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Experiences of Gender Roles in Young Adults Living in Soweto

Fundiswa Mdunge

Supervised by Ruby Patel

This report is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Counselling and Community Psychology in the faculty of Humanities in the University of Witwatersrand.

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Johannesburg, November 2023

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

School of Human and Community Development

SENATE PLAGIARISM POLICY

Declaration by Student of Originality

I, **Fundiswa Mdunge (Student number: 2325920)** am a student registered for Masters of Community-Based Counselling Psychology in the year 2023 at the University of the Witwatersrand. I hereby declare the following:

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- Any part of this study that does not reflect my own ideas has been fully acknowledged in the form of citations.
- No part of this thesis has been submitted in the past, or is being submitted, or is to be submitted for a degree at any other university.

Signature:  **Date: 9 November 2023**

Fundiswa Mdunge

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Operational Definitions

Sex

According to the Medical Law Review, sex can be described as the biological classification that distinguishes between males and females' sexual reproductive systems based on their physical and physiological features (Hodson et al., 2019). This biological category is based on features such as chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and function and reproductive anatomy. The biological category makes a distinction between species that produce eggs and refer to them as 'females', and species that produce sperms and refer to them as 'males' (Hodson et al., 2019). The female's reproduction system is one that typically includes sex characteristics which produce eggs such as a vagina, vulva, ovaries, uterus and fallopian tubes. The male's reproduction system include the primary sex characteristics of testes and a penis which produce sperm and testosterone (Hodson et al., 2019). This distinction between these species highlights that the participants identified themselves as members of a species who can be considered as either male or female based on the abovementioned characteristics. There are therefore 3 male participants and 3 female participants.

Gender

Gender refers to the societal meanings that are assigned to the male and female sexes for the construction of masculine and feminine gender identities (Roshchynskaya, 2010). Gender is determined socially, as societies emphasise specific behaviours, expressions and identities that are considered as being socially acceptable for each sex (Roshchynskaya, 2010). According to Perry (2016), gender is rooted in assumptions, beliefs and norms that society attributes to men and women, which are grounded in the concepts of masculinity and femininity.

Gender roles

Gender roles refer to the behaviours men and women exhibit in the private and public sphere based on their biological sex and social gender distinctions (Tong, 2012). Gender roles are based on the societal expectations of how men and women should act, speak, dress, and interact in the context of society (Smyth, 2008). Based on the society, individuals can ascribe to traditional or non-traditional gender roles. Traditional gender roles emphasise roles for the gender distinctions of masculinity and femininity. Non-traditional gender roles on the other hand, refer to the roles individuals wish to occupy which are not associated with their sex

(Perrone, 2009). Different societies, groups and cultures have different gender role expectations, and these gender roles can change over time (Smyth, 2008).

Masculinities and Femininities

Masculinities and femininities refer to the social roles, behaviours, and meanings prescribed for men and women in any society at any time. These normative gender ideologies are distinguished from biological sex and must be understood to be plural as there is no single definition for all men and women (Kimmel, 2001). Stereotypes used by society in the construction of masculinities and femininities are composed of characteristics generally believed to be typical either of men or of women. There is widespread agreement in societies about what are considered to be typically feminine and typically masculine characteristics, and people of both genders are generally encouraged to adhere to stereotypic beliefs and behaviours and commonly conform to and adopt the dominant norms of femininity and masculinity present in their culture (Partin, 2021). Typical feminine gender roles include a homemaker role, being nurturing, polite, and accommodating, while typical masculine roles include providing for and protecting the family home, and being emotionally and physically resilient (Perrone, 2009).

Adultification

The term adultification has been used to describe children who take on various adult roles in the family home. There is a suggested vacuum in the family that is filled by the child as the "parental child" whose parents, caregivers and/or siblings have either implicitly or explicitly expected them to engage in child-rearing and other executive functions in the family system (Jurkovic, 1997). Adultification is a construct that describes behaviours in children which are transmitted across generations and involve assumptions of what they are obliged to do in the family home (Chase, 1999). It is a social construct which is associated with gender and broader cultural and ethnic considerations.

Black

In acknowledging that there are no fixed rules in the classification of race, the South African classification of "black people" is one that can be taken from the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003 which includes African, Coloured, and Indian South African citizens (Department of Trade and Industry, 2004). The Act describes black people in post-apartheid South Africa as individuals who were previously disadvantaged and oppressed by

the apartheid government, and were subjected to racism, economic deprivation and social exclusion during the regime. With the study's focus on the township of Soweto, the term "black" in the study therefore refers to African South African citizens and the community of Soweto in which they reside which was subjected to the forced relocation of black South Africans into areas that would keep them separate from white suburbs under the apartheid regime's Urban Areas Act of 1923 (Clark & Worger, 2016),

Youth and Young Adults

Definitions of the term "youth" vary when exploring South African law, public policy and social perception. The law, public policy and social definitions often overlap in their stipulations of age, which causes confusion as to what truly denotes "youth", which seems to include adolescence and/or adulthood. For instance, contradictions exist between the White Paper on Social Welfare of 1997 which defines a "young person" as being between the ages of 16 and 30 years, while the Child Care Act of 1991's definition of a "child" includes the ages of 0 to 18 years, and lastly the National Youth Commission Act of 1996 defines "youth" as including the ages of 14 and 35 years (Department of Welfare, 1997; Department of Justice, 1991; Department of Welfare, 1996). With consideration of these definitions, the definition of young adulthood was included in the study to provide clarification for the definition of "youth". Young adulthood is defined as the developmental period between the ages of 18 and 25 and this definition informed the reference to as well as recruitment of "youth" and "young adults" in the study (Higley, 2019).

Township

A "township" is defined as an area near a suburb or a city which is predominantly occupied by black Africans, Coloureds and Indians. These areas were selected by the apartheid government to keep black South Africans separate from white South Africans, and the government officially designated these areas for black occupation through enforced apartheid legislation (Donaldson, 2014). Townships have unique histories which have influenced the socio-economic status and lived experiences of the individuals who reside in them (Donaldson, 2014). Townships predominantly consist of low-income housing estates and informal settlements, in small fully functional neighbourhoods influencing a small-lived experience within them (Pernegger & Godehart, 2007).

Abstract

The study explores the more contemporary meanings and experiences of gender roles which have been developed by young adults over the years in their small-lived, contemporary experiences within Soweto. The study draws on in-depth interviews conducted with six young adult men and women and is carried out using a qualitative design. In exploring the topic of gender roles, normative patterns of change were identified which can contribute to the future discourse of gender role development. These normative patterns of change were attributed to ecological influences from the individual, their family, and their local and international communities, as well as intersectional influences which were identified as also playing a role in the participants' experiences of gender. The study reveals participants' experiences which are related to themes of gendered social pressures and socialisation, generational experiences of traditional and non-traditional gender roles, gendered divides and harmful gender stereotypes, gender identity conflicts in the ecological system, social ostracisation, issues of adultification, and views on patriarchal gendered ideologies and the maternal gatekeepers of these ideologies. The participants' stories reveal fractures in their contemporary gender role ideology and their gender role development during their upbringing. Despite these fractures, they express hopes to develop gender role experiences which incorporate both traditionally socialised gender roles and non-traditionally developed understandings of gender and gender roles in their future adult years, as a means to create their own personal gendered experiences based on their exposure to different ecological environments.

Key words: Gender role experiences, ecological development, racialised gender, adultification, maternal gatekeeping, father absence, patriarchy, Soweto

Chapter One

Introduction and Rationale

1.1 Introduction

"Gender is a shell game. What is a man? Whatever a woman isn't. What is a woman? Whatever a man is not. Tap on it and it's hollow. Look under the shells: it's not there."

-Alderman, 2016

There is a rising challenge to explore contemporary gender role experiences in youth, who are raised in traditionally heteropatriarchal communities with exposure to contexts which accept less traditional gendered means of living within South Africa (Chan, 2009; Langa, 2012; Shefer, 2013; Helman & Ratele, 2016; Gottert et al., 2018; Zawaira et al., 2022). This challenge comes as a result of the growing prevalence of conflict in gender role identity development which is experienced by young individuals in the different contemporary spaces they interact with, which has mostly been extensively explored from the male perspective in academia and action research (Langa, 2020). This gender role conflict comes as a result of significant socio-political changes targeted towards the largely traditional gender roles that people ascribe to in South Africa, as well as changes in the assumed gender role needs for the household's survival, which are increasingly being experienced by both males and females being raised in patriarchal, traditional households in a modernising society (Shefer, 2013; Helman & Ratele, 2016). As a result, these changes have brought an interest to explore the contemporary gender role experiences within this academic enquiry as these experiences have significant implications on young individuals' quality of life and functioning. The paper thus provides a qualitative means of deeply understanding contemporary youth's experiences of gender roles from the heteropatriarchal township of Soweto, as well as the relevant issues that are associated with their gender role experiences.

In order to create a background understanding of this topic, we can look into Alderman's (2016) abovementioned quote which portrays gender as a game, which contains everchanging concepts in an ever-evolving society. Patriarchal societies have an idea of what roles males and females should adopt, but the moment you take a peek behind contemporary society's curtain, these patriarchal beliefs no longer appear relevant or beneficial to some individuals (Nash, 2009). As society evolves the idea of gender roles is challenged and in light of globalisation,

the contemporary world is experiencing shifts between traditional and non-traditional gender roles in order to accommodate contemporary lived experiences. The quote therefore lays the groundwork for the theme of this paper, which is to explore whether there are contemporary shifts in experiences of gender roles in young adults living in Soweto.

The preservation and reinforcement of gender roles within society is based on the gendered ways that people organise their lives as well as the social expectations that assign roles to men and women (Blackstone, 2003). Men are expected to take on socially assumed characteristics, beliefs, attitudes and practices, that are considered as masculine gender roles, and these are associated with manhood or manliness. Feminine gender roles are taken on by women on the other hand, as these roles are associated with womanhood. Gender roles are considered as a major power structure, and it is important to study the topic of gender roles as they significantly define people's identities alongside other social factors such as race, nationality, age, ethnicity and class (Varmaghani et. al, 2015). Within the diverse cultural context of South Africa, this study on gender role experiences of young adults in Soweto can contribute to the understanding of normative patterns of change, and allow for an opportunity to gain an understanding of the contemporary characterisations, meanings and experiences that young males and females in Soweto have in terms of gender roles.

Research on gender roles in South Africa often draws on intersectional and historical experiences as an influence on these roles, it also draws on research on the experiences of patriarchy and masculinity and the impact of these on contemporary social justice issues (Christofides et. al, 2019; Greig et. al, 2017; Helman & Ratele, 2016; Shefer, 2013; Stets & Burke, 2005). More emphasis can be afforded to the contemporary experiences of gender roles in young adults navigating through small-lived experiences in specific South African contexts, outside of health and crime-related implications (Ngubane, 2010; Segalo, 2015). This would help to emphasise on the meanings and implications of young adults' subjective gendered experiences within small-lived heteropatriarchal South African contexts. This research intends to explore the meanings developed by young adults in Soweto in terms of the concept of gender roles, as well as exploring their experiences and implications of gender roles in the small-lived experience of contemporary Soweto.

Controversy over gender roles is a major issue in contemporary society (Ayres, 2013). The debates surrounding gender and sexuality have extended to arenas far beyond the individual,

into the home, the community, the political platforms and religious views, governmental organisations, and the globe as a whole (Burman, 2005; Hyde et al., 2019; Mikkola, 2022). These arenas have inherited the torch in the discussion surrounding gender roles which has been extensively explored in the past, continuing the argument into the 21st century by exploring the contemporary meanings and experiences of gender and gender roles. This study will show how traditional gender roles arose in the context of Soweto to the potential blurring and maintenance of these roles in the contemporary township of Soweto. By following the historical progression of these gendered arguments and tracing the establishment of gender roles back to their roots, this study intends to better the understanding of both the origins of traditional and non-traditional gender roles, as well as the application of gender roles today in young adults in the township of Soweto.

1.2 Background of Study

Apartheid was a patriarchal system founded on gender injustice and white male privilege, and this regime enforced gender role tensions amongst South African males and females throughout different generations. These gender role tensions were developed through "racist sexualisations" which refer to the Apartheid system's reinforcement of traditional gender roles in the black community (Shefer, 2013). Restrictions were imposed on black South African women at the beginning of the 1950s which saw many women living in the homelands nurturing their children and maintaining the household while their husbands migrated to the city in search of work (Berger, 1992). Women who followed their husbands to the city either stayed home and did housework or took on low-wage domestic work in neighbouring white suburbs.

By the 1960s, women integrated themselves into the public work force in the urban and industrial fields. Within these fields of public work, the domestic field reported a presence of 90% of black women by the late 1980s and 36% in the industrial field. With women's integration into the work force, there was significant evidence that they were paid much less than their male counterparts (Berger, 1992). Black men, during the Apartheid era, were dispossessed and forced to become low-waged factory or mine-based manual labourers and they were paid much less than their white male counterparts. Men left their homelands and families to move to the city for work and restrictions were set in place that prohibited black men from living with their wives (Stewart & Webster, 2020).

Changes in laws, policies and constitutions that were now aimed towards supporting equality amongst the country's citizens regardless of race or gender resulted in significant changes in South Africa when apartheid was abolished in 1994 (Mantell et al., 2009). In post-Apartheid South Africa, males and females are now afforded constitutional protections and freedoms which they were previously denied, however the spatial, structural and ideological remnants of Apartheid do however remain in the township of Soweto, such as the remnants of traditional and patriarchal gender ideologies with socially unaccepted deviations towards non-traditional and contemporary gender roles (Zarrinjooee & Chegeni, 2016). The study therefore seeks to further explore how young adults have made meaning of gender roles and how their patriarchal socialisation has impacted their gendered experiences in the township of Soweto.

1.3 Rationale

Gender and gender roles are concepts that are internalised by children from a very early age, as they become exposed to various processes of socialisation throughout their development (Greig et. al, 2017). As children grow up, they become socialised with ideas of masculinity and femininity, and they are raised with societal assumptions and expectations of gender roles. The child is expected to embrace particular gender roles based on their sex category as they begin to develop their identity. Research suggests that constructions of gender roles in children as they grow up significantly shapes young people's notions and experiences of relating with others, themselves and with understanding sexuality (Helman & Ratele, 2016). As significant as these gender role constructions are to people's experiences, some ideas about masculinity and femininity can become harmful. Gender role ideas that are harmful impact males, females, and people of other gender identities (Greig et. al, 2017). These harmful ideas about gender roles influence the construction of gender role stereotypes that are maintained and reinforced within society.

Gender role stereotypes refer to generalisations about the characteristics, beliefs, attitudes and practices that are associated with men and women, which are socially constructed and internalised by people (Hentschel et. al, 2019). Gender role stereotypes are used to attribute particular gender role behaviours and experiences to a specific sex category. These gendered attributions can however negatively impact both men and women when unequal power relationships develop (Johnsson-Latham, 2006). Gender role stereotypes greatly impact

experiences of gender inequality, economic inequities, gender discrimination, gender-based violence and other areas of social inequality.

Women and girls may internalise harmful gender role descriptions which are attributed to them by society such as being incompetent, weak, unambitious and powerless. This internalisation emphasises the social assumption that women must have a natural inclination to be submissive towards men and not be driven towards economic and political success (Johnsson-Latham, 2006; Burke 2004; Stryker, 2002). Men and boys on the other hand, may internalise harmful gender role descriptions such as being aggressive, controlling and powerful. This internalisation emphasises the social assumption that men and boys must have a natural inclination to want to exert power and control over women and girls, be driven and strive towards a high social status as well as economic and political success (John et al., 2019). This need for power and control for men may even be achieved through violent or abusive means (Stets, 2005; Christofides et. al, 2019).

