anger as a catalyst for women's liberation.

The feminist movement started as a movement that only recognised oppression as it exists along gendered and sexual lines. Feminists in Western societies used their newly acquired power to turn what was formerly perceived as the private troubles of women into public issues constituted by the gender inequality of the prevailing social structure (Desai, 2007; Lazreg, 2005). However, this movement failed to bring to the forefront the issues affecting black women. In response to the inadequacy in accounting for the lives of black women by dominant feminism in the USA and parts of Europe, black feminism emerged (Ebunoluwa, 2009). Barriteau (2006, p. 14) notes that black feminism was not simply an "undifferentiated notion of 'sisterhood'", but rather, that it was an intellectual body of work from black feminist scholars "reacting to the failure of existing feminist explanatory frameworks". Black feminism provides a solidarity movement for black women in America through intersectional theory (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002). Intersectionality coined by Crenshaw (1991), Intersectionality contributes to the understanding of gender, by

proposing that an investigation of gender should take into consideration how intersecting identities operate within power relations embedded in social identities (Shields, 2008).

America intersectionality highlighted the marginalisation of women of colour thus lay the foundation for new articulations of feminism, such as nego-feminism (Nnaemeka, 2004), and decolonial feminism (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018; Lugones, 2010), Chicana/Latina feminism(s) (Calderón, Bernal, Huber, Malagón, & Vélez, 2012; Saavedra & Perez, 2013), and African feminism(s) (Gaidzanwa, 2013; Kiguwa, 2004; Lewis, 2001, 2008; Mekgwe, 2007).

de la Rey (1997) notes that when the feminist movement was taking shape in South Africa, particularly within psychology, Black women had to fight for the recognition of race and class, along with gender as triple oppressive mechanisms. The non-recognition of how race, class, and gender interact to reproduce the oppression of poor and working-class black women was also symptomatic of feminist movements in the USA and Europe. Collins (1990) notes that, despite the involvement of black female intellectuals in the feminist movement, black women were hardly recognised as full participants of the feminist movement, since in the fight for women's rights, white feminists failed to recognise the differing fight for the rights of black women for racial and class liberation.

3.3.1 The application of Western feminism in Africa. Feminist research has broadened the focus on women's lives beyond the areas of child-rearing and other domestic matters (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 2006; Lazreg, 2005; Lorber, 1991). In Africa, the scope of research remains imbued with Eurocentric ideals, which presents women from Africa "in need of liberation, not in terms of their own herstory and needs, but into the 'progressive' social norms and customs of the

metropolitan West" (Carby, 2007, p. 740). Feminist scholarship in Africa has focused on "women's burden of labour, submissiveness to men and lack of intimacy in marriages to conclude that women are oppressed" (Cornwall, 2005, p. 3) and centres religion and culture as sources of oppression for women (Atanga, 2013; Gaidzanwa, 2013; Lazreg, 2005). Western feminism perpetuates a reductionist culture within social sciences that reduces women into one category. For example, Lazreg (2005) highlights how women from Egypt and Morocco are written about by feminist academics as simply "Arab women" or "middle-eastern women". This misrecognition and misrepresentation of women in the Global South serve to perpetuate the colonial narrative of Africans in need of saving from themselves by Western saviours.

Feminist epistemologies developed by feminists in the Global South speak to the politics of location and the interconnectedness of race, class, gender, and sexuality, amongst others (Mama, 2007). The focus on poverty, illness and abuse is necessary to highlight the plight of women in, for example, a violent or poverty-stricken society. Similarly, the focus on ethnicity, religion, culture and tradition is necessary, as these play a significant role in shaping the experiences of women. However, the narrowed view of the experiences of men and women in Africa fails to recognise the ways in which women can be complicit in perpetuating patriarchal relationships and ways in which women (and men) may resist patriarchy.

In May of 1979, Audre Lorde penned an open letter to Mary Daly – reprinted in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women Of Color* – hoping to engage her on representations of goddesses in Daly's book *Gyn/Ecology*. In the letter, Lorde notes Daly's representations of goddesses as "white, Western-European, Judio-Christian" and the absence of Africana goddesses

such as “Afrekete” (Lorde, 1983, p. 94). According to Lorde (1983, p. 94), in a chapter focusing on genital mutilation, Daly presents black women as “victims and preyers-upon each other”. Daly’s construction of the white goddesses and black victims serves to maintain the white saviour-black victim narrative. As a feminist scholar Daly’s choice to focus on a single experience of African women’s lives without exploring the ways that African women resist many forms of oppression.

While Lorde also an American woman may not be suitable for speaking against the oppression of women in Africa, her letter to Daly highlights the problems of Western orientated feminism that although she is from the West, she too feels misrecognised and misrepresented by white feminist scholars like Daly, who often sift through her work for quotable lines without fully engaging with her through her work. Lorde recognises similar carelessness in how African women are represented in Daly’s book. Their lives and experiences condensed For Daly’s audience into a single narrative of genital mutation. This focus on a single experience of African women may be reflective of what Lorde (1983, p. 93) mentions in the letter as a long and discouraging “history of white women who are unable to hear black women’s words”, referring to black women not only as mentioned in the book but also black women in the Global North (p. 94). Western feminism has been committed to representing women in Africa as “voiceless victims of ever-deepening multiple oppressions” (Cornwall, 2005, p. 1). The realities of the women who are presented by feminist scholars such as Daly are “ignored in favour of applying theories from the point of view of a more ‘advanced’, more ‘progressive’ outside observer” (Carby, 2007, p. 740).

Considering this misrecognition and misrepresentations of the lives and experiences of women outside the global north as illustrated in Daly's work the need for more alternative approaches to understanding and writing about people's worlds and lives requires an understanding of these worlds. However, this is not done as an attempt to essentialise their experiences but rather as a way of considering how the historical, contemporary and material contexts shape the experiences of the people whom we are interested in writing about. Next, I discuss African-centredness as such an approach to thinking about, writing, working with people in Africa.

3.4 African-centredness

In the essay *How to write about Africa* Binyavanga Wainaina (2006) satirically describes what has come to be known as "real Africa". Wainaina (2006) highlights some of the tropes that are used in Western writing to tell stories about Africa and Africans, such as the lush lands, starvation, corruption, nakedness, and death. Wainaina speaks of what Mama (2007, p. 123) refers to as "Africa's special place in Western mythology", which she describes as "a dark and anti-thetical land of fables and fantasies, imbued with sexuality, violence and taboo." In the essay, not only does Wainaina (2006) trouble the image of Africa and Africans as depicted in Western-centric writings, but he also shows the limitations and problematic representations of Africa in Western writings.

While Africa and Africans appear to be central to some narratives produced in the West, these narratives "reveal not only passing academic fashions, but also the personal and political perspective through which African lives are read and written" (Cornwall, 2005, p. 2). In other words, they are not always written for an African audience, therefore orientated towards what is

palatable. What Wainaina (2006) points us to is that it is not only the subject of the narrative that we ought to pay attention to but also how the narratives (shared in a research space, through autobiographies, movies or tabloids, academic publications and other forms of academic dissemination) are informed by the politics of those who tell stories, as well as the audience for whom the narratives are produced.

With the mandate to re-narrate Africa, some scholars have argued for African-centred or Afrocentric scholarship across different disciplines such as history, sociology and psychology which I will discuss further below (Carroll, 2014; Ratele, 2017a, 2017c, 2017d). According to Oyebade "African-centredness as a theory and philosophy emanates from 1980s diasporian African writing" (1990, p. 233). As an approach, African-centredness is transdisciplinary, and places cultures and histories in Africa at the centre of analysis, recognising these histories and cultures? to include yet predates colonisation (Ebede-Ndi, 2016; Oyebade, 1990). The recognition of African history that precedes colonisation is not intended to romanticise pre-colonial Africa but is rather an emphasis to resist thinking of Africa and Africans as products of the West, and thus only understandable through paradigms that emanate from the West. This recognition propels us to see Africa as a site of knowledge production rather than a site for excavation in which "data collection, the feverish gathering of all supposedly useful information aimed at immediate export to the 'mother' country […] for theoretical/experimental processing and interpretation" (Hountondji, 1990, p. 8). African-centredness scholarship can then be understood as an attempt "to find ways in which African research can be better informed by local concerns and interpretations and concurrently, for African experiences to be taken into account in general theory building" (Oyěwùmí, 2002, p. 1).

African scholarship is often assumed to be knowledge produced in Africa and only applicable within the African context. Ratele (2017a, 2017d) critiques this assumption, suggesting that African-centred scholarship is not only about producing situated knowledge but also about knowledge that emanates from Africa, transgresses geographical and temporal borders to speak to a myriad of conditions that impact human life in Africa. As Oyebade (1990) puts it African-centred scholarship takes Africa as a point of departure and "seeks to liberate African studies from the Eurocentric monopoly on scholarship and thus assert a valid worldview through which Africa can be studied objectively" (p. 234). African-centred scholarship concerns resistance to colonial forms of knowing, recognising knowledge, and expertise from Africa, as well as informing how we teach, and conduct research. Kwate (2005), Grills (2002), and Ratele (2017a, 2017c, 2017d, 2017e) illustrate, for example, how African-centred scholarship can move beyond ideology and towards transforming psychological praxis, i.e., moving beyond the philosophical debates towards the doing of psychology, in the teaching, researching and practice. In this study, I discuss departing from psychology how an African centred feminism might enable me to think about how gender and gendered dynamics are organised in and through the customary practice of lobolo. I will return to this later in this chapter, but for now, I will discuss how African centeredness has been discussed in relation to psychology.

3.4.1. African-centred psychology. According to Ebede-Ndi, (2016, p. 72), "the goals of African-centred psychology […] [are] the liberation of the African mind, empowerment of the African character and enlivenment and illumination of the African spirit." This is similar to what Palmary and Barnes (2015) posited, that there is a need for an African psychology that seeks to liberate Africa and Africans from Western psychology, by recognising the contexts in which the

African psyche exists, is constrained, develops, and flourishes. Grills (2002), in the book *Counselling Persons of African Descent: Raising the Bar of Practitioner Competence,* outlines what she considers to be the basic principles of African-centred psychology, namely: self-definition, spirit, nature, metaphysical interconnectedness, communal order, and self-knowledge. Grills (2002, p. 11) states that:

> In the African worldview, the person and community adopt a teleological orientation [which] informs the African mind that everything in the world has been designed by God to be of service to man… As it discerns its purpose and the purpose of things around it, the African mind is informed in the world in ways that are not limited to cognition, the conscious mind, and intellect.

It is important to note that some definitions of African-centredness, such as the one offered by Grills (2002), particularly the representation of "the African mind", can rely on colonial stereotypes. These definitions present African people, whether on the continent or elsewhere in the world, as a homogeneous group, thus re-inscribing the very colonial ideas of Africa and Africans (see Ratele, Cornell, Dlamini, Helman, Malherbe & Titi, 2018). Kwate (2005) suggests that the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM) fails as a diagnostic foundation for individuals of African descent and adds that African-centred psychology rejects the idea of mental disorders as intrapsychic malfunction, but rather considers mental discordance as a reflection of the larger social and political context.

While Kwate (2005) offers a de-individualised way of looking at mental disorder and health, the simplistic and homogenous representation of an "Africa psyche" fails to account for individual experiences. Grills (2002) and Kwate (2005) fall into the essentialist trap, that fails to recognise

what Dosekun (2007, p. 41) observes when saying “the place we only happen to call Africa is very large and culturally diverse, made up of very different peoples, cultures and practices.” Additionally, the assumptions about African spirit and assumptions that all Africans believe in a God that created everything and have a cosmic connection or understanding, suggests simplistically that all “Africans have the same blood flowing in their veins which determines our spirit, culture and capabilities” (Dosekun, 2007, p. 41).

Ratele (2017c) relates this to psychology, which places the metaphysical and spiritual as central components, and talks about cultural African psychology. While cultural African psychology provides a compelling approach to a study on lobolo, gender and power, as it offers an opportunity for thinking of the role of culture in the development of identity, it, stumbles over a few conceptual issues. For example, cultural African psychology tends to construct “African as exceptional” (Ratele, 2017c, p. 321). In this regard, cultural African psychology localises and limits knowledge produced in Africa or by Africans within the boundaries of Africa. Another obstacle faced by cultural African psychology is that, even though while culture, traditions and religiosity play a significant role in the lives of people, they should not be viewed as existing independently from socio-political influences. I suggest that, rather than using cultural African psychology, I propose an African-centred feminist approach which will be more appropriate to this study on lobolo, gender and power. Before I elaborate on African-centred feminism, it may be useful to outline African-centred approaches to gender, as these provide an alternative way of thinking about gender in Africa.

3.5 African-centred feminism

Black feminism can be seen as an inspiration for the development of an African-centred feminist approach but is limited in its utility within an African context. The foundation of black feminism is primarily its move against the white-centric gaze of Western feminism. However, African-centred feminism attempts to move beyond being "reactionary and definable against Western feminism" (Mekgwe, 2007, p. 21). African-centred feminism seeks to challenge marginalisation and oppression in Africa as a result of colonialism, apartheid, and present-day reproductions of patriarchy, capitalism, heteronormativity, and other mechanisms of exclusion.

African feminism is the primary foundation for an African-centred approach due to its recognition of Africa as the fundamental starting point for understanding feminist activism and scholarship. African feminism, however, remains focused on women as the focal point for the feminist interventions, thus often limiting feminist scholarship to the study of women's issues (Makama et al., 2019). I argue that for feminist work, particularly that which studies cultural aspects of African life, to be situated in Africa, there needs to be a feminist scholarship that focuses on men and masculine subjects in addition to women and femininities. In this case, I borrow the tools offered by feminists, especially African feminist scholars, to critically explore how men and women engage with one another within the practice of lobolo.

African-centred feminism recognises the impact of colonialism and apartheid on both men and women and seeks to challenge the manifestation of patriarchy in Africa through cultural, religious, and political practices. African-centred feminism seeks to critically engage with the structures within African politics, societies, cultures, and norms that perpetuate oppression, inequality and

marginalisation, in order to challenge them towards the liberation of men and women. In so doing, an African-centred feminist approach allows for a broader, non-essentialised, anti-binary way of viewing lives in Africa.

Adeleye-Fayemi (2010) suggests that African feminism should recognise how African traditional contexts shape these interactions between men and women. In the context of this thesis, such traditional practices as lobolo can be used as the apparatus through which gendered interactions are created and reinforced. Moreover, African-centred feminism does not essentialise Africa but recognises the historical, material, and cultural conditions across Africa that shape the interactions between and amongst men and women (Dosekun, 2007). African-centred feminism interrogates the impact of Western imperialism on Africa, which has resulted in hierarchies that exist along gendered lines but also exist on class and racial lines. African-centred feminism seeks to challenge institutions and systems that manifest within African contexts, and which are masked as religion and culture and so contribute to the oppression of women as well as men. African-centred feminism recognises the patriarchal, capitalist, and racial subjugation of women, and how these oppressive systems may also have an impact on men.

In patriarchal societies, men hold much of the power when it comes to perpetuating systems and institutions that are oppressive to women. As such, dominant forms of feminism have been concerned with issues affecting women, with the assumption being that these issues are perpetuated by men. However, this view positions women as perpetually on the "wrong side of power" (Cornwall, 2005, p. 5), with little room for exploring how women may be implicated in the patriarchal behaviour that may be oppressive to other women as well as to some men. Further,

when considering oppression along a binary axis, feminist thinkers in Africa find themselves limited with regards to understanding how gendered oppression operates. The focus thus remains on understanding individually perpetuated forms of oppression, rather than those that can be located in more systemic forms such as cultural practices. African-centred feminism can be seen to be a response to the need to recognise varying African customs, particularly in that it focuses not only on issues affecting the lives of women. African-centred feminism is an approach to understanding the ways in which men and women may be complicit in perpetuating patriarchy through the guise of culture.

African-centred feminism is intersectional. According to Kiguwa (2019, p. 227) "[i]ntersectionality makes it possible to consider how women [and men…] may be differentially positioned within multiple axes of power that in turn influences how they embody gender". This means intersectionality speaks to the experiences of marginalisation but can also be useful in thinking about positions of presumed privilege (Chadwick, 2017b; Lewis, 2008; Warner, 2008). As an intersectional approach, African-centred feminism may allow me to explore how gender intersects with other social categories to shape men and women's experience of lobolo. Intersectionality challenges the essentialist presentation of women's experiences, by not only making explicit the differences between black women and white women, but also by allowing us to consider geographic differences, ethnic differences, and class differences (Davis, 2008). Mama (2007, p. 122) reminds us of the contribution made by Southern-based feminists to challenge the "disciplinary and locational fragmentations which have tended to demarcate and circumscribe the theorising of gender and gender relations".

Lobolo brings to the forefront issues of heteronormativity, class, gender, and age. Intersectionality allows us to move beyond the dominant narrative of lobolo as only a patriarchal system that is oppressive to women, and instead to explore how gender intersects with class, age, ethnicity, and other identity categories to shape the experiences of men and women in the participation of lobolo. An intersectional approach allows me to explore how men and women draw on, resist, or challenge gendered discourses in order to construct, negotiate and enact their own gendered identities through participation in lobolo. I am thus able to see how people navigate different subject positions within their narratives, in order to negotiate power within the practice.

3.5.1 African-centred approach to gender. In a world still dealing with the history of colonialism and its aftermath, coloniality (Quijano, 2007), issues of race, class, and gendered hierarchies are paramount to understanding any phenomenon. The African-centred feminist approach articulated in this thesis attempts to highlight, in the ways that Akin-Aina (2011, p. 67) argues, "the interplay between scholarship, practice and activism and how these inform each other". Feminist epistemologies developed by feminists in the Global South speak to geo-politics and the interconnectedness of race, class, gender, and sexuality amongst others (Mama, 2007). The idea that differences between men and women are located within social practices and not biology became a central argument for feminist discourse (Oyěwùmí, 2002). Willott and Griffin (1997) state that an analysis of power ought to consider how people are not only gendered but also "constructed around race, class, age and sexuality" (p. 108). This means that, even though men have some male privilege, in a heteronormative, patriarchal, capitalist, racist society this privilege is limited to a few men only.

Gender is socially and historically constructed and has been used by many feminist scholars to explain the subordination of women (Moore, 2015). Scholarship on gender that focuses on the "processes and structures through which women's and men's identities and relationship were mediated" (Cornwall, 2005, p. 1) from a Western perspective has resulted in a limited perception of gender as the only defining factor for how individuals interact with one another. The focus on women's lives in Africa has been predominantly concerning their conjugal identities, rather than exploring multiplicities of identities that extend beyond their relationship to and with men (Cornwall 2005; Ogundipe-Lesile, 1994). Research on lobolo has followed a similar trend. Lobolo has been predominantly criticised as a patriarchal practice, in which women are presented as passive participants in their own oppression (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010; Chiweshe, 2016; Mangena & Ndlovu, 2013; Parker, 2015).

The tendency to essentialise women's experiences within Western feminism leads to activism and scholarship that perpetuates reproducing the binary narrative of male perpetrators and female victims (Makama et al., 2019). African scholars such as Oyěwùmí (1997, 2002) and Amadiume (1987) have warned against the binary conceptualisation of gender. They argue that these constructions of gender are limiting in thinking about the interactions of men and women within the African context. The binary construction of gender is restrictive to a critical exploration of how men and women actively engage in ways that maintain and challenge the status quo. For example, in considering power, Amadiume (1987) states that power does not only operate as male dominance and female subordination but can also be a result of other social categories such as seniority. While gender is an important category for the study of lobolo, other categories that may be at play are class, age, ethnicity amongst others.

In the article *African (situated) psychologies of boys, men and masculinities*, Ratele (2017a, p. 10). elaborates on the idea of centredness (situatedness) by asking "what potential contributions …might a situated psychology make towards understanding men and boys?" Here Ratele outlines four potential orientations within African psychology of boys, men and masculinities. These orientations correspond with the four African psychologies, viz.: (i) universalised (Euro-American) psychology of African boys, men and masculinities; (ii) psychological African studies of boys, men and masculinities; (iii) cultural African psychology of boys, men and masculinities; and (iv) critical African psychology of boys, men and, masculinities (Ratele, 2017a, 2017c). While Ratele (2017a, p. 54) focuses on how boys, men and masculine subjects "exist, experience the world, relate to others, and attempt to create meaning", the premises of the article are applicable to a wider conceptualisation of gender. Ratele's (2017a) conceptualisation of African (situated) psychology of boys, men and masculinities provides the conceptual framework for exploring gender in lobolo. In other words, Ratele (2017a) leads us to an African-centred approach to gender that allows for the exploration of gender in a way that takes into consideration the context in which men's and women's relationships are constructed. Like Ratele, Mfecane (2018a) also advocates for a contextualised theory on masculinities. Mfecane (2018a) argues that African scholars have relied on "narrow definitions of masculinities" (p. 292), based on theories of masculinities that are from the Global north thus reproducing intervention and scholarship that fails to speak to the complex lives' of men in Africa.

I turn next to the methodology, which is a narrative inquiry, before analysing the data I collected with men and women who have participated in lobolo by way of narrative discursive analysis. In the way that Cornwall (2005, p. 5) argues an African-centred feminist approach to gender is

“sensitive to the range of relational subject positions taken by women and men in the different domains of discourse that co-exist within any single cultural setting”. By using narrative inquiry, I was able to understand how men and women draw on different gendered discourse to position themselves as well as others in their narratives of participating in lobolo.

Chapter 4: African-centred feminist narrative inquiry

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an outline of the approaches that inform and have shaped the methodology of my thesis. In the previous chapters, I showed that lobolo has been previously understood from a predominantly western-centric framework, which emphasises the monetary component of the lobolo process that serves to reproduce the dominant discourse of wives for cattle (see Kuper, 1982). I argue that these ways of understanding lobolo are limited because, while they allow for feminist forms of inquiry, the patriarchal underpinnings of the practice remain unchallenged. In order to push this point further, we need to interrogate how lobolo has remained relevant in contemporary contexts. More importantly for this study, the simplistic representation of lobolo as a monetary transaction is inadequate, as it does not consider the social or cultural meanings associated with the practice of lobolo (see Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Dlamini, 1983). Instead, I have argued that approaching lobolo using the methods and insights from an African-centred narrative approach will enable us to understand lobolo as a dynamic and evolving practice, through which we can explore the situated ways in which men and women construct and negotiate gender, and through which we can trace how power is negotiated and exercised within gendered interactions.

The chapter opens with an outline of the research approach I have adopted, that is an African-centred feminist narrative approach. I discuss the feminist scholarship that has informed this narrative research, focusing on how these principles have guided my approach in the recruitment of research participants and shaped the data collection method I used, as well as my engagement

with the data. These principles move beyond a mechanical approach to research, which is often limited to the research process without engaging with the politics of doing research. Kiguwa notes that research in psychology has approached the concept of gender apolitically, and as a result questions of "power that is configured in terms of gender remain hidden and uninterrogated" (Kiguwa, 2019, p. 223). Feminist research takes into consideration the gendered power dynamics that shape the research phenomena, as well as the gender and power dynamics in the research process and the research space. By interrogating "networks of power that exist within social structures [lobolo] and between social beings", we are able to explore how people "are actively produced as gendered subjects in very particular ways that either disempower or empower them in society" (p. 223). The African-centred feminist narrative approach employed here allows me to interrogate how women and men make meaning of their gendered subjectivity through participation in lobolo.

4.2 Research approach: African-centred feminist narrative inquiry

In this study, I employ a method informed by what is called narrative inquiry. In the scholarly literature on narrative research, a narrative is described as a process by which the narrator makes meaning of events and their experiences (Chase, 2008; Josselson, 2013; Riessman, 2008). Narratives can be verbalised or embodied framings of events in the form of autobiographies, home videos, performance art works, photo albums, research interviews, research reports and other forms of dissemination (Ochs & Capps, 1996; Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013). The act of narrating is a subjective process, in which the narrator carefully selects aspects of their experience to share. While this may be mediated by memory and the research question at hand, it may also be influenced by the narrator's desire to position themselves in a particular way. The subject position

one assumes in a narrative is not fixed, since different contexts draw people into different subject positions, where the particular narrator may assume different positions at different points of the narrative. In this study, I was interested in understanding how men and women position themselves in the narratives of their lobolo experience. I was particularly interested in the role they assume in the narrative and how this role is positioned in relation to other characters in the narrative.

According to Taylor (2006), "our understanding of who we are, our identities are derived from accumulative ideas, images, and associations […] which make up the wider social and cultural contexts of our lives" (p. 94). These ideas, images and associations can be understood as discursive resources available to us, and they are used by our interlocutors and by narrators to position themselves or others in particular ways, or to "justify a practice, defend against expressed or anticipated criticism and so on" (Mavuso, Chiweshe & McLeod, 2019). I propose that lobolo rests on heteronormative gendered discourses. I was interested in how participants navigate these discourses in their narratives. I was interested in how participants construct, reject, take up, negotiate particular gendered positions in relation to their social, geographic and economic position.

The research interview space is a dynamic space in which both the researcher and the research participant have to negotiate their identity and power (Boonzaier, 2014). The sharing of narratives "imposes order on the heterogeneity of experience and therefore does not merely reflect [experience], but constructs it" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2011, p. 17). Therefore, narratives are not representations of truths, but rather representations of meaning, "never fully archive[ing] any real closure to the meaning of an event, but rather leaves discursive space for the assignment

of new and times different meaning" (Kiguwa, 2006, p. 21). The narratives are open to interpretation, and because they have the potential for being retold, they have the potential for multiple competing and contradictory interpretations.

In the study, I focussed on narratives of experiences or personal narratives. Personal narratives are narratives of experience as "texts which bring stories of personal experience into being by means of the first-person oral narration of past, present, future of imaginary experience" (Patterson, 2008, p. 37). The contouring of narratives for an imagined audience suggests that narratives are not only shared as a mechanism for recounting experience but also a form of social action or political practice (Kiguwa, 2006). Narratives are acts of assertion, as part of a group or means of distancing from a group (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Personal narratives offer an opportunity to explore "the social process by which social life and human relationships are made and changed" (Laslett, 1999, p. 392). Personal narratives are also linguistic performances of identity through the narrators position the self in relation to others within the narrative (Taylor & Littleton, 2006).

The meanings attached to personal narratives are located within larger social narratives (Gergen & Gergen, 2011; Stephens & Breheny, 2013). People draw from "accumulated ideas, images, associations and so on which make up the wider social and cultural contexts of our lives" (Taylor, 2006, p. 94) in order to share their stories. For example, in 2016 I found that young men living on the street shared narratives with similar trajectories. In addition, I found that these narratives were not necessarily their own narratives but instead were rather a broader collective narrative of young men on the street. This was evidenced by young people's tendency to talk generally about life on the street, rather than about their personal experiences of life on the streets. Morison (2011, p. 95)

suggests that even within these meta-narratives, individuals "can alter or transform existing scripts, performing these in slightly different ways", responding to the demands of the discursive context. Personal narratives are embedded within the larger context and reflect the narratives of that larger context in which the experiences had come to have meaning (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2011). The narratives of men and women participating in lobolo, which are the focus of this thesis, are shaped by the experiences located within a specific society, culture, or family. As such, the individual narrative is embedded within a hegemonic discourse of what it means to be a member of a particular group (Yuval-Davis, 2006). So, we may see that the story of one person's experience of going through lobolo as a Zulu man is embedded within the metanarrative of how lobolo is practised amongst the amaZulu.

Narrative inquiry seeks to bring to the surface individual experiences that are understood as being constructed in, and are a reflection of, the range of contexts (cultures and societies, as well as narrators' intersecting identities) within and against which they are constructed (Stephens & Breheny, 2013). While there is no single and unified feminist approach used in narrative inquiry, feminist approaches to narrative have generally been concerned with "how texts treat the intersections of gender with sexuality and race" (Stanley, 2017, p.xiii). People are not only gendered and raced, but their gender and race hold particular meanings in different contexts. As a methodological approach, narrative inquiry allows researchers "to enter into the experiences of others and serves as a starting point for understanding, interpretation, and imagination" (Yang, 2011, p. 205). I use the narratives which I have collected as part of the work for this thesis as vehicles for exploring the intricacies of gender and power within the practice of lobolo. Asking

participants to narrate their experiences of lobolo allows participants to share elements of the experience that are significant to them.

African-centred feminism encourages us to explore how the historical and contemporary socio-political contexts shape the experiences of individuals. Within an African-centred feminist narrative inquiry, I am concerned with the implications of how gender is constructed or represented in text, and how these are mediated by the meanings of lobolo.

African-centred feminist approaches have enabled me to analyse the narratives and to explore how men and women draw on (and at times resist) contextualised discourses of masculinities and femininities, in order to position themselves in their narratives about the experiences of participating in lobolo. I was particularly interested in how men and women position themselves in relation to others in relation to the customary practice of lobolo, by drawing on and/or challenging the dominant discourses of heteronormativity in their narratives of participating in lobolo. Drawing on concepts such as intersectionality from feminist scholarship and African-centeredness as outlined in Chapter 3, I was able to explore how the exercise of power within the practice of lobolo is mediated by gendered identity as well as other social identities.

4.2.1 Researchers as storytellers. A unique attribute of the narrative approach is the recognition of researchers as storytellers, through the ways in which they interpret and re-tell these narratives they have investigated (Chase, 2007). The researcher, like the research participant, is "thinking, reflexively aware and relationally formed self through narrated as well as narrating" (Stanley, 2017, p.xiii). The researcher, "in constructing a transcript, [does] not stand outside in a neutral objective position, merely presenting what was said. Rather, [he or she] is implicated at

every step along the way in constructing the narratives we then analyse" (Riessman, 2008, p. 28) and later re-present to different audiences. In other words, as researchers, we listen to and read the stories of others and in turn re-tell these stories while grounding these stories in theory and embellishing them with subjective, yet "expert" opinion (Gabriel, 2000). Narrative research sees the researcher becoming the narrator in how they interpret and re-tell these narratives they have investigated (Chase, 2007; Riessman, 2012). It is imperative that we are mindful of our own epistemological, ontological, personal, or political biases, which influence how we read or re-tell the narratives of others. Within an African-centred feminist narrative approach, this means considering how my positionality as an unmarried and educated black woman, who might be perceived as middle class, has an impact on how narratives are shared (co-constructed), interpreted and re-told.

These narratives we produce across different platforms describe the world but may also create realities that may be exclusionary and sometimes oppressive to others (Harding & Norberg, 2005). According to Wassenaar (2006), qualitative research has the potential to cause emotional distress and requires researchers to consider carefully, along with other ethical considerations, the risk/benefit ratio of the research. Ethical consideration refers to more than just ticking the boxes to meet institutional demands; it includes "moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of the researchers throughout the research process" (Edwards & Mauthner, 2002, p. 14). While there are numerous approaches to ethics (see Chilisa, 2009; Israel, 2014; Mertens & Ginsberg, 2009; Smith, 2013) there are four widely accepted principles, namely: (i) autonomy and respect; (ii) nonmaleficence; (iii) beneficence; (iv) justice (Wassenaar, 2006).

4.2.2 Ethics. Below, I outline the ethical considerations in conducting this study. These are the guidelines that regulated my own research, and they are informed by the regulations of the University of South Africa (UNISA) College of Human Sciences, from which ethics approval to conduct this study was obtained (see Appendix A). In the next paragraphs, I outline the ethical considerations that are observed across different research projects and outlined in the UNISA ethics guidelines. By discussing ethics here, rather than at the end of the chapter as is customary in a research thesis, I hope to show that ethical issues are a central component of the research, rather than a checklist at the end of the research process. In the second part of this section, I discuss some of the feminist principles that have guided me in this journey and have shaped my thinking about the research process as a whole and not only about the relationship with participants as discussed below. I developed the following as guiding principles for my research and collaborations with those I interviewed:

1. No deception. Some of the participants assumed that I was getting married and needed the information to prepare for my lobolo. I explained that I was interested in their narratives as part of a research project that I was conducting towards the completion of a PhD. Participants were verbally given all details related to the study, as described in the information sheet (see Appendix B).

2. Consent. This means that the purpose and aims of the study were verbally explained to all the participants. All participants were requested to give their written informed consent to participate in the study as well as to have the interview audio recorded (see Appendix C).

3. Confidentiality. Participants were informed that their recordings would be kept private and confidential. I also explained that the interview recordings would only be listened to by myself, the transcribers, supervisors and examiners (if necessary). Four transcribers and translators were employed for this task, two who could speak and write isiXhosa, one who could speak and write isiZulu and one for the Sesotho transcription and translation. Each transcriber/translator was requested to sign a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix D). The research assistant was also requested to sign the confidentiality agreement.

4. Right to withdraw. I ensured that all participants understood that they had the right to withdraw from the study. This meant that they were allowed to stop the interview at any time. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study post the interviews.

5. No harm. While a study may not be intrusive, participants may experience a level of discomfort when talking about intimate issues such as marriage and families. No participants showed distress that I could discern during the interview. Participants were encouraged to contact me should they feel distressed as a result of participating in the study.

4.2.3 Feminist ethics. While these ethical considerations may be sufficient for the research process, they limit ethics to the actual doing of the research which is presented as if this work is divorced from political action (Chilisa, 2009). Drawing on the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2019) asserts that the purpose of research, or "re-search" as declared by Smith, should be "to reveal the dirty history, politics, embedded power dynamics, concealed conception of being human" (p. 2). This way of doing research does not take people as

sites of data extraction but is wary of how the research process can dehumanise people. In considering how research can subvert the human in people (the research participants and the researcher), I employed feminist principles as a guide to the re-humanising the research process (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 2016; Kiguwa, 2006, 2019; Mama, 2011; Smith, 2013). In other words, the feminist principles enable me to think about myself and the participants in the research space as gendered subjects with other intersecting identities. Through these principles, I have been able to reflect on how these might affect the research process and the data constructed for the study.

According to Mama (2011, p. 10), a feminist approach to research requires deliberate attention to "choice and design of questions, the choice and application of methods, and the interpretation and analysis of findings". Firstly, in choosing a research question, feminist research views "patriarchy as a central organizing principle in society" (Kiguwa, 2019, p. 227). Feminist research explores the analytics of power in society and the intersecting effects on women (Kiguwa, 2019; Mama, 2007). Mama (2011) asserts that feminist research in Africa needs to consider the complexities, nuances and multiplicities of power relations in societies, which are the result of histories of imperialism. Research on lobolo has generally focused on highlighting how the patriarchal nature of the custom has affected women, without careful consideration to the multiplicities of power that function within and through the practice of lobolo. I argue that, within lobolo, power does not occur in a unilateral way between men and women, but also acts amongst men and women, reproducing hierarchical constructions of gender. I will elaborate on this further in Chapter 5.

In choosing this topic I was interested in how lobolo can be a gendered and gendering process. While lobolo is central to the study, my particular interest in the set of practices was to see them

as a lens through which we can explore specific and particular practices related to gender and power. I was careful to keep in mind that lobolo is not only an academically controversial topic (Baloyi, 2016; Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Hunter, 2016b) but is also a personal matter, which speaks to intimate interactions between men and women, as well as their extended families. An ethical study of lobolo will not only seek to expose and analyse the gendered dynamics embedded within the set of practices known as lobolo but will also seek critically to engage with the topic without inadvertently reproducing problematic discourses about African marriage practices.

Lobolo is generally seen as the business of men and as a result, men are often presented as "experts" when it comes to discussions of the practice of lobolo (Dlamini, 1983). In this study, I was not primarily interested in understanding lobolo as a set of legal and social practices. Instead, I was more interested in the actual and lived experiences of individuals participating in lobolo. I wanted to understand how subject positioning impacts why and how men and women act within the set of practices governed by lobolo. I anticipated that women and men from different backgrounds may offer diverse narratives about participation in lobolo, and I imagined that that would allow me to explore the contested and contradictory workings of gender and power.

When I decided on which participants to recruit for the study, my primary interest was in men and women who had participated in lobolo. I considered including also some lobolo negotiators (who are often male) known in isiZulu as abakongi, to be research participants. I rejected this idea because focusing on these men's knowledge and "expertise" of the practice, rather than on their personal and more complex experiences of lobolo, might re-inscribe the patriarchal notion of men as knowers. In this study, I was interested in the experiences of male and female participants in

lobolo. In this way, I would not wish to privilege the opinions and values of men invested in a particular version of what lobolo means.

In choosing the right tools with which to approach this study, I was conscious of the fact that feminist research means going against "malestream" knowledge production. Kiguwa argues that "feminist research aims to attend to women's marginalized and often silenced voices, not just in the social world but also in the production of knowledge" (2019, p. 225). Feminist research and interventions have opened up a space for theorising women's challenges by offering a "large and diverse body of theoretical and conceptual tools, a corpus of methodologies and approaches to knowledge building" (Kiguwa, 2004; Mama, 2007, p. 122). However, despite the ground-breaking work of feminist scholars in establishing spaces for women to make sense of our worlds and experiences, some of the strategies, tools and methods employed may be marginalising and even harmful if they fail to recognise the politics of location in their analysis. Due to the nature of lobolo, studies on lobolo have positioned women as vulnerable participants (Kyalo, 2012; Phiri, 2002). I was careful not to position the female participants as victims, or male participants as benefactors, of the custom. I realise that the capitalist-patriarchal discourses within lobolo may be oppressive and are maintained by both men and women.

Feminist researchers frequently challenge the power structures that exist not only in society and spaces of knowledge production (such as academic institutions) but also in spaces of knowledge sharing such as the research interaction between researchers and their research participants. On the one hand, some have argued that the relationship between participants and researchers is inherently asymmetrical. Campbell & Wasco, for example, argue that "the researcher is the 'all-knowing'

expert, the participant is not. The researcher has access to all information about the study, its designs, and questions, the participant" (2000, p. 786). Feminist research sets out not only to make visible and to challenge hierarchies and heteronormativity in the researched phenomena, but it also seeks to destabilise the hierarchies and norms accepted by traditional research methodologies and procedures (Presser, 2005; Smith, 2013). Narrative inquiry considers storytelling as a collaborative practice that is situated within and shaped by historical, cultural, and social context (Riessman, 2012), and takes this as an essential element to consider in the research process. In this way, narrative inquiry allows for a feminist disruption of hierarchies in the research space, by inserting the researcher as a key component of the research process. As part of the research process, I understand that being in dialogue with older participants as an unmarried woman would have shaped the conversation. For one there was a sense from the much older participant that in sharing their narrative an element of teaching about the process rather than focusing solely on their experience. The tendency to teach was especially noticeable in my interaction with male participants.