There is a long history of international and local research in psychology that explores gendered experiences, with most studies exploring traditional gender role experiences and a few studies exploring non-traditional gender role experiences (Mantell et al., 2009; Zosuls et. al, 2011; Mayer & Barnard, 2015; Helman & Ratele, 2016; Zhu & Chang, 2019). Within the South African context, research with a focus on gendered experiences has indicated that these experiences are largely influenced by patriarchal meanings, values and structures, and that more traditional gender role structures encourage power and control for men and boys (Stets, 2005; Helman & Ratele, 2016; Greig et. al, 2017; Christofides et. al, 2019). There are a few studies on non-traditional gender roles within South Africa, and these studies correlate non-traditional gendered experiences with increased gender equality, equitable gendered roles and practices for men and women, as well equal access to opportunities in the economic and health sectors of society (Mantell et. al, 2009; Ngubane, 2010; Mayer & Barnard, 2015; Segalo, 2015). There are also a few studies on the gender role conflict experienced by individuals who reside in heteropatriarchal environments and are exposed to more non-traditional gender role experiences and contexts (Segalo, 2015; Greig et. al, 2017; Christofides et. al, 2019; Langa, 2020). This study aims to contribute to this body of knowledge on gender roles by exploring the individual meanings and experiences of gender roles in young adults living in contemporary Soweto, based on their exposure to both traditional and non-traditional gender role experiences

within their lived experiences and the implications of these experiences on their gender role development.

This research based on gender roles within the contemporary Soweto context allows the continued influence of Western colonisation, apartheid, racialisation and patriarchy to be understood within the area of contemporary gender role development. It also allows the concept of power to be understood beyond control and domination by men over women, to thinking about the use of social power in ways that emphasise uncontested social acceptance of gender roles resulting in gender inequality and the developmental oppression in young females and males (Greig et. al, 2017). The exploration of gender role meanings and experiences in young adults also enables normative patterns of change to be identified in gender role development, as well as supports an understanding of social justice issues relating to gender and gender roles. Based on these explorations, this research aims to encourage contemporary implementations of strategies aimed at alleviating any social justice issues that arise from gendered experiences within small lived contexts like Soweto.

Addressing gender role stereotypes and the topic of gender roles builds on the discourse of gender equality. It also emphasises the importance of developing contemporary social meanings and beliefs that embrace both masculinity and femininity as having associations with esteemed social status, economic reward and political power (Greig et. al, 2017; Varmaghani et. al, 2015). It is critical to understand the way in which gender inequality is reproduced within the South African context by examining and understanding the influences that contribute towards harmful gender role constructions, a reconfiguration of more equitable gender roles can be achieved (Helman & Ratele, 2016). Lastly, understanding experiences of gender roles and power contributes to the knowledge that is aimed at reducing prevalence rates of violence, adultification, gender stereotyping and gender inequality amongst the youth of Soweto.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the study is to explore experiences of gender roles of young adults living in Soweto. Within this primary aim there are three secondary aims for the study. The first is to explore the development of gender roles. Second, is to explore the lived experiences of traditional and non-traditional gender roles for these young adults. And lastly, it is to explore

the young adults' experiences of gender roles in private and public spaces within their small-lived experiences in Soweto.

1.5 Chapter Outline

Chapter one introduces the research and outlines the rationale and aims of the study. Chapter two presents a literature review which provides insight into the differences between sex, gender and gender roles, gendered experiences and their implications, and ecological and intersectional influences on Sowetan gender role experiences.

Chapter three outlines the gender role development theory and the ecological framework as frameworks which are used to understand and unpack the research topic. The origins, application, benefits and shortcomings of the framework for the research are also outlined in this third chapter. Chapter four provides the methodological framework of the paper based on the participant's accounts of their experiences, which was analysed and interpreted. The study used a qualitative design and within this qualitative design, an Interpretive Phenomenological Approach was employed to analyse and process the data. Finally, this fourth chapter also presents the strengths and limitations of the study, as well as a reflexivity section which outlines the researcher's process during the implementation of this study.

Chapter five provides a discussion on the research findings which are thematically outlined. The themes are based on the in-depth interviews which included the meanings and experiences of the participants based on the research topic. The sixth chapter of the paper is the final section, and it presents a conclusion which includes the themes and theoretical concepts highlighted in the paper. This final section closes off with the recommendations from the study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores literature pertaining the gendered evolution of Soweto and the multiple issues related to the racialised, political and cultural influence on gender roles within the community. This chapter offers insight into the ecology of gender role development, as well as the implications related to gender role identity development.

2.2 A Gendered Evolution of a South Western Township

2.2.1 Contextualising the Apartheid City

A contextualisation of South Africa and its history is necessary before exploring the gendered evolution of the South Western Township, which is popularly known as Soweto. This contextualisation of South Africa helps to provide the context of the conditions that influenced the gendered experiences of individuals residing in the post-colonial township of Soweto. This contextualisation is brief and oversimplified, however it portrays the different racialised events that played a significant role in how individuals later accepted and developed specific gender role experiences.

South Africa has early foundations of colonial rule which can be traced back to 1652 when Dutch and British settlers journeyed through South Africa looking to meet the demands for cheap labour slaves who could produce goods to be exported for international trade (Clark & Worger, 2016). These early foundations of this colonial society began with the Dutch and British settlers creating practical segregation based on the wealth differentiation, as the country's African natives were considered to be poverty stricken (Christopher, 1983). This wealth segregation involved differential housing styles for the foreign settlers and natives in a free society. By the mid-1800s, there were growing racial undertones in this free society which resulted in the strict and unchallenged enforcement of residential segregation, as well as political and economic dominance by the European settlers over the South African natives (Christopher, 1983). The wealth and racial segregation as well as political and economic dominance by the European settlers influenced the beginning of the colonisation period of South Africa (Zarrinjooee & Chegeni, 2016). During this colonial period, there was an

emphasis on white rule and a preference for a separation of European settlers from non-European people.

After the Second World War, the less formalised colonial period became formalised as the Apartheid regime began to emerge in South Africa. The regime enforced policies that supported violent racial segregation, land dispossession and subsequent economic impoverishment for black South Africans (Helman & Ratele, 2016). State surveillance and state restrictions were processes that were also enforced on the predominant non-white South African population which influenced a growth in racism within the country (Zarrinjooee & Chegeni, 2016). The growth in racism by the dominant European classes resulted in the settlers perceiving the African natives as unhygienic, which exacerbated segregation as a counteraction by the settlers as a means to appropriate the major resources in South Africa and secure their economic and political dominance (Christopher, 1983).

The emphasis of natives being a health hazard was very effective in maintaining political pressure for the South African natives to be kept away from the European residential areas (Christopher, 1983). The first decade of the twentieth century saw sites for African housing being selected in areas which were distant from the European cities of Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg (Maharaj, 2020). As a result, townships like Soweto were developed as places for what was labelled as the "redundant native", in separate African residential locations, who could provide cheap labour for a European area. The development of these townships were achieved through the enacted Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 enforced by the Apartheid parliament (Maharaj, 2020).

These newly enforced laws were based on a patriarchal system founded on racial oppression, gender injustice and white male privilege (Morrell, 1998). The regime enforced gender role tensions amongst South African men and women through "racist sexualisation" (Shefer, 2013). Racist sexualisation refers to the Apartheid system's reinforcement of traditional gender roles in the South African context, particularly in the native locations. Restrictions were imposed on black South African women at the beginning of the 1950s which saw many women living in the homelands nurturing their children and maintaining the household while their husbands migrated to the city in search of work (Shefer & Ratele, 2011). Women who followed their husbands to the city either stayed home and did housework, or they took on low-wage domestic work in neighbouring white suburbs (Shefer, 2013).

By the 1960s, women took on less traditional gender roles as they were integrated into the public work force in the urban and industrial fields due to a growing demand for cheap public labour (Shefer & Ratele, 2011). Within these fields of public work, the domestic field reported a presence of 90% of black women by the late 1980s and 36% in the industrial field. With women's integration into the work force, there was significant evidence that they were paid much less than their male counterparts, despite working similar or longer working hours than them (Berger, 1992).

Black men, during the Apartheid era, were dispossessed and forced to become low-waged factory or mine-based manual labourers and they were paid much less than their white male counterparts (Shefer & Ratele, 2011). Black men left their homelands and families to move to the city for work and restrictions were set in place that prohibited black men from living with their wives (Stewart & Webster, 2020). As a result of the growing demand for black women and men to enter the work force, the black child became socialised to take care of the family home as a pseudo-mother or father, according to their gender (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Based on these racialised experiences, Soweto was subsequently moulded in significantly traditional gendered ways as a black location within South Africa.

2.2.2 Locating Soweto within the Apartheid City

Soweto is an urban settlement that was developed in the 1930s as policies of racial segregation began emerging in South Africa. Black South Africans were relocated under the Urban Areas Act of 1923, from Johannesburg to Soweto, which was founded as an area that would keep black South Africans separate from white suburbs (Clark & Worger, 2016). The township emerged largely through forced removals, squatting, and state violence carried out by the Apartheid state. Soweto became a place where severe oppression and poverty were experienced on a racial, class and gender basis (Chabedi, 2003). Soweto was the largest black city in South Africa and residents served as a temporary working force for the strictly white suburb of Johannesburg (Bonner & Segal, 1998).

The Sowetan household became a form of social organisation under the Apartheid state, and the household was represented as the primary site in which gender relations were restructured with a significant move to patriarchy (Muthwa, 1994). Income generation was highlighted as a

male responsibility and domestic activities such as cooking and cleaning were associated as female responsibilities (Morrell, 1998). These responsibilities enforced on the household under the oppressive Apartheid state quickly became adopted within the Sowetan home as a survival strategy in the context of the urban Bantustan community of Soweto (Muthwa, 1994).

From the year 1976, flames of resistance began to be ignited in an effort to achieve social and political reform, and Soweto became the centre of political and cultural violence from 1976 to 1994 (Bonner & Segal, 1998). There was a violent struggle in the name of liberation, against the representatives and government of the Apartheid state, and violence became a means of communicating power (Heffernan, 2016). There was a breakdown of paternal authority and a lowered male presence in the home, as men and boys left the household by migrating for work or becoming exiled due to their involvement in the armed struggle (Muthwa, 1994; Morrell, 1998). Women and girls became the heads of households, taking over the financial and organisational responsibilities within the home (Muthwa, 1994). Family suffering, poverty, oppression and crime within Soweto saw the youth taking on authoritarian and gender-specific parental roles and acts in response to the struggle (Chabedi, 2003).

Change was fast becoming achieved through the mobilisation of the youth who made politics their primary passion (Heffernan, 2016). Young males and females took on active roles within the struggle as comrades and there was a dissolution of gender roles during this time (Phaladi, 2008). The youth identified themselves as being separate in their political and moral differences compared to their elders, and there was an age division which emerged between the elders and the youth which resulted in adults feeling defeated due to their loss of authority in their households (Chabedi, 2003). The youth were perceived as being out of control and breaking away from the traditional gender roles within the family home (Chabedi, 2003). As the struggle intensified, South Africa became ungovernable and unpopular with international states which eventually led to the breakdown of the Apartheid regime that strongly oppressed non-European natives (Phaladi, 2008). This breakdown of the regime led to the Apartheid system's abolishment in the year 1994. Post-1994, South Africa's independence from the Apartheid state saw Soweto's continued existence, as the largest black township in the country (Chabedi, 2003). Although the township thrived to evolve with the times in many different ways, it largely remained rooted in its gendered colonial beliefs, standards and practices which were widely accepted by the Sowetan community.

2.2.3 Soweto After 1994: Liberation and a 'Better Life For All'

With South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, it was clear that the purpose of the struggle was freedom. There was a need for freedom from an oppressive regime, a yearning for a representative government, and a need for the traditional nuclear home to return (Muthwa, 1994). There was a change in laws, policies and constitutions which were aimed towards accommodating these needs while supporting equality amongst the country's citizens regardless of race or gender (Zarrinjooee & Chegeni, 2016). The African National Congress promised 'A Better Life for All' in its campaign slogans and there were notions of African development and wealth redistribution, which is yet to be seen by many in contemporary Soweto (Chabedi, 2003). Opportunities to expand opened up for new black middle class citizens who quickly moved out of the township while the expected benefits of democracy quickly failed to materialise for the majority of the population of Soweto who had to remain in the township with their large extended families in the Sowetan family home (Chabedi, 2003).

The Sowetan household was once again forced into a survival strategy, as the poor and lower middle class households adapted to and attempted to cope with the adverse external circumstances in post-apartheid Soweto (Morris, 1998). A large percentage of households are now headed by females, with a lack of return of the paternal presence in the home, with fathers struggling to live up to the traditional role of provider and protector of the family (Morris, 1998). This lowered presence of the paternal figure resulted in mothers opting out of caring for their children and leaving child-rearing to the grandmothers while they sought out jobs to provide for the home (Muthwa, 1994). The male and female child were subsequently adultified in an attempt to ensure the continued survival of the Sowetan household emanating from Apartheid ideology, as they were socialised to take on parental roles based on their gender (Muthwa, 1994).

In the era of the Apartheid regime, misfortunes and the country's suffering were linked to oppression, and in contemporary Soweto, any unfair fate of individuals is linked to feelings of stuckness in a community which is still deeply rooted in oppressive values and beliefs (Chabedi, 2003). For the "unlucky ones" who do not leave the township, traditional values, poverty, violence, crime and a lowered sense of freedom become a means of life and provides a sense of purpose in life, while others do their best to get out of the township by any means

through financial and academic success (Muthwa,1994). Young boys and men are pressured to provide for their families and protect their girlfriends, while young girls and women are pressured to care for the home and learn how to negotiate the public space with a high risk of violent and criminal violations (Shefer & Ratele, 2011).

The post-colonial Soweto context can be considered as still portraying a patriarchal structure in which inequitable gender role relations are highly prevalent and indicated in gender-related social justice issues (Chabedi, 2003). This patriarchal Sowetan context is indicative of the spatial, structural and ideological remnants of Apartheid which continue to thrive in the township (Helman & Ratele, 2016; Zarrinjooee & Chegeni, 2016). In further understanding the gender role relations in Soweto, it is important to contextualise the definitions which underly the phenomenon of gender roles and gender role development.

2.3 Unpacking Gender Role Ideology

In unpacking gender role ideology in relation to this research topic, one begins by exploring the definitions which differentiate the concepts of sex, gender and gender roles. The exploration of these definitions is then followed by an exploration of the ecology of masculinities and femininities, in which these concepts are defined and contextualised.

2.3.1 Sex, Gender and Gender Roles

When unpacking gender role ideology, one may begin with defining the term ‘sex’ as the core concept of gendered ideology. Sex is defined as a biological concept that classifies an individual as male or female based on the individual’s primary reproductive organs (Committee on Understanding the Biology of Sex and Gender Differences, 2001). According to this simple scenario, the presence or absence of a Y chromosome is what is important: with this Y chromosome, you are male, and without it, you are female (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). There are however some people who straddle outside this simple scenario - their sex chromosomes say one thing, but their gonads (ovaries or testes) or sexual anatomy say another (Ainsworth, 2015). Individuals who find themselves outside this scenario are known as having intersex conditions, or differences or disorders of sex development. Parents of these individuals often face difficult decisions about whether to bring up their child as a boy or a girl (Ainsworth, 2015).

For the purposes of this research paper, sex is a biological category that seeks to make a principled distinction between individuals of a sexually reproducing species. Females are defined as the species that usually produces eggs and have ovaries, a uterus, fallopian tubes, vulva, and a vagina as typical sex characteristics (Hodson et al., 2019). Males are defined as the species that produces sperms and have testes and a penis as primary sex characteristics (Hodson et al., 2019). This division may not be tidy as there are individuals in the human species who are neither entirely male nor female along various dimensions, or who exhibit a mix of male and female sex-related features.

The next concept in gendered ideology is 'gender', and this concept is often confused with the term 'sex'. This struggle with the nuances of these terminology is because the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are often used interchangeably to denote if someone is male or female (Levesque, 2011). However, with regards to conceptualisation, the terms sex and gender are different, as the distinction of these terms separates the cultural (gender) from the biological (sex) (Roshchynskaya, 2010). Gender is therefore a social construct that classifies an individual as masculine or feminine based on their sex category, and it is the societal meaning assigned to males and females (Tong, 2012). The concept typically refers to the behavioural, social, and psychological characteristics of males and females, and each society emphasises particular roles that each sex should play (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Gender indicates the socialised behaviour patterns and ideas about what is considered as appropriate and desirable masculine and feminine identities (Roshchynskaya, 2010). People receive messages from the day of birth about what is appropriate for a male and a female (Levesque, 2011). Gender is the basis in which gender roles are developed. Societies tend to assign some classes of social roles to male individuals, and some classes of social roles to female individuals (Roshchynskaya, 2010).

Gender roles are socially assumed roles that suggest how an individual should behave, talk and think on the basis of being male or female (Perrone, 2009). Gender roles are typically described as either traditional or non-traditional. Differences between men and women are highlighted in a traditional gender role orientation, and this traditional orientation suggests that the different sexes are inherently disposed to engage in particular behaviours (Lindner et al., 1995). The value of equality for males and females in society and relationships are highlighted in a non-traditional gender role orientation. This non-traditional orientation motivates individuals to become empowered towards embracing the roles they wish to occupy and shaping the extent

to which those roles should be associated with their sex (Perrone, 2009). Traditional gender roles are more likely to be found in patriarchal societies, while non-traditional gender roles are more prevalent in transformative contemporary societies (Roshchynskaya, 2010). None of this is meant to imply that gender roles, in and of themselves, are good or bad; they merely exist, and they are realities in almost everyone's life. These gender roles help individuals shape their gendered identities as they navigate being male or female, and as they shape their socialised ideas of masculinities and femininities in the different contexts they interact with.

2.3.2 The Ecology of Masculinities and Femininities

There is a significance in using the plural in defining 'masculinities' and 'femininities' in this research paper, as the plural form recognises the significantly different ways, different groups define masculinity and femininity (Priola, 2010). These definitions can differ even in the same society at the same time, and they can even differ on an individual basis. The meanings of masculinity and femininity are considered as varying over four different dimensions; culture, time, an individual's life course, and meaning-making (Kimmel, 2001). Definitions of masculinity and femininity vary across cultures (Hofstede, 2001). There are some cultures which encourage men to be apathetic and unemotional to prove masculinity, others encourage sexual conquest, while other cultures prescribe a more relaxed representation of masculinity, which encourages emotional expressivity, community participation, and collective provision and care for the community's needs (Kimmel, 2001). Some cultures encourage women to be decisive and competitive, while others insist that women are naturally passive, helpless, and dependent (Kimmel, 2001).

Definitions of masculinity and femininity also vary considerably in any one place and context over time (Bhatia & Bhatia, 2021). These definitions shift in response to changes in levels of industrialisation and urbanisation, positioning in the larger world, as well as changes in the geopolitical and economic context, and with the development of new technologies (Kimmel, 2001). Definitions of masculinity and femininity also change over the course of a person's life with a set of developmental milestones linked to chronological age and life-stage which lead to a difference in an individual's experience and their expression of gender identity (Strough et al., 2007). Finally, the meanings of masculinities and femininities can vary significantly based on the given society, the time, and the moment, and just as these masculinities and femininities vary in their meanings, they can also coexist (Hofstede, 2001). These meanings

can be shaped by class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, and region and ultimately shape the individual's gender identity (Kimmel, 2001). Thus by pluralising the terms, this research paper acknowledges that masculinity and femininity mean different things, to different groups of people, at different times.

2.3.3 Defining Masculinities

When defining masculinities, it is important to reiterate that they will signify different things, to different men, of different ages, at different times. Masculinities are constructed socially and are not static or timeless, and are rather historical and are created by culture (Fernández-Álvarez, 2014). Traditionally, the social expectations for masculinity include a display of attributes such as strength, power, control less open display of emotionality and affection except for anger, as well as competitiveness (Fawkner, 2012). There are four types of masculinities which were introduced by Robert Connell (1995), and they have been identified as hegemonic, subordinate, complacent and marginalised masculinities.

Hegemonic masculinity refers to a traditional masculinity which is the embodiment of male domination, as well as exercising male power and authority over women and other men (McVittie et al., 2017). There are consequences of oppression, violence and privilege that are associated with this masculinity (Connell, 1995). Subordinate masculinity refers to a non-traditional masculinity which includes behaviours and feelings that are embodied by men which are conventionally attributed to women and are considered as being inappropriate for men. These behaviours and feelings include being caring, emotionally expressive, and standing for gender equality (Fernández-Álvarez, 2014). This subordinate masculinity is considered as contaminating the masculinity and men who exhibit these traits are stigmatised and are considered as inferior and socially undesirable (Schippers, 2007).

Marginalised masculinity refers to groups of men who experience social exclusion and have very little access to power (Fernández-Álvarez, 2014). These men are at the receiving end of injustice and oppression in societies led by men who exercise unjust forms of hegemonic masculinity and they do not question the often violent and misogynistic patriarchal culture they exist in (Maguire, 2021). Complacent masculinity refers to men who have no significant access to power and lack financial and social status but enjoy the patriarchal advantages associated with the male sex (Fernández-Álvarez, 2014). These ideologies of masculinity can be valid for

every place, period, social class, age, race or sexual orientation and can be adopted by individuals as early as childhood (Connell, 1995).

Male children's earliest experiences and memories are characterised by an emphasis on what it means to be a man. The male child is exposed to social and cultural norms that emphasise the expected gender roles for a boy child through their family, their peer group and their community (Mabunda, 2020). There is an explicit pressure to follow rules about how a man should behave and feel in young boys' socialisation process of adopting masculine gender roles (Johnsson-Latham, 2006). Strength, little emotion and resolution of physical conflict are characteristics that are emphasised early during the gender role socialisation process for young boys (Biglan et al., 2019). Boys are encouraged to play rough, to stand up for themselves, and are sometimes even taught that they are superior to girls (Biglan et al., 2019). Young girls may be kept inside to help with domestic chores or care for their siblings, while their brothers are afforded more freedoms to play outside (Johnsson-Latham, 2006). These differences in the way boys and girls are raised are often prevalent in patriarchal societies.

Patriarchy describes a system which is based on societal structures and practices in which men consistently govern, oppress and exploit women (Greig et. al, 2017). Patriarchal societies consist of predominantly traditional masculinities. Traditional patriarchal masculinities emphasise power as a construct based on domination and control (Mabunda, 2020). Control and domination can either be achieved through the use of violence or it can be achieved more indirectly, by enforcing beliefs and practices that exist in society that emphasise the superiority of men over women (Sikweyiya et. al, 2020). Within patriarchal systems, the construction of traditional masculinities insists that there should be distinct, rigid and albeit unequal gender roles between men and women, and that there should even be hierarchies among men (Sikweyiya et. al, 2020; Greig et. al, 2017).

There are however different societies and cultures that emphasise positive and non-violent masculinity practices, behaviours and norms (Mabunda, 2020). These societies aim to identify and promote positive and non-violent norms towards achieving the goal of gender equality (Johnsson-Latham, 2006). Non-traditional masculinities allow a different narrative of understanding maleness and manhood to surface, as they emphasise that nurturing and supportive roles can be perceived as gender neutral roles (Greig et. al, 2017). Non-traditional

masculinities suggest that both genders can work towards building equal power dynamics in relationships.

Traditional and non-traditional masculinities are portrayed in townships in South Africa and are represented by differences in the masculine roles boys and men take on (Johnsson,-Latham, 2006; Langa, 2012; Greig et al., 2017; Mabunda, 2020). A study by Langa (2012) portrayed the different masculinities taken on by boys in the township. The traditional masculinity was portrayed in the study in a hero-villain dynamic which surfaces in a boy's childhood and early adolescence (Langa, 2012). The heroic traditional masculinity often leads to boy-on-boy violence as a result of boys striving to achieve popularity and being labelled a hero (Spielberg, 1993). The boy who is defeated in the violent exchange loses his social standing of being perceived as a "real man" and loses respect from his fellow peers (Amin et al., 2018). In the traditional masculinity displays of violence do not only indicate dominance, power and authority but these displays also indicate an underlying need to achieve or hold onto a social status they had to win or consequently experience shame, humiliation and even emasculation from their male peers (Langa, 2012).

The non-traditional masculinity was characterised in the study as a non-violent and non-risk taking masculinity (Langa, 2012). This masculinity is represented by boys who were scholarly, mature, emotionally expressive, responsible and indicated a clear sense of the masculine self. The boys who aligned with the non-violent masculine self were confident and self-sufficient and often experienced a sound inner world (Randell et al., 2016). Academic success was argued by the boys as the main protective factor in avoiding engagement or participation in violent and risk-taking behaviours, and these individuals chose to portray a high degree of self-reflection instead (Langa, 2012). The boys' concern was not how others perceived him, but rather it was how he felt about reconciliating his behaviour with a clear personal identity (Kaplan et al. 2017). Males who embraced non-violent masculinity identities expressed higher levels of positivity and confidence towards their future, compared to their counterparts who embraced violent masculinity (Randell et al., 2016). Non-violent masculine males stated that one does not have to resort to violence to achieve the "ideal" manhood (Langa, 2012).

The study suggested that there is an inner conflict that is experienced by males who have adopted either traditional or non-traditional masculinities which results in the decision to move from one masculinity to the other (Langa, 2012). This move between masculinities is

considered to be in an attempt to conform to certain norms of masculinity and avoid marginalisation within the school setting (Amin et al., 2018). Although boys with heroic traditional masculinity are perceived as popular and attract girls, there is also an energetic and emotional cost that comes with the violent masculine identity, as it requires constant performance and interpersonal conflict (Randell et al., 2016). This identity can be experienced as frustrating and tiring for the hero-villain, however to the observer peer, it can be perceived as intimidating (Langa, 2012). Masculinity can be considered as a pressured experience for males who either subscribe to the traditional or non-traditional masculinity. Individual and social influences were portrayed as playing a major role in determining the masculinity a male wants to associate with (Langa, 2012).

2.3.4 Defining Femininities

Femininity is an underconceptualised construct within gender literature, compared to the vast literature on masculinity, there is a need for continued consideration of theorisations of femininities (Paechter, 2018). In existing theorisations of femininities however, there are different notions of what it means to be a woman which are linked to a woman's assumed place in a given set of gender roles and gender relations (Schippers, 2007). Just as in the case of masculinities, there are multiple femininities which exist. Connell (1987) introduced the concept known as emphasised femininity which is defined as a compliance to the subordination placed on women by men, as well as an orientation to accommodating the interests and desires of men. Within this emphasised femininity there are hegemonic and subordinate femininities (Schippers, 2007).

The hegemonic femininity exits in more traditional contexts and it refers to the power dynamics among women, and also contains racialised differences in the domination and power which women hold over other women (Hamilton et al., 2019). The hegemonic femininity is considered as an adaptation to men's power and emphasises compliance, nurturance and empathy as virtues which characterise womanhood (Hamilton et al., 2019). The woman is considered as a feminine object that does not have physical strength, authority and superiority. The hegemonic femininity poses sanctions on women who embody any practices and characteristics which are associated with hegemonic masculinity, and these sanctions are in the form of stigmatisation and social rejection (Schippers, 2007).

In its racialised form, the hegemonic femininity is considered as being different for white and non-white women (Hamilton et al., 2019). In the hegemonic femininity of white women, the woman is constructed as a monolithically self-confident, independent, assertive and successful. In the hegemonic femininity of non-white women, the woman is constructed as being passive, male-dependent and successful in child-rearing and keeping the home. The white hegemonic femininity takes on the same ruling traits over non-white hegemonic femininity (Schippers 2007). The white hegemonic femininity mimics hegemonic masculinity in a less exaggerated and more feminine manner, and ultimately attributes a subordinate femininity onto non-white femininities (Paechter, 2018). Subordinate femininity illustrates the intersectional subordination of females who do not qualify under hegemonic femininity due to the maintenance of patriarchal femininity. The racialised associations of subordinate may also be associated with ethnic/racial traits more than culturally inscribed gender traits (Hoskin, 2020).

In taking on a relational focus on femininity, its characteristics can be defined as a symbolical pair to masculinity as it complements it through having physical vulnerability, an inability to use violence effectively, and being compliant (Schippers 2007). This symbolic relationship is established through hierarchical complementarities which provide a rationale for a general social practice (Paechter, 2018). Thus alongside masculinity, femininity is considered as establishing gender hegemony as women and men engage in social relationships with each other which ensure ascendency and dominance for men (Hamilton et al., 2019). Femininity becomes a collective iteration for masculinity in the form of culture, interpersonal interaction, social structure and social organisation (Schippers, 2007).

Women who embody features which are considered to be associated with hegemonic masculinity are referred to as embodying characteristics of pariah femininities (Schippers, 2007). Pariah femininities exist in more non-traditional contexts and are considered as contaminating the hegemonic relationship between masculinity and femininity as women take on masculine traits (Paechter, 2018). These masculine traits include being aggressive, having authority, having multiple partners, having financial and social status, being sexually inaccessible to men, and having a sexual desire for other women (Fielding-Miller et al., 2016). Embodiment of these traits are considered to also contaminate the woman and makes her socially undesirable when exhibiting these traits (Schippers, 2007).

In the African patriarchal society there are standard and rigid expectations regarding a "woman's place" and her role in this society. The woman is given roles which consist of primary duties that are oriented towards homemaking and child-rearing (Hoskin, 2020). Women who aspired to enter the labour market had little to no role models and peers to follow and share common experiences with, in the past years (Burgess, 1994). Married women's employment was especially considered as reflecting negatively on the husband's ability to provide adequately for the family. There is an assumption that the African woman works out of economic necessity, companionship and for self-fulfilment in the labour force (Burgess, 1994). The African woman received social support to join the labour force in career roles such as domestic work, teaching, secretariat, or factory worker, which strongly resembled their responsibilities in the home of being a homemaker and child-rearing (Ackerman & Velelo, 2013). In the home, the woman was expected to keep her responsibilities of cleaning, cooking, taking care of the children, family and community, and keeping the home regardless of her employment status (Burgess, 1994).

Over time, in the African patriarchal society, slight deviations became evident in the standard and rigid expectations, as women fought to steer away from the systematic exclusion imposed on them by the colonial powers (Ackerman & Velelo, 2013). Women began taking on leadership roles in the community and in the home, they became influential in decision-making, they became prominent in the work force, and they became independent and proud of their womanhood as a strength of their African femininity. There were rights, respect, privileges and open responsibilities afforded to women in the growing non-traditional context (Burgess, 1994).

2.4 Being Male vs. Female: A Process of Socialisation

There are social and systematic differences which are created for males and females, and learning and socialisation plays a significant role in the process of shaping what is defined as masculinities and femininities within society (Kimmel, 2001; Roshchynskaya, 2010). During this learning and gender role socialisation, children undergo the process of being taught how to behave under the social expectations of their gender. They are given ideas of roles and activities which are appropriate only for males and females from the first years of life through this socialisation process (Cerbara et al., 2022). The children then receive parental approval when they conform to gender expectations and this approval influences them to adopt socially

accepted and conventional roles. This socialisation process is further reinforced by additional socialising agents, within the social context (Calvo-Salguero et al., 2008). These socialising agents, alongside parents, include teachers, peers, movies, television, music, books, and religion teach and they reinforce how males and females should think, speak, dress, and interact within the context of their society (Roshchynskaya, 2010).