Feminist researchers have rejected the acceptance of a strict distance between researcher and participants, which is advanced by positivism, where the "subjects become objects of research" (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 2006, p. 503). The acceptance and maintenance of this distance is a way of maintaining a power dynamic between the researcher and the researched. As a feminist method, "narrative modes of interviewing […] involve challenging traditional power relations in which the interviewer sets the agenda and defines and structures the conversational space of the interview encounter" (Chadwick, 2017a, p. 10). While the research process is often seen inherently as skewed power interaction in favour of the researcher. Drawing on the notion that lobolo is the

business of men, there were times during the interview space where some male participants would deviate from the research interview and question my interest in the topic. In some of the Cape Town interviews, the male participants would address Mr Molo when responding to questions or simply respond with “some things you will never understand” or “some things you do not need to know”. In those interactions, participants would look to Mr Molo to confirm their assertions. In order to avoid this in the rest of the research process, I decided to conduct subsequent without Mr Molo. The narrative interview considers the individual subjectivities in the research space to be key elements in the research space, as it shapes how the narratives are constructed. In this regard, the interview encounter does not merely produce the research data but can be in itself the research data.

4.3 Recruitment and selection of participants

Data collection was done in two cities, namely Cape Town and Johannesburg. Initially, participants were recruited for the study via WhatsApp and Facebook advertisements. I circulated the advert (see Appendix E), which was subsequently shared by my contacts. My advertisement stated that I was looking for men and women over 18 who had participated in the customary practices generally understood under lobolo. While there are many roles in the lobolo process, I was specifically looking for men and women who had participated either as the ones paying lobolo or for whom lobolo was paid.

I used purposive sampling, where participants are selected based on their shared experience (Willig, 2013). I provided a contact number and email address so that interested individuals could contact me. While this generated some discussion on my social media platforms, few people

responded to participate. Only 4 of the 18 participants from Johannesburg were recruited via this method, the rest were referrals from my friends and family of the researcher, as well as other participants.

None of the Cape Town participants were recruited via social media. All but one (who was referred by her mother, who was also a participant in the study) of the 9 Cape Town participants were recruited through the research assistance of Mr Molo, who is also a resident of Kwa-Langa. The services of Mr Molo were solicited because I had limited networks in Cape Town. Due to my limited networks in Cape Town, it was challenging to recruit participants in Cape Town.

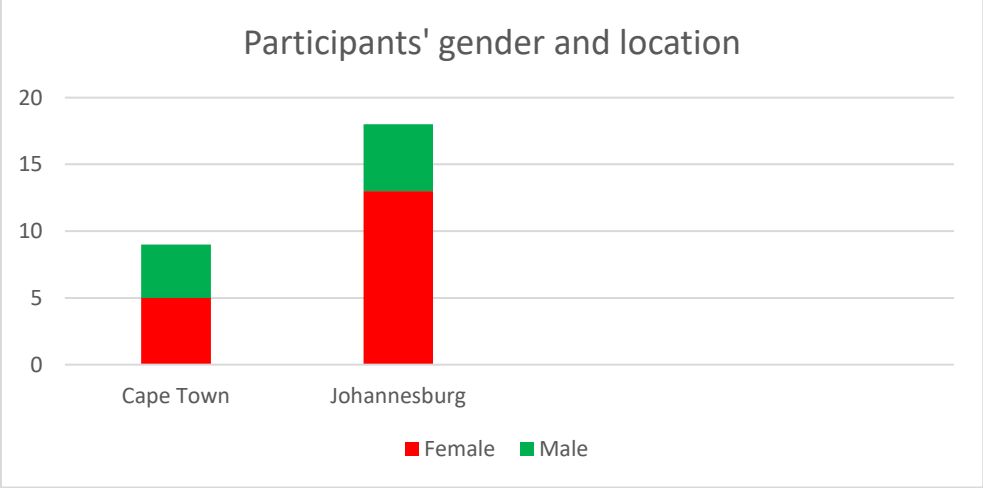
I visited Kwa-Langa on two occasions, where Mr Molo introduced me to the participants. I explained to each participant that I was doing research on lobolo and I would like to spend time with them so that they could share their experiences with me. I took down the names and telephone numbers as well as details of their availability.

The Johannesburg recruitment and interview schedules were structured. All participants who had expressed an interest were called, and a date for the interview was set over the phone and confirmed via email. I provided the participants with dates for when I would be in Johannesburg. There could be several reasons why the Johannesburg interviews took place according to the agreed schedule. The first could be related to logistics. Being based in Cape Town, I had to schedule the Johannesburg interviews close to each other, resulting in three trips to Johannesburg. The second reason could be related to the fact that a majority of participants in Johannesburg were in full-time employment, which meant that they would have to schedule time away from work to participate in the study. None of the Cape Town participants was in full-time employment. Three ran

businesses from their homes, two were taxi owners, and four were unemployed. This may have had an impact on how the participants responded to scheduled appointments.

4.3.1 Participants. Figure one below shows the distribution of participants by area and by gender. In total 32 participants were recruited and scheduled to participate. However, only 27 participants –18 from Johannesburg and 9 from Cape Town – were interviewed (Appendix F). In total there were 18 females, 13 from Johannesburg and 5 from Cape Town, and 9 males, 5 from Johannesburg and 4 from Cape Town. Of the 5 who cancelled, one male from Johannesburg had to withdraw from the study due to work commitments. Another, a male from Cape Town, fell ill and could no longer participate. One male from Cape Town did not return from the Eastern Cape after the December holidays. A couple from Cape Town suddenly relocated without notice.

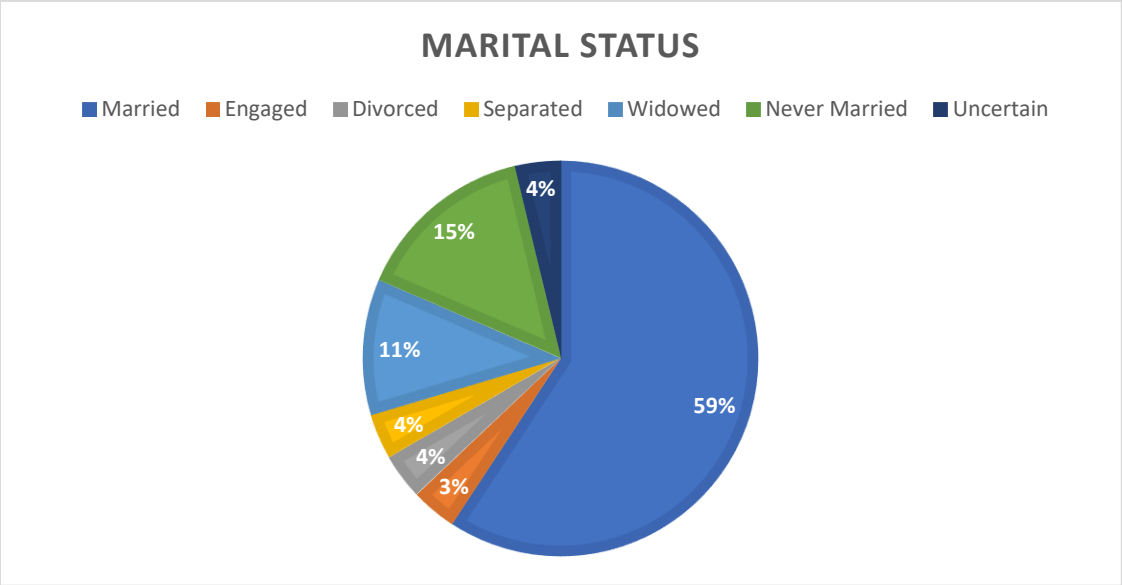
Figure 1: Participants Gender and Location



4.3.2 Marital status. 16 participants reported that they were married. This included participants who had not legally registered their union but considered themselves to be married

because of having paid lobolo. One participant mentioned said he considered the lobolo to be like an engagement. One participant reported being divorced, one separated, 3 were widowed, and 4 had never married.

Figure 2: Marital Status



4.4 Data collection: Narrative interviewing

I conducted 27 face-to-face narrative interviews, 9 in Cape Town, and 18 in Johannesburg (schedule see Appendix G). Narrative interviews are unstructured interviews that encourage storytelling through conversation, often generating detailed accounts about an experience rather than brief answers to structured questions (Josselson, 2013; Riessman, 2008). In this study, I was interested in exploring how people use narratives to make sense of their gendered identities or attach meaning to their experiences of participating in lobolo.

All the Cape Town participants were interviewed in their homes. Most Johannesburg participants were interviewed at their offices or at a restaurant, and only two participants were interviewed at home. The interviews ranged between 45 minutes and 150 minutes. Each participant was interviewed once, and the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and translated. The interviews were conducted in English, Sepedi, Sesotho, isiXhosa, and isiZulu.

4.4.1 The narrative interview. Narrative interviewing does not follow a fixed set of techniques. It is rather an approach to interviewing that allows researcher and participant to "forge dialogical relationships and greater communicative equality" (Riesman, 2008, p. 26). In this way, narrative interviewing can be seen to be in line with the feminist research principles that are aimed at destabilising the hierarchical relationship between participant and researcher. Riesman (2008) notes that narratives interviews enable researchers and participants to be comfortable, resulting in participants offering less structured accounts of their experiences, often in a narrative form (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013). I used narrative interviews because I wanted participants to offer rich information about their experiences. In other words, rather than asking participants to share their views or knowledge on lobolo, I asked participants to share narratives of their experience of participating in lobolo. In this way, I was able to explore how participants spoke about the different parties in the lobolo process as well as how the relationships between these parties were organised. I facilitated the construction of the narratives by asking questions such as these:

- Can you tell me about the decision for you and your partner to participate in the custom of lobolo?

- Can you tell me about the events leading to the lobolo negotiations?
- Can you remember who was so involved in the process and what was their role in the process?
- What role did you play during this process?
- Can you tell me about the events following the day of lobolo?

Taylor and Littleton define narrative as "a construction, in talk, of sequence or consequence" (2006, p. 95). This means data collected in narrative form is presented as events arranged in linear temporal order, "communicated minimally through words such as "and then" or through references to time (Mavuso, Chiweshe & McLeod, 2019, p. 17). The sequential ordering in dialogue is not simply a representation of events but is an active "re-present[ing] experience, reconstructing it as well as expressing it" (Squire, 2013, p. 42) as a way of meaning-making (Altman, 2008). Busia (1990) notes "the stories we tell have a dual purpose of explaining an otherwise incomprehensible world and creating and sustaining the world in our likeness" (p. 93). In this way, the narratives we tell are part of identity formation (Bruner, 2001; Freeman, 2015).

Narratives constructed for the research interview have been criticised for being artificial narratives moulded by the research question (De Fina, 2009). Narrative inquiry recognises the artificiality of narratives in research. That is to say, narrative research recognises that narratives constructed for research purposes are just as artificial as data collected through most other qualitative methodologies. However, narrative inquiry does not consider this to be a limitation, but rather a key component of the construction of narrative.

According to Ochs and Capps (1996, p. 21), “even the most silent of listeners is an author of an emergent narrative”. Narrative interviewing can be seen as a mode of resistance to existing structures of power. Narrative interviewing offers an opportunity for new ways of articulation that favour a less detached interaction between the researcher and the research participant (Chadwick, 2017a; Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 2006; Mavuso, Chiweshe & Macleod, 2019). Chadwick, (2017a) states that “narrative interviews are generally co-constructed, with the interviewer ideally travelling along with the narrator and giving freedom to the storyteller to structure the shape of their narrative” (p. 6). Squire (2013) reflects on this when she discusses that the narratives told by her black female participants in South Africa about their experiences of living with HIV. She notes that as a white woman from an “overdeveloped world”, her subject position, but also the imagined audiences such as the consumers of the research, shaped the narratives shared by her participants (Squire, 2013, p. 44). However, participants may use the interview space to speak to the broader discourse surrounding a topic (Squire, 2013). In this study that would be, for example, speaking for or against the discourse of lobolo as a money-making scheme and interrogating how the centrality of the financial component masks the complexities of the practice as a gendered and gendering practice.

4.5 Narrative discursive analysis

It is not uncommon for individuals to respond to structured questions with lengthy responses that may appear to have nothing to do with the research questions. It is the work of the researcher to honour the narrative shared, and to resist imposing coherency on the told story (Josselson, 2004). Georgakopoulou (2006) describes two different waves of narrative analysis. The first wave of narrative analysis, the most common being Labovian analysis. Interested in the need to collect

reliable sociolinguistic data, is systematic and structured and focuses on the structural properties of narrative (see Labov, 1997). The Labovian approach which primarily focused on the analysis of naturally occurring data (conversation) was also used in narrative analysis. De Fina (2009) states that the Labovian analysis approach can be considered a starting point when thinking about how to analyse narrative. This approach has been criticised for placing too much emphasis on the structure of the narrative, while paying less attention to the context in which the narrative is constructed and thus privileging narratives that have included a temporal ordering (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008, 2011; Patterson, 2008). The Labovian approach did not allow for personal accounts of experience that tend to be told in chronological order.

The second wave of narrative analysis consists of approaches that are more orientated towards context and use more discursive approaches focused on the socio-political action of narratives instead of only concentrating on the temporal ordering of a plot narrative (Lindeggar, 2006; Phoenix, 2014; Riessman, 2012). Examples of discursive approaches to analysis are Squire's (2013) experience-centred and culturally orientated approach, and Mishler's (2006) focus on identity development through narrative as well as narrative discursive analysis. Taylor and Littleton (2006, p. 25) propose that the focus of analysis should be on structure and the content of the narrative as well as on the "unfolding of life stories" through references to the past and the future. In narrative discursive analysis, narratives are understood to be constructed through the reliance on larger societal discourses or meta-narratives but may at the same time be used to reproduce these discourses (Mavuso, Chiweshe & MacLeod, 2019; Taylor, 2005b). In other words, people draw on gendered discourses to make meaning of their experiences through their narratives, and they may reproduce these discourses in and through their narratives.

Narrative discursive analysis is distinguishable from other forms of narrative analysis in the sense that it offers the opportunity for micro and macro analytic work at the same time (Mavuso, Chiweshe & Macleod, 2019). Georgakopoulou (2006) usefully refers to big and small stories. Big stories are narratives that are represented in (auto)biographical narratives (Phoenix, 2014). Small stories are understood as narratives in action, such as those we tell in everyday interaction, or even within the context of a research interview (Stokoe & Edwards, 2006). The analysis of small stories enables us to pay attention to the performative work done in narrative (Phoenix, 2014). By macro analysis, I refer to focusing on the content of the narrative. The micro-narratives or what may be referred to as narratives of experience or personal narratives are embedded in or reference macro narratives (Squire, 2013; Taylor, 2006). Taylor and Littleton's (2006) narrative-discursive approach offers a broader exploration of how people use discourse to position themselves as well as others. They propose that "narrative discursive analysis can show the identity work through which these available meanings are taken up or resisted and (re)negotiated" in talk (Taylor & Littleton, 2006, p. 23).

Narrative discursive analysis also recognises that the complexities and contradictions in told stories mirror the complexities and contradictions of lived lives. Therefore, rather than seeking accurate accounts of events, narrative discursive analysis allows me to explore the meanings attached to the narrated experiences. In this way, narrative discursive analysis disrupts the ideas of objectivity and validity that are embedded within traditional research methods. Narrative discursive analysis is, as Morison (2011) asserts, an approach that allows us to focus on "what people do with their talk" (p. 98), in other words, it is to do with how people use narrative to make meaning of experience, use narratives to take up or resist, and to negotiate dominant discourses

within larger narratives (Taylor & Littleton, 2006). Narrative discursive analysis allows me to explore how the narrators position themselves (Morison, 2011), by taking up or rejecting particular discourses of masculinities and femininities within the practice of lobolo, as well as how narrative strategies are used by men and women to speak about power in and through lobolo.

Chapter 5: The Gender Theatricals of Lobolo

5.1 Introduction

Theatres can be described as public places for "viewing dramatic plays or other spectacles" or "an action presented through role-playing to an audience" (Sirayi, 2003, p. 46). Theatrical performances are dependent on shared knowledge of experiences between performers and audience. Sirayi (2003) notes that this notion of theatre, which emphasises place and the boundaries between performer and audience, is more in line with a European notion of theatre or performance. He notes that, while these are dominant understanding of theatre, various scholars have challenged this notion and have contributed to broadening the understanding of theatre to include performances and expressions that are not necessarily, limited to "theatres", bound by shared meanings between performer and audiences, or even the representation of a tangible world. Singer's conceptualisation of theatre as "cultural performance" includes cultural rituals, poetry, dance and oral narratives, and he proposes an African theatre which is a "socio-cultural interaction between performer and audience" (p. 47).

In this chapter, I employ this understanding of theatre to discuss the different stages of lobolo as a gendered performance. I outline the various ways in which wedding ceremonies are unmistakeably a dramatization of traditional, cultural and/or religious symbolism (Lewis, 2018; Monger, 2004), and propose that regarding the lobolo processes as theatrical performances allows us to see how lobolo functions as a platform for the negotiation and enactment of gender. I focus on how participants employ gendered discourses in their description of the different roles that women and men play in the process.

The narratives shared by participants in this study illustrate that lobolo is about more than just the offering of wealth by a groom to his intended in-laws towards formalising a relationship. While this component may be considered the main act in the lobolo process, it is only a part of the larger process.

As discussed in the previous chapters, literature on lobolo tends to focus on the monetary aspect of lobolo, thereby reinforcing the narrative of sale and purchase and the impact lobolo has on women (see Ansell, 2001). While this focus on the transference of wealth has provided a platform for exploring the marginalisation of women within the practice of lobolo, this has limited the discussion on lobolo to simply a discussion of oppression and objectification of women through the practice. This may be considered consistent with feminist research which tends to highlight the plight of women in Africa, particular within heterosexual conjugal relationships (Chiweshe, 2018; Cornwall, 2005). The over-simplification of the custom into a monetary transaction hinders the possibility for thinking through how women (and men) negotiate their gendered positions, power or agency through the practice.

In this chapter, I expand the narrative of lobolo practices beyond the exchange of wealth and argue instead that lobolo is a multi-staged and complex set of processes that enables men and women to enact as well as resist particular gender roles. While the lobolo process varies across geographic locations, cultural groups and families (Ansell, 2001; Khomari, Tebele & Nel, 2012; Parker, 2015), I consider the similarities in the overall process which I refer to as the "lobolo script". The lobolo script not only outlines how the story plays out, but also stipulates the role each actor plays, and what the limits of their performances are. I refer to these scripts, roles and parameters of

performance as the theatricals of lobolo. Building on the idea of theatre, I outline the different phases of lobolo as different stages of a theatrical performance. I use the headings: 1) Setting the scene; 2) The rehearsal; 3) The main act, and 4) Post credit to indicate the function of the different stages in the overall process.

5.2 Setting the scene

In this section, I focus on the events that generally precede the day of the lobolo payment. While there is not a great deal of research that focuses on these events, the narratives shared by the participants in this study suggest a coherent pattern that repeats. The interactions between the different parties, in the initial stages, set the precedent for the subsequent negotiation and enactment of gendered roles and the exercises of power.

5.2.1 Deciding to get married. The transition of a romantic relationship, from a causal connection to a committed one, is often marked by symbolically elaborate gestures such as the marriage proposal (Vannini, 2004). Marriage proposals are not only romantic gestures but also illustrate how autonomy and agency play out in heterosexual relationships. Even though both parties in a relationship may desire marriage, the power to make that shift in the relationship is generally seen to lie with the man (Sassler & Miller, 2011). A marriage proposal marked by the offering of an engagement ring is one of the most recognisable expressions of a man's desire to move the relationship from the casual stage to a more committed stage (Lamont, 2014). In this section, I consider how the men and women I interviewed narrated the transition in their own romantic relations, through the payment of lobolo.

For most of the participants going through lobolo was mandatory. The examples below focus on the discussions would-be husbands and wives had as part of the planning for the lobolo. Koketso (32), a married female from Johannesburg, mentioned that the conversations she had with her prospective partner were centred around the finances for the lobolo:

Our talks were mainly about what he could afford and what I should suggest to my family.

While the planning for lobolo involves both men and women, it seems as though there is, in Koketso's version, an understanding of the roles that the different parties are expected to play. While couples may both be involved in the planning for the lobolo process, it is generally accepted that the financial responsibility for lobolo falls on the man. The expectation that men should provide lobolo is consistent with the male provider discourse, and so lobolo is described as a demonstration of a man's ability to financially provide for his family (Casale & Posel, 2010; Mhongo & Budlender, 2013; Posel, Rudwick & Casale, 2011). Even though times are changing, and women are more likely to work outside the home, the male provider discourse remains dominant in lobolo discussions (Jaga, Arabandi, Bagraim & Mdlongwa, 2018).

In addition to the lobolo being a demonstration of a man's financial stability, the expectation that men should provide the lobolo can also be seen as a continuation of the autonomy that is afforded to men in determining how and when the relationship progresses (Lamont, 2014). Through lobolo, men are continually active participants, while women are in the margins either waiting to be asked or as supporting characters working in the background mediating the lobolo process.

An example of this mediation comes from the interview withs Koketso, who stated that following the discussion with her partner, she made a recommendation to her family about how much they could request for lobolo. Rudwick and Posel (2014) found that while some women regarded having a large amount paid for their lobolo as an honour, others shared that it is important to advise their families not to request a large sum as this might discourage their partners from getting married. While the roles that women play may seem to be in the periphery, it is pivotal to ensuring the success of the lobolo process. Some of the women also shared that they recognised that it was important to act as a mediator between their future husbands and their families, otherwise their families would use lobolo as an opportunity to exploit their future husbands. Mandla (36), an engaged male from Johannesburg, expressed this frustration with regards to fear of being exploited during participation in lobolo:

> *Yeah! She mentioned it. She said straight "I can't disrespect my parents" and again it is more like in a relationship the emphasis is on "my parents, my parents, my parents", there is no "me, me, me". It's "my, my, my; me, me, me" is never there.*

The above quote is Mandla's response to a question I asked about whether he and his partner believed lobolo was an optional or a mandatory process. From the extract, it appeared as though Mandla did not want to participate in lobolo. This is clear from his attempts to distance himself from the decision, mentioning the fact that his partner was the one who decided that they should include lobolo as a sign of respect for her parents. Some authors note that In this way, l

Therefore, while Mandla used the word parents, he was most likely only referring to the father.

Mandla's repetitive use of the words "my parents" and "my", which is used in the narrative to show emphasis (Bamberg, De Fina & Schiffrin, 2007), suggests that his frustration with lobolo is related to the centrality of the parents. He further expresses this frustration by referring to the absence of "me" in his partner's argument for lobolo. By referring to the absence of "me" in his partner's argument in favour of lobolo, Mandla suggests that if the lobolo conversations were more about his partner, rather than her parents, he might be more willing to participate. Mandla illustrates this below by suggesting that he only agreed to participate in lobolo because it was important to his partner.

> *... yeah, I didn't want it, but the person I wanted to be with, the person that I love was for it. But for me in order to get her, if I don't pay lobola and then I won't be able to be with her. Then I felt that I was compelled, it was more of I was being pushed to do this because in the end then if I don't do it, we will separate in the end.*

In the above quotation, Mandla suggests that he was compelled by love itself to participate in the lobolo custom, and not by his partner. This is also evidenced by his repetitive use of "I" and the erasure of his partner in this narration can be read as an attempt to show that he was an active participant in the decision making, which is contrary to his earlier assertion where it seemed like his partner was in charge of the decision making. The switch in Mandla's narrative illustrates what Kiguwa (2006) notes as the multiple possible meanings of experience in narrative, even in the same narrative. The multiple meanings Mandla attaches to the same experience allows him to construct and negotiate his gendered position within the narrative and in the narrations, as well as resolve some of the contradictory positions he assumed in the narrative.

In his explanation for why he decided to go ahead with the lobolo Mandla does not draw on the discourses of cultural or moral legitimacy to assert himself as a real man, that is a man who honours traditions and honours his partner (Mwamanda, 2016). Instead, Mandla constructs lobolo to be an act of love. While love is often associated with femininity as it often understood to be about weakness and delusions (Fletcher & Kerr, 2010; Singh, 2013), Mandla uses this discourse of love to position himself in a more favourable masculine position. It seems as though Mandla uses this second extract to reposition himself as the dominant partner. He does so by positioning himself as someone who chose to participate in lobolo as a means to an end, in other words "in order to get her". This strategy can also be linked to heteronormative constructions of masculinity, where men pursue and women are the pursued (Malinga & Ratele, 2012). In this way, Mandla is able to move away from his initial position as someone who had little power in negotiating the lobolo.

It appears from these extracts that Mandla's rejection of lobolo is not linked to his perception of its relevance, but rather to how he feels himself to be positioned through the process. Perhaps the frustration for Mandla is that lobolo is a threat to his masculinity, where he is not acting out of free will but rather is made to participate in a process that subjects him to a submissive position - not only in relation to his partner's parents but also in relation to his partner. By decentralising his partner's parents from the process, as well as presenting lobolo as an act of generosity, Mandla is able to maintain the gendered norms in which he (the man) acts out of his own free will. For Mandla to do this, he positions his partner as someone "deserving" of marriage. The absence of his partner in the second extract is perhaps an attempt to re-present her in a more positive light, as a way to mitigate against the view of women who are seen as transgressing their gendered roles by being overly assertive or independent (Chisale, 2017; Lamont, 2014).

These examples from Koketso and Mandla, regarding the decision to participate in lobolo, illustrate that lobolo is not only a "traditional process between extended, families but also as a more individualized, dyadic process between a would-be husband and wife" (Yarbrough, 2018, p. 3). The process is a negotiated and gendered process right from its initial stages. While for some people lobolo is considered as a necessary component of getting married, for others, particularly for some men, lobolo has become a taxing and possibly exploitative practice (Casale & Posel, 2010). James (2017) argues that, even with the perceived working opportunities for black men, lobolo and the accompanying demands from families continue to place high demands on men.

5.2.2 The lobolo letter. The delivery of the letter is a traditional method of informing prospective in-laws of one's intention to get married (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Radebe, 2016). Due to the absence of literature that focuses on these initial stages of the lobolo process, it is difficult to trace the origins of the lobolo letter. The writing and delivering of a physical letter, in contemporary practices of lobolo, may be considered a peculiar practice given that there are other forms of communication such as emails and telephone calls. Some authors note that today this letter serves as more than a request for the two families to meet to discuss the union between two families; the letter, together with the minutes of the negotiations and agreement, are all noted and are sometimes kept long after the wedding celebrations and may be used as evidence in court if there is a dispute regarding the validity of customary marriage (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Radebe, 2016).

In this section, I consider the lobolo letter to be the first step in formalising the relationship by involving family members in the process. Mbali (29), a single female from Johannesburg, describes how for her the letter served as a form of marriage proposal.

> *I think he told me about his intentions to marry me after the letter had been drafted. So, they were going to send one of his brothers to go and hand-deliver or rather put it in the post box at my grandmother's house and that's what they did.*

What is evident from Mbali's narrative is that the sending of the letter is gendered in similar ways to the rest of the lobolo practice. Mbali suggests that there is a script to the delivery of lobolo letter. For example, that the lobolo letter needs to be delivered and received by a specific family member. The lobolo letter also needs to be delivered in a particular way. Mbali mentions that, in her case, the letter was delivered to her grandmother's post box. The delivery of the letter has to be done by a representative of the groom's family and in most cases, this would be a male relative (Dlamini, 1983). The letter will also typically be received by a male representative of the family, on behalf of the bride's father. In Mbali's case because she was raised by her grandmother in the absence of her father or other male representatives as is common in South Africa (Ratele & Nduna)

The lobolo is addressed to the father of the bride because children are considered to belong to their father (Nhlapo, 2019; Parker, 2015). Children's paternal lineage is established through the payment of lobolo (Jeffreys, 1951) or the payment of inhlawulo which has come to be commonly understood as damages (see Langa, 2010; Makusha & Richter, 2016; Nduna, 2014). If the father is not married to the mother or does not offer inhlawulo, children belong to their maternal side of the family. I discuss this further in Chapter 7 but mention it here in relation to Mbali's narrative.

Mbali a 29-year-old woman from Johannesburg mentioned that she was raised by her grandmother and at the time of the interview didn't have a relationship with her parents. By delivering the letter to her grandmother, the sender of the letter acknowledged that the lobolo would be received by her grandmother.

Another participant, Mam' Dolly (56), a married woman from Johannesburg, also spoke about the delivering of the lobolo letter as the initiation of the lobolo process.

> *Ahh Refiloe (laughter). There was no long conversations and proposals like you do today. I just got a message from home that a letter was delivered.*

I had asked Mam' Dolly about the conversations she and her husband had had when they decided to get married. She corrected me, saying that there were no marriage proposals in the sense that I had meant. She suggested marriages that are initiated with long conversations and proposals are a modern phenomenon that she did not experience. The long conversations and proposals Mam' Dolly was referring to are part of the western idea of marriage proposals that speak to discourses of romantic love which is between two people (Vannini, 2004). She mentioned that she was not aware the lobolo letter would be delivered, acknowledging her understanding of marriage as something that extends beyond the conjugal couple.

Mam' Dolly also said that, even though she was living with her then-boyfriend, she found out from her family rather than from him about his intention to get married. The sending of the letter, and thereby initiating the lobolo process, without the inclusion of the bride is consistent with the trajectory of traditional heterosexual relationships where men determine how and when

relationships move from one stage to the next (Malinga & Ratele, 2012; Mgwaba & Maharaj, 2018; Sassler & Miller, 2011).

The fact that it didn't appear untoward to Mam' Dolly that her partner would initiate the lobolo process without talking to her first shows women's complicity with the patriarchal construction of women as minors. However, this position of women as minors should not be read as a unique attribute of lobolo. In fact, this construction of women as passive participants in the lobolo process concurs with Lukes' (2005) observations of heterosexual relationships. Lukes (2005) states that power in intimate or familial relationships is exercised through the ability to make decisions. Within heterosexual relationships, men tend to make decisions regarding the trajectory of the relationships through a marriage proposal or, in this case, the sending of a letter.

The exclusion of the bride from the process implies that lobolo is a matter between the groom and the bride's family. Traditionally, lobolo was offered by a man's family on behalf of their son, since the groom would not have yet accumulated any wealth of his own (Dlamini, 1983; Groes-Green, 2009; Walker, 1992). This traditional construction of lobolo is discussed by Eunice (38), a married female from Johannesburg. Eunice describes the theatricals involved in the sending of the lobolo letter as a matter between the families. She states that it is not only the bride that is excluded from this process but the groom as well:

> *Ka sePedi we send a letter before the lobolo starts. A letter was sent by his family to mine. It was said "we will come on a certain date" not "we are requesting to come". Ja, plus people from the villages, if they say they are coming on a certain date you don't want to say, "ah not another day", they are very relaxed in those ways because anyways there isn't much to do, what will stop things from happening on that day you know so just do it.*

Eunice describes her lobolo experience as conforming to the traditional practice of lobolo, in the sense that the lobolo process was a matter handled by families. Eunice's narration differs from that of Mbali and Mam' Dolly in that her partner is not mentioned in this narration about the lobolo letter. It is more apparent here how the lobolo letter becomes the first interaction between the families. Even though some participants shared that their families were acquainted with their partner's family, the sending and receiving of the lobolo letter marked the first of the formal interactions between the two families.

What is demonstrated by the above example is how the lobolo letter also serves as a platform for the families to negotiate power. In describing the contents of the letter, Eunice states that the letter from the groom's family to the bride's family stipulated when they would come to begin the lobolo negotiations. She goes on to add that this date in the letter is often not contested. While this can be seen as an exercise of power by the groom's family over the bride's family, it appears that this is not recognised as such. Eunice explains that there would be no reason for contesting the date because "people from the villages… are very relaxed… and there isn't much happening". In this way, Eunice expresses an apolitical view of the lobolo theatricals. The homogenous description of "people from the village" is a rhetorical tool to suggest that the lobolo processes, starting with the sending and receiving of the letter, are engagements between equal parties. What can be inferred from this example and statements made in the other participants' narratives, is that lobolo extends the relationship between a man and woman to that of a relationship between families. Therefore, discussions on lobolo move beyond the gender and power dynamics between men and women, and towards thinking about how power operates between families. While Eunice implied that the interactions between the families is one of equals, other participants suggested that power

oscillates between the families throughout the lobolo process, beginning with the sending and receiving of the lobolo letter.

In the rest of this chapter, I will show how the power dynamics between individuals and families are frequently fluid and changing, at different stages of the lobolo. Building on the idea of theatre, I discuss the phases of lobolo in the rest of this chapter as different stages of the lobolo theatricals. In the next section which I have titled *The rehearsal,* I discuss the events following the sending and receiving of the lobolo letter. I focus on the gendered power dynamics as they play out within families. I consider these intra-family negotiations to be a type of rehearsal for the inter-family lobolo negotiations which I explore further in the section, titled *The main act*.

5.3 The rehearsal

Lobolo as a gendered practice has received much attention, and in particular, attention has been given to the ways in which lobolo as a matrimonial practice reproduces asymmetrical relationships, most obviously between men and women, but also between and amongst family members (Moore & Himonga, 2017; Yarbrough, 2018). However, not much has been said about how lobolo is used as a custom through which gender is negotiated rather than replicated. In the next section, I discuss how lobolo may serve as a platform for men and women to negotiate, challenge and creatively enact gender identities. In this section, I discuss the next stage of the lobolo which I refer to as *The rehearsal*. The rehearsal refers to the intra-family negotiations towards the planning of the lobolo negotiations.

Intra-family negotiations in which would-be brides and grooms engage with their respective families, as well as the interactions and negotiations between and amongst other family members regarding the lobolo procedures, set precedence for the inter-family lobolo negotiations. I consider this stage to be a pivotal point in the lobolo process, in that the intra-family negotiations allow the bride and groom as well as other families to come to an internal agreement before the inter-family negotiations. I focus specifically on the interaction between the bride/groom and her/his family, in preparation for the lobolo proceedings, and show how this sets a precedence for the lobolo negotiation. This process, I argue, acts as a form of rehearsal for the day of the lobolo negotiations.

5.3.1 Understanding the characters. Some scholars on lobolo have noted that lobolo is predominantly a masculine practice (see Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Yarbrough, 2018), except in a few societies where women are in charge of the lobolo process such as the Tsonga and Venda people[5]. Women often need to be invited into these spaces, and when they are invited, they are welcomed only as long as they fulfil particular roles. Mupotsa (2008) describes these roles in her reflections on her own lobolo, during which her aunts were responsible for ensuring that she presents well on the day. There are many roles that women may be required or permitted to fulfil throughout the lobolo process. Below, Eunice (38), a female participant from Johannesburg, speaks about the role of a bride in the lobolo process:

[5] I would like to note that the lack of literature that speaks to women as lobolo delegates confirms the androcentric nature of the lobolo narrative.

> *You know as a makoti, if you start saying "no, I want this to be on this day" it's going to come across as being arrogant. No. They will tell you "no, this is how things are done". These things depend on who should be there, who is available on this date. And you just go with it.*

Eunice speaks here about the roles that individuals play in the lobolo theatricals. Although the bride is at the centre of the lobolo, she has limited autonomy in how the lobolo proceeds. This may be due to the juniorisation of unmarried women, which is common in most patriarchal societies (Chiweshe, 2016). Eunice states that brides should not assert themselves too much in the decision making, as is consistent with notions of humility and docility or ukuhlonipha (to have respect) which are considered to be good feminine traits (Atanga, 2013; Bhana, 2016; Rudwick & Posel, 2015).

Discourses of respect and respectability are crucial to the different roles played by people during the process. Even though Eunice does not explicitly mention who the "they" are it can be assumed that these are the elder members of the family, which in most cases are the elderly female relatives who take on the responsibility for socialising younger females into assuming acceptable gender roles (Oyěwùmí, 2005a). Women are expected by society to embody particular feminine ideals such as passivity and docility, men to demonstrate assertiveness (Moloko-Phiri, Mulaudzi & Heyns, 2016). Even though the participants acknowledged these expectations, they also mentioned that it was sometimes necessary to deviate from these expectations in order to ensure that their families approach the lobolo negotiations in a way that ensures that the lobolo negotiations take place with minimum conflict.

The second extract from Eunice's narrative refers to the fact that the intra-family negotiations take place with regards to what one is permitted to do, but also about the manner in which these things ought to be done. For example, other considerations that need to be made within the family relate to when and how the lobolo negotiations will take place, as well as who gets to participate in the lobolo process.

Kuper (2016) noted that lobolo is a fairly regulated process in terms of who receives the lobolo, as well as who is allowed in the negotiation space. Across the narratives, the issue of who gets to participate in the lobolo was described as a serious point of contestation within families. Because lobolo procedures are often carried out by male relatives, participants shared that some of their family members would insist on being part of the lobolo delegation even though they didn't have a close relationship with either the bride or the groom. It is evident from Eunice's extract that the bride is not the one who makes decisions regarding who is part of the process, as Eunice states that "they will tell you… this is how it is done". Eunice does not explain who the "they" are she is referring to, but it can be assumed that it refers to those who have been allowed to enter what Kuper (2016, p. 274) calls the lobolo "circuit", that is the lobolo decision making space. Sechaba (32), a married man from Cape Town, speaks about the parameters of the lobolo circuit:

> *And you know how it is in the lobola negotiations? If you have never been married, you are not involved in the negotiations.*

Sechaba mentions the state of having been married as a defining category for who should be allowed to be part of the lobolo circuit by suggesting that only married people (men) are legitimate participants in the lobolo negotiations. In this case, it is evident how lobolo is used as an apparatus

for hierarchical positioning of masculinities and femininities within the practice of lobolo. Sechaba implies that these hierarchies are determined by marriage status. In some of the narratives, the hierarchies were determined by other factors such as age, gender and socio-economic status. In yet other narratives, like the example from Koketso, the inclusion of some people in the lobolo process was determined by their affiliation with the bride and groom.

> *Refiloe: Who chose the lobolo delegates?*
>
> *Koketso: I chose the delegates. My mother had her options, but she asked me. So, I suggested my favourite uncle, and my spiritual parents and another uncle, who could not make it but sent his son to represent him. These are people who raised me, my mother is a single parent.*

Koketso expressed that she had more autonomy in selecting her lobolo delegates, therefore instead of having only her uncles she used the lobolo process to honour family members she believed had contributed to her upbringing. In choosing her lobolo delegation, Koketso shows that the lobolo circuit is permeable, and thus that the roles people may play in the process are negotiable. While the participants spoke about gendered roles as fixed, it was evident in the narratives that men and women would "transgress" the gendered roles within the process. In the next section sections, I will discuss how men and women transgress the roles within the intra family negotiations.