As the socialising agents reinforce gender-specific expectations, behaviours and attitudes on children during the primary socialisation process, the children begin to internalise gender stereotypes and adhere to gender roles based on their sex and gender (Cerbara et al., 2022). Based on this gender role socialisation, the assumption is therefore that male children should internalise masculine stereotypes and expectations, and that female children should internalise feminine stereotypes and expectations (Roshchynskaya, 2010). Consequently, from this perspective, male children are more masculine than female children, and female children are more feminine than male children at an early age (Kimmel, 2001). Children therefore develop their personal gender identity based on these internalised strongly conditioned traditional expectations, behaviours and attitudes.

Traditionally, boys are conditioned to know how to provide, and how to fix and build things, while girls are conditioned to know how to cook, sew, and tend to the house (Roshchynskaya, 2010). As boys grow into men, they continue to undergo this socialisation process and they are taught that their role is to provide for the family by being a breadwinner, while women on the other hand, are taught that their role is to keep the home as a wife and bear children (Kimmel, 2001). Boys also develop physical and psychological masculine characteristics that allow them to succeed in the social environment, such as having traits like competitiveness and initiative. As girls grow into women, they develop feminine characteristics which are centred around community, such as having traits like emotional expression and caregiving and nurturing skills (Calvo-Salguero et al., 2008). This manner of socialisation ensures that these traditional gender roles lead males and females to adopt and maintain the socially accepted characteristics and skills that are associated with that individual's sex and gender (Calvo-Salguero et al., 2008).

The reinforcement that occurs during the socialisation process is rooted in the social acceptance of gender stereotypes as a form of society building and social belonging (Egan & Perry, 2001). Generations of society members are given a responsibility to continue building and strengthening the community by perpetuating gender stereotypes through the socialisation process (Hentschel et. al, 2019). This generational socialisation crystallises the expected

behaviours, characteristics, attitudes, skills and preferences for males and females, and limits freedom and flexibility for future generations who might want to adhere to different behaviours and beliefs (Cerbara et al., 2022). The continued reinforcement process in traditional gender role socialisation can be linked to neuroscience research on social acceptance and reinforcement of social phenomena. This research argues that when individuals receive positive social feedback about their identity, reputation or character, it activates the ventral striatum in the brain which is a reward centre (Meshi, Morawetz & Heekeren, 2013). This allows individuals to feel good about their involvement in reinforcing what is socially accepted and what is then subsequently rewarded through a sense of social belonging (Eisenberger et al., 2003). The consequence of deviating from the socially accepted socialisation process therefore has the opposite effect on the ventral striatum and makes individuals feel the pain of rejection and a lack of social validation and approval (Eisenberger et al., 2003).

Social acceptance therefore plays a significant and observable role during gender role socialisation and development, as individuals will voluntarily internalise gender role stereotypes in order conform to gender role requirements as a way of feeling a sense of belonging (Egan & Perry, 2001). Taking this voluntary conformity of gender roles as individuals develop into consideration, a study by Li and colleagues (2022) argues that gender role self-stereotyping correlates with higher life satisfaction. Therefore if individuals perceive gender role stereotypes as being enforced onto them, it negatively impacts their personal and relational self-esteem and it leads to deviations from these stereotypes (Li et al., 2022). If a growing number of individuals perceive gender stereotypes as problematic, it leads to an increased focus to address outdated and detrimental gendered roles and stereotypes and norms within communities as they grow in their social support to achieve social and cultural change through individual attitudinal and behaviour change, and subsequent community mobilisation (Stewart et al., 2021).

2.4.1 Gendered Expectations Around the Globe

In most parts of the world, there is a general expectation for men and boys to be masculine, and for women and girls to be feminine (Fawkner, 2012). Society socialises men to display attributes such as power and strength and to not display too much emotion and affection (Roshchynskaya, 2010). Women on the other hand, are socialised to display nurturing and compassionate attributes and submission towards men (Kimmel, 2001). These global social

expectations can generally be regarded as aligning with traditional gender roles (Roshchynskaya, 2010). There are however individuals in different parts of the world who prescribe to gender roles that are perceived as deviations that are inconsistent with the international society's expectations (Fawkner, 2012).

The deviations perceived in the non-traditional gender roles that people prescribe to, are considered to be moving away from social expectations and understandings of gender roles that are characterised by unequal power relationships between men and women, and beliefs that women should be submissive to men (Best & Foster, 2004). This shift has resulted in global ideologies transitioning towards more equitable beliefs and attitudes of gender roles (Tahira et al., 2017). The transition stresses the notion that women and men are equally important and that neither sex has the right to dominate the other. Despite this global transition, there are many societies that continue to hold on to traditional gender roles (Best & Foster, 2004).

There are various early international studies that have investigated international attitudes regarding gender roles and gendered socialisation. A study by Agarwal, Lester and Dhawan (1992) reported that individuals in wealthier first world countries expressed more non-traditional equitable views of gender roles than individuals in less wealthy, third world countries. However, across both first and third world countries women were reported as being more open to subscribing to equitable gender roles than men. A similar study by Gibbons, Stiles and Shkodriani (1991) reported that in traditional collectivistic groups and non-traditional individualistic groups, student boys stated that they subscribed to more traditional attitudes than student girls. Ghadially (2007) did a study on women who prescribed to non-traditional equitable gender roles ideologies. The study found that it was mainly women who were raised by educated, working mothers in traditional societies who prescribed to non-traditional gender role ideologies. In an international study conducted by on women in individualistic and collectivistic countries, equitable gender role attitudes were reported, and education and job status were considered as significant predictors in these results (Best & Foster, 2004).

Williams and Best (1990) conducted a 14-country study which looked into the attitudes of university students. Participants from northern European countries such as Germany, Finland, England and the Netherlands reported non-traditional gender role ideologies. The United States' results indicated both traditional and non-traditional ideologies. African and Asian countries like Nigeria, Pakistan, India, Japan and Malaysia indicated traditional gender role

ideologies (Williams & Best, 1990). The results of men and women's gender role attitudes in the overall study were reported as being highly similar. Differences in gender role attitudes were more significant in intercultural groups than in individuals who were from similar cultural groups (Williams & Best, 1990).

A look into African gender roles leads to the historical roles men and women were socialised to play in pre-colonial Africa. During this time there were many different cultural and traditional belief systems that all similarly defined the role of a woman as one characterised by reverence, equality and power (Medie, 2019). In Africa's earliest economies, hunting and gathering food in the wilderness was the way of life. Historical reports indicate that African women were the primary economic producers in Africa's earliest societies. Women were also reported to have held positions of power and control in what was considered matriarchal societies (Medie, 2019).

From the late 19th century, colonial policies embedded a system of patriarchy within African economies which saw the emergence of customary law that enforced traditional colonial gender roles on African men and women. European missionaries enforced constructions of gender roles which promoted traditional roles for the individual, marriage and family life as slave trade and the exploitation of African men and women intensified (Akyeampong & Fofack, 2014). The emergence of a patriarchal structure in African societies resulted in social, economic and political change in the continent (Anunobi, 2002). Colonialism significantly influenced the rise of gender inequality in African societies, which remained long after countries achieved their independence (Akinola, 2018).

The social, political and economic conditions in post-colonial Africa does not reflect women's pre-colonial exercise of power and influence in the continent (Ogbomo, 2005). Although different cultures have different views on gender roles, there is a general traditional belief that in public and family life African women should be submissive to men. Traditionally there are different roles that are assigned to men and women in the private domain of family life and in the public domain (Medie, 2019). As a result of these assigned roles in the African context, many women have consequently experienced difficulties in accessing education, employment, health care, as well as economic and political power (Anunobi, 2002).

Various laws have been passed in an attempt to close the gap in access to opportunities that has been imposed by gender inequality (Medie, 2019). This has slowly resulted in more African women experiencing gender equality, and access to resources and opportunities in different areas of their lives. Research has reported that how women used to exercise a degree of independence in the past, contemporary African males now respond to such independence in different ways, ranging from acceptance to accusing women of practicing witchcraft (Ogbomo, 2005). Class, gender, influence and opportunities have been considered as a major influence on more equitable gender roles, hence in cities and areas where Western influence is the strongest, African attitudes are moving towards more non-traditional equitable gender roles (Anunobi, 2002).

Just as in the general African context, gender roles in pre-colonial South Africa complemented each other. Women were respected as equal players in the public domain who played important roles in production, spirituality and politics in certain cultures (Montle, 2021). There was an intersection of duties and roles between men and women, that are now considered as gender typed. Women were revered, independent and considered as important figures in the social, economic and political spaces that were not exclusively for men (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2019). South Africa was later colonised and the British and Dutch colonisers enforced laws and ways of living that were rooted in racism and a patriarchal structure. South African men and women were forced to subscribe to traditional patriarchal gender roles during the emergence of the Apartheid regime (Montle, 2021). The post-colonial South African context can be considered as still portraying a patriarchal structure in which inequitable gender role relations are highly prevalent and indicated in gender-related social justice issues (Helman & Ratele, 2016).

2.4.2 The Racialised Masculinities and Femininities of the South African Sowetan

As mentioned in the beginning of this literature review, the gender role experience within the South African context has been strongly influenced by racialisation due to colonial rule and the apartheid era. The racial segregation during this time influenced distinct racialised gender arrangements to persist which saw emerging gender role ideals which were distinctive for black and white males and females (Shefer, 2013). These gendered ideals impacted the manner in which society constructed masculinity and femininity ideals, and this resulted in the traditional male-dominated authority to be retained (Montle, 2021). The gendered ideals also influenced work place inequality which saw whites dominating professional and business positions in

white-owned industries, and black South Africans being limited to take on labour or farming positions while they are confined to increasingly impoverished areas (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

For black South African men and women, financial challenges were rife, and this made it difficult for men to construct ideas of masculinity around material and professional achievement (Helman & Ratele, 2016). The South African man generally found what would be considered as insecure ways of securing a livelihood by being employed in seasonal, low waged, unskilled positions during his lifetime. This increased the likelihood of finding masculine affirmation in their social interactions with their families and other men (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Black women, generally did not have the means to be economically independent, and often had to be dependent on black men for sustenance (Burgess, 1994). This financial dependence promoted passivity and unquestioning obedience among black women, alongside the cultural practices which encouraged respect for males, and these experiences helped to shape the hallmarks of African femininity. Black women's gendered identities were similar to that of white women which were socially emphasised as being focused on keeping the home and rearing children (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

Constructions of masculinity and femininity in the historically black context of Africa have been rooted in the adoption of the colonial Western religion of Christianity, which have been passed down as ideas of traditional black African gender roles over the generations (Kügler, 2019). In the religious roots of Christianity, gender roles are located in sex and the ideas of marriage for procreation (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Based on the foundations of Western Christianity, African culture began to share the incontestable religious gendered roles prescribed to males and females (Rwafa, 2016). In the traditional black African gendered ideology, gender roles are an essential, normal and healthy way of life for all ages. Traditional black gendered ideology normalises gendered play during the early ages of a child's life, and gender role exploration is presented as a natural activity, especially when the individual enters adolescence (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

After the abolishment of Apartheid in South Africa, a period of transition and fluidity occurred in gender identities (Ackerman & Velelo, 2013). There was an overwhelming emergence of hegemonic femininities, particularly in urban spaces, which was associated with a growing interest in women to be independent and experience financial and professional achievement. This is an ideal womanhood that is chiefly based on women having access to material resources

(Burgess, 1994). A growing number of females from varying age groups are seeking political freedom, financial independence, and gender equality, and with the emergence of hegemonic femininity, more attention has been placed on understanding the meaning of feminine agency (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Despite the diversity offered by hegemonic femininity, traditional femininities are still considered as key elements of successful African womanhood for some women, with an emphasis on women to continue playing the role of keeping a home and bearing children (Ebila, 2015).

In other emerging, young black African femininities a growing trend is aiming towards showing that womanhood is successful when a young female proves herself to be desirable to men (Hamilton et al., 2019). This idea is complicit with hegemonic masculinity as it is framed in a way that encourages resonance with those ideas as the worth of women is being assessed by men, and women wish to be successful by conforming to the dominant social order, and accepting the control by men (Hoskin, 2020). There is a social expectation placed on women to not threaten a man's sense of control in the way that she behaves, and if she fails to do so, she is considered as running the risk of experiencing physical or emotional punishment from her male counterpart (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Although the dominant ideal of femininity is mostly presented as subordinate, not all women experience or tolerate controlling behaviour from their male counterparts to the same extent (Hoskin, 2020). Dominant African femininity is described as a femininity that excuses male behaviour, tolerates violence, tolerates polygamy, promises sexual exclusivity to men, places importance on sexual pleasure, has cultural wisdom, and requires a strong woman who is able to cope with and accept the stresses of life (Hamilton et al., 2019).

In Soweto, the gendered division of labour has seen constant evolution and shifts. Most women engage in domestic work and adopt gender positions as homemakers and providers in single-sex households which are economically independent of men (Erzse et al., 2021). These women's gender role positions are considered as dynamic and fluid, however it does not indicate how these women resist the traditional gender order that stipulates that women are subordinate to men, while men were absent in their households (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). It is therefore possible for opposing gender positions to be occupied without challenging the traditional gender order or being in support of alternative, gender-equitable gender roles (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

There are still patterns of power and dominance post-1994 which are associated with masculinities (Helman & Ratele, 2016). This is clear in the various racialised masculinities which are still dominant. It is these masculinities that prescribe particular ways of being a man and legitimate gender-inequitable practices in black South African communities (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). One example of a black African hegemonic masculinity is found in the Zulu and Xhosa concept of "indoda", an idealised heterosexual, virile man, who is desired by women, and whose prodigious sexual and material successes are the envy of other men (Mfecane, 2016). Heterosexual success is considered as the key to expressing successful African manhood. This successful manhood is proven through material success, attaining and keeping sexually desirable women, and exerting control over both women and men (Morrell, 1998). Hegemonic masculinity also emphasises other practices such as excessive alcohol consumption and general and sexual risk taking (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

Contemporary black South African masculinities value physical strength and firmness, dominance and courage, as well as hierarchical authority (Morrell, 1998). Within heterosexual relationships, males expect to establish and demonstrate control over females through physical and sexual violence (Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014). While men are not expected to injure women, and acts of extreme cruelty often incur familial and community wrath, the use of moderate violence by men (and in other circumstances, by women) is tolerated and generally is not viewed as evidence of weakness or lack of self-control (Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014).

Historically, sexual relationships between individuals were part of socially assumed and negotiated relationships between families, with marriages formalised through payment by men of lobola, the bride price (Heeren et al., 2011). As this cultural practice continues, it becomes a norm for men to perceive themselves as having patriarchal ownership over women and using physical violence in the contemporary space to demonstrate this ownership (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). In this way, behaviours such as having multiple sexual partners become inextricably normalised through hegemonic masculinity resulting in male control and female subordination, and in some cases this comes with the use of violence (Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014). The perception of sex as a male need, the gifting of women, or the sexual exchange of money are now all considered as social practices which are culturally accepted. In perceiving these practices in this way, they develop social meanings which extend beyond the individual rewards and motives of such behavioural acts (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

For black South African women and men, emphasised femininity and hegemonic masculinity are both cultural ideals which are upheld by a system of sanctions and rewards. Men, and other women, tend to reward women who comply with the dominant emphasised femininity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Women are thus respected and admired by their peers, families and communities for having desirable partners, and aligning with this dominant emphasised femininity ideal. This is similar to the hegemonically masculine male who seeks a relatively harmonious relationship through a compliant female partner, so does the successful female who desires a hegemonic male (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Many females are considered to interpret displays of hegemonic masculinity as socially and sexually desirable, which results in them subsequently marginalising men who practice more gender-equitable masculinities (Mfecane, 2016). Women and men who do not comply with these feminine and masculine roles, or express resistance to it, suffer marginalisation and stigmatisation (Blackstone, 2003). This is due to the widely socially accepted gender roles within the black South African community increase the prevalence for traditional gender role socialisation and traditional gender role ascription (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

This does not mean that there is no room for gender role differences in South Africa's social space. There is a vast social spectrum which is occupied by many different individuals who incorporate a non-gendered approach in their engagement with gender roles, and subsequently adopt counter femininities and masculinities to hegemonic practices both inside and outside the home (Khosa-Nkatini et al., 2023). This includes joined efforts in the engagement of providing childcare, cooking and cleaning, caring for the sick, financial provision for the home, handywork, supporting gender equality, and opposing violence against women and men (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

Traditional womanhood and manhood is proven time and time again in this Sowetan context, through symbolic and behavioural demonstrations to others, typically family and peers, who are in positions of validating, questioning, and challenging assertions of masculine and feminine roles, as well as policing and punishing those whose demonstrate inadequate gender role ascriptions (Mankowski & Smith, 2016). These traditional roles result in men's denial and repression of their vulnerabilities function as an attempt to validate their masculinity, while women accept their dependence and fragility functions as an attempt to validate their femininity (Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). These traditional gender roles are often contested in their status in Sowetan society due to the harmful nature that is

associated with gendered power dynamics and the subsequent social justice issues which are linked to gender inequality.

2.5 Inevitably Unequal?: Gender Role Socialisation and Power Dynamics

When considering all masculinities and femininities, simply put, they are not created equal (Cerdán-Torregrosa et al., 2023). In every culture, males and females are expected to measure themselves up to definitions of what it means to be a man or what it means to be a woman (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). In the topic of gender roles, gendered power dynamics can be identified in the existence of the multiple configurations of femininity and masculinity that are hierarchically organised and structured along lines of gendered domination (Cerdán-Torregrosa et al., 2023). These configurations can be structured along the lines of men having domination over women, powerful men having domination over less powerful men, adult men having domination over younger men, powerful women having domination over less powerful women, and adult women having domination over young women (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

The term 'hegemonic' as associated with gender, identifies the male gender position as being dominant, and subordinating and oppressing other forms of masculinities and femininities (Kimmel, 2001). Hegemonic gender refers to the aspects of femininities and masculinities that serve the interests of those with the most social power in society and ensures their position on the gendered hierarchy (Maclsaac, 2021). Hegemonic gender is characterised by different practices which expresses a particular gender's power and aims to reinforce this power within the social system (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Hegemonic masculinity refers to the qualities defined as manly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to subordinated masculinity and femininity (Connell, 1995). Hegemonic femininity defines the characteristics considered as womanly which establish and legitimate a hierarchical relationship with subordinated femininity and a complementary relationship with hegemonic masculinity (Maclsaac, 2021).

An implied idea of hegemony is that ideal gender roles and experiences can ascend the social hierarchy without the use of brute force, but rather through the use of the interactions in the complex social web of processes which include the private life, social spaces, and cultural and traditional arrangements (Budgeon, 2013). Therefore, tenets of culture, religion and society as a whole, can work together to maintain a particular ideal of masculinity and femininity as it

ascends to achieve the social acceptability of gender roles (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Antonio Gramsci's 20th century work introduces the concept of 'hegemony' by referring to it as exercising power by creating consent through establishing ideas and values which are socially accepted (Bates, 1975). The concept therefore descriptively identifies that forms of masculinities and femininities need to be socially accepted before ensuring the domination of men and legitimating the subordination of women (Budgeon, 2013). The socialisation of gender role power dynamics in this sense, allows the existence of differing forms of gender role expressions that result in the unquestioned rights and privileges of men over women (Kimmel, 2001). Patriarchal societies require males and females to demonstrate their social responsibility by actively participating in heteronormative gender role experiences and behaviours (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

Hegemonic masculinity, as a gendered social and role identity, involves a form of showcasing power and is typically, although not exclusively, associated with the roles and characteristics of men (Mankowski & Smith, 2016). Hegemonic masculinity represents the dominant socialised model of idealised manhood, and it is a frame used by individual men to judge their "success" as men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In a highly gender-inequitable country like South Africa, hegemonic masculinity mobilises and legitimates the subordination and control of women by men (Sennott & Kane, 2022). Conceived in this way, hegemonic masculinity is a necessary and integral element of patriarchy, which is a social organisation that allocates, distributes and secures the power of men over women (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

In the socialisation of masculinity, boys and men are encouraged to reject or avoid anything stereotypically feminine, and are rather encouraged to be independent, tough, successful, aggressive, suppress emotions other than anger, distance themselves emotionally and physically from others, and strive toward competition, success and power (Mankowski & Smith, 2016). Men are rewarded for showcasing their power as the stereotypical traditional and hegemonic masculinity in their rejection and control of the feminine, and in their control of the subordinated masculinities (Connell, 1995). Boys and men are considered to be rewarded in a variety of settings such as homes, schools, communities, intimate relationships, the workplace, military and police forces, prisons and general society for adhering to these stereotypic expectations (Mankowski & Smith, 2016).

In this view, masculinity is intimately interwoven with the dynamics of power and privilege, and boys and men are often punished or rejected for violating these stereotypic expectations of traditional and hegemonic masculinity (Kimmel, 2001). The fulfillment of these gendered expectations is often associated with a range of health and social problems including interpersonal and domestic violence, stigmatisation, discrimination, anxiety, depression, peer and social pressure, and substance abuse which are experienced by the individuals who take on these stereotypic expectations as well as their subordinate counterparts (Mankowski & Smith, 2016).

Women contend with an equally exaggerated ideal of femininity, which also results in perceived power dynamics existing among the femininities (Hamilton et al., 2019). Hegemonic femininity is developed and maintained around compliance with the gender inequality associated with the complementary gender roles linked with hegemonic masculinity (Kimmel, 2001). The hegemonic feminine gender roles are considered to be oriented in ways that are aimed at accommodating the interests and desires of men (Paechter, 2018). This femininity is emphasised as displaying social desirability by complying with the ideas of men's powerfulness in their masculinity and women's fragility in their femininity (Schippers, 2007). There is a compliance with men's desire for social and financial power, and an acceptance of marriage and childcare as a response to the social and labour-market norms and discrimination against women (Kimmel, 2001).

There is a gender difference which is emphasised in hegemonic or emphasised femininities which are considered as a strategy to adapt to men's power by taking on roles which stress empathy and nurturance (Kimmel, 2001). In the hegemonic femininity, women do not contest the unequal structuring of gender relations, and these unchallenged power relations between men and women ultimately lead to the unequal distribution of gender power, with men dominating women (Schippers, 2007). This hegemonic femininity is given power as the "cultural norm", and it is socially rewarded as a cultural idea of femininity (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Other forms of femininity, are considered as less socially desirable and subordinate femininities, as they are shaped around strategies of resistance, and women who adopt these femininities based on resistance, or engage in acts of resistance are often marginalised and stigmatised (Ruiz, 2009). There are however femininities which combine compliance, resistance and cooperation into their relations with masculinity (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

These combined femininities can alternate between being perceived as socially desirable or as deviating from social norms (Lewis, 2014).

The gender differences which exist in the roles of masculinity and femininity, are produced through the socially structured ways that males and females relate with their world. Nancy Chodorow (1978) stated that there are structural arrangements which are created as women become primarily responsible for raising children and men are responsible for financially providing for the home. These structural arrangements create unconscious and internalised desires in both boys and girls, who grow up to become men and women, to reproduce these structural arrangements (Shore, 1979). The perpetuation of these structural arrangements result in the generational preservation of gendered power dynamics, which socially affirm male dominance through provision and female subordination through mothering and homemaking (Kimmel, 2001).

These gendered power dynamics develop as early as childhood for males and females (Shore, 1979). For the male child, gender role identity development requires him to experience emotional detachment from his mother, through a process of individuation by separating himself from his maternal figure (Chodorow, 1978). The male child comes to define himself as a boy by rejecting whatever he sees as female, by imitating the actions of his father or significant adult/older male figure in his home and general life, by devaluing the feminine in himself through separation, and by devaluing the feminine in others through male superiority (Smith et al., 2015). This rejection of the feminine continues to grows outside of the boy child's home experience, with their mother and father (and other significant adult/older female and male figures), into their experiences and interactions with their siblings, peers, teachers, and society (Kimmel, 2001).

Female children, by contrast, experience a pre-Oedipal conection to the same-sex parent or significant caregiver (Chodorow, 1978). The girl child develops a sense of themselves through their ability to connect to their mothers, which leads to a growing desire to become mothers themselves (Vivona, 2000). The female child defines herself as a girl by accepting all that she sees as feminine, by imitating and bringing herself closer to her mother and other significant maternal figures, and valuing femininity in order to experience hegemonic femininity (Froidevaux-Metterie, 2012).

The expression of practices related to hegemonic masculinities and femininities extend beyond domestic and sexual relations between males and females, as they also include pertinent practices which take place in the different private and public which influence intersections of gender roles and power inequity (Sadoughianzadeh, 2013). The social acceptance and legitimisation of men's power helps to develop and maintain harmful gender norms (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). The gendered power dynamic is therefore applied in the public and private domains and inevitably creates harmful dynamics between males and females.

2.6 Gender Roles in the Private vs. Public Space

The conceptualisation of "space" is important in the exploration of the topic of gender roles, as gender roles are often presented as being produced both physically and socially (Löw, 2006). The physical space is organised by society, and gender roles are considered as being socially constructed within the public sphere (West & Zimmerman, 1991). Social organisation does however differ in different areas, cities, countries and regions of the world (Huning, 2014). The same argument can be made in the context of gender roles in private spaces, that is, in different places and families there is a difference in the existence of traditional gender role power relations and patriarchal domination (Smyth, 2008). The division of labour in a gendered way is often the most common approach to defining the gender role and space relationship (Washbrook, 2007). Women are often considered to be allocated housework or domestic labour in the private space, and men are given opportunities to engage in paid work in public spaces that are deeply rooted in patriarchy (Segalo, 2015). Gender-typed activities are presented in the private and public spaces which results in the social expectation that men and women should take on assigned or expected roles in these spaces based on their sex (Sadoughianzadeh, 2013).

Public spaces provide a setting for various gendered social interactions to take place (Huning, 2014). The way in which public spaces are organised has often been perceived as favouring men and keeping women detached from the space (Hassim & Gouws, 1998). The private space on the other hand, has been considered to be organised in such a way that can be traditionally linked to women and their domestic roles in an environment that has no legitimate status or authority when compared to the public space (Segalo, 2015). Society is working towards transforming the public space in an effort to create a neutral space that allows the public space to equally belong to both men and women without experiencing judgment and fear of discrimination (CIPADH, 2016).

In perceiving the context of "space" within the concept of gender roles, it can be considered as not simply as an aspect of what one is, but, more fundamentally, it is something that one *does*, and does recurrently, in interaction with others (West & Zimmerman, 1991). Individuals are constantly 'doing' gender both in the public and private space, while performing the activities and exhibiting the traits that are prescribed for them in these spaces (Kimmel, 2001). Gender is a lifelong process which is done through performances and interactions with others who can display behaviour that is consistent with situationally appropriate gender norms (Huning, 2014). Thus, consistent gender role behaviour is less a response to deeply internalised norms or personality characteristics, and more a negotiated response to the consistency with which others demand that individuals act in a recognisable masculine or feminine way (Kimmel, 2001).

Gender is less an emanation of identity that bubbles up from below in concrete expression; and it is rather an emergent property of interactions, coerced upon people by others (Kimmel, 2001). Understanding how individuals do masculinities and femininities, then, requires that they make visible the performative elements of identity, and also the audience for those performances (Massey, 1984). It also opens up unimaginable possibilities for social change. In saying that gender roles is something that individuals 'do' it can be considered that gender is not something that is done to individuals (Priyashantha et al., 2021). Individuals create and recreate their own gendered identities within the contexts of their interactions with others and within the institutions they inhabit (Kimmel, 2001).

2.6.1 Gender Roles in the Private Family Institution

According to Minuchin (1974), the family is a complex structure consisting of various subsystems that are mutually dependent and are influenced by one another. Each individual family member and generation can be thought of as a subsystem and each subsystem can be organised by gender (Kulik & Tsoref, 2010). When considering the interaction among these family members, four primary subsystems are generally emphasised and these include the executive subsystem which consists of the husband and wife or caregiver gendered interactions, the parental subsystem which consists of parent-child or caregiver-child gendered interactions, the sibling subsystem which consists of child-child gendered interactions, and lastly the extrafamilial subsystem which consists of the nuclear family gendered interactions with extended family members and networks of social, community, and professional support (Minuchin, 1974). The gendered interrelationships between the overall functioning of the

family system and the gendered beliefs which exist within this system, can significantly influence the development of gender roles in children (Kulik & Tsoref, 2010).

The overall family system is therefore highlighted as a key player in influencing gender role attitudes in children (Hussain et al., 2015). Parents and caregivers play the roles of instructors, reinforcers, and models of their children's gender role attitudes and they directly communicate their beliefs about gender by providing instruction, guidance, and training to their children (Chen et al., 2023). They also reinforce sex-typed behaviours by encouraging their children's involvement in gender-stereotypical activities, such as girls helping out in the kitchen and boys working in the garden. In addition, gender socialisation messages are indirectly transmitted through parents' modelling of sex-typed behaviours (Marks et al., 2009). For example, children learn that males and females should act differently when they observe their mothers or female caregivers spending more time on cleaning, cooking and child-rearing, while fathers or male caregivers engage in more leisure activities and repairs within the home (Hussain et al., 2015). From this perspective, parents pass their attitudes about gender roles to their children, resulting in congruence between parents' and children's developed gender role attitudes. The socialisation of gender roles therefore incorporates the child's significant caregivers' perceptions of gender roles, and this experience shapes their gender role development (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010). Individuals' gender role attitudes are subsequently largely informed by parental and family practices in their early childhood to early adult years (Marks et al., 2009).

2.6.2 Maternal Gatekeeping in the Family Home

In the African home, mothers and daughters have traditionally been identified as natural nurturers and carers of the private family home for generations, and this has resulted in the female adopting a maternal identity rooted in the ethics of care (Gaunt, 2008). When a female actively engages in the caring and nurturing work within her black family home, it subsequently allows her to affirm to herself and others that she is a good maternal figure (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). This need for maternal affirmation influences a term referred to as "maternal gatekeeping", which results in mothers and females in the family home hesitating to receive assistance from the males in the home as they perceive it as relinquishing their responsibility of maintaining the home (Aytac, 2022). Mothers and females in the home perceive paternal involvement as a threat to their identity as a maternal figure in the home (Gaunt, 2008). The female thus develops negative attitudes towards any paternal or male involvement in childcare

and housework, and discourages or even expresses overt resistance towards involving her husband or any other male counterparts in caring for the children and maintaining the family home (Kulik & Tsoref, 2010).

The phenomenon of maternal gatekeeping is therefore considered as a collection of traditional beliefs and behaviours that inhibit a collaborative interaction between maternal and paternal figures in the family home (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2008). These traditional beliefs and behaviours limit a paternal and male figure's opportunities to develop the relevant house management skills and to experience childcare and housework (Meteyer & Perry-Jenkins, 2010). As a result, these gatekeeping patterns influence mothers to unintentionally develop a preference try to maintain sole female responsibility for the household work by managing or restricting paternal and male involvement in the family work, through the use of planning, organising and scheduling their engagement in household activities (Kulik & Tsoref, 2010). Although their actions are unintentional, the mother's ambivalence towards the father and male child's involvement in childcare and housework results in her unconscious gatekeeping behaviours (Puhlman & Pasley, 2013). The mother therefore unintentionally supervises the father and male child by setting high standards and criticising the quality of their housework and childcare, which further impacts their involvement in household work (Gaunt, 2008).