5.3.2 Getting into character. What is evident from the above examples is that the inter-familial rehearsals are connected to the rest of the lobolo theatricals. In the rehearsal, the bride and groom, as well as other parties, may try to challenge some roles in an effort to have their say about

how the lobolo negotiations will unfold. Jabulani (36), a male from Cape Town, speaks to the role of brides in the preparation for lobolo:

> *A woman will tell her mother everything that is about to happen. She does this so that her mother can prepare her father for the arrival of the visitors. She [the mother] will soften him up the way she knows how, so that he is not too harsh when the visitors come. A girl will not call her father about such matters.*

Jabulani describes how a woman might influence the lobolo processes without crossing the boundaries to which Eunice alluded. He explains that a woman will inform her father about the visitors, that is the lobolo delegates, through her mother. Two points are worth highlighting here. The first is that intra-familial negotiations are mediated by the relationships that the parties have with one another. For example, according to Jabulani, a woman cannot talk to her father about lobolo, but she can talk to her mother. In turn, the mother will speak to the father. Here we see how the mother is invited into the space to act as a mediator between father and daughter. The use of the words "prepares" and "soften" in this extract speaks to the construction of men (fathers in particular) as unapproachable and therefore needing to be prepared to receive the visitors. Lesejane (2006) warns against this negative construction of fatherhood, arguing that black fathers today are treated with suspicion rather than recognised as protectors and guardians for their children. While Lesejane's (2006) caution allows us to challenge the stereotypical construction of black men as dangerous, his construction of men as protectors still feeds into the discourse of men as violent and as a result, a view of fathers as unapproachable.

Jabulani describes a hierarchical intra-familial interaction, in which the bride speaks to her mother and the mother speaks to the father. He describes the intra-family interactions and negotiations as

occurring within the already established roles. For example, such roles are negotiated between mothers and daughters, and between husbands and wives. The hierarchies are also made evident by the nouns Jabulani employs in describing the various interactions within a family, for example, he uses the noun “woman” to refer to the bride in her interaction with her mother, suggesting an interaction between adults. Jabulani later switches from using the noun “woman” to using the noun “girl” when referring to the interaction with the father. This is a patriarchal construction of women as minors under the guardianship of their father and other male relatives, a control which is transferred to the husband and his family through marriage (Shope, 2006). This positioning of the bride is also extended to other females, including the mother of the bride who is assumed to be under the guardianship of her husband. Therefore women, in such understandings of family, cannot be custodians of their children (Kuper, 2016). This is further exemplified by the understanding that lobolo, although offered to the bride’s family, is technically offered to the father of the bride.

While women are often said to have only a minor role to play in the lobolo process, the example from Jabulani illustrates that women play a pivotal role in the background, by ensuring that when the two families meet the lobolo negotiations run smoothly. Rudwick and Posel (2015) note that the literature on lobolo has not explored the ways in which women maintain the custom and claim agency through lobolo. The dominant narrative on lobolo is embedded within the binary construction of male oppressors and female victims and thus does not allow much room to explore alternative gendered dynamics within and through lobolo such as how masculinities are negotiated through the lobolo

. It is evident from Jabulani's example, as well as that of others in this study, that while women may take on more active roles in the lobolo process, these roles still remain within the acceptable parameters of what may be considered feminine behaviour.

Across the different narratives, it was suggested how brides may approach the issue of lobolo with their families without appearing too assertive in the process. Below are some of the tactics used by women to influence how much is requested for the lobolo. Lethabo (37), a married female from Johannesburg, reflects on this awareness of the gendered parameters in the lobolo process:

> *For me it was a no-go area to say to my family "okay charge him this much" and I just told them that he comes from a humble family, they don't have a lot of money, you see. As to how much they charged him, I didn't really have a hand.*

Lethabo shared that it is not the place of a bride to influence how her family determines the amount that will be requested for lobolo from the groom. Despite this, Lethabo states that she nevertheless attempted to intervene by mentioning to her family that her husband-to-be is not from a wealthy family. By mentioning her in-laws and not her husband when talking about the lobolo payment, Lethabo refers to the traditional practice of lobolo in which the lobolo was not the groom's responsibility but the family's responsibility (Dlamini, 1983). The constriction of lobolo as family responsibility allows Lethabo to distance her partner from being perceived as a man who cannot afford lobolo, and in so doing she positions her husband as a man who will be able to provide for his family.

It is evident in the example above that Lethabo, while moving towards crossing the borders of her designated female role, does so with caution, acknowledging that it was not her part to influence

the decision that her family comes to with regards to how much would be requested for lobolo. This difficulty of having to manage one's role as bride and daughter was also mentioned by other participants. Jabulile (44), a divorced female from Johannesburg, described this management of roles as like being caught in the middle. Below she describes what makes it difficult for women to act as mediators between their families and their partners:

> *You get caught in the middle because you want to be appreciated like that. You want to also honour who you are and understand where your family is coming from for setting whatever price they have set. You want to allow that. You want to respect that and want to appreciate that, but you also think ok, but then it's actually my future husband. So, you really get caught in the middle, because this is a person you are trying to start a life with.*

Jabulile explains that during the lobolo process brides understand that the amount given for lobolo is symbolic of their worth. They are also confronted with the fact that this amount will be paid by their future husbands and as such has implications for their future. Jabulile states that her role as a mediator is inhibited by her position as a daughter, and her imminent position as a wife. The distress experienced by Jabulile is linked to the transition from one stage to the next, which can be marked by discomfort. Rudwick and Posel (2015) report that, for women, the initiation of the lobolo marks the beginning of their new lives. While they still want to hold on to their lives before marriage, they recognise the new role that they are about to enter into as one of a better status (Rudwick & Posel, 2015). For Jabulile, similar confusion is expressed by her listing of the number of things she wants to do (all related to her role as a daughter) which seems juxtaposed to what she recognises to be in her best interest as a wife-to-be. This consideration of life after lobolo was

shared by some participants, both male and female. In the following extract Mbali (29), mentions how the consideration for life after lobolo was a pivotal point of the intra-familial negotiations:

> *I … briefed her[grandmother] prior to the meeting and I said to her that they need to be very reasonable because yes, it's custom that we pay lobolo and stuff. But, at the end of the day, we still need to live as well. You know. If we charge him an arm and leg, what am I going to eat tomorrow?*

Mbali, who was raised by her grandmother, reported that she approached her grandmother to try to influence the lobolo process. Although Mbali does not state why she chose to speak to her grandmother, it can be assumed that she approached her grandmother so as not to appear to be overstepping her position as a bride. In this instance, her grandmother serves as the mediator between Mbali and the lobolo negotiators.

In her attempt to argue for reducing the amount of lobolo, Mbali states that even though she recognises lobolo to be a mandatory custom, it is necessary to consider the implications of the custom on everyday living. Mbali highlights the financial implications that a high lobolo might have on her life with her partner and presents herself as a dependent within the union. In so doing, Mbali appeals to her grandmother's (and her family's) affection for her.

What can be noted from this example is the complexities associated with the lobolo process. Individuals are expected to assume various roles throughout the process and these roles have to be constantly negotiated. For Mbali, the complexities are expressed through how she positions herself as both an insider and outsider to her family. This can be inferred from the way in which she alternates her use of the pronouns "we" and "I" in this quote.

Mbali begins by mentioning that she recognises that they have to pay lobolo. The use of "we", here refers to her and her prospective partner, implying that the lobolo is a shared responsibility. It may be that in presenting herself and her partner as one, Mbali hopes that her grandmother (representing her family) would not be a burden to him, nor to her. This is further demonstrated by her second use of "we" when she says, "We still need to live". James (2017) reports that due to the cost of lobolo and the immediate cost of the wedding, most couples find themselves overly indebted in the early years of their marriage, resulting in a lot of conflict in the marriage.

Mbali's third "we" in this extract refers to herself, her grandmother, and possibly other members of her family as part of the collective that will decide how much should be requested for lobolo. While the bride is said not to be part of the decision making and is not supposed to know the amount that is requested by her family (Ansell, 2001; De Haas, 1987), Mbali's fluctuating use of "we" here can be seen as an attempt not to appear as though she is trying to tell the family how much should be requested for lobolo, while simultaneously relieving her grandmother from feelings that she has to make the decision alone.

Lastly, Mbali abandons the "we" and uses the pronoun "I" when referring to the possible impact on her family of asking for a large amount for the lobolo. In saying "…what am I going to eat tomorrow?" rather than saying "what are we going to eat?" she emphasises that she will, in the long run, be the one who has to bear the disadvantages. Perhaps by centring herself, Mbali is attempting once more to appeal to her grandmother's maternal love.

Even though at the time of the relationship Mbali reported that she was employed and was financially independent, she opted to present herself as a dependant partner, in an attempt to

influence how much is requested for lobolo. This is consistent with this discourse of male providers and female dependants which has long been a normative way of describing relationships between men and women (see Edin, Nilsson, Ivarsson, Kinsman, Norris & Khan, 2016; Ranganathan, MacPhail, Pettifor, Kahn, Khoza, Twine, Watts & Heise, 2017; Samuel, 1999; Sennott & Mojola, 2017). The expectation that women should rely on their romantic partners for resources is not only limited to married couples. Mgwaba and Maharaj (2018) found that, amongst young people in casual relationships, there is often an expectation that males should offer their girlfriends gifts or pay for activities that they might do together, such as going to the cinema.

In the examples presented above, all interviewees mentioned that, in the intra-familial negotiations, the quality of life after lobolo was an argument for a larger amount. Lethabo, Jabulile and Mbali referred to the impact on their marriages, Koketso (32) stated that her mother also attempted to argue for a lower amount and mentioned the impact of lobolo on the relationship between the two families:

> *My mom, shame, she did try to speak on my husband's behalf. She reminded them that it is about bringing families together and not about selling our child. But unfortunately, she was defeated.*

Koketso describes the interaction between her mom and other members of the family regarding the amount that was going to be requested for the lobolo payment. She states that in order for her mother to dissuade the rest of the lobolo delegates from asking for a high amount she brought up the notion of lobolo as selling women. Koketso ends off by stating that her mother was "defeated", implying that the intra-family negotiations are a battle, a form of rehearsal for the inter-familial

negotiation. Koketso's mother draws on the discourse of unity to argue for a lower amount. This reliance on the unity discourse is often used by the groom's representatives during the lobolo negotiations (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Yarbrough, 2018). I will elaborate on this discourse of lobolo as a medium for uniting families in chapter 7, I mention it here to highlight that the discourse is not limited to the inter-family negotiations but can be foundational even in the intra-familial negotiations.

5.3.3 Abandoning character. While the female participants expressed that lobolo is generally seen as a matter between families and that it is not their place to determine how the process goes, most of them said that they participated in and had some influence over how much was eventually requested. This goes against the dominant assumption that women are merely passive participants in lobolo (see Ansell, 2001; Shope, 2006). In this section, I use the idea of abandoning character to illustrate that both men and women in the process of lobolo may act in ways that may be considered against traditional roles.

Interestingly, when asked about the events before the day of the lobolo negotiations, both male and female participants spoke about the bride's role in preparing for the lobolo negotiations. The male participants, either did not mention in detail their role in the intra-familial negotiations or said that there was nothing they could do. Jabulani, for example, whose narrative was discussed in the previous section, described the intrafamilial negotiations in which a bride might engage, yet he did not mention what happens within the groom's family in preparation for the day. It appears as though much of the rehearsal behaviour occurs within the bride's family, perhaps because this is where the main act of the lobolo process is staged. I asked some of the male participants what

they were doing within their own families to prepare for the lobolo negotiations. Sandile (41), a male from Johannesburg, in his response below captures what other male participants shared:

> *Refiloe: It sounds like during the process it was the families making the decision. What were you doing?*
>
> *Sandile: Nothing. I was just waiting for them to tell me what the next step is. My role is one, I identify the woman I want to marry, I make the money available to do so. I organize the uncles, I tell them "here is the merchandise, I want a Mercedes, make it happen".*

Sandile mentions that his responsibility as a groom was limited to identifying the woman he would like to marry and providing the resources for the lobolo process. His views were shared by other participants, who similarly reported having limited power to influence the lobolo processes. Sandile's description of the lobolo as his responsibility, rather than his family's responsibility, and his analysis of his roles in the process, reflects a contemporary construction of masculinities through lobolo.

From a feminist perspective, Sandile's description of his ex-partner as "merchandise" is consistent with the criticism already levelled against lobolo as a mechanism for objectifying women. While this still holds, it is necessary to consider how this description also speaks to Sandile's own positioning. The analogy Sandile uses of the Mercedes to describe his former partner references the objectification of women, particularly used in advertising, where feminine sexuality is used to sell luxury and aspirational goods (De Jong, 2017). The association of women with merchandise such as sports cars, deodorant and even refreshments, suggests to the consumer not only that women are objects for the male gaze, but also that ownership of such an item would make one

distinguished amongst your peers (De Jong, 2017). Therefore, it seems as though Sandile's description of his partner as a Mercedes does not only objectify his partner but can also be understood as a way of presenting himself as a better man.

The repeated use of the word "I" by Sandile is inconsistent with his initial response that he was responsible for nothing. Sandile goes on to list some of the items for which he was responsible. The "tasks" he lists all support and build his heteronormative hegemonic masculinity. For example, Sandile's ability to make the money available puts him in a position where he does not need to negotiate the tasks with other family members, while also giving him the right to "organise the uncles and tell them…". The use of the word "tell" suggests an instruction rather than a request. Sandile positions himself as an assertive participant in the process, which is a shift from his initial assertion that he had no role to play in the process.

Sandile's reference to the woman he wants to marry as "merchandise", or a "Mercedes" uses sexist language and objectifies the woman as something to be acquired and displayed. By constructing women in this way, Sandile links lobolo to the contested nature of lobolo as bride-price, which speaks to the practice of women trade (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010). When likening his partner to a luxury car, Sandile infers that his partner is better than other women, and is therefore worth the amount her family would request. Mangena and Ndlovu (2013) argue that, regardless of the cultural significance of lobolo, at its core lobolo is about putting a price on women. This objectification of his partner speaks his position as a man who is able to raise money to get a woman he likens to a Mercedes Benz, while simultaneously suggesting that his partner is

better than other women who might not be able to meet what is required of a woman who is to be his partner.

By paying attention to the different components of the custom, including those that happen before the day of the actual lobolo payment, allows me to explore the nuances of how power and gender are reproduced and contested throughout the process. The rehearsal stage is about understanding (and contesting and negotiating) one's position as a bride, a bridegroom, a mother-in-law or an uncle. In this discussion above, I have argued that people use the intra-familial negotiations to conform to or to resist and contest, particular gendered scripted roles, in so doing set a precedent for how the interfamilial negotiations can take place. Despite their involvement in the process, many women interviewed for this study did not seem to realise or to admit to their central role in the custom. They constructed lobolo as a practice that is male-led and male perpetuated.

5.4 The main act

When it comes to the customary practice of lobolo, it has become inevitable that the discussion, dialogue, debate or narrative will be centred on, if not limited to, this day of lobolo negotiations. I have titled this section *The main act* to emphasise the centrality of this component in both the literature and in the participants' narratives. I maintain that, in order to fully understand how lobolo can be a gendered and gendering practice, it is important to think about lobolo as more than a single act. I recognise that the rest of the lobolo processes hinge on the success of the inter-family negotiations.

It is worth noting that lobolo negotiations may happen over several days and may even extend over many years (Yarbrough, 2018). In this section, I refer to a single day of negotiations. I do this because most of the participants reported that in their case the negotiations happened in one day. Those who reported that the lobolo negotiations happened over several days added that, even though a similar process was followed in the subsequent interactions, these interactions were described as less structured and informal.

I divide the discussion below into two gendered parts. In the first section, I discuss the arrival of the groom's delegates at the bride's home. In the second section, I discuss the negotiations between the two families. I propose that the day of lobolo negotiations offers a preview of the roles men and women are supposed to assume in the particular marriage and that the events of this day act as a negotiated agreement, not just for the couple but also for the families.

5.4.1 Scene 1: The arrival of the delegates. Jabulani (36), a male from Cape Town describes the events on the day of the lobolo negotiations as a staged interaction, in which the delegates from both sides already know what is about to happen, but still perform per the lobolo script:

> *By the time we get there, they are already expecting us. But we have to do this process as abantu (meaning black people or Africans). My family arrived and stood next to the kraal and thereafter my wife's father arranged for other two old men within their family to find out, what the visit was about.*

Jabulani says that by the time they arrived at the woman's home "they [we]re already expecting us". Even though Jabulani says "us", he is referring to his representatives. Jabulani had explained

earlier that, as amaXhosa people and unlike the other participants I discussed earlier, they don't normally send a letter in preparation for this day. But even if they had done so, a similar process would have taken place. By saying “we have to do this process as abantu” Jabulani suggests that there is a script or protocol that is observed. He then explains what “this” is: “my family arrived and stood next to the kraal and thereafter my wife’s father arranged for other two old men within their family to find out, what the visit was about”. Jabulani’s description of the performance that needs to be done “as abantu” confirms that this is a gendered performance, in which it is the male representatives who interact. He explains that even though the bride’s family already knows what the visit is about, there is an expectation that the groom’s delegate should explain the reason for their visit. This exchange is consistent with the rest of the lobolo theatricals, in that the performances associated with lobolo may be seen as a means of maintaining cultural authenticity.

The lobolo theatricals are like other traditional or cultural events like umgangela, a traditional Zulu stick fight now staged as an expression of identity more than dispute resolution as it was commonly used (Coetzee, 2000, 2002). The stick fight, even though now used for entertainment, follows the rules and norms that were established for battle. For example, a time and place are set and honoured by all parties. On arrival, the different parties will introduce themselves by reciting their clan names (Coetzee, 2002). The clan names are not just about announcing one’s identity but are narratives of the great accomplishments of those with whom the narrator identifies (Mhlambi, 2016). These are often narrative about heroes or great men of honour in the person’s lineage (Buthelezi, 2004; Mhlambi, 2016).

A similar exchange is described with regards to lobolo, with the exception that the groom's representatives not only introduce themselves but also have to recite the bride's family clan names. Sibusiso (45), from Johannesburg, talking about his experience as a lobolo delegate, describes it as follows:

> *When we go pay lobola, we arrive in the morning, we stand outside the home and announce our arrival by stating who we are, our clan names. We sing their praises by reciting their clan names, requesting permission to enter the homes. Once all that happens, they open, and we go inside.*

Sibusiso explains that when they arrive at the bride's home, they do not just enter - even though they are expected. He adds that they had to "announce" their arrival and introduce themselves by stating their clan names. This cultural performance, in some ways similar to knocking, may be considered a sign of respect for the family (Shope, 2006). By adding "we sing their praises by reciting their clan names" he suggests that this "knocking" is more than a request for permission to enter, but is also a demonstration of humility. This is an act reserved for when speaking to someone of a higher social ranking (like the king), who would be hailed by his subjects through the singing of praises (Dlamini, 1983).

While this exchange between the two families is not a hostile exchange, it can be understood as a way through which each family is able to assert their position in the interaction. The examples illustrate how the initial interaction between the families is typically hierarchical. This scene at the gate makes evident the hierarchical interaction between the families, in which the bride's family holds the power to allow or prohibit the lobolo negotiations. In the extracts below from Jabulile (44) and Mandla (36) from Johannesburg, we see them elaborate on how the bride's family

exercises power through the theatricals that happen before the actual lobolo negotiations. Sometimes these happen in order to allow the groom's family to enter the yard, and sometimes they are expressed as described below as a way to initiate the negotiations:

> *Jabulile: Oh! And with Zulus don't insult them don't be talking about R50 or R100 imvulamlomo. Imvulamlomo is a gesture of how you perceive the family. Whatever you put on the table before you start talking it's a big thing to them, it's how you see us. You know if you going to put R50 they can even… I've heard stories whereby people got chased out because they honestly did not know.*

Jabulile states that, before the lobolo negotiations can commence, imvulamlomo needs to be presented. Posel (1994) says that this amount is not set by the bride's family; it is offered voluntarily as a way of enticing the chief negotiator to set the price at a favourable starting point. The inclusion of imvulamlomo in the lobolo negotiations demonstrates that the interaction is essentially asymmetrical. Even though Jabulile also suggests that this amount is a voluntary gesture, it is an important one that can determine how the lobolo negotiations proceed, if they do at all. She explains this by using the example of R50 or R100 to make the point that the perceived low amount could be seen as an insult by the bride's family. This illustrates the power dynamics within the lobolo discussions.

While Jabulile implies this is normal interaction, Mandla below describes how imvulamlomo and other similar interactions can be frustrating and can distract from the purpose of the interaction.

> *Mandla: You know all these games are stupid and are just expensive taxes that one is expected to pay on top of the ridiculous amount of lobolo that one will still be expected to pay. For example, that thing of "imvula mlomo" (mouth opener), who closed his mouth, to*

begin with, because now no one closed his mouth, it's just an act. And then I have heard there is "sqaqa mazinyo" (loosen the teeth). Ok, "imvula mlomo", the mouth is opened then "sqaqa mazinyo", Haa! What is the difference between the two? Because when you open the mouth obvious the teeth will open. And then they say there is "ehla'mthini", that's money for someone to get down from a tree. I mean you are in the house. Who is on top of the tree? Who helped him get up there? Why doesn't he get down from there? You know. So, for me really this thing of lobola I feel that people use each other in an indirect way, and they make you realise how foolish you are just because you need what they have. It's just taking advantage of someone in need.

According to Mandla, imvulamlomo is another way in which the bride's family can exercise power over the other family through lobolo. In talking about the different various ways lobolo can raise challenges and problems, Mandla describes some of the activities that happen around the day of lobolo negotiations, He describes these as "games" which could suggest a positive interaction between those involved. However, Mandla then describes the interaction as "stupid" and as an "expensive tax". This implies that these are games that he is forced to play. Mandla indicates that, even though as the groom he is not there on the day of the negotiations, these games have a financial impact on him and not on the people he has sent to represent him. Mandla further stresses this responsibility when referring to the "ridiculous amount of lobolo that one is expected to pay", here constructing lobolo as mandatory custom, over which he has little control.

Throughout his narrative, Mandla demonstrates resistance towards being made to participate in these games. Mandla's resistance may stem not only from a recognition of these games as problematic but also express his resistance to how he is positioned in these games. By removing his delegates and inserting himself in the narration of the day of the negotiations, he wants to

illustrate how he defines and controls his masculinity as part of the process of lobolo in which he is made to participate. His insertion of himself in the narrative may further demonstrate a kind of fragility, in response to a perceived lack of control. In this regard, Mandla's narrative is indicative of the power of the bride's family, as acknowledged by the need for the various payments before the lobolo negotiations. Moreover, Mandla's narrative is also indicative of the tussle for dominance by men, in an attempt to assert their masculinities.

The above excerpts were useful as a way to discuss the inter-family negotiations and exercise of power, even before the actual lobolo negotiations take place. The extracts below from male participants from Johannesburg Sandile (44) and Sibusiso (45) illustrate how gender and power play out when there is a break in the protocol:

> *Sandile: My uncles are busy people. They didn't wait to be invited in, they just went in. I mean think about it; we live in a fast world we don't have time for these games where we must stand outside in the sun. We are here to talk business, let's get to it. So, my uncles were fined for that, they broke protocol.*

The cultural value of lobolo lies in the maintenance of the agreed-upon cultural protocols (Yarbrough, 2018). In Sandile's narrative, we see how he attempts to prove the dominance of his uncles by referring to their breaking the "protocol of lobolo". He argues that his uncles are busy, that is important, people. The interaction described above illustrates how people bend culture and "tradition" to meet a particular end and, in this case, to assert their dominance. The deviation from this protocol and Sandile's use of the phrase "talk business" constructs lobolo as a capitalist interaction. This is in fact one of the criticisms levelled against lobolo as understood as a "modern tradition" (Van Dijk, 2017). After talking about his experiences as a lobolo representative for his

nephews and nieces, I asked Sibusiso to tell me about his own lobolo. His narrative illustrates how different practices may shape the inter-family interactions and negotiations. This is what he said:

> *The interesting part is that you know when you go to Limpopo to go and negotiate, it's not men that sit and negotiate, it's women. This side in KZN (Kwa-Zulu Natal), women are not involved.*

Even though there are societies in Limpopo and in other parts of Africa where women are the ones who oversee lobolo, in South Africa it is still perceived as a peculiar occurrence for women to be involved in, let alone to be in charge of, the lobolo negotiations, as illustrated in the example below from Sibusiso:

> *In Limpopo, the women negotiate, so my dad as a Zulu man when they came, he said: "No, we don't speak to the women, we want the man of the house". So, the father had to come. Now because men are not involved in these things, he did not even call his brothers since they were not even around.*

In this case, it seems lobolo is not only a platform for the exercise of gendered power but also ethnic power. By saying only "my father being a Zulu man" and not offering any explanation of what it means to be a Zulu man, Sibusiso assumes a shared understanding of the social capital that lies in being a Zulu man, and which eliminates the need for him to elaborate on why his in-laws were willing to deviate from their protocol in order to accommodate his father.

The narrative by Sibusiso illustrates further how masculine dominance is asserted through lobolo, even as some participants indicated the importance of protocol in lobolo. Sibusiso's narrative points to the dominance of patriarchal gendered interactions, rather than to narrowly defined

cultural practices. Sibusiso does not explain why the family agreed to alter their way of doing things. However, the involvement of the father in this interaction indicates that the bride's family conceded power in the interest of the lobolo continuing. While women may occupy positions of authority in their society, the construction of marriage as a desirable goal for women (Singh, 2018) may explain why the women in this example may have decided to relinquish their position of authority, so as to allow the lobolo processes to continue and to ensure that their daughter was married.

5.4.2 Scene 2: The lobolo negotiation. Lobolo has long been considered the establishment of a lifelong relationship between the two families and not a once-off transaction as it is commonly practised (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Dlamini, 1983; Nhlapo, 2019). Lobolo was arranged in such a way that it allowed the families to have ongoing interactions which reinforced the familial connections (Baloyi, 2016). Additionally, in line with the Zulu saying umuntu akapheli (you cannot finish paying for a person), there was no specific time in which the amount needed to be settled, and the couple could wed without ever settling the full amount (Dlamini, 1983). The outstanding amount was also supposed to ensure the longevity of the union (Kalule-Sabiti, Palamuleni, Makiwane & Amoateng, 2007). Today, even though the lobolo negotiations and lobolo payments are generally limited to one day, the engagement between the two families is still aimed at establishing a relationship between the two families. In the extracts below, Ntate, a 51-year-old married man and Ma Mbatha, a 53-year-old single woman also from Johannesburg, describes the nature of the lobolo negotiations:

Ntate: let's say maybe the wife's uncle stands and asks my people "who are you?" .... [we respond] "We are the Tau's" ... [they ask] "what do you want here?" ... "We have seen a calabash[6]" [we respond] ... "The thing you want is here?" They say "yes, we believe we came to the right place" [we respond]. They say, "okay then let us sit down". They then ask each other "mom do you know them, dad do you know them?", even when they know you, they ask each other on that day that "does anyone know these people?" Imagine they can just change and say things like "maybe they are sick these people, why they are here" […]. Then the middleman, he's not a relative to us, he's not a relative to them, he's just a friend in between us, will say "Let's hear what they have to say". The middleman, he was the one chairing the negotiations.

Ntate offers a script-like narrative of the interactions that take place in the negotiations, and from his words, it does not seem that the interaction is in any way hostile. The use of a script-like presentation of interactions suggests that Ntate does not ascribe any value judgment to the events. In presenting the interaction in this way he suggests that there is nothing unusual about the interaction, and indicates a mutual acceptance of the discourses embedded in this interaction. For example, Ntate says when they were asked about the reason for their visit, they responded by using a metaphorical description of the woman as an object for drawing water. This metaphorical description could be read as a continuation of the objectification of women through lobolo. The second is that situated analysis of this discourse requires one to consider the function of the

[6] Translated from the phrase Sego sa metsi

discourse in the context. The use of metaphorical language is common in lobolo discourse (see Ellece, 2010; Monye, 2017; Moloko-Phiri, 2015). The use of metaphoric language is consistent with the discourse of lobolo as an apparatus for establishing familiarity between two families. Furthermore, this metaphor is deployed to describe the role the woman will be expected to assume as a wife. Traditionally, when a new bride moves to her matrimonial home, she would assume some of the duties such as fetching water, and making the fire for cooking (Jowah, 2015). The idea of women moving into their husband's family in the contemporary lobolo negotiations forms part of the lobolo theatricals. The language of the lobolo negotiations forms part of the theatricals (which include the sending of the letter, to the arrival of the lobolo delegates) that serve to maintain a sense of cultural authenticity in the practice of lobolo.

Another example of how these theatricals are carried through is in how and where the dialogues take place, as well as how the parties choose to present themselves. For example, Sibusiso (a male from Johannesburg) explains that the groom's family needs to appear in a particular way in order to gain favour in the lobolo negotiations:

> *Another thing we do when we go to negotiate, we don't use our fancy cars. We take the cheapest cars available. You must not give them the impression you have money.*

Given that lobolo negotiations are often conducted by the male representatives of each family, the display (or absence of display) mentioned by Sibusiso could also be understood as a performance of certain kinds of masculinity. However, during this phase, the male representatives cannot employ hegemonic representations of masculinity such as the demonstration of wealth or appearing to be physically intimidating, as this may result in an unfavourable outcome. Ntate and

Sibusiso describe the lobolo negotiations as a kind of performance, a performance that requires one party (the groom's delegates) to assume the submissive role, or at least to pretend to do so. Sibusiso expresses the negotiators' attempt to distance themselves from being perceived as wealthy people. Perhaps it is this distancing from dominant masculine expressions that shapes contemporary lobolo practices and the accompanying intellectual verbal battles. Ma Mbatha put it this way:

> *Lobolo negotiations are really that. You have to have the skill. So, the family will choose people who know how to speak well. Not people who will agree to everything. Well-spoken people. Even from that family, they will do the same so we know lobolo negotiations are iron versus iron, and we will see who bends first.*

Ma Mbatha's description of lobolo positions the men who are sent as delegates as needing to possess particular traits, such as "speaking well" and being strong. These traits are also considered to be desirable masculine traits in business, and so we may see that the principles that apply to any business negotiation may similarly apply to lobolo negotiations. She continues to explain the importance of these traits, indicating that lobolo negotiations are not for everyone but rather an activity for a select few. Ma Mbatha contributes to the depersonalising discourse of lobolo as business transactions (White, 2016). This is further emphasised by Ma Mbatha's use of the analogy of "iron". The use of iron to describe the men participating in the lobolo negotiations constructs these men as devoid of any human characteristics in the lobolo negotiations, and strong like metal.

This excerpt also points to the power dynamics within lobolo negotiations. While this hostility may be attributed to the amount that is eventually paid for lobolo, this hostility may also be indicative of a negotiation of authority between the two families (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). The

acceptance by one family of the other family's terms (which she describes as bending) is not only limited to the lobolo negotiations but continues in the activities after the lobolo negotiations (Moeti, Koloi-Keaikitse & Mokgolodi, 2017).

Even though lobolo negotiations are presented in this case as an apparatus for one family to gain power over the other family, Ma Mbatha's narrative points out that lobolo is used as an apparatus to assert male dominance. This is also evident in Sandile's account of the lobolo negotiations, in which he details the conditions under which his family conformed to the demands of his ex-partner's family:

> *My uncles tried their best to get the money down. But those guys were like, if you are not serious about that let us leave the whole thing. Apparently one of the chief negotiators from my ex's side, I think it was her grandfather, he just wouldn't let them catch a break. He actually dribbled them badly, if I can say that. When they would suggest this, he would counter it, so eventually, they realized they were fighting a losing battle and they surrendered "whatever you want, here it is. We want to go".*

In the above narrative, the speaker gives an account of how one family might come to conform and submit to the demands of the other. Sandile explains that his uncles tried to challenge the amount demanded, but their attempts were received with disdain by the bride's family. Sandile explains that his uncles' multiple attempts to negotiate the amount down were not well received by the bride's family. Considering that it is not unusual for families to negotiate the amount that is requested for lobolo (Dlamini, 1983), it is possible that Sandile's former in-laws were not impressed with the manner in which his uncles were negotiating. Most participants commented that there is an expectation for the lobolo delegates to follow the unstated lobolo negotiation script,

the script that is meant to facilitate and cement the relationship between the two families (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018).

What may be seen from the example above is how the power balance between families is established through the negotiation of male dominance. Sandile describes the interaction between his uncles and his former partner's grandfather as a battle to have the final say with regards to the lobolo amount. Sandile uses a sports metaphor as an attempt to show that the interaction between his uncles and his former partner's uncles was not an equal interaction in which his uncles were bullied, but rather it was a match in which there had to be a winner. Sandile further explains this victory, by suggesting that the lobolo negotiations were difficult for his uncles because his former partner was "not an ordinary woman":

> *My ex was not just a beautiful woman, she was a strong woman, very powerful, a hustler. And her family knew that she was strong and therefore I needed to show that I was man enough for such a strong woman. I mean she is really beautiful, so her family also capitalized on that, they knew she is not an ordinary woman beautiful, independent and strong.*

Even though Sandile is describing the lobolo negotiations, he focuses on himself and his former partner in the above example. Sandile's emphasis on his former partner's beauty and strength illustrates three points. The first is the commodification of women in the lobolo negotiations. Even though he seems to be admiring her, he turns this attribute into something that increases her worth compared to other women. He adds that her family "capitalised" on her attributes to gain success over his uncles. Mwamanda (2016) states that lobolo is an opportunity not only for the groom but is about men and their power more generally. For example, the uncles and grandfathers are central

to the process. The lobolo delegates not only represent the families but are often heads of the family, therefore it is important that the lobolo negotiations allow the different parties to maintain their position as respectable men (Lugg, 1945). By inserting himself and his former partner into the narrative, he simultaneously redeems his uncles from a less desirable masculine position of men who were "dribbled"; and he positions himself in a more favourable light.

Secondly, Sandile's description of the lobolo negotiations uses the language of ranking for evaluating the worth of women, and he implies that his partner is better than other women. Since Sandile's partner was not in the lobolo negotiations it is striking that she was still the dominant subject in the above extract. This confirms that women are used as the face of lobolo in the public domain as well as on academic platforms. It appears from this example as though women are used as a gateway for men to access more desirable and more powerful masculine positions. In this case, even though his uncles could not secure him a more favourable amount for the lobolo, the lobolo negotiations were a platform for Sandile not only to demonstrate that he can be with a woman like his beautiful and powerful partner, but that he was as also able to meet the lobolo demands required to be with her. In so doing Sandile presents himself in this narrative as a dominant man.

5.4.3 Offstage: The making of a wife. So far in this chapter, I have attempted to highlight the heteronormative and masculine nature of the lobolo theatricals. In this section I turn to one of the least discussed part of the lobolo theatricals, namely what takes place on the peripheries of the lobolo negotiations. So far, I have shown that lobolo negotiations are a space for power games between families, often a masculine space, in which women are typically relegated to the peripheries of the main event. I refer to these peripheral domains as "offstage". I was interested in

finding out what the brides and other women were doing during the lobolo negotiations. The responses from the participants indicated that women's activities are seen as an insignificant part of the lobolo process. The participants also narrated this section as a trivial part of the story, and one not discussed in much detail. Most of the participants mentioned this part of the lobolo procedures only in response to my direct questions about their role in the lobolo process, specifically on the day of the lobolo negotiations.

In the extracts provided below, Nthabi, Lethabo and Mbali all narrate similar experiences of the lobolo negotiations day. Each participant mentioned that they were not allowed to be part of the negotiations and had to remain in a separate room. For example, Nthabi explained that during the lobolo negotiations she was assigned to a specific room and that her sister was given the task of sitting with her in the bedroom throughout the lobolo negotiations.

> *Nthabi: During the negotiations I was just sitting in the [bed] room with my sister. She had to sit with me. I couldn't get out of the room and I can't sit alone, someone has to be there with me. I don't know what that person is called, but she must sit with you throughout the process.*

Nthabi mentions that she does not know what the person who sits in the bedroom with the bride is called, but also implies that this unnamed arrangement is a common practice during the lobolo process. This was confirmed in the narratives of other participants, who mentioned that they too were confined to the bedroom with female relatives during the lobolo negotiations. On the day of the lobolo, the bride is expected to sit in a different room with other women and is not supposed to be seen moving around and performing tasks but instead has to sit in the room until she is presented to her in-laws (Mupotsa, 2008).

Lethabo and Mbali also narrate that they had to sit in a separate room with female relatives during the lobolo negotiations. They add that their female relatives were not only keeping them company during the lobolo negotiations but were also counselling them about their new roles as wives. The participants described this space, that is the unofficial off-stage space, as a situation in which they learned about the significance of their transition from being a girl to becoming a woman (Rudwick & Posel, 2015).

> *Lethabo: You know while these things are happening you will be told: "no, you have to sit in the bedroom". That's all I was doing there, sitting with boragadi [aunts]and you know, they tell you these things about marriage that you must do.*
>
> *Mbali: my grandmother was there but she was not part of the negotiations, she was just outside with me because we weren't allowed to come into the room. So, she was sitting with me talking to me about becoming a wife.*

While the activities that take place offstage are not frequently discussed, it appears from these examples that they play a vital role as a pedagogical space. It appears that this space may be considered the beginning of the process of marital counselling known as ukulaya, or to go laiwa gwa ngwetsi, that is marriage counselling that a woman will get from her family regarding how to conduct herself in the home (Moeti, 2017, 2018). Moeti, Koloi-Keaikitse and Mokgolodi (2017) say that this process is formally concluded as part of the wedding ceremonies, specifically the escorting of the bride to her matrimonial home. I elaborate further on this in the next section. For now, I want to focus on how this interaction that occurs concurrently with lobolo negotiations offers an opportunity for exploring how womanhood and wifehood are constructed, and how

particular norms are reproduced. This interaction is about how women, particularly older women, play a vital role in ensuring that other women do not deviate from these norms.

It is interesting to note that while the lobolo negotiations are taking place, and while the bride is in a room where she is introduced to being a wife, the groom is not in the negotiations; nor is he getting this induction into his new role as a husband. The difference in how the bride and the groom experience the day of the lobolo highlights how women are perceived as needing constant socialisation in the different roles they enter, while the same is not true for men. Because the grooms are often not present on the day of the lobolo negotiations, they do not get the same induction into marriage. The space is necessary as a pedagogical space, in which a new bride is educated about their new identity as wife and the expectations there off. In this space, brides are also warned about the challenges one might encounter in marriage and how to handle them. While it is clear that this interaction places a burden on women to ensure the success of their marriage, for now, I want to highlight how this part of the lobolo process allows us to gain insights into how femininities are constructed in the lobolo process.

5.5. Post credits

In movies, the post-credit scene refers to a short clip, image or line that comes after the credits have rolled. While this is often used for comic relief, these moments have also been used as a teaser for upcoming movies (Filimon, 2017). In this section, I use this idea of post-credits to refer to the events that take place once the lobolo negotiations are concluded. While there is a shared notion that the lobolo is never complete (Dlamini, 1983), there are ceremonies and customs that take place to mark the end of the lobolo negotiations process (Jowah, 2015). I refer to those

ceremonies such as umembeso, go isiwa ga ngwetsi, and uduli, which all can be translated to refer to the delivering of the bride by her family to her in-laws' home.

I refer to these as post-credits because even though this moment marks the completion of the lobolo process, it does not necessarily mark (for everyone) the completion of the matrimonial process. In other words, even though some participants mentioned that these customary ceremonies are important they lead up to the "real wedding", which I will discuss in more detail in chapter 7. For now, I want to focus on how these post lobolo ceremonies also function as sites for constructions, negotiations and enactments of gender norms.

One such event that comes post lobolo is umembeso. Umembeso is the ceremony in which the groom offers gifts to the bride's family and which takes place as soon as the lobolo, in full or in part, has been received and signifies that the two families have entered into a relationship with one another (Haselau, 2015; Yarbrough, 2018). In receiving the gifts, the bride's family agree not to receive any lobolo from another family for the same woman (Rudwick & Posel, 2015). Likewise, during umabo, the bride and her family will also offer similar gifts to the groom's family, in so doing welcoming the new bride into their family. This reciprocity is thus the establishment of a relationship between two families. Below Mandla and Jabulile describe the items that need to be purchased for umembeso:

> *Mandla: The father and the mother have specific things that must be bought for them. The relative are bought basic things… other things can be additional but the basic that needs to be there is the doek, there must be an apron and a blanket, those are the basics. Thereafter it is the father's which is the hat, an umbrella, between an umbrella or a rod which is a staff or a knobkierie, if I can put it like that. And then it is the coat, and that is*

now the father. And then the mother gets an apron, a blanket, a doek and then there is a pot that must be bought. She will tell you if she wants you to buy a stove and pots, you know the big pots mos. When you bring the pot, it means there have to be some kind of groceries inside which can be tea, sugar and traditional beer … and maybe some veggies, this is more of to say to the mother that as the husband of this home obviously I will come and visit and will obviously need food.

Jabulile: What happens is we put down a list of items, a list of people; rather a list of people that need according to their titles. For example, [it] will start with the father and then the mother. In Zulu, they know the father will be very expensive. It would be a coat, the kind of coat that would protect him from the cold and the winds when he is herding the cows, you know. So, it has to be a very strong coat. it would be a hat, a blanket you know, oh it would be induku (stick). It's a whole lot of things and the mother it would be the blanket, doek, the ityali (small blanket), mshanyelo (broom). You go down the list presenting the individuals as per their responsibilities in the family.

While some participants mentioned that they did not buy all the gifts such as the stick, coat and hat for the male relatives and the doek and in accordance with tradition (Haselau, 2015; Rudwick & Posel, 2015), but instead opted for the blankets. Mandla states that while the rest of the family can get basic gifts, the mother and father of the bride and groom have to receive specific gifts. Jabulile and Mandla's description of the gifts demonstrates the heteronormative constructs of masculinities and femininities through the gifts given. For example, the father's coat, walking stick and hat may be linked to working outside the home, in the "elements" as expressed by Jabulile. The male coat is often the thickest item of clothing and may be seen as an equivalent of the traditional animal skin used to cover up, but also to demonstrate a man's social position as a provider (Lukhile, 2017). Similarly, the gifts that are given to the mother exemplify the gendered nature of the lobolo theatricals. The gifts given reinforce heteronormative gender norms. The gifts

for the father suggest that men work outside the home and women work in the home, as illustrated by the pots mentioned by Mandla and the brooms mentioned by Jabulile.

What is evident from the two examples is that the constructions of gender within the lobolo process are not limited to the bride and groom. For example, Jabulani explains that the gifts given to his mother-in-law are not for her to enjoy, but rather for his future benefit as a son-in-law. This further demonstrates that marriage is considered to be beneficial to men more than to women.

Umembeso and umabo, as described above, are very similar in procedure, in that they are both gifting ceremonies but serve different functions. Umembeso is the acknowledgement of the newly established relationship. Umabo centres around the acceptance of the new bride into her home (Rudwick & Posel, 2014). Even though here I specifically refer to umembeso and umabo, which are Zulu ceremonies, the gifting ceremonies are not limited to Zulu people and were mentioned by other participants who were not Zulu. For example, the Xhosa spoke about ukwendiswa which is performed through uduli and the Sotho and Pedi participants spoke about go iswa ga ngwetsi in Sesotho/Sepedi (see Moeti, 2017). While these events technically occur outside the lobolo process, as "post credit" events, they provide a form of closure for the theatricals while simultaneously allowing us to think about how the gender and power dynamics that take place within lobolo transcend the parameters of the lobolo negotiations. For instance, go iswa ga ngwetsi, which refers to the accompanying of the bride to her new home acts as an acknowledgement by the bride's family that the groom and his family have completed all the requirements to conclude the marriage agreement (Moeti, 2018). The bride is accompanied with gifts for her in-laws is as well as gifts for her to start her new home. These gifts she takes for her in-laws are similar to the ones offered

during umabo and umembeso. Her gifts would include items she will need to use as a new wife, such as pots and a broom. I will discuss these further in the section below, which is on uduli.

I discuss these ceremonies, go iswa ga ngwetsi and uduli, separately in this section, not to offer a distinction between the ceremonies but as a way of showing the different ways in which masculinities and femininities are constituted within different "post credit" lobolo theatricals. Go iswa ga ngwetsi focuses on the accompanying of the bride to the new home, uduli focuses on preparing and leaving the new bride in the new home.

Below, Mapaseka, a female participant from Johannesburg, describes what normally happens after the lobolo negotiations:

> *So, they were supposed to get their bride on the last day that they were finishing but I said to my husband I cannot, I can't go to Venda and complete the ngwetši [bridal] kind of duties. When they come to fetch ngwetši [the bride] or when your family takes you there because they have to go with you, in any case, to finalise everything by doing the handover, right. So ja then you have to go to your in-laws then you have to stay with them for some time. Usually, it's a month that you have to spend with your in-laws.*

There are two important gendered interactions to which Mapaseka is referring. The first is the symbolic handing over of the bride. The symbolic gesture of handing over the bride is reflective of the construction of marriage as something that takes place between the two families. There is a sense of peculiarity in the "fetching of the bride" or the "handing over", in that some participants, including Mapaseka, were already in a long term relationship and living with their partners and in some cases even had children already. This further demonstrates the theatrical nature of the lobolo processes.

These theatricals of handing over the bride position women as passive participants and is reflective of the gendering that happens through lobolo and its associated practices. Moreover, this process of handing over or delivering the bride suggests that the custodianship of women rests with others, in the first place her family and then her in-laws (Kalule-Sabiti, Palamuleni, Makiwane & Amoateng, 2007). The lobolo process thus acts as a mechanism for patriarchal ownership of women's bodies (Chiweshe, 2016).

The second point highlighted what is referred to as ukukotiza, which can be loosely translated as "completing the bridal duties" (Mpungose, 2010). Ukukotiza is a form of induction of the bride into her family. During this period, the new bride is supposed to "demonstrate" that she was "trained" well when it comes to domestic duties, during this period as a newly married woman (Sennott & Mojola, 2016). The process of ukukotiza can be seen as yet another form of socialisation of women, to foster in them desirable feminine qualities, in this case, those that are associated with being a wife. The idea of go laya is an example of how the matrimonial customs and rituals (like sitting in the bedroom, the marriage counselling, the physical taking of the bride), perhaps offer elements of closure in the narrative of becoming a whole being (Mupotsa, 2015a). The absence of these sorts of rituals for men implies that women are seen as constantly becoming and in need of socialisation at each stage of their life. This notion of femininities as needing socialisation is further demonstrated in other ceremonies like go iswa gwa ngestwi, in which the bride is accompanied into her new role as a wife.

Mam Dladla (54) and Ma Ngozi (65) from Cape Town comment on the practices associated with ukwendiswa. Ukwendiswa is a traditional Xhosa ceremony that marks the completion of the

marriage rights that need to be performed for a woman to be considered legitimately married into the family (Majova, 2001). Like umabo, this ceremony takes place at the groom's home; however, in this case, the focus is not on the groom's family but on the bride.

The phrase ukwendiswa speaks to the positioning of women within the marriage. The phrase itself, like in other languages (for example, ukushadiswa in isiZulu or ho nyadiswa in Sesotho) suggests that a woman cannot be legitimately married unless she is permitted by her family to do so. This discourse of permission can perhaps be linked to the positioning of women as minors, therefore as being in need to be given into marriage. The giving of the bride can also be seen during the white wedding where the father of the bride walks her down the aisle and hands her over to the groom (Monger, 2004). Customary ceremonies such go iswa kgwa ngwetsi, described above, and ukwendiswa described below, are examples of handing over the bride and act as an acknowledgement of the lobolo having been received.

Below Mam Dladla describes the ukwendiswa as a testament of the family's support of the marriage, demonstrated through the items that were bought for her by her family to use in her new home:

> *Mam Dladla: My family bought clothes, pots, a straw mat, an axe, kitchenware and also a bucket these are obvious things you will use in your new home. They also bought me a bed and a kist. The kist is very important you know. You know if someone says to you "hai wena you are not fully married" you can say "come see, what is this?" When they see the kist in your bedroom they will know you are really married. A kist is from your family. They buy it for you for your new home, they let you go with it.*

The items bought by the bride's family relate to the roles she needs to play as a wife. The items bought for the bride are not personal items but rather household items, specifically the kitchenware, a bucket and an axe and items for the bedroom emphasising that the significant roles she needs to perform are linked to these two spaces. Mam Dladla refers specifically to a kist, which is a wooden trunk used to store linens and other personal items. It appears that the kist is somewhat symbolic of a coffin. There is an idiom that states lebetla la mosadi ke lenyalo, which can be translated as a women's grave is marriage. This speaks to the idea that women ought to endure difficulties in marriage. Moloko-Phiri (2015) argues that idioms such as these are used to legitimise women's suffering in marriage, which can be associated with shaming women who leave their marriages. It appears, from the example, that even though the kist has been associated with women's suffering, Mam Dladla describes it as a tool for asserting her position in the new home. The kist is constructed as evidence that she did not just leave her family's home, but was sent off well. In this way, Mam Dladla distances herself from being perceived as a woman living with men out of wedlock, which is something that is often considered shameful (Posel & Rudwick, 2012).

Ma Ngozi below explains that even if one was abducted into marriage, a woman's family must send uduli so that she can live in peace with her in-laws even though the woman may not have wanted to be married in the first place:

> *Ma Ngozi: If your family fails to do this for you, you will suffer yo! You will suffer. In isiXhosa you have your sisters, those are your husband's sisters who live in the yard with you back home. Now if your family don't send uduli [bridal party with gifts for the bride] for you they will insult you. They will say "what kind of woman is this whose family never sent her off. We don't remember seeing any goods brought for her, we don't remember*

drinking tea from your cups. Not even a dog was slaughtered in your honour". They will say "we didn't celebrate with you. We don't remember having people here to celebrate with us because of your family". You know it's funny because now you also want this to happen for you so you can be like other girls even if you don't like the men, you just want this done for you so that you are not just leaving with people who don't know who you are even though it is their child who took you and brought you to them. And they know after that you can't go anywhere that time everyone knows you are no longer a girl so you must stay, face whatever until your family can afford to send uduli for you.

Ma Ngozi explains that ukwendiswa saves a new bride from experiencing difficulties in her marriage. Ma Ngozi, like many other now elderly women, was married by abduction and her lobolo was sent weeks later, and others reported that it might even have been sent after a few months. Once the lobolo is received the bride's family send uduli for the bride, in so doing acknowledging her marriage. Considering that the amount offered for lobolo is often far less than the amount required for the bride's gifts (Majova, 2001), some participants like Ma Ngozi mentioned that they would stay in their marital home even though they faced difficulties. Ma Ngozi states that once a woman is taken by a man, she can never return home because people will know that she was no longer a virgin, implying that no one else would want to marry her.

The experiences of women who were abducted speak to the post-credits of the lobolo process, but also show how lobolo can take on different meanings. Throughout this chapter, lobolo was discussed as an initial step for families to get to know one another, in a way allowing couples to live as husband and wife. For the women who were abducted, lobolo was described as hope for a better life with their in-laws. In this case, lobolo was not so much about families getting to know

one another, but rather a means through which families could release the women to live peacefully in their marital home.

From the examples above it is evident that constructions of femininities and womanhood through lobolo and are often overlooked within the singular focus on lobolo as simply a transactional practice. Women are not merely passively positioned in particular ways through lobolo, but also use lobolo to negotiate and construct their own femininities.

5.6. **Conclusion**

In this chapter I argue that the theatrical nature of the lobolo process is a platform for constructing, negotiating, contesting and enacting gendered identities and the exercise of power. I use the metaphor of a play or a film to outline the different stages of the lobolo process, as well as to convey the script-like nature of the lobolo process. Lobolo is understood as a process rather than as a single day event. In this chapter I showed how men and woman use lobolo as an apparatus to construct, negotiate, resist and take up particular gendered roles; and in so doing negotiate and exercise power in the different stages of lobolo and post lobolo.

The analysis of lobolo as theatre illustrates a multistage nuanced interaction, between families. Through this analysis I show how lobolo, although varies from one family to the next there are similarities in the processes which I refer to here as the lobolo script. The script determines what needs to be done, and who needs to be in the main stage. The use of theatre allows me to illustrate the how interconnected the different stages are and the role that each person plays to ensure the success of the lobolo process. In this chapter I have shown that the roles within the are embedded

within heteronormative norms, participants narratives have shown that people may take up roles that may seem to transgress the norm. In the section Acting out of character I outline the ways in which some participants, particularly female participants shared the how they had to take up roles that they seem to be out of character such as trying to influence the money amount that would be requested by their families for lobolo. I have illustrated through this section the multiple negotiations throughout the lobolo process.

Lobolo negotiations often recognised as a negotiations between representatives of the families regarding the amount requested for lobolo. However, as shown in this chapter negotiation are not limited to the lobolo amount. Intergenerational, intrafamilial and interfamilial negotiations all mediated by gender norms as is illustrated by bride's negotiation with other females in their families rather than talking to their fathers.

The analysis of the different stages of the lobolo process shows that, while men do generally take the lead during the main act that is the lobolo negotiations, the rest of the process seems to be mainly female-led. For example, while the grooms expressed a sense of helplessness beyond accumulating the money required for the lobolo, we see that the brides are very much involved in the negotiations regarding how much may be asked for lobolo in the intrafamilial negotiations. The position of women can be seen throughout the lobolo process, whether it is in the socialisation of the new bride – off-stage – or the accompaniment of the bride to her new home. Women are active participants in the continued practice of lobolo. The off -stage activities and post lobolo ceremonies illustrate the significant role that women play in the success of marriage

I explore in the next two chapters some possibilities for why women, as well as men, might participate in lobolo, despite some of the findings discussed in this chapter which suggest that lobolo can be an exploitative, money-making and oppressive practice. I will focus specifically in the next chapter on how masculinities and femininities are constructed through lobolo, and how these constructions allow the women and men in this study to negotiate their own gendered identities.

Chapter 6: Lobolo is… Constructions of Gender

6.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to explore how gender is constituted, negotiated and contested through lobolo. In the previous chapter, I discussed the gendered theatricals in the customary practice of lobolo. In chapter 5 I showed how the scripted nature of lobolo allows for a particular gendered role of lobolo. In this chapter, I explore how lobolo is a gendering custom. In other words, how I focus on how lobolo acts as an apparatus for constructing masculinities and femininities. The analysis of what lobolo is may provide insight into why lobolo remains common despite ongoing criticism of the practices and questions being asked about the contemporary relevance of lobolo. In this chapter, I will not be focusing on why people continue to participate in lobolo. Instead, I will focus on how the men and women who participated in this study positioned themselves, through their narration and their description of lobolo.

6.2 Constructions of families through lobolo

Lobolo, as established in the previous chapter, is a set of practices intended to introduce the families to each other. It is also a process for establishing a relationship between the two families through the multi-stage processes described in the previous chapter. The multiple stages discussed are in line with the idea that lobolo unfolds over time and a process that would ideally never be fully completed (Dlamini, 1983). The perpetual incompleteness of lobolo is reflected in the common saying in isiZulu and other Nguni languages that ilobolo aliqedwa, which can be translated as meaning that lobolo (payments) are never paid in full, therefore there is always an opportunity for the two families to interact (Yarbrough, 2018). Lobolo is an apparatus for joining

two families – the bride's family and the groom's family. I argue that lobolo plays a crucial role in establishing a new family unit – that between the bride and the groom. I consider how masculinities and femininities are constructed through the discourses of lobolo as an apparatus of bringing families together, and how the meanings of family and gender are debated, contested and negotiated through lobolo.

6.2.1 Lobolo is an apparatus for joining families. Despite the uncertainties regarding the function of lobolo in contemporary times, lobolo has remained a consistent practice in the formalisation of marriage (Mohlabane, Gumede & Mokomane, 2019). Most of the participants in my study expressed that lobolo was necessary for the formalisation of marriage. In the following extract, Sechaba, who is a married man living in Cape Town, described lobolo as both necessary and beautiful:

> *Lobolo is a beautiful thing. It is about extending family relations and finding out what kind of people are these, that want to be part of us.*

Sechaba expressed that lobolo is a functional practice that allows families to get to know one another, possibly through the multiple stages of lobolo (Yarbrough, 2018). Lobolo is not only about knowing each other but also a process of two families becoming one. While the notion of uniting families is commonly used in talking about lobolo (see Baloyi, 2016; Dlamini, 1985; Yarbrough, 2018), it appears that the offering of lobolo is generally understood with regards to an extension of the groom's family, rather than the uniting families as Sechaba suggests. Perhaps it is the fact that the woman is separated from her kin that gives rise to the discourse of lobolo as compensation, which can be linked to the understanding of lobolo as bride price (De Hass, 1987;

Dlamini, 1985; Evans-Pritchard, 1931; Posel & Rudwick, 2014a; Semenya, 2014). The discourse of bride price is problematic as it distorts lobolo by freezing the set of practices in "tradition", and by suggesting that lobolo is simply about selling and buying. This interpretation has been strongly rejected in scholarly literature (see Ansell, 2001; Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Mkhize, 2019) as well as by the majority of participants in this study. For example, Bab' Dladla, a 71-year-old male from Cape Town, also distanced lobolo from the idea of selling women by linking lobolo to uniting two families:

> *Note that when we pay lobola we are not buying you ladies but are in fact building a relationship between the two families through you. Because if I am buying you that means you are my property I can treat like cattle. But you can't sell or buy a person. When you pay lobolo you are uniting families. That means when we are fighting you can return home; you still have a home I didn't buy you. In that way you can see lobolo is not buying a person, that's why we say we are families.*

In the extract, Bab' Dladla speaks to the notion that lobolo is an exchange of women for cattle and that women can thus be treated as the property of their husbands. He rejects this idea that women are the property of their husbands and suggests that, should the marriage not work out, a woman may return to her home. This quote raises the notion that there is a risk of gender inequality when marriages are established through lobolo. Moloko-Phiri, Mulaudzi and Heyns (2016) have argued that lobolo creates hierarchies between families, as well as between husband and wife. The superiority of the groom's family is evident in the songs that are often sung at weddings, while the superiority of the groom is emphasised through the marital counselling that is often directed only at the bride (Mulaudzi, 2013).

Through marriage counselling, women are advised of the difficulties of marriage and are encouraged to endure the difficulties of marriage (Rudwick & Posel, 2015). This creates the sense that the failure of marriage is considered a failure of the woman and an embarrassment to her family which may in some cases result in returning the lobolo (Bakker, 2018; Moloko-Phiri et al., 2016). Moreover, the notion of returning home when a marriage ends, which appears to be reserved for women, is in line with the idea of women leaving their homes to get married (Khomari, Tebele & Nel, 2012). The persistence of this discourse in contemporary lobolo discussions may reproduce hierarchical relationships between men and women through marriage.

The position of women as minors under the guardianship of their husbands has been shown to have detrimental consequences for women when marriages, particularly customary marriages, end (Button, Moore, Himonga, 2016; Monareng, 2014; Moore, 2015; Peinaar, 2003). The dissolution of customary marriages has been found to have a material and social impact on women because women cannot claim ownership of any property acquired in their marriage (Moore & Himonga, 2017).

6.2.2 Lobolo is an apparatus for making new families. Despite the dominance of the discourse of lobolo as an apparatus for merging families that can be seen across the different participant narratives, it appeared that the interaction between the two families was limited to the lobolo negotiations. Beyond the lobolo negotiations, lobolo was described as an apparatus for establishing a new family unit in which that conjugal relationship is the central component of the family unit. The examples discussed in this section focus on the role of lobolo in establishing this new family unit.

The establishment of the new family unit through marriage often follows the script of man meets woman, pursues her, and persuades her to get married. This script, Achebe (2018) argues, is the dominant script of romantic love as often presented in Western romantic comedies, which limits how we conceive of relationships. It fails to recognise other forms and expressions of love and courtship. Achebe (2018) further states that the idea of romance is not foreign to Africa as is evidenced by vast literature documenting narratives of love. The normalisation of Western-centric ideals of romantic relationships has resulted in a narrowed view of courtship and marital practices like lobolo, as commonly practised in societies in southern Africa, as deviant. Below Bab' Dladla responds to my questions regarding his planning for lobolo before he had met someone whom he wanted to marry:

> *Refiloe: baba, in all this planning what about love?*
>
> *Bab' Dladla: No, no. Some things have nothing to do with love. Marriage and love are two different things.*
>
> *Refiloe: Really? How so?*
>
> *Bab' Dladla: Marriage is about building a home, someone to look after the home, someone to raise the children. Love comes by the way. I'll give you an example, my wife, she didn't need to love me, I know she didn't love me. I was an old man by then. But she agreed none the less because she understood that lobolo is a woman's honour. What kind of woman would refuse to be lobola'd?*

It appears the question I had asked Bab' Dladla was in line with Western constructions of romantic relationships in which, during preparations for lobolo, the establishment of a new family is based on the romantic connection of two the couple. While this is the case in most cases Bab' Dladla's response illustrates that while it may be commonly expected for love to lead to marriage, the

converse can also be expected (see Singh, 2013). In his case, what he needed from the marriage was not love but rather someone with whom he could establish a family. It is important to note, as I discuss in more detail in the next two main sections, that Bab' Dladla's assertion implies that women and men have different investments in the lobolo process. While men assert their masculinity through the establishment of a family, becoming umnumzana (Hunter, 2005), women are dignified through lobolo. This here shows the active and passive constructions of masculinities and femininities in the practice of lobolo, which we saw in chapter 5 to be less rigid than is suggested in the scholarship on lobolo.

Bab' Dladla states that marriage has a functional purpose like raising children; and that the functionality of marriage is not dependant on love. It may be possible for one to plan for it, through the preparation of lobolo, before meeting someone to marry. He adds after he met his wife, he continued with the lobolo, while knowing that she did not love him. Bab' Dladla only mentions that she did not love him, and does not mention whether he loved her or not. It may be that Bab' Dladla mentions love when speaking about his wife because, as Singh (2013) found of the participants in her study, many believed that women are more likely to get married because of love, while men were more likely to get married for social recognition and the possibility of having someone to take care of them. Bab' Dladla states that, in his case, it was not the idea of love that motivated his partner to agree to marriage, but rather the idea of having lobolo offered for her. Perhaps Bab' Dladla is drawing on the discourse of lobolo as an honour for women, which may result in the creation of asymmetries in the marriage, as the man – Bab' Dladla in this instance – bestows honour upon the woman he chooses to marry. The implication here is that men are

perpetually positioned as being in a position of power, to take away or to give honour and dignity to women, while the woman cannot achieve the same for the man.

Bab' Dladla was talking about arranged marriages, but this discourse of lobolo as an honour for women was shared across the different narratives I collected. I will return to it in more detail in a later section, and I mention it here to highlight that the discourse of lobolo as an apparatus for establishing a new family unit holds different meanings for men and women. For women, having lobolo is described as a privilege, for men it is seen as a means to an end. For a man then, lobolo is a mechanism to acquiring a family, and the new family unit and children born to it belong to the man (Nhlapo, 2019; Parker, 2015). Further, women who are honoured through lobolo need to prove through their works that they are worthy of the honour of lobolo, through performing acts of service such as taking care of the home and having children which do not belong to her, but her husband (Oyěwùmí, 2005b). This idea of children belonging to their father was also raised by Nthabi (27) a female from Johannesburg who described lobolo as atonement by her son's father for the "wrong he had committed". She said:

> *You know for me his decision to pay had nothing to do with love. I just told myself "he is taking responsibility for what he has done, he is acknowledging the pregnancy and that is it". He felt we had to do the right thing by my family. We refer to our son by the name that his (the child's) paternal grandparents gave him and also, he (the child) uses his father's surname. So actually, we didn't do anything right by my family. He said, "I know the lobolo is going to be a lot cos I have to first apologise for impregnating you and also buy the surname for our son". You know what, the relationship is not there, there are no hugs and kisses. No goodbyes. No, I love yous. It's only when the lights go off that we acknowledge*

each other's presence. We both know this. When we have a high-pitched argument, we have both said I am only doing this for my son.

In the extract above Nthabi may be attempting to illustrate that lobolo is not only an apparatus for joining families but also the "correct" way of establishing a family. Nthabi states that she and her son's father did not follow the correct order of establishing a family, that is pay lobolo and then have a child. She also lists a number of things that she perceived were not correct to do given that he had not paid lobolo. There is a Setswana saying "ngwana ke wa dikgomo", meaning that children belong to a man only after he has offered lobolo or inhlawulo (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, Mphaka, 2013; Semenya, 2014). In instances where children are born before marriage, like in Nthabi's case, and the father is unable to comply with these rituals, the child remains with the maternal family (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010; Chiweshe, 2016; Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, Mphaka, 2013; Jeffreys, 1951). Should the father wish to have the children carry his surname, he has to pay the inhlawulo which has commonly come to be understood as damages (see Langa, 2010; Makusha & Richter, 2016; Nduna, 2014).

It appears from Nthabi's narrative that she regarded the lobolo offered to be inhlawulo. This can be seen from her emphasis on the fact that she and the father of her child had not done the "right thing". It appears as though she and her son's father did not agree on what the money offered was for. While she considered it to be inhlawulo he regarded inhlawulo to be part of the lobolo. As a result, he believed that the amount that will be requested by Nthabi's family will be a lot. Nthabi did not see it as lobolo because she felt that she and the father of her child did not have a relationship, therefore it made sense that whatever that was offered was not towards formalising

their family unit, but rather as a way of offering their child a sense of legitimacy – a commonly held view of inhlawulo (Moore & Himonga, 2018).

Women are often spoken about as not having control over their sexual lives (see Attwood, 2011; Lesch & Kruger, 2005), and this may result in the notion of atonement or damages for a pregnancy that occurs out of wedlock or even before lobolo is paid. A pregnancy can thus be viewed as the result of a negative act that was done to a woman, rather than as an act in which she participated. Lesch and Kruger (2005) found that when it comes to sexual education, parents are more likely to inform girl children about the dangers of sex than they would boys. The discourses of damages can be linked to the Christian idea of purity, in which pregnancy outside of wedlock is seen as a defilement of the women (Nkani, 2012). Therefore, inhlawulo which is offered as damages is not only about the acknowledgement of paternity as argued by Jeffreys (1951) but is also a platform for discussing women's sexualities.

The view of inhlawulo as damages is consistent with the view of lobolo as bride-price, in that both are mistranslations that position women as passive participants in their sexual lives as well as in their marriages. This is perhaps best exemplified in Nthabi's narrative referring to inhlawulo as damages. She inevitably victimises herself in the relationship, and makes the father of her child a central figure of her narrative, for example, focusing on what he did, why he did it, what his intentions were and his hesitations in the relationship.

> *We have since stopped talking about it (the lobolo). We have not spoken about are we married? Are we engaged? What is going on? I don't know what he wants. I feel he is not honest with me and he is not honest with himself.*

It appears that Nthabi recognises lobolo to be an apparatus for establishing a family unit but does not believe that this is the case in her own situation. She expressed a lot of uncertainty throughout our interview, stating that she is not sure whether she should identify as married or engaged. Nthabi expressed that she wanted the father of her child to clarify what is happening between them. From this narrative, it appears that Nthabi's behaviour was consistent with how heterosexual relationships tend to be organised, in that men are believed to have to take the lead and to be responsible for determining how the relationship progresses (Lamont, 2014; Sassler & Miller, 2011). Women, on the other hand, are believed to have to take the position of passive submission to the will of the man, with little to no power in determining the course of the relationship (*ibid*). Male leadership in heterosexual relationships is established from the first encounter between couples and is reproduced through various interactions and stages in the relationship (Lever, Frederick & Hertz, 2015).

In Nthabi's narrative, she positions herself as a passive participant within the relationship and presents the father of her child as having as the active leader. I decided to ask Nthabi what she wanted from the relationship since she spent a large part of her narrative speaking about the father of her child. She narrated the following:

> *I want a family, I want a family for my son, and I think he (the father of my child) is the only person I can have that with. He is the only man I have been with. I have not actually prepared myself to be with someone else like thinking actually someone else can do this with me. I just want a home a proper home, a household, you understand right?*

In her response, Nthabi, like other participants, suggests that lobolo is a mechanism for establishing a family unit. What may be also deduced from Nthabi's narrative is that her decision to agree to

have lobolo paid is not about honour – as suggested by Bab' Dladla earlier – but rather as a means to preserving a sense of acceptable femininity. By asserting that she has only been with the father of her child, Nthabi may be attempting to distance herself from notions of promiscuity that are often associated with women who have children out of wedlock (Posel & Rudwick, 2014b). Mbali's narrative illustrates how lobolo is necessarily linked with women's sexuality, through patriarchal notions that govern acceptable and non-acceptable sexual behaviour of women. Due to the patriarchal nature of this system of governability, neither in Nthabi's narrative nor in the narratives of other participants, does the issue of male sexual activity arises as a problem to be discussed.

The centrality of children to the female participant's narratives about lobolo as an apparatus for establishing new families speaks to the social expectations for women to put their children's welfare before their own (Chisale, 2017; Msiza, 2019). While other participants did not share Nthabi's experience of being in an uncertain relationship at the time of their lobolo, most female participants expressed that they agreed to have lobolo paid for them so that they could establish a home for their children. This sentiment was shared by other female participants in this study, who also spoke about lobolo as an apparatus for constructing their nuclear family, and not only about bringing together the two larger families. The focus on the nuclear family emphasised in the narratives of participant such as Nthabi, was also noted by Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (2015), who noted that marriage offers relationships social and legal recognition it is also a system that gives children legitimacy. In these narratives, lobolo was constructed as a mechanism for establishing these legitimate families. Even the female participants who did not have children

mentioned that lobolo, even if it was not followed by the legal procedures of getting married, would offer their children a sense of legitimacy.

Finally, Bab' Dladla and Nthabi, although they both suggest that lobolo allowed them to realise "legitimate" families, offered different reasons for why they desired these families. These differences hinge largely on gendered responses. For men, lobolo gives access to the social status of respectability, while for women the decision to go through lobolo is for the greater good and to strengthen social relationships, where the lobolo is not for the woman but for the extended family or for the children. These differences open up new avenues for further discussion about the gendered differences and meanings attached to participation in lobolo. In the rest of this chapter, I analyse the ways in which masculinities and femininities are constructed, challenged and taken up through the meanings attached to individuals' and families' participation in lobolo.

6.3 Constructions of masculinities

In this section, I discuss various articulations of lobolo as they pertain to the construction of masculinities. I focus on how desirable versions of masculinities are constructed and reproduced through lobolo. Masculinities [and femininities] can be understood as a "series of discourses - transcending the scale of the individual - which set out the rules, expectations and conditions within which everyday gender relations take place" (Shepherd, 1996, p. ii). Although the focus in this section (and in lobolo more generally) is on masculinities, I take up the insights of some scholars who argue that masculinities and femininities are co-constructed through everyday socialisations in different platforms such as home, school and work (see Helman & Ratele, 2016).

In the previous chapter, I discussed the gendered nature of lobolo by exploring the different stages and activities around the set of customs. In this section, I want to pay attention to how the research participants spoke about lobolo as a gendering set of customs. In other words, I want to analyse how the participants discussed and framed how lobolo is used as an apparatus for the construction of masculinities (and femininities).

6.3.1 Lobolo is a demonstration of maturity and financial stability. Manhood is marked by "some act or choice on part of the young male and acceptance by [other] adult males" (Morrell, 2006, p. 16). The act on the part of the young male and the acceptance by another adult male is often centred on particular ceremonies, such as ulwaluko amongst young Xhosa men (Mfecane, 2016; Magodyo, Andipatin & Jackson, 2017) and stick fighting amongst young Zulu men (Carton & Morrell, 2012; Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012,) that mark the rites of passage into (male) adulthood. Hodes and Gittings (2019) found that young men in the townships, as well as those who have participated in customary initiation practices of some kind, expressed that it was important as a young man to be in a relationship with a woman as this was proof of one's maturity. Hodes and Gittings (2019) also found that sexual education was part of the initiation, with some men reporting that they were encouraged to "test drive the new Mercedes" (p. 449), which is code for having sex with a woman immediately after returning from initiation.

While there are other social markers of the transition into manhood, what remains constant is the accession into manhood through having relationships with women (Hodes & Gittings, 2019; Msibi, 2011). While it may be acceptable for men to have sexual relationships with multiple women, this behaviour is often associated with younger men. For older men, there is an expectation

that they will establish stable relationships through the payment of lobolo (Hunter, 2005; Kogan, Cho, Barton, Duprey, Hicks, & Brown, 2017). The payment of lobolo is considered the correct way to establish these formal relationships.

In the extract below Koketso (32), a woman from Johannesburg speaks about lobolo as a rite of passage for men rather than it being about women, as it has come to be understood:

> *Koketso: honestly, I don't know but I think if you are charging over a hundred grand that is madness. I think they mustn't make it too easy after all he must feel the pinch that you know he earned his wife. And also, they mustn't make it so difficult that he can't reach. Honestly, this is a difficult question. I don't know, all I know is that there should be an amount and the amount should not be too cheap.*
>
> *Refiloe: What is too cheap?*
>
> *Koketso: I don't know, R2000, for example, is too cheap. A man must sweat. He must work for his woman. He is not going to feel anything if he has to pay 2000.*
>
> *Refiloe: But what is it that he has to feel? I mean he chose you and you chose him…*
>
> *Koketso: Cos he is a man, and he must grow up. Having been married for this long. I can say men are kids. They just need that one thing to make them realize this is a whole different stage of life. It's different with us girls, I mean the societal expectations for women. You know the stuff you have to do after you get married. For them, they have it so easy. You know that WhatsApp joke that was going around about how the son in law is always welcome. The minute he enters his in-laws' home, someone serves him. But you as makoti (daughter-in-law), you can't just enter sit down. They expect you to start taking care of everyone there. And that pisses me off so much. It's so unfair. So, can he just feel the pain even if it's just at the beginning? Cos, we feel it for the rest of our lives*

Koketso doesn't offer an answer regarding what lobolo negotiations should be based on. She only states that the requested amount should not be low. Earlier in her narrative, Koketso had mentioned that lobolo has become too expensive because it has become about what a woman has or doesn't have, as well as what she had done in her past. She argued that the consideration for certain things such as a woman's level of education gave some families the opportunity to abuse lobolo for personal gain. In her explanation, Koketso deviates from the norm of equating the amount paid for lobolo to be a reflection of the worth of a woman. Instead, Koketso implies that lobolo is about men, by linking it to affordability and working hard. In so doing Koketso constructs lobolo as an apparatus for making men into men, by drawing on discourses of affordability, acquisition, and the ability to endure the discomfort associated with paying lobolo.

While Koketso draws on the discourse of affordability which is common in lobolo discussions, she deviates from the dominant association of lobolo with a woman's worth (Mofokeng, 2005; Mwamanda, 2016; Moore, 2015; Rudwick & Posel, 2015; Shope; 2006). Koketso's focus is instead on men and their ability to "earn" their women. She adds that the amount should not be as low as R2000, an amount she considers too easily affordable by most men. She insists that lobolo should be an uncomfortable process, something that a man would "feel" in preparation for the next stage of his life. Koketso draws on the notion of difficulty as evidence of a transition from boyhood to manhood.

The notion of making men through pain is not limited to lobolo. While the transition into womanhood unfolds over a series of developmental milestones occurring from puberty (Scott & Mojola, 2016), the rites of passage into manhood seem to be centred around single events or

experiences. While the transition into womanhood is a guarded journey, figuratively and physically as discussed in the previous chapter, the transition into manhood appears to be marked by an event, particularly an uncomfortable or painful one. In discussing the multiplicities of woundedness through the process of ulwaluko, Kiguwa and Siswana (2018) explain that it is not only the endurance of the psychical pain that is considered central to the making of a man, but rather it is the ability to endure the psychological pain associated with this transition from boyhood into manhood. This was also mentioned by other participants like Bab' Dladla quoted below, who describes this transition as a time in a man's life in which he desires a companion:

> *You know wena Refiloe, as a man there comes a time when you decide you can't be alone anymore more. So, when that time comes, us in our time you would go to relatives and tell them "I'm ready, I want a wife". And some might suggest so and so's daughter, you know "Hai, I know this girl she lives here I'll introduce you when she visits" you know that kind of thing (laughter). So, I also got to that point.*

Although Bab' Dladla does not describe it as a point of maturity, it appears that this point that the desire to have a wife comes to every man eventually. He explained that when a man reaches this point, he takes particular steps to make the transition. In his case, he said he turned to his relatives to help him find a wife. Bab' Dladla notes the steps that a man took in his time may not necessarily be the steps that a man would take today. The different approach alluded to by Bab' Dladla was confirmed by some younger participants like Lucky, a 37-year-old male from Johannesburg, who said that the decision to get married was supported by accumulating money for lobolo:

> *Lucky: Before I met my wife, I was saving already for the lobolo or a wedding, depending on the money of course. I went as far as saving all my change in a 5L bucket and can you*

believe that money contributed to lobolo. When I started this journey, I was not looking for the right person to marry, I was looking for a person to make into the right one.

Lucky said that the steps he took were to start saving for lobolo. Even though Lucky's marriage was not an arranged marriage, he began saving for lobolo before he even met his wife, meaning that the decision to save money to pay lobolo was not a result of the development of a romantic relationship. This realisation of desire for a companion, as expressed in the above example, suggests that the desire to pay lobolo is a sign of maturity that is independent of women, but is realised through women.

Lucky explained that he could save for lobolo even though he was not in a relationship because once the funds are available, the woman he chooses to marry would be made "into the right one". Lucky's reference to the notion of the right one is in line with the idea that lobolo is offered on behalf of women who are considered different from other women, women who are deserving (Chisale, 2017). I observed this discourse of the "the right one" across many of the participants' narratives, most of them asserting that they decided to pay lobolo or have lobolo paid for them because they believed they were with the right one. In this way, lobolo not only serves to distinguish men from boys, but lobolo also serves to affirm that the person they are with is better than other partners.