There are three identified dimensions which were introduced by Gaunt (2008) which result in mothers achieving maternal gatekeeping; these include the differentiation of family roles, maintenance of standards and responsibilities, and lastly her personal experience of maternal identity confirmation. The mother begins by ensuring that there is a differentiation of family roles through her clear division of household labour and expectations for the males and females within the home (Gaunt, 2008). She subsequently maintains the standards and responsibilities of the family home which allows her to resist the relinquishment of her responsibility within the home by taking charge of tasks, setting strict standards, and managing the male family member's involvement and participation in the household (Gaunt, 2008). The mother's maternal identity is then ultimately confirmed when she receives external validation of her maternal role from those within and outside the home (Gaunt, 2008). Her maternal identity confirmation suggests that she is a competent member of her sex category as she has the capacity and desire to perform socially appropriate gendered behaviours without the involvement and assistance from her male counterpart (Kulik & Tsoref, 2010.

The three dimensions of maternal gatekeeping are subsequently maintained by the mother's desire for control over her husband and home, in the private domestic sphere, through her enforcement of traditional gender roles within the household (Kulik & Tsoref, 2010). The three dimensions are also maintained by the mother's extensive support, outside of the family home, for her maintenance of traditional values and her negative attitude towards paternal and male involvement in the household (Kulik & Tsoref, 2010). The stronger the mother's identification with the female category, the less she would be willing to share childcare and household responsibilities with the father and male child, and therefore the stronger her maternal gatekeeping behaviours become, as a way to affirm her feminine self (Gaunt, 2008). Females who are high in gatekeeping adhere to a more traditional gender role experience within the family home and perceive male involvement in the home as unnecessary, insignificant or unimportant, while females who are low in gatekeeping value the male's involvement and participation in the household and encourage more of it (Gaunt, 2008). Interdependence among family members in the private family home can therefore help to encourage paternal involvement in the family home and ensure regular access to childcare and housework without any restrictions from maternal gatekeeping (Zvara, Mills-Koonce & Cox, 2016).

The notion of maternal gatekeeping is one filled with controversy, as it portrays mothers as mostly contributing to the maintenance of the socialisation of traditional gendered divisions of male and female responsibilities in the family home and in the larger social context (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). Mothers' are therefore considered as key players in the facilitation of fathers' and boys' lowered involvement in the household as well as the facilitation of males' authority in society through maternal gatekeeping (Gaunt, 2008). Maternal gatekeeping is argued as emerging from the female's fear of losing her source of power, autonomy, competency and self-esteem from the socially affirmed gendered self which validates her maternal identity (Kulik & Tsoref, 2010). The female is seen as lacking power in spaces outside the home, and this perceived disempowerment results in her ensuring she does not lose the responsibility of maintaining the family home as it affords her power, authority, control and status in the private domain (Fagan & Barnett, 2003). The female does not want to share this power with the males within the home, which influences the mother to aim towards empowering her female offspring through maternal gatekeeping in order for her to enjoy the same power, authority, control and status that the household affords the female (Gaunt, 2008).

2.6.3 The Impact of the Patriarch in the Private Family Home

Given the maternal female's traditional role as a primary caregiver and homemaker, paternal male's involvement in the household is subsequently considered to play the role of support to the females of the home (Puhlman & Pasley, 2013). In such cases, paternal and male involvement is generally given low domestic standards, and males are likely to exclude or restrict themselves in the household and family tasks (Kulik & Tsoref, 2010). Consequently, household tasks are stuck in a perpetual cycle of gender division which negatively impact females as they bear the main responsibility of managing the household and caring for the children, and negatively impacts the males who feel excluded from the household due to the norms relating to the gendered division of labour and due to the belief that females are responsible for housework and child care (Fagan & Barnett, 2003).

Although paternal involvement in the household is considered to be a type of support for the mother, research has suggested that father participation has a positive impact on children (Kulik & Tsoref, 2010; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015). Fathers give clear messages on how children perceive gender and actively engage in the traditional male socialisation that emphasises ideal masculinity for their boys, and also promote the socialisation of feminisation in their girls (Güder & Ata, 2018). Fathers not only provide financial support, they also play a significant role in the cognitive and psychosocial development of their children, as they impact the dynamics of the family environment through the traditional gender role orientations which play out within the family home (Levtov et al., 2015). Thus, a father's absence in the family home consequently impacts the gender role and psychosocial development of their children, in particular their male children (Mandara et al., 2005). Male children are considered to be more affected than their female counterparts as a result of their fathers' absence, due to the significant role their fathers play in modelling masculinity (Alemann et al., 2020). Male children who are not primarily raised with their fathers have been reported to exhibit more passive masculine traits compared to their male counterparts who are raised with their fathers and exhibit traditional masculine traits (Mandara et al., 2005).

In the South African household, black fathers are often presented as physically absent due to effects of the past colonial labour system which physically took males away from the family home. In recent years, the term "presently absent father" has gained popularity in reference to the stern patriarchal, dominant, unsupportive, uncaring paternal figure who is either physically absent or physically present but emotionally absent (Richter & Morrell, 2006). The presently

absent or absent black father is considered as experiencing unemployment or underemployment issues while in menial jobs, and these employment issues impacts his ability to engage in his gender roles as a family provider (Mandara et al., 2005). This fathers' single marital status and his problems with fully engaging with his role of providing for his family impacts his ability to be actively involved in the day-to-day socialisation of his children, which consequently increases the prevalence of female-headed households and the feminisation of family poverty in black communities due to his absence in the home (Mandara et al., 2005)

Absent fatherhood is therefore problematised in the patriarchal South African private home due to its influences on emerging psychosocial problems and societal ills (Clowes et al., 2013). The absent biological father is considered as depriving the family home from its nuclear gender role orientations, as well as depriving the male child from adequate and balanced masculine socialisation, which leads the male child to be exposed to external harmful masculine socialisation (Alemann et al., 2020). In a global heteronormative and patriarchal capitalist system, the absent father in the family home influences an unstable and fragile family system, however in the South African township this unstable family structure is countered by the extended family network which serves to fill in the role of the absent father through the presence of uncles, grandfathers, stepfathers and other male figures in the private family home (Clowes et al., 2013).

These pseudo-fathers provide young males with an opportunity to develop alternative masculinities beyond the ideas of control, power and violence, paternal masculinities rooted in gender equality, and a secure identity of manhood through their interactions with them (Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015). These pseudo-fathers can also help young males challenge the normative understandings of harmful traditional gender roles by highlighting the value of positive fathering within the private family home by modelling nurturance, interdependence, forgiveness, humility, respect, consultative decision-making, and avoiding fear-mongering and violence (Clowes et al., 2013).

2.6.4 Adultification in the Private Family Home

In light of the pervasive maternal gatekeeping and absent fatherhood issues, alongside issues of poverty, large families living together, single-parent households and parental illness, in the South African township, family dynamics become significantly impacted which result in children being overburdened with the responsibility of protecting and sustaining the private

family home. The term “adultification” is used to describe this very process, as it describes the process of children being inappropriately exposed to adult knowledge and inducted to take on the adult roles of their caregiving adults in order to fulfill the unmet needs of the family home (Jurkovic, 1997; Ramirez, 2017). In this process of adultification, parents unknowingly exploit their children’s intrinsic loyalty, concern, and trust in the family system by giving them the sole responsibility of nurturing and providing for the home (Blake & Epstein, 2017). Children therefore become the nurturers and take care of the adults in their family home as well as their siblings, at a very young age (Jurkovic, 1997).

The colonial history of Sowetan family life suggests that parents and the extended family system have demanded adult-like behaviours and services from children (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). These demands on children have been perpetuated over generations through the influences of sociocultural dynamics, and these influences significantly reinforced the normalisation of the adultified child (Jurkovic, 1997). The normalisation of adultified children saw young children transitioning from being innocent and carefree, into assuming adult roles and taking on adult responsibilities in their family and social context (Koch & Kozhumam, 2022). There are four types of adultified roles which were presented by Ramirez (2017) which children and adolescents take on. The first type is called “precocious knowledge adultification” which refers to children acquiring knowledge or witnessing situations that are far too advanced for their age (Ramirez, 2017). The second type is called “mentored adultification” which refers to children taking on adult roles and responsibilities with little adult supervision (Ramirez, 2017). The third type is “peerification/spousification” which refers to children engaging in a peer relationship with their parent or caregiver (Ramirez, 2017). The last type of adultification is called “parentification*”* which refers to children serving as a full-time pseudo-parent to their siblings (Ramirez, 2017).

The adultification of the black child in the private family home is especially damaging, compared to their white counterparts as it strips away their innocence at earlier ages due to society’s perceptions of black children’s early maturity (Blake & Epstein, 2017). The adultification of the black child influences stereotypes that suggest that black children are less nurturing, require less protection, comfort and support, are more confident and knowledgeable about adult and sex knowledge that is advanced for their age (Koch & Kozhumam, 2022). As a result of this racialised adultification, black parents and caregivers within the family home are likely to enforce more traditionally colonial ideas of gender roles on their children, and they

may also show less empathy and more harsh discipline on their children (Davis, 2022). As adultified children constantly respond to the age inappropriate, unacknowledged, unsupervised and burdensome demands of their family system, they ultimately experience a severe compromise in their identity and social development which results in their overall childhood being lost (Jurkovic, 1997).

At this individual private level, gender role development is significantly experienced through family experiences and family practices. Individuals' gender role experiences become based on the child's family's location, however as time progresses, their gender role experiences become based on their exposure to other locations as they interact with the public, external environments and contexts outside of the family home (Marks et al., 2009).

2.6.5 Gender Roles in the Public Space

According to the gender schema perspective, individuals are considered as building schemas about gender-appropriate roles and behaviours beyond the socialisation of the family home. Individuals develop gender roles and gendered behaviours through cognitive processes of identification and categorisation (Marks et al., 2009). Through these cognitive processes, children begin to integrate novel ideas about appropriate gender role behaviours and beliefs into their schemas based on the different learning public contexts in which they interact with and develop in (Canevello, 2020). These public contexts include schools, peers, and other social contexts (Marks et al., 2009). Within this public gender schema perspective, the child internalises the idea that the stereotypically stronger male figure is expected to handle the potentially harmful public world, while the milder and more gentle female figure is socially expected to remain in the private home and handle the maintenance of the family home (Smyth, 2008).

At the social level, gender roles emphasise the dynamics which organise how males and females relate to one another publicly (Calasanti, 2007). People are therefore considered to experience their lives and develop their gendered identities based on their location and their society's gender expectations within a specific location (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010). Each location determines the complex masculinities and femininities based on race, age, culture, class, and gender (Mankowski & Smith, 2016). Based on these intersectional specifications, males and females are expected to manifest gender roles differently in the public sphere, and they each have different opportunities and capabilities to perform hegemonic or subordinate

masculinities and femininities, depending on their race, age, socioeconomic class, culture, religion, body and abilities, age, and living context and environment (Albert & Porter, 1986).

The public sphere creates gendered positions which then shape contextually specific gendered experiences (Mankowski & Smith, 2016). Public normative meanings of gender identities subsequently become connected to intersectional ties as they are continuously shaped, reshaped, and reinforced over an individual's lifetime through social structures, social institutions and social agents (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010). Gender and gender roles then take on meaning at the societal and public group level, and they become embedded in the context of a social order that privileges some groups and subordinates others (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010).

In consideration of age as an intersectional public influence, some research has suggested that the gender role attitudes of older females and males tend to be more traditional in nature in the public sphere, while young males and females are considered to be more amenable to adopting new roles and attitudes as periods change within their public spaces (Lynott & McCandles, 2000; Albert & Porter, 1986). A study by Lynott and McCandles (2000) suggested that young females and males are more likely to be liberal, reject sex-typing and traditional familial roles, and are also more prone to adopting pro-feminist views. This occurrence is considered as being a result of young people moving away from exclusive exposure to their family environments and being exposed to more non-traditional public spaces, as time progresses (John et al., 2019). Older males and females, on the other hand, are considered as being more thoroughly socialised to accept traditional role prescriptions at all times in the public sphere, and have little to no exposure to alternative gender role prescriptions (Lynott & McCandles, 2000). Older individuals are seen as having made a considerable investment in traditional patterns and may be less motivated to re-examine their definitions and beliefs during periods of change (Lynott & McCandles, 2000). Another age-related gender role study by Koenig (2018) suggested that prescriptive gender roles are weaker in women and girls from early to late adulthood, and gender roles are stronger in their prescription for men and boys from childhood to late adulthood.

Changes in periods of time significantly influences gender role attitude changes more than the maturational biological process (Bhatia & Bhatia, 2021). Birth cohorts are therefore considered as playing an important role in influencing gender role socialisation and subsequent gender role

attitudes, and socially-determined traditional or non-traditional gender ideology adherence (Perales et al., 2018). This suggests that males and females born in one historical period are likely to have different gender role attitudes than individuals born in another period (Woortmann, 2007). Significant changes in history such as the rise of women's rights, countries gaining democracy, revolutions and globalisation, influenced gender role attitude changes over time (Lynott & McCandles, 2000). These significant changes in history saw a shift being identified from predominantly traditional gender role adherence to more non-traditional gender role adherence in different locations (Perales et al., 2018).

Life event changes have also been considered as playing a role in influencing socially-determined gender role attitudes. Marital status, offspring, work status, income and education among males and females may play a role in mediating change in gender role attitudes over the life cycle (Zhu & Chang, 2019). Adults with lower levels of education, lower income, and lower feelings of personal competence are considered to hold more traditional attitudes, while adults with higher levels of education are considered to adhere to less traditional views. Calvo-Salguero and colleagues (2008) revealed in a study that people tend to be less gender-typified when they have a higher level of education. This is attributed to the university setting having a significant influence on people's beliefs which allows them to develop more egalitarian attitudes and values regarding male's and female's gendered family roles and occupational roles.

When examining the gender role orientations of males and females, females were found to express less traditional gender role attitudes in comparison to their male counterparts, however this comparison also revealed that different life experiences could cause a change in these attitudes (Lynott & McCandles, 2000). With modernisation there has been a progressive integration of females into the labour market which influenced a belief that traditional gender role socialisation is weakening, and that this has subsequently resulted in a reduction of people internalising gender-typified values and attitudes (Calvo-Salguero et al., 2008). Given these changes, there have been differences in individual's gender role orientation which can be linked to intersectional influences like age, class and race, which then affect a generational cohort's experience of gender roles (Woortmann, 2007). As time progresses, masculine characteristics have increased in females, but at the same time, feminine traits largely remaining unchanged for these females. Males on the other hand, have not been considered as undergoing changes

in the way they adhere to feminine characteristics, and they have mostly remained masculine in their characteristics (Calvo-Salguero et al., 2008).

Males' and females' conception of themselves in relation to masculinity and femininity reflects the geographical, socio-cultural and historical influences of a given society (Calvo-Salguero et al., 2008). In patriarchal countries, males and females are more different as they adhere to traditional gender roles, compared to matriarchal or egalitarian countries, where males and females are more alike as they equally engage in characteristics that are traditionally considered as either feminine or masculine (Blackstone, 2003). A patriarchal country is considered as consisting of the highest percentage of women corresponding to feminine roles, while the highest percentage of men corresponding to masculine roles (Calvo-Salguero et al., 2008).

Within the Afrocentric geographic and social-cultural space, the gender experience is traditional in nature (Burgess, 1994). There are however paradoxical discussions in academia regarding the precolonial gender relations in the African context (Tembo, 1988; Guy; 1990; Kajoba, 2002; Mihanjo, 2011; Weir, 2000; Nkunzi, 2007; Ndlovu, 2008; Moagi & Mthombeni, 2019). Some authors have argued that the gender role relations were traditionally patrilineal with girls and women being highly protected and socialised to grow a family name, maintain the family home and being kept close to the home (Tembo, 1988; Kajoba, 2002; Mihanjo, 2011; Guy, 1990). During some occasions women and girls would also help to produce trade commodities which were dependent on men to trade (Tembo, 1988; Mihanjo, 2011). Boys and men on the other hand, were given defence and provision duties while being exposed to the harsh natural environment as well as duties to make decisions about clan matters (Tembo, 1988; Kajoba, 2002; Mihanjo, 2011). While other authors argue that the precolonial gender role relations were complementary and gender neutral with both males and females being able to accumulate authority, status and recognition, providing and caring for the home, as well as both being influential in decision-making skills (Weir, 2000; Nkunzi, 2007; Ndlovu, 2008; Moagi & Mthombeni, 2019).