What can be seen clearly from Lucky's narrative is how he positions women. For women, lobolo is described not as a choice but rather as a desire. For women, the transition from girlhood to womanhood does not lie in a woman's actions, but rather it is the lifelong socialisation and earning recognition of her worthiness through lobolo (Mupotsa, 2015a). Therefore, the agreement to

participate in lobolo is not an outward performance of readiness for marriage, but rather an opportunity to realise the external validation of worthiness.

Perhaps men are afforded more autonomy in relationships, due to the assumption that marriage is a privilege for women and that men, therefore, do not naturally desire marriage. Perhaps it is because women are seen as being more likely to desire marriage than men (Chisale, 2015; Miller & Sassler, 2011; Moyo, 2005). In other words, while men need to get ready for marriage, women are told to aspire to marriage while also being taught how to conduct themselves as to prove they are suitable for marriage - to be the "right one" (Posel & Rudwick, 2014a; Shoppe, 2006; Nkosi, 2011). It does not appear from the extracts or other narratives that men were concerned about being the right one. In both Bab' Dladla's and Lucky's narratives there was an assumption that they would be acceptable to the women they would choose to marry.

Furthermore, from Lucky's narrative, it may be that the ability to provide the lobolo qualifies a man for marriage. Similar sentiments were expressed across different narratives. Some participants said that it is not sufficient for men to desire a companion, a man should have the financial means required to be in a relationship. I decided to interrogate this belief found in some of the narratives. For example, Lebo had mentioned earlier in her interview that she realises that, even though it may be difficult for some men to raise money for lobolo due to financial difficulties, lobolo is a necessary sacrifice if a man wants to get married.

> *Refiloe: so, what about men who are unable to save up or to make that kind of sacrifice, not because they are unwilling but simply cos, they are unable to. What do they do then?*

> *Lebo: then don't get married. I mean if you can't afford mahadi [lobolo], like an uncle of mine much older than I am, he got married three years before me and his lobolo was like R5000. I mean even if you don't have money, I'm sure you can afford R5000. If you want to get married and be the head of the household, you need to show this. Like I don't believe that I can't afford it, story.*

Lebo's response is informed by a capitalist and patriarchal construction of husband-hood, in which men occupy a higher social position in the family as providers. She suggests that lobolo distinguishes between men who should get married and those who should not, thus creating a classed distinction between different men. Malinga (2015) found that men who are precariously employed (day labourers) often have their masculinity questioned even in their own homes because they are unable to meet the demands placed on men to be providers. By suggesting that any man can afford R5000, she may be attempting to further illustrate that if a man claims he cannot afford that amount, then perhaps he should not get married. Similarly, Aviwe (42), a female from Johannesburg, suggested that even when a man is ready for marriage but does not have the financial resources to pay lobolo, he should delay marriage.

> *I don't understand this thing of men who say that lobolo must be done away with, I mean if you are a broke man what business do you have wanting to get married. How does a man like that propose he will look after his wife and children? If a man doesn't have money it is fine, he must wait until he has money to do things the right way.*

It appears Aviwe believes that it is only men who are "broke" who do not support lobolo. She adds that such men, men who are not financially comfortable, should not be considering getting married, as they would not be able to meet the social demands of being a husband. Aviwe's call for a delay of marriage by men who do not have money is consistent with findings from other studies that

found that most men and women considered lobolo to be a stumbling block to marriage (Mhongo & Budlender, 2013; Posel & Rudwick, 2014a; White, 2016). While there was consensus regarding delaying marriage across the narratives, the delay in marriage was constructed to be a reflection of a man's sense of preparedness or maturity. This preparedness was mainly expressed as having established financial stability. Sibusiso, a 45-year-old man from Johannesburg, talked about his friend and suggested that, even if a man does not pay lobolo, it is important to be financially stable:

> *He [my friend] just went to the father in law who asked him "are you working?" He said yes. They asked him can you take care of my daughter?" he said yes. So, he said OK go organize your marriage I give you my blessing, you don't need to pay anything.*

While Sibusiso's proposal for how marriage should be formalised diverges from the dominant view, the above example is consistent with the construction of gender within the practice of lobolo. The meeting between his friend and the father-in-law mirrors what we know about lobolo negotiations, namely that marriage is established through negotiation and agreement between men.

Similar to how it happens in lobolo, the negotiations and the agreement between Sibusiso's friend and his father-in-law did not involve his wife-to-be. While Sibusiso's friend is allowed to be part of the negotiations, the interaction illustrates a hierarchical interaction between the friend and the father-in-law. The father not only permits him to get married but also acts as a gatekeeper to accessing successful manhood. It appears that successful manhood is measured by access to employment (Malinga, 2016), thus only men who have access to employment are allowed to establish their homes.

While Sibusiso offers this example in an argument against the necessity of lobolo, it appears that he cannot escape the heteronormative constructions of gender. Sibusiso, like the participants who argued that lobolo is a necessary practice, also drew on discourses of providers and dependants. The meeting between the friend and his father-in-law suggests that marriage is a form of exchange of guardianship, which is reminiscent of colonial and apartheid laws that positioned women as perpetual minors in need of being taken care of (Chisale, 2017; Msiza, 2019).

Similar sentiments were expressed by Tshepi (33), a married woman from Johannesburg who expressed in another part of her interview that she did not want her husband to pay lobolo for her, but realised he needed to do the "right thing" as demanded by culture. Tshepi stated:

> *Normally you will just hear stories that they charged ridiculous amounts. But for me, it was like no, I will not allow my parents to charge him too much because he's been so responsible, so supportive throughout the whole relationship. I gave them my reasons, to say no. "Remember that this guy was there for me when I was pregnant. He did not deny the kid. I did not have to go under any stress. He was there throughout. He took care of me when I was pregnant. It was not his responsibility, but he was taking care of me. Eh, whatever I needed at school he was able to provide for me". So, I felt that no. It goes to show this person, he will even take care of me even after this.*

Tshepi says she suggested to her family that they should not request a high amount for lobolo because she argued that he was a responsible man. She says that she based her arguments on him being present during the pregnancy as well as supporting her. Tshepi's construction of her partner as a good man could be seen as a response to the high numbers of "absent fathers" in South Africa. In 2017 it was reported that over 60% of children, the majority of those being black children, grow up without their biological fathers (StatsSA, 2016). Tshepi also shared that her partner not only

stayed with her during the pregnancy but also took care of her when she was still in tertiary education.

Tshepi, like Sibusiso, also drew on the discourse of female dependants and male providers. In her explanation, she constructed lobolo as a demonstration of a man's ability to take care of his family, and she argued her partner was able to prove this ability when she became pregnant. She explained that her husband had demonstrated that he was responsible throughout their relationship and therefore there was no need for the additional demonstration of responsibility and/or financial stability in the form of lobolo.

The construction of lobolo as a demonstration of a man's financial stability suggests that women are dependants in the marriage. The discourse of male financial stability was prevalent across narratives and serves to maintain the status quo, even though some participants instead argued that it was important for both parties in a relationship to have an income. The narratives in this study suggest that the positioning of women as dependants and minors within a marriage is amplified and exaggerated through lobolo. Through reference to notions of maturity and financial stability, lobolo is understood as a commitment and not only a proof of the man's ability to provide. In the following section, I pay closer attention to the issue of commitment and to how masculinity is constructed in lobolo processes.

6.3.2 Lobolo is a demonstration of commitment. There is a popular assumption that men do not desire marriage, an assumption that is firmly embedded in the construction of masculinities as hypersexualised (Kogan, Cho, Barton, Durprey, Hicks & Brown, 2017; Lindegger & Quayle, 2009). This gives rise to the assumption that men would prefer to have several sexual partners,

which is incongruent with men's desire to get married. In this section, I explore how the discourse of lobolo as commitment intersects with particular ideas of masculinities. Below Khaya (38), a married man from Cape Town, describes lobolo as a commitment:

> *Refiloe: Why was it important for you to pay lobolo?*
>
> *Khaya: I think it (lobolo) shows how much you want the relationship to work. It shows commitment. It shows the ability to follow through with the decision you have made.*

Khaya explained that lobolo is an expression of a man's commitment to the relationship. He adds that lobolo illustrates that a man can follow up with the decision he has made. This could refer to the decision to pay lobolo and the commitment to accumulating the necessary resources to secure the relationship. Similarly, Sindisiwe (33), a single female from Cape Town, also constructs lobolo as an illustration of commitment:

> *Refiloe: What would you say is the significance of lobolo?*
>
> *Sindisiwe: Personally, for me, lobolo symbolizes that a man is ready to commit himself that he is able to take care of his wife and his children. I don't think that is the function for it though. It's just my opinion. By paying lobolo it shows that he is ready to be the head of a household.*

Sindisiwe explains why a man must prove that he is committed. She adds that it is not only a commitment to the relationship but also a commitment to fulfilling the responsibilities that come with the roles assumed in marriage. Sindisiwe draws on the patriarchal construction of men as heads of households (see Lesejane, 2006), but instead of proposing the possibility of equal partnership in the marriage, she questions this position of being the head of a household as a privileged one. Sindisiwe draws on a hegemonic discourse of men as providers to support her

construction of men's role as heads of their households. In South Africa, while men may gravitate towards accepting this role as heads of households, they may struggle to meet the demands associated with this position, given the state of unemployment and the rise in poverty (see Ratele, 2014; Shefer, Stevens & Clowes, 2010).

In these examples, commitment is constructed as a one-sided effort. This could be linked to the assumption that all women desire marriage (Ngabaza, Daniels, Franck & Maluleke, 2013; Singh, 2013), therefore do not need to demonstrate a commitment to the relationship. This discourse of lobolo as commitment feeds into the idea that men are inherently unable to commit, thus making certain behaviours acceptable for men, while unacceptable for women.

Khaya suggests that lobolo is not about a man's commitment to a marriage, but rather a commitment shown by both the man and the woman. He suggests that both parties, through agreeing to the lobolo, are committed to finding ways to save the marriage. This speaks to the idea that lobolo is about the families and not just the individuals (Chiweshe, 2016), therefore it is expected that the larger family will intervene should there be a problem in the new unit as described below:

> *Khaya: you know because lobolo is a matter between the adults, even if you and I fight we can't just decide to leave the marriage. We have to go back to the elders and tell them what the problem is so that they can call us, sit us down and resolve it like that.*

While Khaya's assertion is in line with what most of the participants as well as scholars have expressed regarding the function of lobolo, this view has also been associated with violence in marriage (Moore, 2019; Ngema, 2013). Chiweshe (2016) argues that lobolo plays a role in

domestic abuse, as it creates a sense of entitlement from men as they view women as their property. According to Baloyi (2016), given that most men have to work for long periods to accumulate the resources needed to pay lobolo, most men do not agree easily with their wives leaving the marriage. In the following extract, Sechaba notes that this difficulty of accumulating lobolo payment:

> *Sechaba: We grew up knowing about ilobolo. We were told when you love someone you must pay it. But once you pay lobolo you know this is my wife I was charged heavily for her, so let me hold on to this woman. Even if she says she is leaving you; you will ask yourself how? How do I just let go of her cos I paid for her let me humble myself and go beg her to come back. You know you humble yourself for a woman you married. So lobola creates some sort of discipline in this marriage. You not going to go around chasing other women. Imagine losing a woman you know you worked hard for, for a woman who was just easy to get, a woman who slid her way between you and your wife. Lobolo makes you think twice. For this reason, even if it is little there must be something that a man pays for his wife*

While Sechaba draws on discourses of love to construct lobolo as a commitment and a deterrent to divorce, his assertion appears to be informed by notions of ownership, which is a criticism that has frequently been levelled against lobolo. He adds, on the contrary, that lobolo ensures that a man treats his partner well. This association of lobolo as assurance for a happy marriage was said to be false by Posel and Rudwick (2014b) who found that women in KwaZulu-Natal reported that having a high lobolo offered on their behalf did not mean that they would be treated well in their marriages. Sechaba's attempt to construct lobolo as something positive for women supports Mam' Dolly's position that women need protection in their marriage. By suggesting that lobolo offers this assurance, Sechaba inevitably positions men as pre-disposed to mistreating their spouses.

Chiweshe (2016) found that, even though there is no evidence that men and women who are in a relationship without lobolo fail to respect each other, this belief is still commonly held. Sechaba suggests that lobolo not only ensures a man's commitment to his marriage but also makes women worthy of the commitment. A woman becomes worthy of commitment because of the value ascribed to her during lobolo negotiations. Sechaba states that lobolo forces men to consider what they might stand to lose if they are found to be unfaithful in their marriage. By linking this consideration back to the cost of lobolo, Sechaba may imply that the cost of lobolo is a disciplining factor, rather than creating a sense of commitment to one's wife. If men ought to consider only the money that they offered, then what is suggested is that rich men may not have to commit to a single woman, because even if the wife leaves, they can easily replace her.

While lobolo might act as a divorce deterrent and protection for women from being removed from their homes, again confirming that property belongs to men, it is not evident from the above example how lobolo could protect one against abuse in the marriage. This positioning of men and women in this way implies that marriage can be a hostile place for women. However, given the socio-economic status of many black women, some may opt to stay in unpleasant marriages rather than to leave (Perumal, 2011). Moore and Himonga (2017) note that, because the customary practices have been left to families and societies to define, the dissolution of the customary marriage often leaves women displaced, especially in instances where the marriage dissolves (also see Button, Moore & Himonga, 2016).

These narratives act to create hierarchies between different men, as those who are more financially capable are "allowed" infidelity, whilst poor and working-class men, cannot afford infidelity.

Moreover, what is also prevalent from some of the narratives is that women are positioned as having few choices, as lobolo becomes exclusively about the assertion of masculine identities. While in previous chapters I have illustrated how women often subtly shape the lobolo process at various stages, it appears that women are relegated to passive, choiceless subjects within lobolo. This contradiction is the topic discussed in greater detail in the next section.

6.4 Constructions of femininities

What was argued in the previous section is that lobolo comes to be a demonstration of men's maturity, financial stability, and commitment. The construction of masculinities through lobolo in this way, without an accompanying action for women, speaks to how men and women are socialised in preparation for marriage. While women are socialised to be ready for marriage (Mupotsa, 2015b; Raphalalani & Musehane, 2013), men are assumed to come to a state of readiness for marriage. Lobolo becomes a demonstration for men of their masculinity, and an affirmation of a woman's worth and respectability. In other words, while lobolo acts as an apparatus through which men can realise what is considered desirable masculinities, for women lobolo appears to an apparatus through which respectable femininities are invested in them.

6.4.1 Lobolo is a token of appreciation. While lobolo remains chiefly about the joining of two families, lobolo is offered by the groom or the groom's family to the bride "for the care, effort, respect, values, and education the woman's family instilled in her for their [groom's family] benefit" (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018, p. 583). In this way, lobolo is a token of appreciation, from the groom's family or the groom, to compensate for the loss of their daughter. Lobolo as a token of appreciation is laced with notions of gratitude and compensation. Dlamini (1985) notes that,

although the discourse of compensation has always been prevalent, it should be treated with caution. To assume that lobolo could ever compensate parents for their daughter's upbringing sets the ground for the understanding lobolo as a form of sale, which would be erroneous. Most participants strongly rejected the construction of lobolo as a sale. Below Lethabo (37), a female from Johannesburg, speaks to how lobolo comes to be a token of appreciation by the groom to his in-laws:

> *Lobolo is a token of appreciation, you know, just to say "I've taken your daughter, I've married her. Here is a token of appreciation for raising her, for having born a wife for me" you know that kind of thing. It really is not about buying a person. My family can't say "you owe us" because he has given them what he has and that's where his strength ends.*

Lethabo attempts to disassociate lobolo from the notion of buying and selling by suggesting that lobolo serves as an apparatus for men to express their gratitude to their in-laws. She explains that this gratitude is embedded in the recognition of the brides' family's efforts in raising their daughter, which she then explains is received by a man. Lethabo may be also referring less to appreciation and more to compensation towards the woman's family. Although Lethabo may be attempting to speak out against the sale discourse often associated with lobolo (Dlamini, 1985), her reference to compensation invokes this very sale discourse.

Lethabo's explanation reveals how men and women are positioned through lobolo understood as a token of appreciation. As already discussed in the previous section, lobolo is considered to be a demonstration of a man's strength, which is a euphemism for his financial status. In the above example, Lethabo implies that because lobolo is a token of appreciation it is a voluntary act by the

groom, and the bride's family cannot claim that he is indebted to them. Lethabo's assertion contradicts a dominant discourse in lobolo discussion which is that lobolo can never be fully paid, and it is through this lifelong "debt" that the two families remained tied to each other (Dlamini, 1983; Kalule-Sabiti, Palamuleni, Makiwane & Amoateng, 2007; Yarbrough, 2018). Perhaps the never completed lobolo serves as a means to maintain the hierarchical relationship between the groom and the bride's family, especially her father.

While there is a belief that lobolo is never paid up, some scholars have understood it as an inescapable debt that men are forced to enter into with their in-laws (James, 2015, 2017; Kuper, 2016). For some men, the "outstanding" lobolo hangs like a cloud over their heads (James, 2017). Similarly, Posel and Rudwick (2014a) reported that the "outstanding lobolo" may be used by the bride's family to make demands on the groom. Perhaps Lethabo may be attempting to mitigate this exploitation when she refers to lobolo as appreciation rather than compensation.

Lethabo, like other participants who spoke of lobolo as a token of appreciation, did not question whether lobolo is a recognition of the bride's family in raising her, nor did they question who rewards the parents of the groom. I decided to interrogate how the unilateral token of appreciation comes to be so. While most of the participants found it difficult to offer an answer, Koketso (32), a female from Johannesburg, ventured the theory that lobolo is offered as a token of appreciation to a woman's family by the man. She also added that women honour their in-laws through various acts throughout the marriage:

Refiloe: So, if lobolo is to say thank you, why don't we thank the man's parents for raising him? Because, like you, he was raised; he went to school. His family also sacrificed for him to be the man you would like to marry.

Koketso: oooh ai ai no maan they have enough thank yous. I take care of them; I take on their surname. I have given them an heir. I mean I have given them a boy and a girl. I have given them a boy child who has taken on their surname and will carry it for them. I have given them something money cannot buy. Oh, and one more thing. We look after their boys. We continue to raise them. Men are boys, they are babies their whole life.

Koketso states that the groom's family receives enough gratitude through the marriage. She says that the thank you to her in-laws comes in the form of her service. Even though Koketso does not live with her in-laws, her assertion that she takes care of them is a reference to the notion that lobolo is offered with regards to the women leaving their family to join their in-laws (Bayi & Hawthrone, 2018; Moeti, Koloi-Keaikitse & Mogkgolodi, 2017). The addition of a makoti was considered a benefit to the groom's family, particularly to her mother-in-law, who would be alleviated of some of the housework (Nganase & Basson, 2018). Traditionally, when a woman got married, she would leave her own kin to live with her in-laws in their homestead, thus contributing to taking care of that home through *her* labour in their fields and towards the enlargement of the family by having children, particularly male children that will belong to the husband's family (Chiweshe, 2016; Hosegood, McGrath & Moultrie, 2009; Posel, Rudwick & Casale, 2011).

Jefferys (1951) argued that lobolo is a transference of children's rights from their maternal side to their paternal side. Koketso may be suggesting something similar when she states that, in addition to the domestic labour, she thanks her in-laws through her reproductive labour, namely by having children. Importantly she does not acknowledge these children as her own, but rather as belonging

to her in-laws. This is what Koketso considers to be “enough thank yous” and “something money cannot buy”.

Koketso notes that, in addition to the domestic and reproductive labour, women continue to raise their husbands whom she argues remain babies throughout their lives. Two things can be noted from Koketso’s reference to men as babies. The first refers to what other female participants in this study mentioned regarding men’s total dependence on their wives for all their needs. The second is that this reference of men as “babies” speaks to the construction of women as natural carers. Not only do they care for their children, but also their husbands. Morison (2011) found in her study that males’ involvement in parenting was mediated by beliefs that men are unable to assume caring roles, whereas women assume such roles “naturally”. Thus, one can see Koketso’s claim to taking care of her husband as possible and indeed accepted as part of the naturalised care expected of women.

Even though women are constructed as natural caregivers (Nentwich, 2008), this ability is questioned in the absence of male partners. Single mothers are globally recognised as vulnerable and female-headed households often of lower socioeconomic status (Depew & Price, 2018; Mkhize & Msomi, 2016). The general household survey that women, in particular black women, are more likely to be in the lower socio-economic percentile and have reported that children who grow up in single female-headed households experience various challenges such as educational difficulties (Amoateng, Heaton & Mcalmont, 2017). The difficulties of being a single mother are reflected in how lobolo is constructed in the narratives of participants who were raised by single

mothers. For example, below Koketso and Mapaseka construct lobolo as a reward that their mothers had earned by raising them alone.

Koketso referenced some of the challenges that her mother experienced in raising her. She expressed that lobolo should only be for her mother and those who contributed to her upbringing.

> *Koketso: I would have preferred that my mother doesn't share the money with anyone, she deserves it. Being a teenage mom was difficult I'm sure, school, baby, baby daddy gone. I guess maybe my grandmother cos we stayed with her when my mother while my mother was studying so yeah, I don't mind that she got something. But my mother being the Christian she is, always talking about forgiveness, she gave some of the money to my father, she said he is still your father so we must acknowledge him just for that.*

In this way, Koketso implies that lobolo ought to be a reward given to her mother for all the challenges she might have experienced as a single teenage mother. In a study on lobolo and womanhood, Rudwick and Posel (2015) found that single mothers mentioned that the high amount requested for lobolo was not only a symbol of their daughter's worth but also a reward for their hardship in raising their daughters alone. Similar notions were shared by other participants like Mapaseka who said that the lobolo belongs to mothers as compensation or reward for raising them:

> *Mapaseka: I told my mother she must keep all the money for herself because none of these people were around when I was growing up. Now they want to claim "ey our child has a masters", do they even know how I got it? No! So that is why I didn't want my mother to involve them in the first place.*

Mapaseka is perhaps referring to the intra-familial negotiation regarding how much should be asked for her lobolo. For the intrafamilial negotiations should have not even taken place because

she believes that her mother should have handled the whole lobolo process alone as she had not received help from anyone when raising her. Mapaseka mentions her qualification as a point of contestation between her mother and the rest of the family. Women's educational attainment has been considered by some families as a reason to request a high amount (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018), thereby suggesting that women with higher educational qualifications are better than women who do not have higher education. By suggesting that, if there is anything to be gained from her having a masters it should be awarded to her mother, Mapaseka shifts the focus away from her as better than other brides, and instead makes it about recognition of her mother's efforts in raising her.

The consideration of education in contemporary lobolo discussions illustrates a shift in what is considered desirable attributes for women. While traditionally women were expected to work in the home, today more women work outside the home. It is important to note that even though women work outside the home, it does not mean homes are more egalitarian. Jaga, Arabandi, Bagraim and Mdlongwa (2018) note that women are still largely responsible for housework and childcare, even as they also work outside the home

Lobolo is a compensation for loss of labour for the woman's family was related to doing housework, instead of financial contribution (Khomari, Tebele & Nel, 2012), but in recent times has come to mean the woman's ability to work outside the home (Mhongo & Budlender, 2013). According to Moore (2015, p. 818), when it comes to marriage, women are expected "to improve their access to resources and social networks while often compelling them to comply with gender-conforming norms". Interestingly, while lobolo is still rooted in patriarchal norms of men as sole providers, it appears that women who are able to assist men in fulfilling their supposedly male

duties of provision are considered also worthy of higher lobolo, rather than being seen as a challenge to male authority.

The construction of lobolo as a reward can be explained by how lobolo is organised. Because all children belong to their fathers (Jefferys, 1951), then all lobolo that is offered as a token of appreciation belongs to the father. Therefore, lobolo is a system that maintains hierarchies amongst men. As a token of appreciation, lobolo positions the groom as a receiver and thus lobolo is offered as a demonstration by the groom of his ability to take over from his intended father-in-law in providing for his daughter (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). Therefore, lobolo as a token of appreciation, although commonly said to be offered in recognition of the bride's family, it is actually a recognition and appreciation of the father's efforts. Contrary to the discourse of gratitude that underlies the construction of lobolo as a token of appreciation, the reward discourse positions a man who pay lobolo as someone conferring a reward on the mother.

In the example below, Mandla (36) from Johannesburg implies that mothers are responsible for what are seen to be transgressions in their daughters' sexual practices and in particular if there are children as a result of sexual activity. Mothers who succeed in guarding their daughters' virginity are rewarded with a portion of the lobolo as if they have earned it.

> *Mandla: They asked for eight cows. Reason being that if a woman does not have children, the cows that are charged are 11. The eleventh one is for the mother. But if she already has children then there is a difference, they subtract a child, I don't know if one cow means one child and how much that is. But per one child, is minus one cow. So, they charged me 8 cows because she has two children. So, the mother's one was taken out. The mother's one is only included when their child has not yet had children.*

Mandla, in talking about his own experience with paying lobolo and explains how much his in-laws asked for and why they requested the amount that they did. He explains that the lobolo was based on the evidence of his partner's sexual history which was evidenced by her having children. Mupotsa (2008) in her reflection on her own lobolo day, notes the lack of visible signs of pregnancy were assurance to her future in-laws that she was "acceptable… beautiful… not damaged" (para. 23). Mandla explains that if a woman is damaged, for example by the fact that his partner already had two children, it reduces the amount that her family can request for the lobolo. Some authors (Nkosi, 2011; Rudwick & Posel, 2015) have noted that because lobolo has been linked to women's worth, the reduced amount may be considered to be a ranking of women.

The example above shows that it is not only brides who are ranked through the process of lobolo, but their mothers too. The subtraction of the mother's cow is because the pregnancy is considered a failure of the mother to teach her daughter well. Mgwaba and Maharaj (2018) wrote about women's role in educating younger women about how to engage in non-penetrative sex, to prevent pregnancy and preserve their virginity. It is possible to see how Mandla's narrative may be rooted in a vision of the male-headed households as better homes, suggesting that fathers are not only financial providers but also moral guardians and disciplinarians, ensuring that children are raised well (Lesejane, 2005; Morris, 2011). In a related study, Brabeck and Brabeck (2009) point out that some feminist scholars have highlighted that the construction of women as natural caregivers "relegates women to the private space and men to the public" as custodians of justice and in this case morality.

Therefore, it is expected that women raised in female-headed households will be less disciplined in terms of what is considered appropriate or acceptable feminine behaviour. Therefore, the reduction of the lobolo acts as a punitive measure for single mothers of brides-to-be. The construction of lobolo as a reward for mothers implies that some mothers are better than others. It appears as though both mothers and daughters are measured against the bride's previous sexual history.

6.4.2 Lobolo is a woman's honour. Lobolo is often criticised for putting a monetary value on women. Yet, based on the responses of participants in this study, a majority of whom were women, one can postulate that women who participate in lobolo do not always feel oppressed in the participation of lobolo. Instead, what we have seen is that women attach a range of different meanings to their participation. In other words, lobolo serves as a demonstration of what Ma Ndima's said about lobolo and women, namely, lobolo offers women a sense of dignity. Rudwick and Posel (2015) reported that women in their study expressed that they were proud to have a large amount offered for them, as this reflected that their families and their husbands valued them highly. This supports the findings by other scholars who have shown that women are often very supportive of lobolo as a practice that confirms that their husbands value them (see Ansell, 2001; Chiweshe & Chiweshe, 2016). In this study, similar sentiments were expressed by both male and female participants, who said that lobolo honours the woman for whom it is paid. Therefore, lobolo was interchangeably referred to as a woman's honour, pride, and dignity.

Ma Ndima: lobolo is important wena Refiloe, to us ilobolo is a woman's dignity.

The above statement from Ma Ndima, a 67-year-old woman from Cape Town who was married through ukutwala, is a response to a question I had asked regarding the significance of lobolo in the contemporary context. Her response reflects similar views shared by some of the participants, particularly those who were also married through ukutwalwa. Ukutwala refers to marriage by abduction and has been outlawed, as it is considered to be a violation of human rights (Mwambene & Kruuse, 2017). Monyane (2013) states that when a woman (or girl) is abducted for marriage "[t]he girl is closely watched until she gets used to the idea of marriage. … The process involves having sex with the girl, and if she resists force is used" (p. 69). In so doing the man ensures that she would not attempt to escape because as Ma Ndaba points out, once a woman has been abducted, she can never return to be a girl, meaning being a virgin.

> *Ma Ndaba: With us, we knew once you have been to a man, there is no going back to youth. With you, you can live with a man and come back to your father's house and still be a girl. But for us, we knew once you are taken, you will never be a girl again. You must dress like this for the rest of (stands up to demonstrate attire). You will never wear pants again.*

This loss that is experienced by women through ukutwala, as expressed above, suggests that ukutwala positions women in a perpetual state of "sexual servitude" (Monyane, 2013, p. 70). The participants explained that, even though a woman was abducted, she would not be considered a wife if the lobolo had not been sent to her family. Lobolo, which comes post ukutwala, serves to elevate the woman who has been abducted from this position to the position of a wife. Therefore, lobolo affords women a sense of pride, as is articulated by Ma Ndima.

As discussed in chapter 5, when lobolo is sent to the woman's home, most participants expressed that they felt proud on the day, as it meant that they were fully married and now belonged to their new family. In this section, I explore how lobolo is constructed as a reflection of women's worth and how it in turn functions as an apparatus through which women can access honour and pride. In the extract below from Jabulile (44) from Johannesburg, it is evident how this construction of lobolo as honour may translate as intrafamilial competition:

> *Jabulile: In as much as I tried to help my husband out by talking to my family before the lobolo, I was careful actually, it was tricky. I didn't want them to charge him too much but also, I didn't want them to ask for too little. You know these things behind closed doors, as cousins and so on we know and talk about them, so you don't want to be that one "oh shame they paid R15 000 for her". No, you know. As much as the pressure is exhausting you still want to impress.*

Jabulile refers to the cost of lobolo and the challenges of negotiating with one's family the amount to be requested. As discussed in Chapter 5, most women reported that they attempted to influence the amount that would be requested by their families. Jabulile states that part of the challenge with this intervention is finding the balance between what would be financially feasible and one's own positioning amongst peers.

The assertion from Jabulile perhaps illustrates the tendency to associate lobolo with the value of women. It is important to note here how, by equating the amount paid for lobolo to the value of a woman, there is a slippage into a capitalist line of thinking that results in the discourse of selling and buying which suggests some women are "worth" more than others (Shope, 2006)

The discourse of honour and pride expressed above implies that women can only access honour and pride through the actions of men. It is men who determine what is considered honourable. The examples below from Sandile, Sechaba and Khaya express what is part of how the lobolo is negotiated. These negotiations are informed by what is considered within a patriarchal society to be desirable feminine conduct. Sandile (41), a man from Johannesburg, lists some of the other factors considered when negotiating lobolo:

> *Sandile: of course, they will consider not only her educational background but her social background. If she was a busy girl or not. That is why they used to have virginity testing in the old days. Cos if she is a virgin, she is pure, she is expensive, exclusive, you see. So, if a girl has had children, she has to be cheap, she is not proper goods, she is not like a new car, she has been running for a while, she has a few kilometres on her.*

Sandile states that, in addition to consideration of education, there are other factors to be considered with regards to lobolo. Sandile argues that lobolo can be used as an apparatus for ranking women and for objectifying women. For example, Sandile speaks of women as "goods" and "cars", to explain how lobolo is calculated. While most participants rejected the notion of ranking women through lobolo, some of them shared the sentiments that lobolo can be determined by a woman's sexual history. In this example, Sandile makes a direct link between a woman's worth and the amount paid for lobolo. By likening women who have children to used cars, Sandile implies that women, specifically their bodies, are goods to be used by their partners, and once "used" the next partner should not be expected to offer as much in terms of the lobolo.

Sandile constructs lobolo as trade, but he also positions women and their bodies as objects to be owned by their partners. Many scholars have remarked on the inherent problems of policing female

sexuality (see Chiweshe, 2016). The policing of female sexuality, in this case, is not for the benefit of the woman herself, but rather for the benefit of others such as her family and her potential husband. This confirms how lobolo has come to be understood as a custom that reinforces hierarchical relationships between men and women.

In the next examples, although not talking about sexuality, Sechaba and Khaya also describe the women for whom they decided to pay lobolo. Both men describe the qualities and attributes they considered to exemplify what may be considered desirable feminine attributes in a potential bride:

> *Sechaba: when I met my wife, I saw she was very different from the others and then what attracted me even more was that she did not drink alcohol, whereas I am a drinker. And I would see the behaviour of people who drank and the behaviour of people who did not drink. I saw that this person does not drink, and the way she acted towards me, which was showing me respect. And every time I need her, I know where to find her. I think that is what motivated me to reach that decision that I should pay lobolo.*

Sechaba states that his partner was different, possibly implying that she was better than another woman. He then explains what distinguished her from other women is the fact that she does not consume alcohol. Even though he mentions that he consumes alcohol, he implies that this is an undesirable attribute. By mentioning alcohol consumption as a point for consideration when deciding to pay lobolo, he speaks to the association of female alcohol consumption with undesirable female behaviour (see De Visser & McDonnell, 2012; Lyons & Willott, 2008). Farvid, Braun and Rowney (2017) reported that they found this also in a study that focused on the perceptions of 15 young women regarding casual sex. They write that there was an association between alcohol consumption and promiscuity; women who consume alcohol were perceived to

be more willing to engage in casual sex and were often labelled using derogatory terms (Farvid, Braun & Rowney, 2017). In this study, the association of alcohol consumption with undesirable female behaviour and morals were mainly mentioned by male participants. For Sechaba it was his partner's abstinence from alcohol and her approach towards him that made her "different".

He suggests that he disapproves of all people who drink, and states that he has observed the behaviour of people who drink and those who do not. He then adds that he observed that because his partner does not consume alcohol, she treats him in the way he prefers to be treated and he could find her whenever he needed to know where she was. This desire to know his partner's whereabouts show Sechaba's assumption that women who may have a life outside the home may be transgressing the boundaries of what is considered desirable feminine behaviour.

Khaya also echoes Sechaba's views that a good woman spends her time at home and does not consume alcohol. Khaya also adds other qualities of good women:

> *Khaya: what attracted me to her was her mannerism, she is a gentle person. She was someone I realised that I could build a home with. You know sometimes as a woman you should not be someone who talks too much. She must know that a man is a man. I wouldn't want to marry someone aggressive; you know some women can beat a man up. I didn't want someone who I will leave in my house to go to work and come back and find her drinking Redds, drunk. No! That is not a wife, that is not someone you would pay lobolo for.*

Both examples confirm the kind of woman who is considered to be a good wife. The construction of a good wife is embedded within norms and discourses of what is considered a good woman. The attributes of a good woman are knowing her place; she does not talk too much and is not

aggressive or antagonistic. In other words, a good woman does not transgress these gender norms with behaviour such as acting violently and drinking alcohol (Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala & Buikema, 2007). South Africa is amongst the countries with the highest reports of both alcohol and violence, particularly violence against women by their intimate partners (van Niekerk, 2015). Violence against women tends to be mainly framed as "corrective", whether it be by an intimate partner correcting the behaviour of a woman who is regarded as not "knowing her place" (Hungwe, 2006) or by a stranger who sees himself as correcting the behaviour or appearance of a woman who is perceived to be transgressing the accepted gender norms. In the above examples, lobolo is constructed as a reward for women who display what is considered to be desirable feminine attributes, and in this way, it can be used as an apparatus for policing women's behaviour.

6.4.3 Lobolo is not paying for help. Marriages are often hetero-patriarchal, asymmetrical, and inherently difficult for women (Chiweshe, 2018; Cornwall, 2005). For example, Harrison and Montgomery (2001) found that, in general, women reported fearing marriage. Some of the reasons mentioned centred around fear of the unknown, coupled with what they have been told about the difficulties of marriage (Harrison & Montgomery, 2001). Ironically, marriage is described as difficult and simultaneously necessary, therefore it is important for women to aspire to it and to preserve and protect it.

In this section, I explore how marriage as a goal for women is used to normalise inequality in the home. Inequality in marriage presents itself in various ways, as we have seen in the examples that were presented by the participants in this study who mostly mentioned the everyday living arrangements after the lobolo. The examples provided by most participants centred around the

decision of who would perform and who receive labour, and we read from the participants how lobolo was used by their partners to legitimise inequality when it comes to housework. In the example below, Ma Ndima from Cape Town describes what the day of a married woman would look like:

> *In our days, a man would tell you: I will not have a working wife. Yours is to build my home. I will send you money, you must make sure you look after the home. You cook, you clean, you fetch water from the stream, all that with a baby on your back. Now I see how you girls are living, that thing we were doing was not life. It was oppression. You work like a slave for the family you are married into.*

Ma Ndima argues that she recognised back then that the nature of marriage appeared to disadvantage women. She said that a women's life was enclosed in her home because many were forbidden by their husband to work outside the home. Not only were women limited to working in the home, she explains, but the work was also strenuous as women were responsible for the maintenance of the home and childcare. Ma Ndima's narrative suggests that women who are getting married now have more choices than she had when she got married. However, this is not always the case, as has been shown by numerous scholars who document that housework and childcare is still largely women's responsibility (Morison, 2011; Nourani, Seraj, Shakeri & Mokhber, 2019). Helman and Ratele (2016) found that even in families that claim to be egalitarian, life is still to a large extent reliant on heteropatriarchal gender norms when it comes to the division of labour.

The narratives shared by other (younger) female participants did not reflect the privilege alluded to by Ma Ndima. For example, Mapaseka, a 36-year-old woman from Johannesburg, explained

how lobolo changed her life with her partner. Mapaseka reflects below on some of the challenges she has experienced in her relationship with her husband:

> *Before we got married, he was a decent guy. When we were dating, he was, trust me. And I remember at some point I said to him "you lied to me, you deceived me because had I known that you would refuse to wash your... when you use them you won't want to wash them, had I known that part, I wouldn't have married you. So, you deceived me because when you were visiting my place, if I had washed up everything and packed and you were the last to eat, you won't put it in the sink, you washed it but today you put it there". And I've asked him, "but what's going... are your hands, you know, painful or something or what's... you're allergic to the water or what's going on?". And then he would say "but I'm married, why should I wash the dishes when I have a wife, why did I pay lobolo if I'm going to still have to do my dishes". So, now I just leave it because what can I say? So that's just, ja neh. So, I think [about] what we eat, then I prepare and then I have to serve them [the children] and then I have to take the, I have to take the plate to him. Then when he's done, he just puts it there next to him and I have to go and take it and wash it. So, if I sleep early, then he comes back, he eats, then he just puts the plate on the sink, and I will find it in the morning. It's one plate or just one cup. Yes, so these are the things that always made me feel that I cannot, I cannot, I cannot. I don't want to be responsible for anybody, you see, this is why I always thought that I won't make a good wife.*

In Mapaseka's narrative, it appears that the husband links the payment of lobolo to his expectation that the wife will perform housework. Paying lobolo absolves him of having to perform any housework, as those are the duties of the wife. Mapaseka suggests that her partner constructs lobolo as a down payment for a lifetime exemption from washing dishes. Mapaseka suggests that her husband uses lobolo to excuse himself from doing what is thereby considered a woman's job (Helman & Ratele, 2016; Singh & Mukherjee, 2018), even though this is a task that he performed

before they got married. By asking why he should wash dishes since he has paid lobolo, Mapaseka's husband may be relying on the notion that men and women have different gendered roles which are established through the payment of lobolo. The change in the man pointed out by Mapaseka was also reported by Harrison and Montgomery (2001) in their study, in which women reported that their husband had changed after marriages. Lamont (2014) explains that marriage is a desire to fit into heteronormative roles, therefore married couples tend to conform by those gender roles, as compared to cohabiting couples who tend to be more egalitarian.

While this change is often negative on the part of the men, it is unsurprising in the sense that lobolo is not only a gendered process but also a gendering process. In other words, through lobolo men and women assume particular roles, and the roles that men play during the lobolo process (to provide the resources for the procedure) are perpetuated in the relationship. Women are evaluated on their meekness and submissiveness during the lobolo, and this is expected to be carried out in the marriage. It appears that Mapaseka has tried to challenge the inequality in her relationship. Mapaseka's construction of a good wife as someone who not only serves as she does, but someone who delights in taking care of others, is a sentiment that was shared across narratives and is consistent with the traditional consideration of a woman's domestic abilities in lobolo negotiations (Rudwick & Posel, 2015). Simultaneously, Mapaseka perhaps recognises her husband's behaviour to be linked to problematic heteronormative gender discourse that results in an unequal division of labour in the home. This is evidenced by her confronting her husband regarding the burden of having to take care of everyone. Mapaseka finds this construction of the good wife burdensome, but it nevertheless appears she has internalised it and has found herself wanting in this respect.

The following extract is from Khaya from Cape Town, who also spoke to the idea that good wives are women who can take care of a household:

> *Refiloe: How did you come to the decision that it is time for you to pay lobolo?*
>
> *Khaya: Well, there are things that I can't do, like look after the home, sweep here and there, things like that.*
>
> *Refiloe: Before you got paid lobolo who used to sweep the floor?*
>
> *Khaya: I guess I didn't sweep; I was busy. You see I work I run the fruit and veg here outside. So, at times the house would remain dirty, I wouldn't have time to even make the bed or even wash my laundry. So, it was time I found someone to help me.*

Khaya's extract suggests that one of the reasons men pay lobolo is linked to the need for a woman who will take care of the household. The reasoning for wanting to pay lobolo thus reveals a kind of heteronormative, patriarchal understanding of gender roles within marriage –men work outside the home and women take care of the home (Atkinson, Greenstein & Lang 2005). Even though Khaya runs a fruit and vegetable stall at his home, he nevertheless considers this to be working outside the home, and therefore he felt he needed someone who will be at home to help with taking care of the house.

In the extracts below Sechaba and Jabulani describe a good wife as someone who not only helps with taking care of the home but is someone who would be of help all around including helping their husband achieve their goals.

Sechaba: I needed to be more focused. I wanted someone who will assist me in getting my goals. Actually, I can say, I wanted a helper.

Jabulani: I decided that it is time I pay lobolo when I decided that I wanted to start a business. When you are a businessperson, you must not have many girlfriends because you need to focus and make money, and I know that girlfriends do not assist a man on any idea that they might have.

Sechaba and Jabulani's description of what a good partner is, exemplifies the argument by gender scholars that marriage is more beneficial to men (see Dempsey, 2002; Mwatsiya, 2019). Msiza (2019), states even though the gendered relations have evolved it is still expected for women to choose between their careers and their family life. In the above quotes it and the rest of their narratives, Sechaba and Jabulani did not mention the possibilities of their wives having lives outside the marriage or their goals or ambitions which supports the notion that women's lives are subsumed into their husbands' lives and/or the families. The societal demands on women, once they become wives, are inconsistent with the goals and expectations of women who wish to have carers or to study further (Chisale, 2017).

Jabulani, a self-employed male from Cape Town, stated that his decision to pay lobolo for his partner with whom he was already living was so that he could distinguish her from a girlfriend. Jabulani suggests that a girlfriend might not be committed to assisting a man with his business goals. The distinction made between girlfriends and wives implies that the status of being a wife is equated with being a better and more supportive woman, in line with the discourse of women who are deserving of being elevated to the status of a wife (James, 2017; Paul & van Dijk, 2016).

The helper discourse embedded within these narratives is not offered as a reflection of men's inability to take care of themselves, but rather is consistent with the assumption that lobolo is compensation to a woman's family for the loss of her labour (Khomari, Tebele & Nel, 2012). Further, the narratives suggest that women's labour is not performed to the benefit of her in-laws but rather should be to the benefit of assisting their husbands with achieving their goals. This indicates a shift in the expected roles of women in marriage, but they are still based on the burden of care.

The above excerpts show that the motivation to get married was directed towards meeting personal needs, such as having someone to assist with the house chores, help start with starting a business or achieving a goal. The examples from Khaya, Sechaba and Jabulani demonstrate how men can use lobolo as an apparatus for realizing masculine positions that are consistent with heteronormative gender norms, for example, that men are providers and women are carers.

It appears from the examples discussed in this section that women for whom lobolo has been offered are expected to organise their lives around their homes in ways very similar to those articulated by Ma Ndima, who perceives marriages today to be easier for women. Perhaps, with more opportunities to work and greater access to education, it may appear that women's lives have improved. Yet the examples above suggest that women are still expected to organise their careers around their homes and their husbands' goals.

6.5. Lobolo and redemption of undesirable femininities and masculinities

In this section, I consider how lobolo is constructed as redemption. By redemption, I refer to how lobolo is spoken about as redemption for those men and women who are considered to have transgressed what may be considered acceptable gender norms. For example, while pregnancy may be seen as a positive thing, it is more acceptable "within a heterosexual, conjugal relationship" (Chiweshe, 2018, p. 79). Even though motherhood is considered the epitome of womanhood when motherhood is detached from wifehood it has come to be seen as something shameful (Oyěwùmí, 2005b). Single motherhood is often associated with negative outcomes for both mother and child (see Amoeteng & Setlalentoa, 2015; Mkwananzi, 2019; Newlin, 2017). Literature that focuses on single motherhood contributes to this negative discourse of women as always being in need of being saved, even from roles that society has deemed as natural for women.

Thandeka, a 35-year-old female from Johannesburg, speaks to the shame that is associated with having a child before marriage.

> *You know what Fifi, I won't lie to you, I knew the relationship was not going to work but I thought why not, I already have a child at least if I am married, even if I have a second child I can say at least nami ngilotjoliwe (at least lobolo has been paid for me)". The truth is it is easy for a man to pay lobolo for a woman who is still new. But for a man to pay lobolo for someone who has "mileage" means the man must have recognised that the "used goods" are better than the "new stock".*

For Thandeka, as well as for other women in the study, lobolo affirmed their worth, redeeming them into respectable femininity consisting of wifehood and motherhood within wedlock. In this case, marriage may be recognised as more than a legal, religious, or cultural arrangement, but also

as the ideal environment in which to raise children and the morally acceptable platform "for the sexual expression for love" (Singh, 2013, p. 22). Scott and Theron (2017) note that in these ways women may use marriage as a tool to realise "normal and respectable lives" (p. 5). Moreover, Thandeka may be suggesting that by simply stating that lobolo has been paid for her means that people will universally know that she is deserving of respect, even though she may be regarded as "used goods". Thandeka also suggests that there is a hierarchy of femininities, in which outside marriage she would be near the bottom. By agreeing to have someone pay lobolo for her, even while knowing that the relationship would not work, allows her to move up this hierarchy towards respectable femininity. Rudwick and Posel (2015) note in a related observation that women who have been cohabiting expressed a desire for their partners to pay lobolo so that they could escape the discourse of used goods.

This discourse of lobolo as redemption also extends to men. Men can choose to pay lobolo to mitigate being considered disrespectful men (Hunter, 2016b). In the below extract, Mandla from Johannesburg was referring to being unemployed and how lobolo may act to redeem his hegemonic masculine position in the home:

> *Mandla: you know, even though now I am not working, I tidy the house, yes but I do not expect for my wife to come back home and she finds that there is something I have not done like maybe dishes or cooking and then she asks me, as a woman, "why haven't you cooked". You know I still have that thing that "hey! I paid lobolo for her". Even though I shouldn't feel entitled to her cooking for me. But we know when a woman leaves her home for marriage, she is advised to take care of her home. These are basic teachings, and these are good teachings that even though we are in modern times we should not abandon those teachings. Then I cannot be asked ukuthi why I did not cook. I cannot be asked why I did*

not clean the house. That's not my job, I do these things as you found me now doing them because I am at home bored and I don't mind helping out.

Lyonette and Crompton (2014, p. 14) state that there is an assumption "as women become 'more like men' and take up paid work, then men will become 'more like women' and undertake more domestic work". However, this is too often not the case. Women who work outside their homes are still expected to do domestic work as is also shown in this example above. For Mandla, even though the roles have switched in that his wife is the sole provider, he argues that because he paid lobolo he should not be expected to do housework.

Mandla's argument can be explained by the notion that women's contributions, including financial contributions, are seen as supplementing the household income (Lyonette & Crompton, 2014). Therefore, the justification of the construction of the gendered roles in Mandla's excerpt may be the result of an attempt by Mandla to hold on to the gender norms that afford men power and authority in the household. Mandla's comments point to the pervasiveness of heteronormative, patriarchal roles within relationships, which lobolo acts to reinforce, by redeeming those men who may not have the ability to enact other dominant roles associated with hegemonic forms of masculinity.

Mandla's view on gendered positions in the household was echoed by other participants like Koketso. Koketso expressed that unemployment should not be used to challenge a man's position as the head of the home:

Koketso: After we got married, my husband lost his job and I was the sole breadwinner. And something like that can really break a man. Now having gone through that watching

him lose his confidence even after getting a job, ehm I think having the pride of being able to look after me before he lost his job gave him a little bit of comfort that at least he didn't get me for free, at least he did work for this marriage at some point.

Koketso speaks about the psychological impact that unemployment can have on men. She states that the payment of lobolo saved her husband from the "shame" associated with not working (see Du Toit, De Witte & Rothmann, 2018). For Koketso, lobolo is a demonstration and performance of manhood, and that cannot be undone or lost. This construction of a lobolo as a lifetime pass for hegemonic masculine dominance is inconsistent with the literature on masculinities, in which scholars have found that unemployment has a serious impact on men's sense of worth and may raise questions about their role in the family (Malinga, 2015).

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to demonstrate how lobolo functions as an apparatus for constructing femininities and masculinities. The meanings and functions of lobolo as described by the men and women in this study show how lobolo is embedded in and reinforces particular gender norms.

In this chapter I explored participants response to the question "what is lobolo?" or "what is the function of lobolo?". I framed this chapter around the response lobolo is. For the most part the participants response to these questions reflected the commonly understood as what lobolo is rather than their own personal meaning of lobolo. As a result, I explored how these articulations of lobolo serve to frame masculinities and femininities through lobolo.

I begin with a discussion in this chapter with the widely articulated view that lobolo is about bringing families together. I discuss the construction of families in this chapter focusing on

Constructions of gender to highlight how the notion of bringing families together is centerd on the 'breaking' of one family, which is compensated through the lobolo. In so doing women are positions as the joining force between the two families. This positioning of women is also confirmed by the events discussed in chapter five, in that the success of the marriage and thus the union of the families is often the burden of women. Due to this burden, I also show that the motivations expressed by men and women for why lobolo is significant are underpinned by what is considered acceptable gendered roles. From some of the female participants' narratives it appears that in joining their husbands' families their lives were also subsumed into their husband's lives. While men spoke about the importance of having a partner in relation to their goals and needs, women spoke about the significance of marriage for the greater good.

The articulations of lobolo suggests that while women and men are active roles in the lobolo processes. The articulations illustrate the view that men as active and women as passive. The constructions of masculinities through lobolo is dependent on men's ability to perform in particular the expectation through lobolo. Such as accumulating resources needed for lobolo and paying it. In other words, the construction of lobolo as a man's commitment and of lobolo as a token of appreciation both centralise the grooms as the active participants in the lobolo process and turns brides into passive participants through whom the lobolo takes place.

Chapter 7: Lobolo As Legitimising Gendered Positions

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore how lobolo, as a matrimonial custom, acts as an apparatus for legitimising particular gendered identities and roles. In chapters 5 and 6 I discussed the gendered and gendering nature of lobolo. Chapter 5 highlighted the gendered nature of the theatricals of the lobolo, showing that the process of lobolo allows for the negotiation and performance of gendered roles. Chapter 6 illustrated that lobolo reproduces heteronormative and hegemonic gender discourses such as male providers and submissive females. In this chapter, I take these insights further and show how lobolo legitimises gendered identities through marriage.

As discussed in chapter 2, marriage is recognised as an institution of fundamental social and legal importance (Perumal, 2011). According to Marso (2010, p. 146), marriage has been linked to notions of respectability, and "to be married is to practice legitimate and appropriate sex, provide a suitable home for children, and participate in the promise of a bright future anchored in secure and stable values". In other words, marriage has been linked to social status, in which married couples (particularly heterosexual couples) are considered to subscribe to higher moral standards (see also Scott & Theron, 2017). According to Singh (2013) (heterosexual) marriage is considered to provide an acceptable platform for sexual expression and is considered to be the most suitable environment for reproduction, thereby contributing to the building of societies.

Msibi (2011) argued that marriage becomes a marker of heteronormativity so that people who are not married are considered outside the norm. Chisale (2017) argues that women, particularly black women who are not married, are perpetually juniorised, irrespective of their academic and

professional accolades. Nhlapo (2019, p. 48) states that central to African customary law is the notion that "marriage as a desirable state and an indispensable milestone to everyone's journey of life". This assertion echoes Mbiti's (1969, p. 130) remarks that "[one's] failure to get married under normal circumstances means that the person has rejected society, and society rejects him [or her] in return". This assertion suggests that marriage is not simply an agreement between two people, recognised by society and their family but rather that marriage affords one a position in society.

7.2 Doing the right thing/Doing things right

Mohlabane, Gumede and Mokomane (2019, p. 169) found, in a study that sought to examine attitudes towards marriage amongst South Africans aged 16 years and older, that 60% of their participants reported that they were "pro-marriage and tend not to support alternative living arrangements" like cohabitation, which is often referred to by the derogatory term vat-en-sit (take and keep). Even though there is an increase in marriage-like partnerships amongst black South Africans, due to many factors including the cost of lobolo (Mhongo & Budlender, 2012; Moore & Govender, 2013; Rudwick & Posel, 2014), these less formal arrangements are generally not considered acceptable alternatives.

Mfecane (2018a) argues that, while many black South Africans observe cultural practices such as lobolo, they do so mainly for what can be gained socially from doing so, and not necessarily out of a sense of commitment to gender accountability. He adds that "gender today, although it is achieved in conformity with African 'traditional' social structures, is seen primarily as an individual accomplishment". Mfecane (2018b) explains that some men may participate in

ulwaluko or lobolo not because they are committed to the establishment of an independent household, being rooted in the community, and rebuilding their fathers homestead; instead, many men now are more interested in the social privileges that come with participating in the rituals such as "marriage, respect from women, and unrestricted access to food, meat, alcohol, and sex" (p. 24). In other words, lobolo can act as an apparatus for accessing such gains as respectability, belonging, and cultural legitimacy. In the example below, Lethabo (37), a married woman from Johannesburg, describes lobolo as the necessary channel through which one can/ establish an acceptable relationship:

> *We decided that whatever they want, we will just give them because we wanted to get married and we know you can't get married without eh without going through with lobolo it's, it's kind of, I don't know. In our African culture, it's kind of unheard of to just, of course, people do it. People do vat en sit [cohabit] and whatever but it feels a bit disrespectful that okay you just decided to walk out of your home and go and live with some man and he hasn't even shown himself to your family, you know that type of thing. We didn't want to do that.*

This statement from Lethabo shows that, for her, lobolo is seen as a means to an end. By stating that they could not get married without going through lobolo, Lethabo refers to the cultural validity of her marriage rather than to lobolo being a prerequisite for legal marriage. The significance of lobolo in the marriage process is further demonstrated by her likening marriage without lobolo to "vat-en-sit", which is a derogatory term often used to refer to cohabitation. Lethabo mentions that she and her partner did not want to cohabit, and she speaks of cohabitation as a disrespectful practice. The understanding of lobolo here is as a demonstration of respect for the bride's family, and it is commonly described as a man's demonstration of respect for his in-laws (see Dlamini,

1983; Posel, 1994; Shope, 2006). Yet it appears from the examples in this study that lobolo is about the respectability of women. Moreover, it is evident that gaining permission to live with her partner can only be possible through the action of the man – the paying of lobolo – which once again entrenches the idea of male domination and the juniorisation of women.

Baloyi (2016, p. 1) argues that informal unions that are not founded on lobolo are a "threat to the stability of the African marriages [and families]", further describing cohabitation as a "threat" to African marriage. Although on the rise, cohabitation is not considered an acceptable alternative to marriage (Baloyi, 2016; Moore & Govender, 2013; Posel & Rudwick, 2014b; Rudwick & Posel, 2014). "Vat-en-sit", as expressed by Lethabo and other participants, is considered to be something that is divorced from being an African and is seen as a Western phenomenon. Baloyi (2016) argues that cohabitation is symptomatic of moral degeneration in South Africa. However, Baloyi (2016) fails to consider the many points that have led to the increase in cohabitation, such as the effects of colonialism and Apartheid on the African family. Many of these apartheid policies were designed to dismantle the very family structures Baloyi is speaking of through migrant labour (see Maqubela, 2016; Ramphele & Richter, 2006). The current state of families and marriages is not a moral degeneration as Baloyi (2016) would argue, instead it may be considered as evidence of a historical moral degeneration that served to dismantle African families (Kalule-Sabiti, Palamuleni, Makiwane & Amateng, 2007).

The narratives shared by the participants in this study illustrated a desire to form not only what may be considered a moral union – marriage unions legally or religiously – but also a desire for culturally legitimate marriages. Legitimate marriages are unions that are not only recognised by

law, but also by families and communities. In the rest of the chapter, I consider how cultural legitimacy affords men and women the privilege to access other forms of social status.

7.3. Proper weddings and real marriages

It appears that while lobolo was described as an important custom by most participants, there is also a level of uncertainty regarding its function in the formalisation of a union. For example, Nthabi (27), from Johannesburg found it difficult to define her marital status. This is how she described her relationship:

> *Nthabi: I stay with the baby daddy, "husband", partner whatever you may call it. Partial husband? Actually, I don't know what we are, we have not spoken about it since the lobolo. We are just in that we don't know if we are married or engaged or what space.*

Nthabi's hesitation with regard to defining her relationship reflects a general uncertainty about the function of lobolo. She mentions that they have not discussed the status of their relationship since lobolo, implying that is up to the couple to define their marital status following lobolo. While lobolo is recognised under the RCMA, as part of formalising marriage in accordance with customary law, most of the participants did not explicitly mention that they were or intended to be in customary marriages. For some lobolo is insufficient as a proper wedding but necessary for the establishment of real marriages.

By real marriages, I refer to participants' reference to marriages that are recognised by both sides of the family, through the offering and receiving of lobolo. These are juxtaposed with marriages where the couple would have a church ceremony. While the white wedding was not recognised by

all as sufficient on its own, it was constructed as a proper wedding. It was recognised as an event that demonstrated that a couple was officially married

Aviwe (42), a female from Johannesburg, narrates that after the lobolo and all the activities associated with lobolo, there was an expectation for her to have a "proper wedding":

> *Aviwe: So, after that day, the lobolo and all the traditional stuff his cousin called me and said: we have seen the pictures, so you had a wedding without us. Now you must have a proper wedding so we can all come.*

While Aviwe does not elaborate on what a "proper wedding" is, it can be assumed that a proper wedding would be a grand party such as a white wedding and not the "traditional stuff". It is common for black people to have multiple wedding ceremonies (Erlank, 2014; Mupotsa, 2014, 2015b). The differentiation between the so-called white wedding and the so-called traditional wedding was evident in most of the narratives. While most participants mentioned these different ceremonies for formalising their unions, the role and purpose of the different events varied across the narratives. Lobolo and the events related to it were considered a significant aspect of the matrimonial process, yet the narratives below illustrate the wide range of different meanings attached to lobolo.

Khaya from Cape Town made the distinction between a Xhosa wedding and a western wedding, in a response to my question about events following the lobolo:

> *Khaya: Yes, we still have to have a wedding. Perhaps for you, a real wedding is with a white dress. But for us, the real wedding is the Xhosa wedding. That is the part where they*

are now expected to use the lobola money to buy gifts for my wife, for our home. Once that is done, we can say you are married.

The ceremony described by Khaya as the Xhosa wedding is what other participants described as the final step of the lobolo process, discussed in chapter 5 as ukwendiswa. This is what has come to be known as the traditional wedding and in some cases functions as an addition to the white wedding, rather than as a separate event. Mbunyuza-Memani (2018), reflecting on the Mzansi Magic show *Our Perfect Wedding*, notes how the so-called traditional wedding which is often shown in the second segment of each episode, is hardly given adequate screen time. He adds "[t]he word 'traditional' is mentioned as a bridge between scenes. That is, between the white wedding and the final segment of the show" (Mbunyuza-Memani, 2018, p. 35). In this way, the traditional wedding and the customs associated with it, such as lobolo, are presented as inferior events in the matrimonial customs.

Khaya mentions that the white wedding is regarded as a real wedding by some people. In so doing, Khaya distances himself from the ways in which the white wedding has become more dominant than what is called traditional weddings. Khaya states that when the customary ceremonies have been completed, then the couple is married. This is also echoed by other participants who, like Khaya, expressed that they were married even though they had not formally registered their marriages. Lucky mentioned that he believed that lobolo was sufficient as a matrimonial custom:

Lucky: … the white wedding was for my wife. I was satisfied with just the lobolo. After the lobolo, I considered her my wife, after the lobolo that is when I started sleeping with her, but she wanted the white wedding.

Lucky states that he and his wife had different opinions with regards to which custom signified that they were married. For example, according to Lucky lobolo is the transition while for his wife this was marked by the white wedding. Saying that the white wedding was so significant for his wife confirms the commonly held notion that the wedding is for the bride (Kimport, 2012; Mupotsa, 2015a, 2015b) and the marriage is for the man. According to Lucky, once he considered himself to be married, he permitted himself to have sex with her, even though she did not recognise that they were married or particularly wanted to have a wedding. Lucky's construction of lobolo as a matrimonial custom implies that lobolo allows access to such sexual privileges that are limited to married couples.

Other participants did not regard lobolo as the establishment of a marriage, but rather a custom that is completed in the process of getting married. Mandla, a male participant from Johannesburg, responded when I asked him if he was married since he referred to his partner as his wife throughout the interview:

> *Mandla: No! No! we are not married yet. The lobolo was for her and her family. For me, we will be married once we exchange rings, for my wife to be a Mrs, for us to walk down the aisle you see. Then we will be officially married.*

Mandla explains that he did not consider himself to be married, because they had not completed the necessary steps for a real marriage. It appears that Mandla constructs marriage within a western framework, as illustrated by his reference to western customs such as walking down the aisle and the exchange of rings (Monger, 2004; Singh, 2018). Mandla also refers to the idea of marriage as

a transformation for women, symbolised by the change from Ms/Miss to Mrs. and mentions that, unless they perform the other customs beyond lobolo, his partner will not become a Mrs.

Even though Mandla does not recognise lobolo as marriage, he refers to his partner as his wife to demarcate their roles in the home in which they are living together. Throughout his narrative, Mandla relies on the heteropatriarchal norms embedded within lobolo to position himself and his partner in the narrative. Miller and Sassler (2012) state that heterosexual married couples tend to conform to gender norms when it comes to how the housework is divided. Therefore, even though Mandla does not consider himself to be married, the living arrangement he sets up with his partner is like that of married couples, roles that he sometimes draws on to justify some of his actions.

Koketso also speaks about the role of lobolo in the formalisation of the relationship. She adds that, for her, the customary practice of lobolo did not serve as the establishment of marriage.

> *After mahadi [lobolo] there were suggestions of us living together but for me, that was out of the question. For me, mahadi was an engagement and not a wedding. I wanted to be in a white gown, I've always wanted one. I wanted to get married in a church because I am a Christian and I believe that marriage is about coming together with God in the centre of it. It was important to do mahadi, but also this was as equally important. I mean some of his family members challenged us saying why do you want to have a white wedding, cos you [are] now married after mahadi. But that is not what we wanted as a couple, we wanted to have a white wedding.*

Koketso makes a distinction between lobolo and what she refers to as the "wedding", which would allow them to live together. Even though she states that the lobolo was as important as the Christian ceremony, the above suggests that for her there was a greater significance in the Christian

ceremony. This is exemplified by her lack of elaboration on what the significance of lobolo was, as she has with the Christian ceremonies. Perhaps for Koketso, the white wedding had personal significance. She mentioned the desire to be in a white gown, while lobolo was regarded as more important for the families. The emphasis on the white wedding, while it may be linked to her religious beliefs, also reflects a historical misrecognition of customary marriages as legitimate marriages (see Mupotsa, 2014; Posel, 1994). The perceived illegitimacy of customary marriages means the associated processes are also seen as illegitimate and can only be legitimised through engaging in the western white wedding in addition to the customary ceremonies.

The white wedding, like the lobolo theatricals, reinforces lobola as a platform for the performance of heteronormativity (Fairchild, 2014; Kimport, 2012; Mupotsa, 2015b). Mupotsa (2015b, p. 100) argues that the Western marriage proposal and engagement ring as a symbol of romance can be traced to "ways in which race ideologically works in producing the wedding tradition itself". She adds that the white wedding, including the engagement (diamond) ring, were markers of civilisation and the attainment of modernity amongst black couples in the metropolitan areas. James (2017, p. 1) explored the association of marriage with the status of "South Africa's new black middle class", asserting that marriage, through the ability to meet the lobolo obligations as well as the costs of the weddings, is an expression of mobility towards the middle class. The white wedding is not a mere ceremony but may also be a demonstration of status and upward social mobility (Erlank, 2014; James, 2017; Van Dijk, 2010, 2017). While these festivities, as illustrated in the examples, were considered to be elements necessary for proper weddings, they were nevertheless regarded as insufficient on their own to constitute real marriages.

Mupotsa (2015b) notes that the discourse of the big day constructs the bride as a celebrity for the day, in which she performs this role through various entertainment rituals that focus the gaze on her. This idea of the wedding day being about the bride was reflected also in Lucky's narrative above who also draws on this notion of the white wedding as being about the bride when he explains why he had a white wedding when he believed that lobolo was sufficient for formalizing the marriage. Jabulile reflects on the financial implications of having multiple ceremonies:

> *Jabulile: I had your modern wedding, at a venue, a private venue, very expensive wedding, you know. You want the day to be beautiful and a month later you are starting to fight because I think also, it's only now I look back, I think we did not give ourselves enough chance, after lobola you know. After the lobola you need to breathe a bit, you know, but after the negotiations were concluded, we had lunch and then my mother told them we want an actual wedding, a white wedding.*

Jabulile also constructs the white wedding as the actual wedding. She comments on the fact that the cost of the white wedding can have a stressful effect on the marriage. Jabulile reflects on the desire for the white wedding to be a "beautiful" day, a discourse that is not often associated with customary ceremonies. Mupotsa (2015b, p. 185) notes that the association of the white wedding with beauty may be extended to notions of freedom which may be expressed as romance and choice, whereas other customs such as the traditional union are associated with "the past, the communal and unfreedoms". At the centre of the white wedding is the couple, particularly the bride. The moment of being or becoming a bride is seen as the epitome of feminine beauty and sexuality. However, being a bride is a temporal embodiment of this ideal feminine identity, because one is a bride only for that "big day" (Mupotsa, 2015a).

Perhaps it is this idea of the fleeting perfect moment that has contributed to the industry that creates elaborate and costly weddings (Arend, 2016; Carter & Duncan, 2017). For black brides, this is exacerbated by the fact that the images of the perfect day and the perfect bride are generally associated with white femininities (Mbunyza-Memani, 2018; Mupotsa, 2015a). It can be noted that the black brides assimilate white femininities through the embodiment of white beauty standards such as having synthetic straight hair on their wedding day. Even though some participants argued that the white wedding is just a big party to celebrate the marriage, the time invested in it and the finances dedicated to it suggest that the white wedding is perhaps more significant to many women than they acknowledge.

7.4 Becoming husbands and wives

Marriage customs, including lobolo, have received a great deal of attention and are generally understood as a transformative process. For instance, the (white) wedding is seen as a rite of passage for girls into womanhood (Bambacas, 2002; Mupotsa, 2015b). The focus in the existing literature has been on how marriage customs are symbolic of the transition from girlhood to womanhood and wifehood. This focus is exemplified by the fascination with the bridal image (the dress, the hair, the demure mannerisms), as well as women's decision about whether to change their surnames or not (Singh, 2018; Twenge, 1997). The fascination with the notion of "maiden" surnames within an African context is rather peculiar, given that the phenomenon of changing surnames is a result of the western influence on Africa (Sheilk, 2014). Scholars have linked women's loss of identity to the changing of their surnames when they get married (Boxer & Gritsenko, 2005; Hoffnung, 2006; Singh, 2018; Twenge, 1997). Kunene (1995) explains that this recognition of women's identity has always been a part of African norms, referring specifically to

Nguni people. Kunene (1995) adds that even if a woman is married her surname did not change, it was only her children who would carry their father's surname as they belong to the father, and she to her own people.

This notion that the changing of surnames was a western practice was mentioned by several participants but more explicitly expressed by Sibusiso, a married man from Johannesburg who argued that the African concept of marriage does perpetuate the erasure of women's identity

> *Sibusiso: You know this thing of the surname change came with the West. Like the double-barrel thing Madikizela-Mandela. My mother for example she Ma Mchunu. That is her maiden surname and that is what everyone calls her. Her surname does not die. Ya, the papers have something else but that's for insurances (laughs), that's not her. It is this white system that came and changed everything. Like when you are married you must now change your surname. In isiZulu, we don't have Mam So and So we have Ma So and So. Let me explain. Imagine my brothers and I out without wives and someone calls Mam Madondo, which one? Imagine if you are in a polygamous marriage and all your wives are Mam Madondo, what confusion. Instead, people remain Ma Zondo, Ma Dlamini, Ma Mbatha and so on, even if they are all married to me. Let's stop letting white people confuse us with their traditions.*

Sibusiso argues that the western influence has confused how people understand African marriage, in which a women's sense of identity dies through the assumption of her husband surname. He references the use of the term "Mam So" to refer to a married woman, where the Mam is supposed to translate to Mrs Sibusiso goes on to explain that in Isizulu there is no Mam' meaning that there is no such thing as a Mrs which he explains is a title with legal significance but not culturally recognised. Robnett, Wetheimer and Tenebaum, (2018) state that women in western communities may be compelled to adopt their husbands' surname as the deviation from this norm may be

regarded as a lack of commitment to the marriage. For women in Africa, in which customary marriages were regarded as invalid and sometimes even immoral (Possel, 1994; Sheik, 2014), it was important (socially and legally) for marriage to conform to western customary practices of marriage certificates and even the changing of surnames (Hungwe, 2006).

While Sibusiso implies a more egalitarian construction of marriage, his argument suggests that women's social identities are limited to their surnames. He fails to recognise that even though women may retain their identity by keeping their surname, women's lives in marriage often get subsumed into their husbands' lives and their identity attached to his and his children. In this way, Sibusiso only speaks to the tertiary issues of how marriage through lobolo position women and how that impacts on the micro-interactions between men and women.

The second point that can be lifted from Sibusiso's quote is the differences between cultural and legal recognition of the marriage customs. Other participants alluded to similar tensions when talking about the ceremonies they would have in formalising their union. Participants in this study distinguished between lobolo processes and the wedding itself, stating that both lobolo and the wedding served important functions in the journey of becoming husbands and wives. The white wedding is often described as the proper wedding and was frequently presented as a marker of having completed all the requirements to be considered married. This was exemplified by the fact that some participants had not registered their marriages (even though they had met all requirements under the customary marriages act) because they were still trying to accumulate money for the white wedding, which was in some narratives presented as a prerequisite for civil marriages.

Despite the perceived significance of the white wedding or the church ceremonies, most participants expressed that a marriage that was not established through lobolo is not a real marriage. Even if the marriage is legally valid it cannot be considered a legitimate marriage. In the rest of this chapter, I examine how this construction of lobolo as a legitimising practice also serves to legitimise some gendered positions. I will focus on two of these roles, namely the position of a makoti and the position of a father, as they were the most frequently mentioned across the narratives.

I argue that lobolo affords those who participate in it a sense of cultural legitimacy, through the roles that are assumed and adopted through participation. In the first section titled "Brides, wives and abomakoti" I discuss the gendered positions that reflect the evolution of becoming brides, then wives and makotis through lobolo. Each of these positions represents a range of constructions of a feminine ideal. In the second section titled "Husbands and fathers", I discuss the roles that men assume through participating in lobolo.

7.4.1 Brides, wives and abomakoti. The terms brides, wives, and abomakoti refer to the various stages in the evolution of the feminine subject during the matrimonial process. The bride is a temporary position, an image of idealised femininity (Mupotsa, 2014, 2015b), central to the matrimonial event. The bride in the lobolo process appears docile, she is spoken for in the negotiations, she is trained and made into what a man needs – a wife. Brides, on the other hand, are representations of idealised femininities – be it a perception of the beauty and purity of the white dress and veil in a traditional white wedding, or in discussions of women's possible reproductive labour in lobolo. Wives can be considered the embodiment of these idealised

feminine attributes and behaviour patterns. Throughout this thesis, I have discussed the construction of femininities in relation to being a bride (chapter 5) and becoming a wife (chapter 6). I have argued that lobolo is embedded in heteronormativity and that it perpetuates femininities in the persons of brides and wives. In this section, I will focus on the construct of becoming and being a makoti. While the term makoti can be translated as bride or daughter-in-law, the term has a much richer meaning. I refer here to a woman's position as a makoti, as one that comes with having gone through lobolo. Below Jabulani (36), a male from Cape Town, describes some of the dos and don'ts of what he referred to as an umfazi, which can be translated to mean woman or wife:

> *Jabulani: When you agree to have lobolo paid for you, you agree to move from one stage to the next. Us Xhosa people, I cannot speak for others but for us, a wife does not have side relationships with men. A wife must not have spent all night at a tavern drinking alcohol. A wife does not meet up with all sorts of men. A wife goes to church. A wife does not have friends that are girls. By girls I mean women who are not married. Just like a man has no business talking to boys who are occupied with matters of dating, a wife also has no business talking to women who are not married. What does she have in common with girls?*

While Jabulani suggests that these dos and don'ts are for a Xhosa wife, these seem to be part of more general sets of expectations for how women are expected to conduct themselves. For example, he refers to the kinds of relationships married women can have, the places they can and cannot frequent. Jabulani states that a married woman cannot be friends with girls. The notion that lobolo is a rite of passage into adulthood was a common one in most of the narratives, as discussed in the previous sections. Jabulani's statements regarding how wives are supposed to act in public can be interpreted through what we know to be considered desirable feminine behaviour. For

example, having multiple romantic or sexual relationships is considered more acceptable for men (Hunter, 2005) than for women. The same can be said about alcohol consumption, it is more acceptable for men than for women to drink.

There is a long history of attaching a moral judgement to women who consume alcohol (see De Visser & McDonnell, 2012; Lyons & Willot, 2008). Alcohol consumption is, on the other hand, often considered to be acceptable for men, and even a marker of masculinity (Dumbili, 2016; Rich, Nkosi & Morojele, 2015). Holloway, Valentine and Jayne (2009) note that due to fear of judgement some women confine their alcohol consumption to their homes while men consume alcohol in public spaces.

Koketso below suggests that being a wife is not only about public appearances but also a personal transformation which she states is a sacrificial transformation.

> *Koketso: I think as women we sacrifice our lives. After your family receives the lobolo and you get married, you let go of your identity you have been raised with. You take on a new identity. You know. I also like Christmas at home with my mom's food. I sacrificed that. I spend the holidays with people I didn't grow up with, they have a different culture they do things I don't understand, some crazy things I must now understand cos they have paid lobolo for me.*

According to Koketso, becoming a wife is less a process of learning to follow a list of dos and don'ts, but rather it is a transformation of one's identity. She maintains that this transformation is only expected of women. It is not intended for both men and women, as Jabulani also confirmed. However, unlike Jabulani who speaks to the public performance of being a wife, Koketso speaks of the private performances of being a wife. In this example, she draws on the understanding that

lobolo is not about the couple but about the "joining" of the families where she positions herself as a makoti to be the bridge between the two families.