However, as time progressed, these authors agree that colonialism introduced an oppressive and racialised unequal gender role ideology within the African context (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2019). The traditional Afrocentric social positions assigns categories and roles to males and females which automatically suggest different gender expectations for marital, familial and work roles (Ngubane, 2010). Males are placed in provider roles while females are placed in caretaker roles. Class in the African diaspora also has important implications for the gender

roles in which African males and females take on. (Burgess, 1994) Lower class and lower educated black individuals are considered to maintain the enforced colonial gendered roles imposed on them, while middle and upper class, educated and property owning black individuals define norms and roles outside these imposed roles. The middle and upper class family roles are redefined both publicly and privately, and these roles do not resemble the traditional nuclear family, and reflect more non-traditional gender roles (Burgess, 1994).

Both middle and upper class males and females are considered to be educated, active in politics and hold leadership roles in the community and the home (Burgess, 1994). Middle and upper class females still however play the role of "the mother of the house" while continuing to be career-driven in the public realm. The middle and upper class males still play the role of "the man of the house" while offering assistance in keeping the home and taking care of the children, and growing numbers indicate that they are engaging in domestic labour in the public domain such as being professional chefs and nurses. These middle and upper class males do however, prefer to take on positions of leadership in the public sphere (Burgess, 1994).

Gender roles interlock with the theoretical concepts of social location and standpoint. Social location refers to the position an individual occupies within society (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010). Social locations offer privilege or oppression to individuals depending on the access to the power that they have within particular intersectional categories and how the categories intersect. A particular group's position in the social hierarchical power structure therefore influences their socialisation and adherence to gendered perceptions and behaviours. A standpoint on the other hand, is a critical perspective defined by feminists as highlighting how marginalised or oppressed groups have a lack of power relations and how this makes them interact within society (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010).

These theoretical concepts suggest that in the public sphere, a black female from a South African township would be inevitably disadvantaged in her gender, race and class due to her overall social positioning, while a white female from a South African suburb would be privileged due to her race and class positioning but would be subordinated due to her gender positioning. The black female therefore has a disadvantaged standpoint on the intersectional axis in comparison to her white male and female counterparts, black male counterparts, and she would experience the most marginalisation and oppression due to her group's positioning. The black male from a South African township on the other hand, would be privileged in his gender positioning but would be subordinated in his race positioning, while his white male

counterpart from a South African suburb would be advantaged in all of his intersectional positions and be considered as dominant above all the other subordinate groups' positions and standpoints. The private and public sphere therefore plays a significant role in influencing gender role development through multiple ecological and intersectional ties.

2.7 Conclusion

Gender role experiences within the Sowetan context are influenced by multiple factors which have shaped how individuals have come to develop their gendered identity as well as their gender role ideology and experiences. The multiple factors highlighted in this chapter include an oppressive, violent and racialised colonial history, family and varying social influences, intersectionality, perpetuated family and cultural gendered beliefs and expectations, and socially enforced gendered socialisation, and arising problems during gender role development. These factors reflected how individuals forge their gendered lives, and also highlighted the implications of the ecological space of the black South African, Sowetan township during gender role development. This chapter intended to provide a holistic approach of ecological gender role development presenting individuals as interacting with multiple spheres, environments and contexts which play a significant role in their development of gender role ideology and experiences.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

Gender role development theories have been founded and developed from biological, social, cultural and cognitive theories, and various theorists have contributed to understandings of gender role development, including Freud, Kohlberg, Bem and Bandura, who have made significant contributions (Weisgram, 2019; Lantz & Ray, 2020; West, 2018; Martin et. al, 2002; Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Roshchynskaya, 2010). For the purpose of this study, social theories of gender role development provided the foundation for the specific focus on how an individual's interactions with their society influences their gender role development. The emphasis on the individual's gender role development through their interactions with their environment allowed for the incorporation of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as a theoretical framework for the paper, which was a theory developed to understand why certain behaviours occur in the presence of the different environments individuals interact with throughout their lifespans (Shen-Miller et. al, 2011). The Ecological Systems theoretical framework within this paper focused on individuals' gender role development and gendered socialisation which has been influenced by their active interactions with different environments such as family, friends, peers, teachers, society, social media, culture, tradition, and time. These environments are significant influences in gender role development as they are considered to inform rules of behaviour which inform people within a society on what is socially desirable and appropriate behaviour, and emphasise appropriate socialisation specific to males and females (Reese et. al, 2019; Chapell & Di Martino, 1998).

3.2 Foreground: An Integrated Social Theory Framework

Unpacking existing social theories of gender role development helps to provide a foundation for understanding the theoretical framework of a gendered Ecological Systems Theory. Sex Role Socialisation is a social theory which asserts that gendered behaviour is not innate, but is rather socially conditioned (Draper, 1985). That is, boys and girls learn to be masculine and feminine through the different social expectations imposed on them by their family and peers (Roshchynskaya, 2010). This theory suggests that role modelling helps to provide messages about gender behaviour through conditioning, and these gendered messages are then passively

adopted by boys and girls (Leaper, 2014). This theory of Sex Role Socialisation is weakened by its perception of individuals as passive participants in their gendered development, who do not have the power to actively engage in developing their gender role identity due to society's excessive conditioning of gendered behaviour (Roshchynskaya, 2010).

The Social Role Theory of Sex Differences is a social psychological theory that pertains to sex differences and their influences on social behaviour (Eagly & Wood, 2016). This social role theory suggests that gender role differences are guided by the way societies separate labour roles based on sex categories (Petersen & Hyde, 2014). According to this theory, the structural gendered division of labour in society influences a gendered difference in the socialisation of behaviour and experiences for males and females (Dulin, 2006). For example, activities such as warfare are historically pursued by men due to their larger physique and strength, by so doing, this gives them greater status, power, and wealth compared to their female counterparts (Petersen & Hyde, 2014). Once in those roles, men begin adapting their behaviour to be more dominant and women accommodated this behaviour by becoming more subordinate. Women then take on the labour of caring for children due to their biological capacity for bearing children and breastfeeding, and they later develop a nurturing nature to accommodate their labour role (Petersen & Hyde, 2014). A weakness in this theory is that individuals are perceived as passively internalising socially assigned labour roles based on their biological sex, and then actively adapting to exaggerated cultural meanings, beliefs and practices of gender roles to accommodate their labour role assignment (Dulin, 2006).

Family Systems theory is a social theory which considers family as the core foundation in the construction and development of an individual's beliefs, attitudes and practices of gender roles (Zawaira et al., 2022). This theory suggests that families are central and significantly influential to the construction of gender roles in children, and that there is a significant correlation in children's views and their parents' views on gender roles (Helman & Ratele, 2016). There is an emphasis on the importance of family as a vital reference in exploring gender roles in this theory (Hare-Mustin, 1988). The theory also argues that experiences of hierarchical gender relations can be found within the context of the family, where unequal power relations can be witnessed between males and females (White & Tyson-Rawson, 1995). A weakness in this theory is its sole reference on the family as an influence on gender role development, without much reference to individual, social or environmental factors (Helman & Ratele, 2016).

In consideration of these significant abovementioned contributions to social theories of gender role development, the Ecological Systems theoretical formulation of gender roles can be argued to integrate the influences suggested in these social theories to provide a holistic environmental experience of the individual's gender role development as they interact with themselves and their environment. This theory argues that people become actively involved over time in the construction and maintenance of their own gendered identities as they interact with various environments (Roshchynskaya, 2010). People are considered to be active in selecting and adapting their behaviour patterns in the different ecological spaces they find themselves in and create versions of gender role experiences depending on the situations and beliefs they interact with (Liben, 2017). This ecological theory emphasises gender role development and experiences as being dynamic, as they can change over time as people constantly and actively construct their own gender role identities in personalised forms of masculinity and femininity (Roshchynskaya, 2010).

3.3 A Gendered Ecological Framework

Urie Bronfenbrenner established an Ecological Systems Theory of Development in the late 1970s that proposed that people develop within a context of relating to others and learning from the social structures around them such as their families, friends, peers, schools, communities and society (Gilstrap & Zierten, 2005). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory was largely influenced by Lev Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Development which stated that people are influenced by their social environments during their learning and developmental process. Despite Vygotsky mainly focusing on cognitive development, there is a significant emphasis placed on the importance of the social environment in an individual's development which influenced Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework (Gilstrap & Zierten, 2005).

Vygotsky strongly believed in development taking place through nested circles, and that the community played a central role in the individual's development, as they engaged with the process of meaning making with more knowledgeable members of society who provided guidance, support and model skills and knowledge during that individual's development (Vygotsky, 1987). Individuals then internalise these skills and knowledge and become more privately and socially competent, adaptable and independent (Schaffer, 1996). Vygotsky suggested that the social context could not be separated from the learning process during the individual's development and that this learning always occurs successfully in the social

environment when there is collaboration and reciprocation (Vygotsky, 1987; Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Hausfather, 1996).

Similar to Vygotsky's theory, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework proposed a relational contribution to human development which also occurs in nested circles in which individuals are socialised to become privately and socially competent and adaptable through their interactions with different environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As socialisation took place in these nested and interconnected circles, the Ecological Systems framework argued that society then develops expectations and norms which are perpetuated over time, based on the way different environments interact with one another (Shen-Miller et al., 2011). Based on these theoretically ecological propositions, Bronfenbrenner arguably used Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory as a foundation to stress the importance of the environment and individuals' interactions with their environments during their development in his theoretical framework (Härkönen, 2007).

With this foundation in mind, Bronfenbrenner thus used the term "ecology" when developing the Ecological Systems theory, which was coined by Ernst Haeckel and is derived from the Greek word *oikos* which refers to the environment and the Greek word *logos* meaning knowledge (Heikkinen, 2020). The ecological framework therefore focused on gaining knowledge on natural behaviours which occur in their environments during a specific period of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Individuals' development is considered as occurring within an ecological environment which is large and consists of nested structures, with one structure inside the next almost resembling a set of Russian dolls, which are interconnected, relational and engage in the bi-directional influence of one another (Liben, 2017). Individuals then actively engage with each of these ecological environments in order to gain socialised knowledge, beliefs, as well as behavioural, emotional and cognitive traits which aid in their development (Elliott & Davis, 2020).

Based on this conceptual grounding of the ecological framework, a gendered ecological systems framework can thus be introduced as having a focus on how individuals gain their gendered knowledge from their ecological environments through gender role socialisation and adaptation in order to develop and grow into a fully competent member of society (Bornstein et al., 2016). In the layered ecological environments that individuals interact with, they continuously engage in processes of learning and retaining socialised gender role knowledge

and adopting it into their personal gender role identity from their early years of development (Liben, 2017). This socialised and modelled gendered knowledge is emphasised through general societal values and traditions which categorise masculine and feminine roles in the wider social context which are then perpetuated as socially accepted gender role norms (Heikkinen, 2020). Like the Russian dolls analogy, these general social norms and roles become integrated into the various environments that individuals actively interact with, and these roles and norms eventually get integrated into the individual's personal gender role identity (Liben, 2017).

The application of a gendered Ecological Systems framework in this study therefore highlighted on the complexity of the gendered interactions participants experienced within the Sowetan ecological environments, and how the layered context of Soweto influenced socially acceptable gender role norms and values which participants had to adhere to. The study used the framework to explore how the different ecological system environments exerted influence on the participants during their gender role development through gendered cognitive, emotional and behavioural modelling from different social agents in these system environments (Shen-Miller et al., 2011). This exploration of gender role socialisation from different interconnecting ecological environments within the Sowetan context highlighted how gendered socialisation reinforces socially acceptable gender role norms and standards that individuals should adhere to in these environments, as a form of social survival (Heikkinen, 2020). The framework also helped to explore the implications of this perceived gendered social survival on the participants' gender role experiences within their ecological Sowetan environment.

Based on these explorations from the gendered ecological framework, one hypothesised that the participants have developed, adhered to and adopted socially accepted gender roles as part of their personal gender role identity. This adoption of socially accepted gender roles is due to the participants' early gendered socialisation processes of widely accepted gender role norms in their ecological environments which influenced their growing need for social acceptance and belonging. This hypothesis suggests that the environmentally influenced gender role socialisation is successful when participants' need to develop and be accepted as a fully competent member of society is high, which results in them openly engaging in socially accepted gendered behaviour, cognitions and emotions in their ecological environments (McBreen et al., 2011). This need to adhere to social expectations of gender roles is argued within the gendered ecological framework as being driven by motivations to experience social

acceptance and social validation, with fears of experiencing social ostracisation, as participants interact with different ecological environments (Gaia, 2013).

Alongside this hypothesis, it is important to note that despite participants having these needs and motivations for social acceptance, they may also experience gender role changes which are not be the same as their earlier observed and socially accepted gendered socialisation as they interact with different environments (Renn & Arnold, 2003). The implications of these gender role changes are also explored in the study, as they are often not accepted in some of the system environments they interact with. When a lack of acceptance occurs when the participant attempts to influence the system environment as an active participant in their gendered development and socialisation process, negative behavioural, cognitive and emotional implications occur (Liben, 2017). These negative behavioural, cognitive and emotional implications are caused by conflicts in gender role identity as well as restrictions in gender role development which can be experienced in the different systems within the ecological environment (Shen-Miller et al., 2017).

3.4 The Systems of the Ecological Framework

Earlier the analogy of Russian dolls was used to describe the large ecological environment, these dolls represent the five ecological systems which are nested into each other with one system inside the next, and with various environments embedded into each system (Liben, 2017). The systems within the ecological environment have a significant influence on gender role development as they can compel individuals to adopt and adapt to the conditions, standards and restrictions it has prescribed in reference to gender and gender roles (Härkönen, 2007). Individuals engage with these five ecological systems as they interact with each other, and these systems are characterised as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem (Shen-Miller et. al, 2011).

The microsystem is the innermost system within the Ecological Systems framework. It consists of individuals and the immediate settings and contexts that each person interacts with directly in their lived experiences (Crawford, 2020). In the Sowetan ecological environment of the study, the microsystem consisted of the closest environments that the participants interacted with. These environments included their family homes, schools, their neighbourhoods, and churches to name a few, and they also included social agents such as their parents, siblings,

extended family who they reside with, friends, peers, teachers, and priests (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Within their microsystems, the participants experienced reciprocal relations through their interconnected interactions with these aforementioned environments and the social agents (Bronfenbrenner, 1983). These interactions played a significant role in influencing their early gender role development as they socialised their early beliefs and knowledge on masculine and feminine behaviours, cognitions and emotions (Shen-Miller et. al, 2011). Within their microsystems, the participants were socialised into developing a pattern of gendered roles, activities and interpersonal relations which they adopted into their gender role identities as they grew older (Härkönen, 2007).

In these reciprocal relations, there is a bi-directional influence of gendered behaviour and attitudes that should occur from the participant towards their environment, and from the environment towards the participant throughout their development within the microsystem (Liben, 2017). However during childhood, adolescence and early adulthood this bi-directional gendered influence is often lacking, which results in a more powerful influence being exerted from the environment towards the participant, which leaves them compelled to accept and adopt socially accepted gender role expectations and experiencing gender role conflict (Härkönen, 2007). This uncontested acceptance and adoption of socially accepted gender role expectations can often be in an effort to maintain peaceful contact with their microsystem environments, and to develop as a socially accepted member of society (Bähr & Taylor, 2023). A disadvantage of this uncontested acceptance and adoption is the negative psychological intra- and interpersonal consequences such as the devaluation of their behaviours, thoughts and emotions as well as restrictions and conditions for the self (O'Neil et al., 1986).