While Koketso and others spoke of being a makoti as a sacrificial position, the examples below suggest that being a makoti speaks more to belonging than being a "Mrs". The title Mrs is a reference to being legally married, where makoti is a culturally recognised position that comes with the establishment of marriage through lobolo (Harding, 2016). Below Mapaseka and Ma Ngozi explain the significance of lobolo in securing one's position in the family as a proper wife:

> *Mapaseka: I know today we don't understand this lobolo thing you know, it seems like it is not necessary, but that can be dangerous in that sometimes you will say, "I don't want my husband to pay lobola" and then he doesn't pay lobola and then the family doesn't recognize you as the wife, as the proper wife. And you know us young people now, we have our education, our feminist whatnots and we decide we go to home affairs we sign. We're married and then the family doesn't even know but you have a marriage certificate. And then the family will say, we don't know you because we didn't pay lobola for you*

Mapaseka explains that there are ways of formalising one's marriage, which, although legal, may not be regarded as legitimate, and which may result in challenges for the women in their marriages. Mapaseka also suggests that the decision not to participate in lobolo is influenced by a lack of understanding of the practice, as well as by the adoption of what she regards as "liberal" stances such as feminism. This judgment can be linked to the assumption that feminism is divorced from Africa and inherently contradictory to the ways and customs of Africa (Arndt, 2002). From an African-centred perspective, I can see how an understanding of belonging that is based on the connection with others, would render a marriage agreement between two people witnessed by

strangers as an illegitimate marriage. What is important to note is how Mapaseka implies that it will be women who face the repercussions that might follow from an unrecognised marriage. This was evident in some of the other narratives from men and women. Here is an example from one of the narratives by Ma Ngozi:

> *Ma Ngozi: Another thing that makes lobolo important is that it secures you as a real makoti. If a man didn't pay lobolo and your family doesn't do iduli, he is in his rights to leave you and marry someone else. But if all that is done all the people in the village will stand up for you. Onozakuzaku (negotiators) will call him to order. They will say "yey, don't embarrass us. You sent us to get you a wife, here she is. So, what are you doing with this one? Go back to your wife". He might say, as a sign of respect to his fathers, "no I was not leaving her; we just had a misunderstanding that's all" and then you stay in your home like that.*

Ma Ngozi describes lobolo as a protective custom, which can also be linked to the discourse of lobolo as a demonstration of a man's commitment. In this case, Ma Ndima emphasises the family's recognition of the marriage as a protective factor. Ma Ndima suggests lobolo is not between two people but between two families, the process itself stands as a testament to the legitimacy of the marriage. The narratives above suggest that the status of a makoti is a recognition of the marriage by the family, even if the marriage is not legally registered. The concept of the makoti further demonstrates how an African-centred narrative approach allows for a more nuanced discussion of the constructions of femininities through lobolo. By thinking through narrative, I was able to consider how feminine subjects are constructed and constantly evolving (from brides to wives and makoti) through the process of lobolo. The position of makoti offers accesses to cultural legitimacy, respectability, belonging and security (specifically for women). This finding is

consistent with what has been noted by other scholars (see Mwatsiya, 2019; Van der Watt, 2015), regarding lobolo as giving access to respectability. In the next section, I focus on how masculinities are constructed in lobolo and how men use lobolo to access particular social privileges.

7.4.2 Grooms, husbands, and fathers. Marriage, in the Christian or legal sense, is not generally seen as a transformative process for men. As discussed already, the focus is predominantly on women's transformation. In this thesis, I have argued that lobolo as a marriage custom acts as a transformative process for both men and women. Through lobolo men are afforded more respectable positions within patriarchal societies. While this sense of respectability is not limited to marriages that are contracted through lobolo, it does appear to be more pronounced within the practice of lobolo.

I have argued that in fact men, like women, are shaped through marriage and lobolo, through being positioned as grooms and husbands. In chapter 5, I showed how men negotiate masculinities through the processes around lobolo. As grooms, men occupy various roles such as husband-to-be and son-in-law. In chapter 6 I argued that masculinities (at least hegemonic masculinities) are presented as more stable and unchanging than are femininities. In other words, men do not need constant socialisation or induction into their various roles and are not in a process of becoming like women are seen to be. It appears as though what it means to be a man, a husband or a father is based on the ability to provide and protect. In the example below, Sandile reflects on his experiences of becoming a husband:

> *Sandile: I think I lost a friend in the process, because before this whole thing we were fond of each other. We would kiss and hug each other, go to movies. You know besides the sexual*

chemistry we liked each other. But after the lobolo, I was not good enough. She wanted more from me as a man. As a husband, I had to put something more on the table. It was like we were business partners in this thing. I remember she once asked me "dude what are you bringing to the table really, your plate is empty, and my plate is full". That really broke me, that just broke us.

Sandile describes his journey to becoming a husband through lobolo as an unpleasant one, due to the increased demands placed on him as a result of being a husband. He mentions that by going through lobolo, he was somehow transformed into someone who was not good enough for his partner. Considering that lobolo is generally regarded as a demonstration of financial comfortability and the ability to financially support the family, it is unsurprising that following lobolo there was an expectation from the former partner that he would put more on the table. According to James (2017), the continued financial pressure placed on men through lobolo and during the early stages of marriage can lead to negative experiences of marriage. For Sandile this was expressed as feeling like his relationship was reduced to a business arrangement.

The roles of being a husband and father appear to be embedded within the hegemonic construction of manhood and based on the provider and protector discourse. In other words, men as husbands and fathers are often expected to perform two roles: to provide and to protect. As mentioned in previous chapters, lobolo acts as an apparatus for the perpetuation of these discourses. In this section, I have not focused on the expectation placed on men in their roles as fathers. Instead, I explore how lobolo may be used as access to fatherhood. That's to say lobolo allows men to have legitimate access to their children as was asserted by Jeffreys (1951) who asserts that lobolo is a guarantee of access to children that will be born in the marriage.

In the example below, Thandeka explains the role of lobolo as a way to access fatherhood. She explains that, even though her uncle was legally married, her family did not recognise him as a legitimate husband:

> *Thandeka: I have an Aunt. Her husband didn't pay any lobolo, they just got married in church. That man gets no respect, like no recognition*
>
> *Refiloe: From whom?*
>
> *Thandeka: Form our family. For example, when my cousin got married, he was not invited to the lobolo negotiations. This is my aunt's husband; he raised this girl, but he was not part of the lobolo negotiations. The family argued how will he know what to do, how will he know how to set a price when he couldn't do the same for his own wife?*

Because lobolo legitimises marriages, couples who choose to forgo the lobolo route may be considered unmarried and may face similar condemnation as a cohabiting couple. In this case, Thandeka mentions that her uncle was not allowed to be part of his daughter's lobolo proceedings because he was not recognised to be married. This notion exemplifies the saying "ngawan ke wa dikgomo" which can be translated as saying the children belong to the cattle paid in the form of lobolo or intlawulo. This means that a father can make a claim to his children only after the lobolo has been paid. If the lobolo is paid by another man who is not the biological father the children will belong to him (Lesejane, 2006). In this way, lobolo not only legitimises the marriage but also legitimises fatherhood, by affording men rights to their children (Hofferth & Anderson, 2003).

Mandla reflects on the dangers of linking lobolo to fatherhood, by explaining that marriage and family units can be established independently of lobolo:

> *Mandla: Lobolo is expensive and discourages young people from getting married. If you look at the stats, young black couples are not getting married and having children. What is the difference? Lobolo. I mean you cannot deny nature. You want to have sex, have children, be fulfilled, but you don't have the means to create an environment to do so. Because marriage is just that, it's an environment to control and to make sure these people grow up in a stable environment. So, we must consider all these things when we think of setting the lobolo too high. We are sending these young boys to have children everywhere.*

Mandla links lobolo to the problem of absent fathers by stating that if young couples are expected to pay a high lobolo, then they are most likely not going to get married. As a result, women are left with children while men go on to have children elsewhere. By linking the high price of lobolo to the single motherhood, Mandla implies that perhaps lobolo in its current form, as an expensive custom, has no place in contemporary society where black men are less likely to be employed and those who are employed are usually casual labourers (Malinga, 2015). Therefore, men who are unable to pay lobolo may be relegated to the social position Hunter (2005) referred to as isoka lamyanla, which can be defined as a man who has romantic relationships with women and has no desire to marry them.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the function of lobolo is to act as a set of legitimising practices. I considered the role of lobolo in the formalisation of marriage and its role beyond the legalising of marriage. Even though lobolo is not a prerequisite of the legal registration of marriage, it was shown that it is a necessary custom for culturally legitimate marriage and is regarded as doing the right thing and doing things right. By thinking about doing the right thing, some participants

mentioned that it was important to be married. Doing things right then includes participating in lobolo, as a step towards getting married.

The distinction between real marriages and proper marriages lends itself to the construction of particular gender positions. While marriage was recognised as a means of doing the right thing, lobolo affords men and women the cultural legitimation that allows them to access particular gendered positions within the family. For example, through lobolo, women can be recognised to be a makoti, which is an affirmation of belonging to the family. Likewise, men who have paid lobolo are also afforded recognition as a father. Participants reflected that these are significant factors to consider when one is getting married. I have demonstrated here that lobolo is not only a gendered and gendering custom through which men and women exercise power, but also outlined the power of lobolo as an institution through which the constructions and enactments of gender are validated.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This study set out to investigate how gender is constructed, negotiated and enacted through the customary practice of lobolo. I sought to understand how lobolo can be a gendered and gendering practice. To do this I employed an African-centred feminist approach to narrative enquiry. I explored, through the narratives of men and women who have participated in lobolo, how gender is constructed through the practice of lobolo, and how men and women take up particular positions that enable them to exercise power in the interactions that occur within the customary practice of lobolo. This aim was met by answering questions related to (i) How do women and men who have participated in lobolo, narrate their position in the process of lobolo? (ii) How do men and women use lobolo as an apparatus for constructing or negotiating hegemonic masculinities and femininities? (iii) How does lobolo serve to legitimise particular gendered relationships and the positions assume in those relationships?

I employed a narrative enquiry approach to explore how, in making meaning of their experiences in lobolo, men and women position themselves in relation to other actors in their narratives. I interviewed 27 men and women from Johannesburg and Cape Town. I employed a discursive narrative analysis which allowed me to explore the content of narratives and the meanings implied in the narratives. Discursive narrative analysis allowed me to explore how the individual narrative speaks to the broader narrative of lobolo and how the individuals draw on broader gender discourses to position themselves and others within the narrative.

The findings of this study outlined in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 illustrated that the customary practice of lobolo is a gendered and a gendering practice. In other words, as discussed in chapter 6 and 7, the

customary practice of lobolo sets the platform for the performance of gender but also serves as an apparatus for reinscribing heteronormative gender norms through the meaning attached to participating in lobolo. Additionally, lobolo acts as a legitimizing practice, not only legitimizing marriages but also the positions people adopt in the marriages.

In chapter 5 I argued that the various activities during the lobolo process which I refer to as the lobolo theatricals are part of the lobolo scripts. The lobolo script outlines the lobolo procedures, as well as how parties to the lobolo processes are expected to act. In this chapter, I attempted to show how the lobolo scripts are embedded within heteronormative ideology. While men were presented as central to the lobolo process, the findings show that women play a great role in the lobolo process.

African-centred feminism was useful in allowing me to consider how power might be exercised through lobolo. Lobolo has been shown to be a male-orientated practice in which women have little agency. The findings of this study showed that, while most participants spoke about lobolo being a male-dominated practice, it was evident in the narratives that women were very much involved in various ways throughout the lobolo process. The marginalisation of women in the narratives about lobolo serves to maintain the patriarchal norm of men as leaders, which may have also contributed to the discourse of lobolo as the trading of women for wealth in which women are presented as passive participants. This is demonstrated in this thesis not to be the case.

African-centred feminism allowed me to explore how power functions between men and women, as well as amongst men and women across generational lines. In the narrative of participating in lobolo, there was a common construction of the bride and groom as children within the lobolo

process, although this was generally used to refer to the bride during the lobolo negotiations. While the construction of the bride and groom as children may be to emphasise that lobolo is a commitment that transcends their commitment to one another, most participants, especially males, expressed that because they felt helpless with regards to the decisions made to through the lobolo process. Even though female participants seemed to embrace their positioning as children in the process, they were expressed that they believed it was their responsibility to get involved in the decision making, even if their involvement is not too explicit.

By thinking through the lobolo theatricals as enactments of gender and power through African-centred feminism, I was able to demonstrate that lobolo is marked with multiple negotiations rather than the single monetary set of negotiations that have become the single focus of the lobolo practice. The different negotiations in the stages of lobolo allow for the establishment of gender hierarchies. For example, the activities associated with the arrival of the groom's representatives (often male) establishes the dominance of the bride's representatives.

Chapter 6 focused on the construction of gender in the lobolo process. In this chapter, I discussed how men and women in their narratives take up, challenge or reject particular gendered discourse in narrating what lobolo is. I focus this discussion on the meanings attached to what lobolo is. By exploring how lobolo is defined, I was able to show how meaning attached to the participation in lobolo re-inscribes the particular gendered norms. The definition of lobolo, articulated as "lobolo is…" demonstrates how femininities and masculinities are constructed through lobolo. For instances, the construction of lobolo as a token of appreciation reinforces the view of women as minors under the guardianship of their parents, who are rewarded or thanked for raising their

daughter well. Because this gesture is not reciprocated by the bride's family, this sets up a hierarchical relationship between bride and groom, which female participant described as burdensome.

It appears that the lobolo process foreshadows the position of men and women in their relationship following the lobolo process. Because men are responsible for the provision of lobolo during the lobolo process, it appears that even within the marriage, the most notable expectation is for men to provide financially in the marriage. This can be seen in how male participants spoke about the need to find partners who would assist them in growing their wealth.

There were many references to women having to fulfil such domestic duties which are emphasised in the lobolo negotiations. What I observed to be more interesting, however, was how women's roles as "helpers" in the lobolo negotiations, in other words, their role in the background, can be seen in how women and men spoke about women's role in the marriage as a helping one. In these narratives, it appears clear that many women may have roles outside their homes and marriages. Instead, both men and women in this study suggested that after marriage, women's lives are subsumed into their husbands' lives and their husbands' goals, thus becoming the "good woman" who might help him realize his dreams.

In this chapter, I also look at how lobolo is constructed as a redeeming custom. By redeeming custom, I refer to how participants spoke about lobolo as an opportunity for women and men to either realise or retain desirable feminine or masculine positions. When it comes to femininities, lobolo was constructed as a redeeming custom for women, who might have had children outside of marriage. Lobolo was described as an apparatus for redeeming women from what might be

considered a shameful position. However, because men do not experience as much shame as women do for having children before marriage, lobolo as a redeeming custom was related to men's role as providers. Participants, women as well as men, implied that once a man has paid lobolo, his position as the patriarch is established because he has demonstrated his ability to provide resources. It was suggested that in the event that a man might not be able to provide for his family, having paid lobolo may redeem such a man from the shame of not being able to provide for the family. The discourse of lobolo as redeeming custom illustrates how lobolo is embedded within a heteropatriarchal ideology.

Chapter 6 also illustrated how the different articulations of what lobolo is… suggest that lobolo is something that is something done by men and happens to women. This can be seen in the construction of lobolo as a redeeming custom that serves to validate a women's sense of wealth. The articulation of lobolo as action-oriented speaks to the construction of masculinities as active (committing, demonstrating) participants in the process, as can also be seen in men's active role as lobolo negotiators. Although women are active in the lobolo processes, the constructions of lobolo suggest that lobolo is something that happened to and through women. For example, lobolo was constructed as a custom that affirms, honours and redeems women. While some participants suggested this demonstrates that lobolo is a recognition of women's value, it must be noted that this value is dependent on men's actions. This suggests that men have the power to grant women access to desirable feminine positions through the paying of lobolo. This access to desirable femininities through lobolo can also be seen in the last chapter, where I discuss the role of lobolo as giving access to belonging.

In the last analysis chapter, I turn towards how lobolo is constructed in these narratives is presented as a legitimizing custom. Lobolo not only serves to legitimize marriage but also serves to legitimize a particular position. In this chapter, I sought to illustrate that lobolo is a site for the exercise of power but also to demonstrate the power of lobolo as a customary practice. The participants in this study mentioned that, while it is important for couples to be legally married, it is also important for the marriage to be recognised by the families as a legitimate marriage. Lobolo was described as the mechanism that ensures that marriage is recognised as a legitimate relationship. In this way, lobolo acts as an inclusion and exclusionary custom, in that people who have participated in lobolo are afforded entry into other positions such as becoming a makoti and being a father.

As discussed in chapter 6, lobolo affords women access to desirable feminine positions such as being a makoti, which is about belonging. Being a makoti was recognised as being about a kind of belonging that is different from being a wife, who is more about the conjugal relationship. Being a makoti speaks to a sense of security that moves beyond legal recognition. For men, the access to fatherhood was not described as a sense of belonging, but rather as performing their role as fathers, which reiterates how lobolo is a performance of masculinities.

African-centered feminism has enable me to highlight that power within lobolo are not limited to the relationship between men and women. By exploring lobolo from an African centered perspective I was able to delineate the legitimising power not only shapes gendered relationships but also intergenerational dynamics. In other words, within this framework I was able to show that lobolo is not a patriarchal custom that that objectifies women. Lobolo is a system that shapes gendered identity and serves to creates multiple hierarchies.

What I was able to illustrate is that agency tends to take different formats such as in the case how women men negotiate their gendered positions in the interactions throughout. Thus, the theorising of gender in customary practices such as in lobolo from an African-centered feminist perspective involves considering how masculinities and femininities are constructed within historical and contemporary socio-political factors.

References

Achebe, N. (2018). Love, courtship, and marriage in Africa. In W. H. Worger, C. Ambler, & N. Achebe (Eds.), *A Companion to African History* (pp. 119-142). John Wiley & Sons.

Adeleye-Fayemi, B. (2010, August). *Feminist theory and practice in Africa.* Training manual prepared For Action Aid International Women's Capacity Building Program, Johannesburg.

Adichie, C. N. (2014). *We should all be feminists*. Vintage.

Akin-Aina, S. (2011). Beyond an epistemology of bread, butter, culture and power. *Nokoko, 2*, 65-84.

Altman, R. (2008). *A theory of narrative*. Columbia University Press.

Amadiume, I. (1987). *African Matriarchal Foundations: The Igbo Case*. Karnak House.

Amoateng, A. Y., & Setlalentoa, B. M. P. (2015). Family structure, race, gender and poverty: the case of food deprivation in South Africa. *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie, 19*(1), 43-62.

Amoateng, A. Y., Heaton, T. B., & Mcalmont, C. (2017). Family structure and children's schooling in sub-Saharan Africa. *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, *21*(1), 77-98.

Anderson, S. (2007). The economics of dowry and brideprice. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *21*(4), 151-174.

Andrews, M., Squire, C., & Tamboukou, M. (2013). *Doing narrative research*. (Rev. ed.). SAGE.

Ansell, N. (2001). "Because it's our culture!" (Re)negotiating the meaning of lobola in Southern African secondary schools. *Journal of Southern African Studies, 27*(4), 697-716.

Arend, P. (2016). Consumption as common sense: Heteronormative hegemony and white wedding desire. *Journal of Consumer Culture, 16*(1), 144-163.

Arndt, S. (2002). *The dynamics of African feminism: Defining and classifying African-feminist literatures*. Africa World Press.

Atanga, L. L. (2013). African feminism. In L. L. Atanga, S. E. Ellece, L. Litosseliti, & J. Sunderland. (Eds.), *Gender and language in sub-Saharan Africa: Tradition, struggle and change* (pp. 301-314). John Benjamins Publishing.

Atkinson, M. P., Greenstein, T. N., & Lang, M. M. (2005). For women, breadwinning can be dangerous: Gendered resource theory and wife abuse. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 67*(5), 1137-1148.

Attwood, F. (2011). Through the Looking Glass? Sexual agency and subjectification online. In R. Gill & C. Scharff (Eds.), *New femininities: Postfeminism, neoliberalism and subjectivity* (pp. 203–214). London: Palgrave.

Bakker, P. (2018). Integration of the bride as a requirement for a valid customary marriage: Mkabe v Minister of Home Affairs [2016] ZAGPPHC 460. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad, 21*(1).

Baloyi, M. E. (2014). Paying lobola when my wife dies: An African pastoral study about the practice of forcing people to pay lobola after their wives passed away. *Journal of Human Ecology, 48*(1), 135-143.

Baloyi, M. E. (2016). The "vat-en-sit" unions as a threat to the stability of African marriage in South Africa: African theological pastoral perspective. *Phronimon, 17*(2), 1-16.

Bamberg, M., De Fina, A., & Schiffrin, D. (Eds.). (2007). *Selves and identities in narrative and discourse* (Vol. 9). John Benjamins Publishing.

Barriteau, V. E. (2006). The relevance of black feminist scholarship: A Caribbean perspective. *Feminist Africa*, *7*, 9–31.

Bayi, C., & Hawthorne, L. L. (2018). Colonialisation of lobolo. *Tydskrif vir Hedendaagse Romeins-Hollandse Reg (Journal for Contemporary Roman-Dutch Law), 81*(4), 576-592.

Beauboeuf-Lafontant, T. (2002). A womanist experience of caring: Understanding the pedagogy of exemplary Black women teachers. *The Urban Review*, *34*(1), 71-86.

Bhana, D. (2016). Masculinities, femininities and the burden of culture among rural South African teenagers in the context of HIV. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.). *Children and young people living with HIV/AIDS* (pp. 127-145). Springer.

Boonzaier, F. A. (2014). Methodological disruptions: Interviewing domestically violent men across a 'gender divide'. *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies*, *9*(4), 232-248.

Boxer, D., & Gritsenko, E. (2005). Women and surnames across cultures: Reconstituting identity in marriage. *Women and Language*, *28*(2), 1.

Brabeck, M., & Brabeck, K. M. (2009). Feminist perspectives on research ethics. In D. M. Martens & P.E. Ginsberg (Eds.), *The handbook of social research ethics* (pp. 39-53). SAGE.

Brandel, M. (1958). Urban lobolo attitudes: A preliminary report. *African Studies, 17*(1), 34-51.

Britten, H. (1930). The Need for the Registration of Customary Unions. *Bantu Studies, 4*(1), 269-277.

Bruner, J. (2001). Self-making and world-making. In J. Brockmeier & D. Carbaugh (Eds.), *Narrative and identity: Studies in autobiography, self and culture*, (pp. 25–37). John Benjamins

Budlender, D. Chobokoane, N. & Simelane, S. (2004). Marriage patterns in South Africa: Methodological and substantive issues. *South African Journal of Demography, 9*(1), 1-2

Business Tech. (2019 October 28). South Africa to change its marriage laws. *Business Tech.*https://businesstech.co.za/news/lifestyle/349413/south-africa-plans-to-change-its-marriage-laws/

Buthelezi, M. (2004). *Kof' abantu, kosal' izibongo: Contested Histories of Shaka, Phungashe and Zwide in Izibongo and Izithakazelo*. [Master's thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal]. ResearchSpace. http://ukzn-dspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/4214

Button, K., Moore, E., & Himonga, C. (2016). South Africa's system of dispute resolution forums: The role of the family and the state in customary marriage dissolution. *Journal of Southern African Studies, 42*(2), 299-316.

Calderón, D., Bernal, D. D., Huber, L. P., Malagón, M., & Vélez, V. N. (2012). A Chicana feminist epistemology revisited: Cultivating ideas a generation later. *Harvard Educational Review, 82*(4), 513-539.

Campbell, R., & Wasco, S. M. (2000). Feminist approaches to social science: Epistemological and methodological tenets. *American journal of community psychology*, *28*(6), 773-791.

Carby H (2007) 'White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood' in A. Gray, J. Campbell, M. Erickson, S. Hanson & H. Wood (Eds.) *Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies Selected Working Papers: Vol 2* (pp. 737-757). Routledge

Carroll, K. K. (2014). An introduction to African-centered sociology: Worldview, epistemology, and social theory. *Critical Sociology, 40*(2), 257-270.

Carter, J., & Duncan, S. (2017). Wedding paradoxes: individualized conformity and the 'perfect day'. *The sociological review, 65*(1), 3-20.

Casale, D., & Posel, D. (2010). The male marital earnings premium in the context of bridewealth payments: Evidence from South Africa. *Economic Development and Cultural Change, 58*(2), 211-230.

Chadwick, R. (2017a). Embodied methodologies: challenges, reflections and strategies. *Qualitative research, 17*(1), 54-74.

Chadwick, R. (2017b). Thinking intersectionally with/through narrative methodologies. *Agenda, 31*(1), 5-16.

Chase, S. E. (2008). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 57–94). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Chilisa, B. (2009). Indigenous African-centered ethics: Contesting and complementing dominant models. In D. M. Mertens & P. E. Ginsberg (Eds.), *The handbook of social research ethics*, (pp. 407–425). SAGE

Chisale, S. S. (2017). *Patriarchy and resistance: a feminist symbolic interactionist perspective of highly educated married black women*. [Master's dissertation, University of South Africa].

Chiweshe, M. (2018). African men and feminism: Reflections on using African feminism in research. *Agenda, 32*(2), 76-82.

Citizen reporter. (2018, July 16). Nonkanyiso Conco's father 'angry' that Zuma 'hasn't paid the lobolo'. *The Citizen.* https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/1979990/nonkanyiso-concos-father-angry-that-zuma-hasnt-paid-the-lobolo/

Civil Unions Act 17 of 2006. Republic of South Africa

Coetzee, M. H. (2000). Playing sticks: An exploration of Zulu stick fighting as performance. *South African Theatre Journal, 14*(1), 97-113.

Coetzee, M. H. (2002). Zulu stick fighting: A socio-historical overview. Yo: *Journal of Alternative Perspectives*, 1-37.

Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Hyman.

Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities.* Stanford University Press.

Cornwall, A., (2005). Introduction: Perspectives on Gender in Africa. In A. Cornwall, (Ed.), *Readings in gender in Africa*, (pp. 1-19). Indiana University Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241–1299.

Dalton, G. (1966). Bridewealth vs. Brideprice. *American Anthropologist, 68*(3), 732-738.

Davis, K. (2008). Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful. *Feminist theory, 9*(1), 67-85.

De Fina, A. (2009). Narratives in interview—The case of accounts: For an interactional approach to narrative genres. *Narrative inquiry*, *19*(2), 233-258.

De Fina, A., & Georgakopoulou, A. (2008). Analysing narratives as practices. *Qualitative research*, *8*(3), 379-387.

De Fina, A., & Georgakopoulou, A. (2011). *Analyzing narrative: Discourse and sociolinguistic perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.

De Haas, M. (1987). Is there anything more to say about lobolo? *African Studies, 46*(1), 33-55.

De Jong, S. (2017). *Complicit sisters: gender and women's issues across North-South divides*. Oxford University Press.

De la Rey, C. (1997). South African feminism, race and racism. *Agenda, 13*(32), 6-10.

De Visser, R. O., & McDonnell, E. J. (2012). 'That's OK. He's a guy': A mixed-methods study of gender double standards for alcohol use. *Psychology & Health*, *27*(5), 618-639.

De Visser, R. O., & McDonnell, E. J. (2012). 'That's OK. He's a guy: A mixed-methods study of gender double standards for alcohol use. *Psychology & Health*, *27*(5), 618-639.

Dempsey, K. (2002). Who gets the best deal from marriage: women or men?. *Journal of Sociology*, *38*(2), 91-110.

Depew, B., & Price, J. (2018). Marriage and the economic status of women with children. *Review of Economics of the Household*, *16*(4), 1049-1061.

Desai, M. (2007). The messy relationship between feminisms and globalizations. *Gender & Society*, *21*(6), 797-803.

Dlamini, C. R. M. (1985). Should ilobolo be abolished? A reply to Hlophe. *Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa, 18*(3), 361-376.

Dosekun, S. (2007). Defending feminism in Africa. *Postamble*, *3*(1), 41-47.

Du Toit, M., De Witte, H., Rothmann, S., & Van den Broeck, A. (2018). Unemployment experiences in context: A phenomenological study in two townships in South Africa. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, *28*(2), 122-127.

Dumbili, E. W. (2016). Gendered sexual uses of alcohol and associated risks: a qualitative study of Nigerian University students. *BMC public health*, *16*(1), 474.

Eagle, G., Hayes, G., & Sibanda, T. (2006). Standpoint methodologies: Marxist, feminist and black scholarship perspectives. In M. Terre Blanche, K. Durrheim, & D. Painter (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (pp. 499-522). University of Cape Town Press.

Ebede-Ndi, A. (2016). A critical analysis of African-centered psychology: From -ism to praxis. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies, 35*(1), 9.

Ebunoluwa, S. M. (2009). Feminism: The quest for an African variant. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, *3*(1), 227-234.

Eddy, M. M., Thomson-de Boor, H., & Mphaka, K. (2013). "So, we are ATM fathers": A study of absent fathers in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg and Sonke Gender Justice*.

Edin, K., Nilsson, B., Ivarsson, A., Kinsman, J., Norris, S. A., & Kahn, K. (2016). Perspectives on intimate relationships among young people in rural South Africa: the logic of risk. *Culture, health & sexuality*, *18*(9), 1010-1024.

Edwards, R., & Mauthner, M. (2002). Ethics and feminist research: Theory and practice. In M. Mauthner, M. Birch, J. Jessop, & T. Miller (Eds.), *Ethics in qualitative research,* (pp. 14-31). Sage.

Ellece, S. (2010). Agency and gender in Setswana marriage ceremonies: "Patlo" and "Go laya" rituals. *Nawa: Journal of Language and Communication, 4*(2), 86-104.

Erlank, N. (2014). The white wedding: Affect and economy in South Africa in the early twentieth century. *African Studies Review*, *57*(2), 29-50.

Fairchild, E. (2014). Examining wedding rituals through a multidimensional gender lens: The analytic importance of attending to (in) consistency. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *43*(3), 361-389.

Farvid, P., Braun, V., & Rowney, C. (2017). 'No girl wants to be called a slut!': Women, heterosexual casual sex and the sexual double standard. *Journal of Gender Studies*, *26*(5), 544-560.

Filimon, E. C. (2017). Say What!? Dubbing the Credit Cookie in Smurfs-The Lost Village (2017). *Studia Universitatis Petru Maior. Philologia*, *23*, 146-152.

Fletcher, G. J., & Kerr, P. S. (2010). Through the eyes of love: reality and illusion in intimate relationships. *Psychological Bulletin*, *136*(4), 627.

Fox, R. (1967). *Kinship and marriage: An anthropological perspective.* Cambridge University Press.

Fraser, B. (1990). An approach to discourse markers. *Journal of Pragmatics, 14*(3), 383-398.

Freeman, M. (2015). *Rewriting the Self: History, memory, narrative*. Routledge.

Fuzile, B. (2019, April 1). 11 arrested after a deadly family feud over "infertility" and lobolo. *Times Live*. https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2019-04-01-11-arrested-after-deadly-family-feud-over-infertility-and-lobolo/

Fuzile, B. (2019, March 31). Feud over fertility and lobolo cows claims 16 lives, leaves villages at war. *Times Live* https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/2019-03-31-feud-over-fertility-and-lobolo-cows-claims-16-lives-leaves-villages-at-war/

Gabriel, Y. (2000). *Storytelling in organizations: Facts, fictions, and fantasies: Facts, fictions, and fantasies*. OUP Oxford.

Gaidzanwa, R. B. (2013). African feminism. *BUWA – A Journal of African Women's Experiences, 1*, 7-10

Geisler, G. G. (2004). *Women and the remaking of politics in Southern Africa: Negotiating Autonomy, incorporation, and representation*. Nordic Africa Institute.

Georgakopoulou, A. (2006). Thinking big with small stories in narrative and identity analysis. *Narrative Inquiry, 16*(1), 122-130.

Gergen, M. M., & Gergen, K. J. (2011). Performative social science and psychology. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 12*(1), Art II.

Goldblatt, B. (2003). Regulating domestic partnerships, a necessary step in the development of South African family law. *South African Law Journal, 120(3),* 610-629.

Gqola, P. D. (2007). How the "cult of femininity" and violent masculinities support endemic gender based violence in contemporary South Africa. *African Identities, 5*(1), 111-124.

Grills, C. (2002). African-centered psychology: Basic principles. In T. A. Parham (Ed.), *Counseling persons of African descent: Raising the bar of practitioner competence* (pp. 10-23). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Groes-Green, C. (2009). Hegemonic and subordinated masculinities: Class, violence and sexual performance among young Mozambican men. *Nordic Journal of African Studies, 18*(4), 286-304.

Gumede (born Shange) v President of the Republic of South Africa and Others (CCT 50/08) [2008] ZACC 23; 2009 (3) BCLR 243 (CC); 2009 (3) SA 152 (CC) (8 December 2008)

Harding, M. (2019). Marriage. In B. Stark & J. Heaton (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of international family law* (p. 11-24). Routledge

Harding, M. H. (2016). The Missing Mrs. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, 49*(3), 145-150.

Harding, S., & Norberg, K. (2005). New feminist approaches to social science methodologies: An introduction. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 30*(4), 2009-2015.

Harrison, A., & Montgomery, E. (2001). Life histories, reproductive histories: rural South African women's narratives of fertility, reproductive health and illness. *Journal of Southern African Studies, 27*(2), 311-328.

Haselau, C. M. (2015). *Marriage in contemporary Zulu society: implications for couple counselling.* [Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal]. ResearchSpace. http://ukzn-dspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/13607

Helman, R., & Ratele, K. (2016). Every day (in) equality at home: complex constructions of gender in South African families. *Global health action*, *9*(1), 31122.

Hlophe, J. M. (1984). The KwaZulu Act on the Code of Zulu Law, 6 of 1981-a a guide to intending spouses and some comments on the custom of lobolo. *Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa, 17*(2), 163-171.

Hodes, R., & Gittings, L. (2019). 'Kasi curriculum': what young men learn and teach about sex in a South African township. *Sex Education*, *19*(4), 436-454.

Hofferth, S. L., & Anderson, K. G. (2003). Are all dads equal? Biology versus marriage as a basis for paternal investment. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *65*(1), 213-232.

Hoffnung, M. (2006). What's in a name? Marital name choice revisited. *Sex Roles*, *55*(11-12), 817-825.

Holloway, S. L., Valentine, G., & Jayne, M. (2009). Masculinities, femininities and the geographies of public and private drinking landscapes. *Geoforum*, *40*(5), 821-831.

Holmes, T. (2017, August 4). Lobolo: Saving for the price of love. *Mail & Guardian*. https://mg.co.za/article/2017-08-04-00-lobolo-saving-for-the-price-of-love/

hooks, b. (2000). *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate politics*. Pluto Press.

Horn, J. G., & van Rensburg, A. J. (2002). Practical implications of the recognition of customary marriages. *Journal for Juridical Science*, *27*(1), 54-69.

Hosegood, V., McGrath, N., & Moultrie, T. (2009). Dispensing with marriage: Marital and partnership trends in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa 2000-2006. *Demographic Research*, *20*, 279-312.

Hountondji, P. (1990). Scientific dependence in Africa today. *Research in African Literatures*, *21*(3), 5-15.

Hungwe, C. (2006). Putting them in their place: "respectable" and "unrespectable" women in Zimbabwean gender struggles. *Feminist Africa 6*: *Subaltern Sexualities*, *6*, 33-47.

Hunter, M. (2016a). Introduction: new insights on marriage and Africa. *Africa Today*, *62*(3), vii-xv.

Hunter, M. (2016b). Is it enough to talk of marriage as a process? Legitimate co-habitation in Umlazi, South Africa. *Anthropology Southern Africa*, *39*(4), 281-296

Israel, M. (2014). *Research ethics and integrity for social scientists: Beyond regulatory compliance*. SAGE.

Jaga, A., Arabandi, B., Bagraim, J., & Mdlongwa, S. (2018). Doing the "gender dance": Black women professionals negotiating gender, race, work and family in post-apartheid South Africa. *Community, Work & Family, 21*(4), 429-444.

James, D. (2015). *Money from Nothing: Indebtedness and Aspiration in South Africa*. Stanford.

James, D. (2017). Not marrying in South Africa: consumption, aspiration and the new middle class. *Anthropology Southern Africa, 40*(1), 1–14.

Janisch, M. (1941). Some administrative aspects of native marriage problems in an urban area. *Bantu Studies, 15*(1), 1-11.

Jarrett, K. (2016). *Feminism, labour, and digital media: The digital housewife*. Routledge.

Jewkes, R., & Morrell, R. (2010). Gender and sexuality: emerging perspectives from the heterosexual epidemic in South Africa and implications for HIV risk and prevention. *Journal of the International AIDS Society, 13*(1), 6-17.

Josselson, R. (2004). The hermeneutics of faith and the hermeneutics of suspicion. *Narrative inquiry*, *14*(1), 1-28.

Josselson, R. (2013). *Interviewing for qualitative inquiry: A relational approach*. Guilford Press.

Jowah, L. E. (2015). Botho values and beliefs as a leadership style: the maturation of the studies in effective leadership. *Journal of Contemporary Management*, *12*(1), 208-225.

Kalule-Sabiti, I., Palamuleni, M., Makiwane, M. and Amoateng, A. (2007). Family formation and dissolution patterns. In: A. Amoateng and T. Heaton (Eds). *Families and households in post-apartheid South Africa* (pp. 89–112). HSRC Press

Kessi, S., & Boonzaier, F. (2018). Centre/ing decolonial feminist psychology in Africa. South *African Journal of Psychology, 48*(3), 299-309.

Khau M (2012) Gender and the politics of the Basotho blanket. In: Moletsane R and Mitchell C and Smith A (eds) '*Was it Something I Wore?' Gender, Dress and Material Culture in Social Research in South Africa* (pp. 95–111). HSRC Press.

Khomari, D. M., Tebele, C., & Nel, K. (2012). The social value of Lobola: Perceptions of South African college students. *Journal of Psychology in Africa, 22*(1), 143-145.

Kiguwa, P. (2004). Feminist psychology in South Africa. In D. Hook (Ed.), *Critical Psychology* (pp. 278 – 215). UCT Press

Kiguwa, P. (2006). Narratives of gender and identity constructs. In T. Shefer, F. Boonzaier, & P. Kiguwa (Eds.), *The gender of psychology* (pp. 12-28). Juta and Company Limited.

Kiguwa, P., & Siswana, A. (2018). Layers of woundedness in *Inxeba*: masculinities disrupted, denied and defamed. *Image & Text, (32),* 1-13.

Kiguwa. P., (2019). Feminist approaches: An exploration of women's gendered experiences. Research Methods in the Social Sciences. S. Laher, A. Fynn, & S. Kramer, S. (Eds.), *Transforming research methods in the social sciences: Case studies from South Africa* (pp. 220-235). Wits University Press.

Kimport, K. (2012). Remaking the white wedding? Same-sex wedding photographs' challenge to symbolic heteronormativity. *Gender & Society, 26*(6), 874-899.

Knoetze, E. (2000). The modern significance of lobolo. *Journal of South African Law, 2000(3),* 532-542.

Kogan, S. M., Cho, J., Barton, A. W., Duprey, E. B., Hicks, M. R., & Brown, G. L. (2017). The influence of community disadvantage and masculinity ideology on the number of sexual

partners: A prospective analysis of young adult, rural Black men. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *54*(6), 795-801.

Kunene, P. (1995). Exploring traditional leadership. *Agenda*, *11*(26), 35-41.

Kuper, A. (1982). *Wives for cattle: bridewealth and marriage in southern Africa*. Routledge & Kegan Paul Books.

Kwate, N. O. A. (2005). The heresy of African-centered psychology. *Journal of Medical Humanities, 26*(4), 215-235.

Kyalo, P. (2012). A reflection on the African traditional values of marriage and sexuality. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, *1*(2), 211-219.

Labov, W. (1997). Some further steps in narrative analysis. *Journal of Narrative and Life History, 7*(1-4), 395-415.

Lamont, E. (2014). Negotiating courtship: Reconciling egalitarian ideals with traditional gender norms. *Gender & Society*, *28*(2), 189-211.

Langa, M. (2010). Adolescent boys' talk about absent fathers. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, *20*(4), 519-526.

Laslett, B. (1999). Personal Narrative as Sociology. *Contemporary Sociology 28*(4), 391–401.

Lazreg, M. (2005). Decolonizing Feminism. In: O. Oyewumi (Ed.), *African Gender Studies: A Reader*, (pp. 67-80). Palgrave Macmillan.

Lesch, E., & Kruger, L. M. (2005). Mothers, daughters and sexual agency in one low-income South African community. *Social Science & Medicine, 61*(5), 1072-1082.

Lesejane, D. (2006). Fatherhood from an African cultural perspective. In L. Richter, & R. Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: men and fatherhood in South Africa*, (pp. 173-1820). HSRC Press.

Lever, J., Frederick, D. A., & Hertz, R. (2015). Who pays for dates? Following versus challenging gender norms. *Sage Open*, *5*(4), 1-14

Lewis, D. (2001). African feminisms. *Agenda, 16*(50), 4-10.

Lewis, D. (2008). Discursive challenges for African feminisms. *Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy 20*, 77-96.

Lewis, J. (2018). Warping: (re)conceptualising contemporary wedding rituals as an immersive theatre experience in South Africa. In T. Kovacs & K.G. Nonoa (Eds.). *Post-dramatic theater as transcultural theater: a transdisciplinary approach* (Vol. 51) (pp. 93-116). Fool Francke Attempto Verlag.

Lindegger, G. (2006). The father in the mind. In L. Richter, & R. Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: men and fatherhood in South Africa*, (pp. 121-131). HSRC Press.

Lindegger, G., & Quayle, M. (2009). Masculinity and HIV/AIDS. In G. Lindegger, & M. Quayle (Eds.), *HIV/AIDS in South Africa 25 years on: Psychosocial perspectives* (pp. 41-54). Springer.

Lorber, J., (1991). Night to his day: The social construction of gender. In J. Lorber (Ed.), *Parodoxes of Gender* (pp. 13-36). Yale University Press.

Lorde, A. (1983). An open letter to Mary Daly. In G. Anzaldúa, & C. Moraga (Eds.), *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color* (2nd ed, pp. 94-98). Women of Color Press.

Lugones, M. (2010). Toward a decolonial feminism. *Hypatia, 25(*4), 742-759.

Lukes, S. (2005). *Power: A Radical View*, (2nd edition) Palgrave Macmillan.

Lyonette, C., & Crompton, R. (2015). Sharing the load? Partners' relative earnings and the division of domestic labour. *Work, employment and society*, *29*(1), 23-40.

Lyons, A. C., & Willott, S. A. (2008). Alcohol consumption, gender identities and women's changing social positions. *Sex roles*, *59*(9-10), 694-712.

Magodyo, T., Andipatin, M., & Jackson, K. (2017). The role of Xhosa traditional circumcision in constructing masculinity. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *47*(3), 344-355.

Maharaj, P., & Shangase, T. (2020). Reasons for delaying marriage: Attitudes of young, educated women in South Africa. *Journal of*

Comparative Family Studies, *51*(1), 3-17.

Mahlangu, I. (July 16, 2018). Jacob Zuma's father-in-law up in arms over unpaid lobolo Sowetan Live. https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-07-16-jacob-zumas-father-in-law-up-in-arms-over-unpaid-lobolo/

Makama, R. (2018, December 27). Ubuhle bendoda, izinkomozakhe and the trouble with paying lobolo. *Mail and Guardian- Thought Leader*. https://thoughtleader.co.za/psyssa/2018/12/27/ubuhle-bendoda-izinkomozakhe-and-the-trouble-with-paying-lobolo/

Makama, R., Helman, R., Titi, N., & Day, S. (2019). The danger of a single feminist narrative: African-centred decolonial feminism for Black men. *Agenda*, *33*(3), 61-69.

Makgabutlane, S. (2018, November 7). #Editor'sNote: #HHP's death has left us with #CustomaryMarriage lessons. *IOL*. https://www.iol.co.za/the-star/opinion-analysis/editorsnote-hhps-death-has-left-us-with-customarymarriage-lessons-17802796

Makusha, T., & Richter, L. (2016). Gatekeeping and its impact on father involvement among Black South Africans in rural KwaZulu-Natal. *Culture, Health & Sexuality, 18*(3), 308-320.

Malinga, M. V. (2015). *Precarious employment and fathering practices among African men.* [Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa] UnisaIR. http://hdl.handle.net/10500/20283

Malinga, M., & Ratele, K. (2012). Love and the construction of young black masculinities. *University of South Africa (UNISA). http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/criticalissues/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/malingaglpaper.pdf*

Mama, A. (2007) Is it ethical to study Africa? Preliminary thoughts on scholarship and freedom. *African Studies Review, 50*(1): 1–26.

Mama, A. (2011). What does it mean to do feminist research in African contexts? *Feminist Review, 98*(1), 4-20.

Mamashela, M. (2004). New families, new property, new laws: The practical effects of the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act. *South African Journal on Human Rights*, *20*(4), 616-641.

Mangena, O. (2003). Feminism (singular), African feminisms (plural) and the African diaspora. *Agenda, 17*(58), 98-100.

Mangena, T., & Ndlovu, S. (2013). Implications and complications of bride price payment among the Shona and Ndebele of Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, *3*(2), 472-481.

Mangoma, A., & Wilson-Prangley, A. (2019). Black Tax: Understanding the financial transfers of the emerging black middle class. *Development Southern Africa, 36*(4), 443-460.

Maqubela, L. N. (2016). Mothering the 'other': the sacrificial nature of paid domestic work within Black families in the post-Apartheid South Africa. *Gender and Behaviour, 14*(2), 7214-7224.

Maqubela, L. N. (2016). Mothering the "other": the sacrificial nature of paid domestic work within Black families in the post-apartheid South Africa. *Gender and Behaviour, 14*(2), 7214-7224.

Marriage Act 25 of 1961.Union of South Africa

Marso, L. J. (2010). Marriage and bourgeois respectability. *Politics and Gender 6*(1), 145-153.

Mathe, T. (2018, November 1). HHP'S family, Lerato Sengadi head to court over funeral. *Eyewitness News*. https://ewn.co.za/2018/11/01/hhp-s-family-lerato-sengadi-head-to-court-over-funeral

Mavuso, J. M. J., Chiweshe, M. T., & Macleod, C. I. (2019). Overcoming essentialism in community psychology: The use of a narrative-discursive approach within African feminisms. In F. Boonzaier & T. van Niekerk (Eds.), *Decolonial feminist community psychology* (pp. 11–26). Springer.

Mbiti, J. (1969). *African philosophy and religion*. African Educational Publishers.

Mbunyuza-Memani, L. (2018). Wedding Reality TV bites black: Subordinating ethnic weddings in the South African black culture. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *42*(1), 26-47.

McClendon, T. V. (1995). Tradition and domestic struggle in the courtroom: Customary law and the control of women in segregation-era Natal. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *28*(3), 527-561.

McKaiser, E. (2019, July 19). *Queering lobola and discussing the role of women in lobola*. [Radio broadcast]:702. https://omny.fm/shows/mid-morning-show-702/lobola-discussion

Mckaiser, E. (Presenter). 2017, February 27). Lobolo discussion. The Eusebius McKaiser show [Podcast radio programme]. Radio 702. Retrieved from https://omny.fm/shows/mid-morning-show-702/lobola-discussion

Mekgwe, P. (2007). Theorizing African feminism (s). The 'colonial' question. *Matatu*, *35*(1), 165-174.

Mekgwe, P. T. (2002). *Feminism: a stutter or a starter? gender constructions and male feminist politics in African literature* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Sussex]. EThOS. https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.249108

Mertens, D. M., & Ginsberg, P. E. (2009). *The handbook of social research ethics*. SAGE.

Mfecane, S. (2016). "Ndiyindoda" [I am a man]: theorising Xhosa masculinity. *Anthropology Southern Africa*, *39*(3), 204-214.

Mfecane, S. (2018a). Towards African-centred theories of masculinity. *Social Dynamics*, *44(*2), 291-305.

Mfecane, S. (2018b). *(Un)knowing MEN – Africanising gender justice programmes for men in South Africa*. CSA&G Press.

Mguni, L. (2018, November 4). We need to have a discussion about the customary marriage act. *IOL*. https://www.iol.co.za/sunday-tribune/opinion/we-need-to-have-a-discussion-about-the-customary-marriage-act-17761577

Mhlambi, I. J. (2016). Wena ungubani (Who are you)?: Post-1994 identity and memory through ukuthakazela in the 'new' media blog. *South African Journal of African Languages, 36*(1), 109-122.

Mhongo, C., & Budlender, D. (2013). Declining Rates of Marriage in South Africa: What Do the Numbers and Analysts Say. *Acta Juridica, 2013, (1),* 181-196.

Mikell, G. (1995). African feminism: Toward a new politics of representation. *Feminist Studies, 21*(2), 405-424.

Miller, A. J., & Sassler, S. (2012). The construction of gender among working-class cohabiting couples. *Qualitative Sociology, 35*(4), 427-446.

Mishler, E. G. (2006). Narrative and identity: The double arrow of time. In A. de Fina, D. Schiffrin, & M. Bamberg (Eds.), *Studies in interactional sociolinguistics: Vol. 23. Discourse and identity* (p. 30–47). Cambridge University Press

Mkhize, L. (2019). *"This is ours… why should [we] be exempt?": Black South African lesbian couples' experiences of identity in the lobola practice*. [Unpublished Master's thesis, University of the Witwatersrand].

Mkhize, N., & Msomi, R. (2016). African single mothers' experiences of work and career in South Africa. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 47*(3), 323-342.

Mkwananzi, S. (2019). The association between household and community single motherhood and adolescent pregnancy in South Africa. In J. Anson, W. Bartl, & A. Kulczycki. (Eds) *Studies in the Sociology of Population* (pp. 319-342). Springer.

Moeti, B. (2018) Go isiwa ga ngwetsi event: A tapestry of cultural learning. *Lonaka Journal of Learning and Teaching, 9* (1), 182-197

Moeti, B., Koloi-Keaikitse, S., & Mokgolodi, H. L. (2017). Married women's lived experiences on the value of traditional premarital counselling "go laya" on marital stability in Botswana. *The Family Journal*, *25*(3), 247-256.

Mofokeng, L. L. (2005). The lobolo agreement as the silent prerequisite for the validity of customary marriage in terms of the recognition of customary marriages act. *Tydskrif vir Hedendaagse Romeins-Hollandse Reg (Journal for Contemporary Roman-Dutch Law), 68(2),* 277-288.

Mohlabane, N., Gumede, N. and Mokomane, Z. (2019). Attitudes towards marriage in postapartheid South Africa. In: Z. Mokomane, J. Struwig, B. Roberts and S. Gordon. (Eds). *South African social attitudes: family matters: family cohesion, values and strengthening to promote wellbeing.* (pp. 156-181). HSRC Press.

Moloko-Phiri, S. S. (2015). *An exploration of the meaning and interpretations of the proverb" Lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi" and its implications on indigenous African women's health: A phenomenological study*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria). https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/50707/MolokoPhiri_Exploration_2015.pdf?sequence=1

Moloko-Phiri, S. S., Mulaudzi, F. M., & Heyns, T. (2016). Women abuse under the guise of culture and language use: Women narrate their stories. *The Oriental Anthropologist*, *16* (2), 245-259.

Monareng, K.N. (2014). *Concubines: The Legal Implications of Co-habitation and Customary Marriages on South African Black Women.* New Voices Publishing.

Monger, G. (2004). *Marriage customs of the world: From henna to honeymoons*. ABC-Clio, Inc.Califonia

Monyane, C. (2013). Is Ukuthwala another form of 'forced marriage'?. *South African Review of Sociology*, *44*(3), 64-82.

Monye, S. (2017). Customary law and adoption: the 'oe gapa le namane' custom as a reflection of customary-law development in South Africa. *Journal of Law, Society and Development*, *4*(1), 1-19.

Moore E and Himonga C (2018) 'Living Customary Law and Families in South Africa' in Hall K, Richter L, Mokomane Z and Lake L (eds) South African Child Gauge 2018. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town. 61-69

Moore, E. (2015). Forms of femininity at the end of a customary marriage. *Gender & Society*, *29*(6), 817-840.

Moore, E., & Govender, R. (2013). Marriage and cohabitation in South Africa: An enriching explanation?. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *44*(5), 623-639.

Moore, E., & Himonga, C. (2017). Centring the intersection of race, class, and gender when a customary marriage ends: An intersectional critique of the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998. *Agenda*, *31*(1), 104-115.

Morison, T. (2011). But what story? A narrative-discursive analysis of "white" Afrikaners' accounts of male involvement in parenthood decision-making [Doctoral thesis, Rhodes University]. SEALS Digital Commons http://hdl.handle.net/10962/d1002534

Morrell, R. (2006). Fathers, fatherhood and masculinity in South Africa. In L. Richter & R. Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: men and fatherhood in South Africa*, (pp 13-25). HSRC Press.

Morrell, R., Jewkes, R., & Lindegger, G. (2012). Hegemonic masculinity/masculinities in South Africa: Culture, power, and gender politics. *Men and masculinities, 15*(1), 11-30.

Moyo, F. L. (2004). Religion, spirituality and being a woman in Africa: Gender construction within the African religio-cultural experiences. *Agenda*, *18*(61), 72-78.

Msibi, T. (2011). They are worried about me: I am also worried. *Agenda*, *25*(1), 22-28.

Mubangizi, J. C. (2012). A South African perspective on the clash between culture and human rights, with a particular reference to gender-related cultural practices and traditions. *Journal of International Women's Studies, 13*(3), 33-48.

Mulaudzi, P. A. (2013). Cultural perceptions and linguistic terminology regarding traditional marriage within indigenous South African communities. *South African Journal of African Languages*, *33*(2), 153-158.http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/

Mupotsa, D. S. (2014). *White weddings,* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Witwatersrand]. WIReDSpace. http://hdl.handle.net/10539/15814

Mupotsa, D. S. (2015a). Becoming girl-woman-bride. *Girlhood Studies*, *8*(3), 73-87.

Mupotsa, D. S. (2015b). The promise of happiness: desire, attachment and freedom in post/apartheid South Africa. *Critical Arts*, *29*(2), 183-198.

Mupotsa, D.S. (2008 July 23). Lobola for my love. *Mail & Guardian*. https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/mail-guardian/20080718/282007553163761

Mwamanda, S. (2016). *Representing lobola: exploring discourses of contemporary intersections of masculinity for Zimbabwean men in Cape Town: lobola, religion and*

normativity, [Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Town]. OpenUCT, http://hdl.handle.net/11427/20600

Mwambene, L., & Kruuse, H. (2017). The thin edge of the wedge: ukuthwala, alienation and consent. *South African Journal on Human Rights, 33*(1), 25-45.

Mwamwenda, T. S., & Monyooe, L. A. (1997). Status of bridewealth in an African culture. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 137*(2), 269-271.

Mwatsiya, I. (2019). Gender constructions in Africa: A systematic review of research findings from the informal support networks of abused women. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (7).

Nash, J. C. (2008). Re-thinking intersectionality. *Feminist review, 89(*1), 1-15.

Native Administration Act 38 of 1927, Union of South Africa.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2019). Provisional Notes on Decolonizing Research Methodology and Undoing Its Dirty History. *Journal of Developing Societies*, *35*(4), 481-492.

Nduna, M. (2015). Growing up without a father and pursuit of the right surname. *The Open Family Studies Journal*, *6*(1), 31–38.

Nentwich, J. C. (2008). New fathers and mothers as gender troublemakers? Exploring discursive constructions of heterosexual parenthood and their subversive potential. *Feminism & Psychology*, *18*(2), 207-230.

Newlin, M. (2017). Public perceptions towards children brought up by single mothers: A case of Queenstown, South Africa. *Journal of Human Ecology*, *58*(3), 169-180.

Ngabaza, S., Daniels, D., Franck, O., & Maluleke, R. (2013). Contestations of the meanings of love and gender in a university students' discussion. *Agenda*, *27*(2), 128-136.

Nganase, T. R., & Basson, W. J. (2018). Makoti and Mamazala: dynamics of the relationship between mothers- and daughters-in-law within a South African context. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *49*(2), 229-240.

Ngcukana, L. (2018, April,8). Village war over lobolo claims five lives. *City Press*. https://city-press.news24.com/News/village-war-over-lobolo-claims-five-lives-20180408

Ngema, N. M. (2013). The enforcement of the payment of lobolo and its impact on children's rights in South Africa. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad*, *16*(1), 404-425.

Nhlapo, T. (2019). Customary marriages. In B. Stark, & J. Heaton (Eds.), (pp. 45-59). *Handbook of international family law*. Routledge.

Nkani, F. N. (2012). *An ethnographic study of teenage pregnancy: femininities and motherhood among pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers at school in Inanda*. [Doctoral Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal]. ResearchSpace. http://hdl.handle.net/10413/8493

Nnaemeka, O. (2004). Nego-feminism: Theorizing, practicing, and pruning Africa's way. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *29*(2), 357-385.

Nnaemeka, O. (2005) 'Mapping African Feminisms'. In: A., Cornwall, (Ed.) *Readings in Gender in Africa* (pp. 31–40). International African Institute, James Currey and Indiana University Press,

Nourani, S., Seraj, F., Shakeri, M. T., & Mokhber, N. (2019). The Relationship Between Gender-Role Beliefs, Household Labor Division and Marital Satisfaction in Couples. *Journal of Holistic Nursing and Midwifery*, *29*(1), 43-49.

Ntuli, M. (2018, November 4). Why is the customary marriage act at odds with actual customs? *IOL*. https://www.iol.co.za/sunday-tribune/opinion/why-is-the-customary-marriage-act-at-odds-with-actual-customs-17763993

Ochs, E., & Capps, L. (1996). Narrating the self. *Annual review of anthropology*,*25*, 19-43.

Oden, R. A. (1983). Jacob as father, husband, and nephew: Kinship studies and the patriarchal narratives. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *102*(2), 189-205.

Ogundipe-Leslie, M. (1994). *Re-creating ourselves: African women & critical transformations*. Africa World Press.

Osman, F. (2019). The Million Rand Question: Does a Civil Marriage Automatically Dissolve the Parties' Customary Marriage?. *PER: Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad*, *22*(1), 1-25

Oswald, R. F., Blume, L. B., & Marks, S. R. (2004). Decentering heteronormativity: A model for family studies. In V. L. Bengtson, A. C. Acock, K. R. Allen, P. Dilworth-Anderson, & D. M. Klein (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theory & research* (pp. 143-165). SAGE.

Oyebade, B. (1990). African studies and the Afrocentric paradigm: A critique. *Journal of black studies*, *21*(2), 233-238.

Oyěwùmí, O. (1997). *The invention of women: Making an African sense of western gender discourses*. U of Minnesota Press.

Oyěwùmi, O. (2002). Conceptualizing gender: The Eurocentric foundations of feminist concepts and the challenge of African epistemologies. *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies 2*(1): 1–9.

Oyěwùmí, O. (2005a). (Re)constituting the cosmology and sociocultural institutions of Òyó-Yorùbá. In O. Oyěwùmí (Ed.) *African gender studies: A reader* (pp. 99-119). Palgrave Macmillan.

Oyěwùmí, O. (2005b). Visualizing the body: Western theories and African subjects. In O. Oyěwùmí (Ed.). *African gender studies: A reader* (pp. 3-21). Palgrave Macmillan.

Palmary, I., & Barnes, B. (2015). Critical psychology in Africa. In I. Parker. (Ed.). *Handbook of critical psychology*, (pp. 397–405). Routledge.

Parker, G. (2015). The practice of lobola in contemporary South African society. *Journal of Third World Studies, 32*(2), 175-190.

Parnell, S. (2002). Winning the battles but losing the war: the racial segregation of Johannesburg under the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923. *Journal of Historical Geography, 28*(2), 258-281.

Patterson, W. (2008). Narratives of events: Labovian event analysis and its limitations. In M. Andrews, C. Squire and M. Tamboukou (eds) *Doing Narrative Research*. SAGE.

Pauli, J. and van Dijk, R. (2016). Marriage as an end or the end of marriage? Change and continuity in Southern African marriages. *Anthropology of Southern Africa, 39*(4), 257–266.

Peinaar, J. (2003). African customary wives in South Africa: Is there spousal equality after the commencement of the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act. *Stellenbosch Law Review, 14(2),* 256-272.

Perumal, D. N. (2011). The ties that bind: Marriage–a risky business or safe place?. *Agenda, 25*(1), 9-14.

Phiri, I. A. (2002). " Why does God allow our husbands to hurt us?" Overcoming violence against women. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa, 114,* 19-30

Phoenix, A. (2014). Reframing relevance: narratives of temporality and methodological turning points in research on families and gender. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *17*(2), 105-119.

Posel, D. (2006). Marriage at the drop of a hat: Housing and partnership in South Africa's urban African townships, 1920s–1960s. *History Workshop Journal*, *61*(1), 57-76.

Posel, D., & Rudwick, S. (2014a). Marriage and bridewealth (ilobolo) in contemporary Zulu society. *African Studies Review*, *57*(2), 51-72.

Posel, D., and Rudwick, S. (2014b). Ukukipita (cohabiting): Socio-cultural constraints in urban Zulu society. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *49(*3), 282–297.

Presser, L. (2005). Negotiating power and narrative in research: Implications for feminist methodology. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, *30*(4), 2067-2090.

Quijano, A. (2007). Coloniality and modernity/rationality. *Cultural Studies*, *21*(2-3), 168-178.

Radebe, K. (2016). The question of custom in the onus to prove customary marriage. *Agenda*, *30*(1), 139-145.

Ramphele, M., & Richter, L. (2006). Migrancy, family dissolution and fatherhood. In L., Richter, & R., Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: men and fatherhood in South Africa*, (pp. 73-81). HSRC Press.

Ranganathan, M., MacPhail, C., Pettifor, A., Kahn, K., Khoza, N., Twine, R., ... & Heise, L. (2017). Young women's perceptions of transactional sex and sexual agency: a qualitative study in the context of rural South Africa. *BMC public health*, *17*(1), 666.

Raphalalani, T. D., & Musehane, N. M. (2013). Arranged marriage practices of the Vhavenda community of the Vhembe district, Limpopo province, *South Africa. Journal of Languages and Culture, 4*(2), 18-22.

Ratele, K. (2014). Currents against gender transformation of South African men: Relocating marginality to the centre of research and theory of masculinities. *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies, 9*(1), 30-44.

Ratele, K. (2017a). African (situated) psychologies of boys, men and masculinities. *Psychology in Society, 54*, 10-28.

Ratele, K. (2017b). Contesting "Traditional" Masculinity and Men's Sexuality in Kwadukuza, South Africa. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie, 108*(3), 331-344.

Ratele, K. (2017c). Four (African) psychologies. *Theory & Psychology, 27*(3), 313-327.

Ratele, K. (2017d). Frequently asked questions about African psychology. *South African Journal of Psychology, 47*(3), 273-279.

Ratele, K. (2017e). Six theses on African Psychology for the world. *Psychology in Society, 54*, 1-9.

Ratele, K., Cornell, J., Dlamini, S., Helman, R., Malherbe, N., & Titi, N. (2018). Some basic questions about (a) decolonizing Africa (n)-centred psychology considered. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *48*(3), 331-342.

Ratele, K., Cornell, J., Dlamini, S., Helman, R., Malherbe, N., & Titi, N. (2018). Some basic questions about (a) decolonizing Africa (n)-centred psychology considered. *South African Journal of Psychology, 48*(3), 331-342.

Recognition of Customary Marriages Act 120 of 1998, Republic of South Africa.

Rich, E. P., Nkosi, S., & Morojele, N. K. (2015). Masculinities, alcohol consumption, and sexual risk behavior among male tavern attendees: A qualitative study in North West Province, South Africa. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, *16*(4), 382-392.

Riessman, C. K. (2012). Analyzing personal narratives. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 695-710). SAGE.

Riessman, C. K. 2008. *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. SAGE.

Robnett, R. D., Wertheimer, M., & Tenenbaum, H. R. (2018). Does a woman's marital surname choice influence perceptions of her husband? An analysis focusing on gender-typed traits and relationship power dynamics. *Sex Roles*, *79*(1-2), 59-71.

Ryan-Flood, R. (2005). Contested heteronormativities: Discourses of fatherhood among lesbian parents in Sweden and Ireland. *Sexualities*, *8*(2), 189-204.

Saavedra, C., & Perez, M. (2013). Chicana/Latina feminism(s): Negotiating pedagogical borderlands. *Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies*, *5*(3), 129-131.

Samuel, S. (1999). Women married in customary law: no longer permanent minors. *Agenda*, *15*(40), 23-31.

Sassler, S., & Miller, A. J. (2011). Waiting to be asked: Gender, power, and relationship progression among cohabiting couples. *Journal of Family Issues, 32*(4), 482-506.

Semenya, D. K. (2014). The practical guidelines on the impact of mahadi [bride price] on the young Basotho couples prior to marriage. *Theological Studies, 3* (70). 209-225.

Sengadi v Tsambo: In re Tsambo 2019 1 All SA 569 (GJ).

Sennott, C., & A. Mojola, S. (2017). 'Behaving well': the transition to respectable womanhood in rural South Africa. *Culture, health & sexuality*, *19*(7), 781-795.

Shefer, T., Ratele, K., Strebel, A., Shabalala, N., & Buikema, R. (2007). *From boys to men. Social construction of masculinity in contemporary South Africa*. UCT Press.

Shefer, T., Stevens, G., & Clowes, L. (2010). Men in Africa: Masculinities, materiality and meaning. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, *20*(4), 511-517.

Shields, S. A. (2008). Gender: An intersectionality perspective. *Sex roles*, *59*(5-6), 301-311.

Sifile, L., (2018 October 29). Lobolo war takes deadly turn. *IOL* https://www.iol.co.za/the-star/news/lobolo-war-takes-deadly-turn-17683382

Simons, H. H. (1961). The Status of Customary Unions. *Acta Juridica*, *1961*, 17-37.

Sinden, E. (2017). Exploring the gap between male and female employment in the South African workforce. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, *8*(6), 37.

Singh, J. (2018). Dropping surname for gender equality and caste system eradication. *Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *9*(3), 509-511.

Singh, R., & Mukherjee, P. (2018). "Whatever she may study, she can't escape from washing dishes": gender inequity in secondary education–evidence from a longitudinal study in India. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *48*(2), 262-280.

Singh, S. (2013). Women want love, men want wives: The discourse of romantic love in young adults' future marriage goals. *Agenda*, *27*(2), 22-29.

Sirayi, M. (2003). In search of pre-colonial African theatre in South Africa. *South African Journal of African Languages*, *23*(1), 46-59.

Smart, C. (2002). *Feminism and the power of law*. Routledge.

Smith, L. T. (2013). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed Books.

Squire, C. (2013). From experience-centred to socio culturally-oriented approaches to narrative. In M. Andrews, C. Squire, & M. Tamboukou (Eds.), *Doing narrative research* (2nd ed., pp. 47–71). SAGE.

Stanley, L., (2017). Preface: Telling lives in Feminist Narrative Inquiry. In J. Woodiwiss., K, Smith., & K., Lockwood, (Eds.), *Feminist Narrative Research*. (p.vii-xvii). Palgrave Macmillan UK

Statistics South Africa. (2016). Whither a Demographic Dividend South Africa: The Overton Window of Political Possibilities. Statistics South Africa.

Statistics South Africa. (2017). Living Conditions of Households in South Africa: An Analysis of Household Expenditure and Income Data using the LCS 2014/2015. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria.

Stephens, C., & Breheny, M. (2013). Narrative analysis in psychological research: An integrated approach to interpreting stories. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 10*(1), 14-27.

Taylor, S. (2006). Narrative as construction and discursive resource. *Narrative Inquiry, 6*(1), 94–102.

Taylor, S., & Littleton, K. (2006). Biographies in talk: A narrative-discursive research approach. *Qualitative Sociology Review, 2*(1), 22-38.

The Journalist (2018, Novemeber 2018). HHP death puts customary marriages under spotlight. The journalist. http://www.thejournalist.org.za/spotlight/hhp-death-puts-customary-marriages-under-spotlight

Torday, E. (1929). The principles of Bantu marriage. *Africa, 2*(3), 255-290.

Twenge, J. M. (1997). “Mrs. His Name”: Women's preferences for married names. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 21*(3), 417-429.

UnisaIR. http://hdl.handle.net/10500/23689

Van der Vliet, V. (1991). Traditional husbands, modern wives? Constructing marriages in a South African township. *African Studies, 50*(1), 219-241.

Van der Watt, A. S. J. (2015). *Women's experience of being single*. [Master's thesis, Stellenbosch University]. SUNScholar Research Repository. http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/97784

Van Dijk, R. (2010). Marriage, commodification and the romantic ethic in Botswana. *Markets of Well-being*. In M. Dekker & R. van Dijk (Eds.) *Markets of Well-being: Navigating Health and Healing in Africa.* (pp. 282-305). Brill

Van Dijk, R. (2017). The tent versus lobola: marriage, monetary intimacies and the new face of responsibility in Botswana. *Anthropology Southern Africa, 40*(1), 29-41.

Van Niekerk, T. J. (2015). *Respectability, morality and reputation: Social representations of intimate partner violence against women in Cape Town.* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Town]. OpenUCT. http://hdl.handle.net/11427/15490

Vannini, P. (2004). Will You Marry Me?: Spectacle and Consumption in the Ritual of Marriage Proposals. *Journal of Popular Culture, 38*(1), 169-185.

Wagner, N. (1999). Sexual violence against women: a key element of institutionalised patriarchy. *Southern African Feminist Review, 3*(2), 59-64.

Wainaina, B. (2005). How to Write about Africa, *Granta*, Vol. 92.

Walby, S. (1990). From Private to Public Patriarchy: The Periodisation of British History. *Women’s Studies Inlernational Forum 13*(1-2). 91-104.

Warner, L. R. (2008). A best practice guide to intersectional approaches in psychological research. *Sex roles, 59*(5-6), 454-463.

Wassenaar, D. R. (2006). Ethical issues in social science research. In M. Terre Blanche, K. Durrheim and D. Painter (Eds). *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences*. (pp. 60-79). Juta and Company Ltd.

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society, 1*(2), 125-151.

White, H. (2016). The materiality of marriage payments. *Anthropology Southern Africa, 39*(4), 297-308.

Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. McGraw-Hill Education.

Willott, S., & Griffin, C. (1997). Wham bam, am I a man?': Unemployed men talk about masculinities. *Feminism & Psychology*, *7*(1), 107-128.

Yang, C. (2011). The quality of narrative research: On a theoretical framework for narrative inquiry. *STUT Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 6*, 195-241.

James, D. (2017). Not marrying in South Africa: consumption, aspiration and the new middle class. *Anthropology Southern Africa, 40*(1), 1–14.

Yarbrough, M. W. (2018). Very long engagements: The persistent authority of bridewealth in a post-Apartheid South African community. *Law & Social Inquiry*, *43*(3), 647-677.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Intersectionality and feminist politics. *European Journal of Women's Studies, 13*(3), 193-209.

Zungu, L. (2018a, Apr 22). Who is Zuma's new bae, Nonkanyiso Conco? *IOL*. https://www.iol.co.za/sunday-tribune/news/who-is-zumas-new-bae- nonkanyiso-conco-14585580

Zungu, L. (2018b, Apr 22). Zuma clan prod of their new addition. *IOL*. https://www.iol.co.za/sundayindependent/news/zuma-clan-proud-of-their-new-addition-14583888

Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics certificate

UNISA university of south africa

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

17 September 2018

NHREC Registration # : Rec-240816-052

CREC Reference # : 2018-CHS-0077
Name : Refiloe Euphodia Makama

Student #: 56241631

Dear Refiloe Euphodia Makama

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 17 September 2018 to 16 September 2023

Researcher(s): Refiloe Euphodia Makama

Supervisor(s): K. Ratele
College of graduate studies- Institute of Social and Health Studies
Kopano.ratele@mrc.ac.za

Lobolo: An apparatus for the construction, negotiation and enactment of gendered identities and power within urban black families

Qualifications: PhD (Psychology)

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for one year.

The ***low risk application*** *was* ***reviewed and*** **expedited** by the Chair of College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee on the 24 August 2018 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.
The proposed research may now commence with the provisions 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.

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Department of Psychology Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. 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. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (**16 September 2023**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2018-CHS-0077** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature :

Dr Suryakanthie Chetty
Deputy Chair : CREC
E-mail: chetts@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429-6267

Signature :

Professor A Philips
Executive Dean : CHS
E-mail: Phillap@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429-6825

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Ethics clearance reference number:

Title: Lobolo: an apparatus for the construction, negotiation and enactment of gendered identities and power within urban black families.

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Refiloe Euphodia Makama and I am doing research with Kopano Ratele, a Professor in the Department of Psychology, towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. We have funding from National Research funding for the completion of this study. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled *LOBOLO: AN APPARATUS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, NEGOTIATION AND ENACTMENT OF GENDERED IDENTITIES AND POWER WITHIN URBAN BLACK FAMILIES.*

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to find out how the custom of lobolo is implicated in the construction of particular gendered identities as well as how power operates within the custom of lobolo.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

This study aims to recruit a minimum of 30 people over the age of 18 living in urban areas in South Africa who have paid lobolo or whom lobolo has been paid for. You are being invited to participate in this study to share your experiences of the process involved in the custom of lobolo.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The interviews will be audio recorded. You will be asked questions about the events leading up to and including the day of the lobolo negotiations and/ or the day of lobolo payments. There will be questions about who was involved

and what were their role in the proceedings. It is anticipated that the interview will not take longer than an hour enough.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

While there are no direct individual benefits of participating in this study, your participation in the study contributes to an understanding of the practice of lobolo in a contemporary society.

ARE THEIR ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

While this study does not pose any danger to you the participant, some of the questions asked may be intrusive in that they may require you to talk about your relationship with your partner and your extended family members. Whatever you share with me in this study will not be made available to anyone outside the research process (myself, my supervisor and the transcribers). Your name or any identifying information will not be used in the transcription or any part of the research write up.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Yes, the information will be kept confidential. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about

your involvement in this research. You will be referred to by pseudonym in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings

In the event that your contribution is used for research reports, journal articles and/or conference proceedings your contribution or any other participants information will be traceable back to the you or any other participant.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard in the researcher's offices for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not receive any payment for participation in the study.

AS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Refiloe Makama on makama.refiloe225@gmail.com.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Refiloe Makama on makama.refiloe225@gmail.com,

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof Kopano Ratele on kopano.ratele@mrc.ac.za. Contact the research ethics chairperson of the CAES General Ethics Review Committee, Prof EL Kempen on 011-471-2241 or kempeel@unisa.ac.za if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Refiloe Makama

Appendix C: Consent to participate in this study

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.
- I agree to the recording of the interview.
- I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname…… (please print)

Participant Signature……. Date……

Researcher's Name & Surname…… (please print)

Researcher's signature……. Date……

Appendix D: Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____ (transcriber/company name), agree to maintain full confidentiality in regard to any and all discussions, audio-recordings and documentation received from the researcher, Sipho Dlamini, related to the research study titled *"**LOBOLO: AN APPARATUS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, NEGOTIATION AND ENACTMENT OF GENDERED IDENTITIES AND POWER WITHIN URBAN BLACK FAMILIES.**"*

Furthermore, I agree:

1) To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the data collection and any associated documents, transcripts and discussions

2) To not make copies of any audio-recordings, documents, and transcripts, unless specifically requested to do so by the Principle investigator (Refiloe Makama).

3) To store all study-related audio-recordings, notes, transcripts and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.

4) Where applicable, to delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard-drive and any back-up devices, at the end of the study period.

I am aware that I can be held legally responsible for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals. If I disclose identifiable information from the research study, information contained in discussions, research materials, audio-recordings and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's Name…… (please print)

Transcriber's Signature……. Date……

Researcher’s Name & Surname…… (please print)

Researcher’s signature……. Date……

Appendix E: Recruitment Advertisement

Appendix F: Participant Information

Pseudonym	Age	Marital status[7]	Employment status	Location	Language
1. Ntate	51	Married	Community Volunteer	Lehae-JHB	Sesotho
2. Nthabi	27	Uncertain	Temporally employed and part time student	Daveyton-JHB	Tsonga
3. Eunice	38	Married	Stay at home mom	Fourways-JHB	SePedi
4. Lethabo	37	Married	Researcher and student	Bryanston-JHB	Sesotho
5. Bab' Dladla	71	Married	Pensioner	Kwa-Langa-Cape Town	IsiXhosa
6. Mam' Dladla	54	Married	Unemployed	Kwa-Langa	IsiXhosa
7. Sandile	41	Single	Employed	Tsakane	IsiZulu
8. Ma Mbatha	53	Single	Community Activist	Zaakariya Park	IsiZulu
9. Mam'Dolly	56	Married	Community Activist	Zaakariya Park	IsiNdebele
10. Mapaseka	36	Married	Stay at home wife	Bryanston	SePedi

[7] The answers provided by each participant illustrated the complex role of lobolo in the matrimonial process. Some people (*) identified as married, even though their union was not legally registered. The two men marked with * identified as married because they had paid *lobolo.*

11. Jabulile	44	Divorced	Business owner	Fourways	IsiZulu
12. Nomthandazo	29	Single	Business owner	Florida	Siswati
13. Tshepi	33	Married	Researcher	Pretoria	Setswana
14. Lebo	32	Married	Personal Assistant	Midrand	Setswana
15. Thandeka	35	Married	Insurance industry	Randburg	IsiZulu
16. Mandla	36	Engaged	Unemployed	Florida	Isizulu
17. Khaya	38	*Married	Taxi owner	Kwa-Langa	IsiXhosa
18. Sechaba	32	*Married	Taxi driver	Kwa-Langa	Sesotho
19. Ma Ndaba	62	Widowed	Pensioner and Home business owner	Kwa-Langa	IsiXhosa
20. Ma Ngozi	65	Widowed	Pensioner	Kwa-Langa	IsiXhosa
21. Jabulani	36	Married	Home business owner	Kwa-Langa	IsiXhosa
22. Ma Ndima	67	Widowed	Pensioner and Home business owner	Kwa-Langa	IsiXhosa
23. Sindisiwe	33	Single	Unemployed	Gugulethu	IsiZulu
24. Aviwe	42	Separated	Government employee	Kempton Park	IsiZulu
25. Sibusiso	45	Married	Construction company owner	Lyndhurst	IsiZulu
26. Koketso	32	Married	Insurance industary	Bramley	SePedi
27. Lucky	37	Married	Construction worker	Boksburg	IsiNdebele

Appendix G: Sample Questions

- What motivated you to participate in this study?
- Can you tell me about the decision for you and your partner to participate in the custom of lobolo?
- Can you tell me about the events leading to the lobolo negotiations?
- Can you remember who was so involved in the process and what was their role in the process
- What role did you play during this process?
- Can you tell me about the events post the day of lobolo?