The mesosystem is the next embedded system in the ecological environment and it is characterised by interactions and linkages between the environments that exist within the microsystem (Liben, 2017). The mesosystem is therefore considered as a system of microsystems which interact with one another and produce connections between the participants' microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The relationships that exist between the different environments within the microsystem also influence the gender role socialisation of the participant (Härkönen, 2007). For example in the Sowetan ecological environment the gendered socialisation which the participant experiences in their family home can interact with the gendered socialisation they experience at school, and these interactions can form a relationship which can influence the individual's gender role development within the

mesosystem. The relationships within the participants' microsystems can either coincide or oppose each other in the type of gendered socialisation they expose the participant to (Bronfenbrenner, 1983). This can result in the participant experiencing gendered socialisation which is supported through the different relationships within the mesosystem or they can experience clashing gendered expectations and obligations from the different microsystem environments (Shen-Miller et. al, 2011). These clashes in the participants' gender role socialisation in the mesosystem can significantly limit their gender role development and can negatively impact their gender role identity (Härkönen, 2007).

The exosystem is characterised by an external focus on environments which are concerned with legislation and policies that impact the microsystem and mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The exosystem does not necessarily contain the participant, however the events in this system influence their gender role development and experiences (Shen-Miller et. al, 2011). For example, the standard gender role social norms which are enforced by the patriarchal community of Soweto can impact the socialisation that the participants experience within their family home. The legislation and policies within the external community environment of Soweto can impact the microsystem environment of the family home, of the school, of the neighbourhood or of the church (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). The observation of the external Sowetan environment's gender role expectations and norms by the micro- and mesosystems determines the type of gendered roles and behaviours that are socialised within these systems which can impact the non-participating individual's gender role development in this exosystem (Härkönen, 2007).

The macrosystem is the next system which is embedded in the ecological environment, and it is concerned with developing and maintaining the cultural standards and norms of society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The macrosystem therefore contains the gendered pattern of the micro-, meso-, and exosystems which characterise a culture that references specific gender role beliefs, standards, norms, lifestyles, and social structures (Härkönen, 2007). The macrosystem conceptualises a blueprint for the gendered culture and behavioural model within the particular social context of Soweto (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). The characteristics of this blueprint can be transferred from generation to generation by means of the culturally-driven environments that engage in the gendered socialisation process within the microsystem such as the family, school, the neighbourhood and church (Shen-Miller et. al, 2011). Participants can be exposed to this generationally perpetuated gender role culture as the macrosystem interacts with the other

nested systems in their ecological environment. This macrosystem emphasises the gender-related cultural values, traditions and laws which may influence the other systems, all the way down to the microsystem, to adhere to them and compel these systems to adhere to them too through a process of socialisation (Härkönen, 2007). The macrosystem helps to strengthen the meanings, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that are related to gender roles in the other systems, however this can influence gender role identity conflicts when participants experience shifts in the gender roles that do not align with the gender role social expectations emphasised in the macrosystem (Oppenheimer et. al, 2017; United Nations, 2020).

The final system in the ecological systems framework is the chronosystem which features the flow of time in a specific period of time during the participant's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). Over time, South Africa has gone through generational changes which are perceived in the gendered socialisation of individuals (Helman & Ratele, 2016). These changes in gender role development can be seen through history in places like Soweto as gender roles and rules have changed over periods of time and over the course of different generations' lifespans which have strongly influenced different generations' development (Härkönen, 2007). As participants developed in the Sowetan environment over a specific period of time, their gender role development was influenced by the rules and roles that were emphasised and socialised during that particular period, as well as other rules and roles that were carried over past multiple generations to their contemporary period of living.

3.5 The Relevance of an Ecological Framework in a Gendered Soweto

The world has changed significantly since the introduction of the Ecological Systems framework, however the theory's reference to an ecological context and interconnecting environments influencing human development made it relevant to this study. The framework's emphasis on human development taking place in a social, ecological environment allowed for a holistic approach in understanding the influence of family, sociocultural, political and economic structures on gender role experiences and how these all interacted with one another in a multidimensional manner to influence an individual's development as they gained knowledge from these different systemic structures (Elliott & Davis, 2020). Thus in presenting contemporary gender role experiences of young adults within the Sowetan context, through an Ecological Systems framework, it helped to highlight the human life course of individuals living within a particular context, experiencing specific gendered experiences relevant to that

particular context, from their early childhood years through to their adulthood (Liben, 2017). This framework allowed the participants to map out information about their individual, interpersonal and social lives by opening up about their experiences linked to their gendered individual selves, their gendered environments, how they have interacted with these environments over time, and how they have come to understand and make meaning of their gender role experiences and their gendered Sowetan environment (Elliott & Davis, 2020).

The study also applied the various aforementioned formed concepts of the ecological model to investigate and acknowledge the significant individual experiences of participants' as well as their interactions with the various environments within the ecological systems during their small-lived experiences in Soweto. This application focused on the real lived experience of gender roles in the real lived space of Soweto and this was useful in describing the young adults' interconnecting ecological environments' experiences, which afforded a view into the existing patterns as well as potential patterns of normative changes in gender role development and gender role experiences as they interacted with the different systems within this framework within the ecological environment of Soweto (Eriksson et. al, 2018). Gender roles were not viewed in isolation in this gendered Ecological Systems framework but were also explored through the interactions and essential sociocultural, political and economic understandings that individuals have come to develop in the organisation of the ecology within their Sowetan society (Thurston & Vissandjee, 2005). In incorporating Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework, an understanding of Sowetan young adults' gender role experiences was achieved in this study, which highlighted the implications of individual, interpersonal and social experiences in gendered environments.

The Ecological Systems framework is critiqued on its relevance in the 21st century (Christensen, 2010; Stanger, 2011; Taylor, 2016), however its description and promotion of human development continues to encourage transformative understandings of individual-context relations and experiences (Elliott & Davis, 2020). The framework's reference to the nested influences of systems such as family, peers, teachers, priests etc. in ecological interactions can still be considered as relevant in a contemporary post-humanist psychology. The ecological framework is also argued to be at a disadvantage in its anthropocentric model of understanding human experiences and human development (Steffen et al., 2007), however this disadvantage was advantageous to the study as the framework reinforced a human-centred

understanding of gender role experiences by highlighting a gendered human experience in different environmental interconnections through different periods of time.

The study expanded on the newer modern developments of the contemporary human experience, with references to the neo-ecological framework's ideas of social media influencing modern virtual microsystems and macrosystems, as well as other modern-day interactions within the ecological system which are not included in the earlier framework's conceptualisations (Navarro & Tudge, 2022). Overall, the gendered Ecological Systems framework was relevant with the exploration of the research topic of contemporary gender roles in young adults living in Soweto, as well as providing answers to the research questions of how participants developed their gender roles, what their individual experiences of traditional and non-traditional gender roles are, as well as what their individual experiences of gender roles are in private and public spaces, and this is further discussed in the Findings and Discussion section.

Chapter Four

Methods and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed outline of the research questions, methodology, procedure, data collection and data analysis. The chapter also offers detailed information about the participants who partook in the study and it also outlines the trustworthiness and ethical considerations of the study. Lastly, this chapter concludes with a critical reflexivity section which provides the researcher's perspective of the research topic.

4.2 Research Questions

1. What are the gender role experiences of young adults living in Soweto?
2. How have young adults living in Soweto developed their gender roles?
3. What are individuals' experiences of traditional and non-traditional gender roles?
4. What are individuals' experiences of gender roles in private and public spaces?

4.3 Research Methodology

The study was carried out using a qualitative design which was aimed towards answering research questions about research participant's experiences and the meaning of certain phenomena in their lived experiences (Hammarberg, 2016). Within this qualitative design an interpretative phenomenological approach was employed. The discipline of phenomenology is aimed towards investigating and revealing the hidden experiences of individuals. The study used the core philosophy of Edmund Husserl's phenomenological philosophy which emphasises the value of studying human experience within specific lived experiences, by engaging with an interpretative phenomenological philosophy (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Bradshaw et. al, 2017). The aim of phenomenology is to provide a description and understanding of how people perceive their lived world experiences. This aim allows researchers to identify the subjective experiences of the participants and make meaning of, and understand the essence behind these experiences and their reality as clearly and as accurately as possible (Griffiths, 2009).

The interpretative phenomenological philosophy emphasises the value of studying human experience within specific lived experiences while deeply interpreting the meanings behind these experiences for the individuals (Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015). This philosophy was employed in this study to illuminate the poorly understood aspects of the youth's gender role experiences in Soweto while examining the contextual features of their particular gendered social experiences which are influenced by various factors. This interpretative phenomenological philosophy allowed for a greater understanding of the different social experiences which could be acknowledged in future as influencing the occurrence of normative patterns of change (Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015).

The interpretative phenomenological approach was identified as being appropriate for this study, as it illuminated the subjective gender role experiences of young adults in the township of Soweto and also provided deeper understanding of the questions raised in the study. The study also gained insight into the meanings embedded in the gender role experiences of young adults living in Soweto based on their engagement with their individual, interpersonal and social gendered ecological environments in which they interact with. To go beyond only describing participants gender role experiences, the theoretical framework of the ecological systems model was applied to help to interpret and gain more insight into the meanings of the participants' gendered experiences in the context of Soweto.

4.4 Research Participants

Participants for this study were obtained through the use of a non-probability sampling method. This sampling method has been conducted in cases where results are not expected to generalise an entire population and participants are easier to find. Participants were considered to be more motivated to participate in this sampling methodology because they were not randomly selected. The method was also useful in a population that has similar experiences. Non-probability sampling was faster and more cost-effective in its methodology compared to probability sampling (Taherdoost, 2016).

A purposive non-probability sampling method was initially employed, as there was intentional selection of participants based on the criteria that they have to have been born and raised in Soweto. This sampling method was considered as being based on a sampling bias of the

researcher, however the intentional selection is due to the geographical location set in the research questions. Subsequently a snowball non-probability sampling method was used to obtain a cohort of six participants, three of which were young adult men and the other three participants were young adult women. The size of the sample size was aligned with the normative practices of descriptive phenomenology which aimed to fully appreciate a participant's subjective lived experience, and for this reason a small sample size enabled a very detailed albeit time consuming data analysis (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Due to the sample size being small, snowball sampling made it less difficult to locate participants through a referral system.

The researcher asked an acquaintance (gatekeeper), who was not be part of the participant group, who had access to the participants within the specified age group. The use of a gatekeeper in the participant recruitment process was necessary as the researcher did not have legitimate access to personal data (names and contact details) of participants who lived in Soweto. The gatekeeper made first contact on behalf of the researcher, although it was not mandatory for the gatekeeper to do so, it was good etiquette in the recruitment of participants. To access more participants, the first consenting participant was asked to assist in finding another participant in alignment with the snowball method of participant recruitment. The participants were not coerced into participating and were informed of their consent and were also informed that they could discontinue their participation at any point during the data collection process.

Each participant was considered as being between the ages of 18 to 25 years, and for the purpose of this study this range was referred to as the period of young adulthood or youth. The snowball sampling technique was employed for participants who agreed to be interviewed and they were subsequently asked to refer other participants that they knew to the researcher. The snowball sampling technique was aimed towards including various participants from different family and cultural structures within Soweto who would construct gender in different ways. The participants were from different South African cultural tribes and these tribes were reported as the Sotho, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, and Zulu nations. The six participants all reported that they were born and raised in Soweto, and currently still reside there. Two of the participants reported that they reside with their immediate family, consisting of either a single maternal parent or both parents, as well as siblings. Four participants reported residing with their extended families, consisting of a grandparent/grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings,

and cousins, with two reporting late parental figures and the other two reporting single maternal figures residing within the extended family home. Two participants reported being in relationships but unmarried, while the other participants reported being single.

At the time the interviews were conducted, three of the participants reported being in the process of obtaining a tertiary degree while residing at home, while the other three reported having obtained a tertiary degree and residing at home. The three participants who have completed a tertiary degree reported being formally employed, and one of the student participants reported being employed part-time to support their family, while the last two student participants reported receiving financial support from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). The participants reported being proficient in English, and stated that they mostly engage with English in their tertiary and social spaces, however they engage with their vernacular language in their family and Sowetan contexts. During the time of the interviews, the participants spoke in both English and their vernacular language, and provided English translations for some vernacular terminology.

4.4.1 Table of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Home Language	Sowetan Location
Khwezi	20	Heterosexual female	isiZulu	Dobsonville
Shaka	24	Heterosexual male	isiZulu	Dube
Nomusa	22	Heterosexual female	tshiVenda and isiXhosa	Protea North
Winnie	25	Heterosexual female	Sesotho and seTswana	Phiri
Themba	23	Heterosexual male	isiZulu	Diepkloof
Sizwe	24	Heterosexual male	xiTsonga	Meadowlands

4.5 Research Procedure

An acquaintance of the researcher, who had access to a social group of individuals who were between the ages of 18 and 25 from Soweto was approached. The acquaintance was asked to assist in finding a willing participant who would be interested in participating in a research study on gender role experiences. Each willing participant was asked to assist in finding other participants through a referral process. The researcher gave participants permission to share the researcher's number with other potentially interested people. Willing participants were given information about the study, which was also stated on the Participant Information Sheet and they were informed that the study is based on gender role experiences. The researcher's interest in the study was also shared with the participants of the study.

Participants were given an opportunity to ask questions for clarity, and once participants stated their interest in wanting to officially engage in the study, they were given a Consent Form to sign. Participants were also informed that the interview process would be recorded for transcription purposes in the Participant Information Sheet and they were also requested to sign a separate section on the Consent Form as a written agreement to this. Participants' confidentiality was guaranteed to them and they were also informed that their anonymity would only be guaranteed during the transcription and reporting process. Recordings of the interviews are kept in a password protected Google Drive folder.

Once signed, consent forms were received from the participants, and an appointment was then arranged for the interview. The interview took place on the virtual platform Zoom and was screen-recorded. The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one online basis, and there was a waiting room component set up during the interview to control access to the interview for confidentiality purposes. The use of a one-on-one online interview was more beneficial in comparison to an online focus group, as it allowed participants establish rapport with the researcher and feel more comfortable to deeply share and explore their views, experiences, beliefs and attitudes without fear of judgement (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). The length of the interviews ranged between one and a half hours to three hours per interview session and the data was obtained through in-depth semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews helped to provide a detailed overview of participants' experiences, perceptions and beliefs in a flexible, free to probe interview-style manner (Griffiths, 2009).

The interviews were conducted in English and participants responded in both English and their vernacular language. The virtual interviews were conducted to adhere to the 2021 Covid-19 government regulations (South African Government, 2021).

The setting of each interview was in the homes of the participants, with the participants each being encouraged to be in a private space within the home to ensure their confidentiality and privacy. Although the participants engaged in the interviews in private rooms, there were occasions in which the interview had to be stopped momentarily when a family member entered the room. The interviews were then resumed once the participant felt that their space was private was again. While the family interferences did not interfere with the continuation of the interview, the participants often reported that there was limited space in the home to ensure privacy and that they were sure that they could be heard from the next room with what they were sharing due to the close proximity of the rooms in the home. The researcher checked in on whether the participant wanted to discontinue the interview in light of their limited privacy and participants requested to continue and were subsequently encouraged to request family members to sit outside for the remainder of the interview which they agreed to.

After each interview, the screen recordings of the interviews were transferred onto the researcher's personal laptop in a hidden password protected folder. The folder was then transferred onto the researcher's Google Drive which was password protected to ensure that a copy of recordings was safely kept, and this folder can only be accessed by the researcher and research supervisor. The transcription process subsequently took place after the interviews were transferred on the Google Drive and were also saved into the password protected Google folder. Both verbal and behavioural information was indicated on the transcript in order to preserve the trustworthiness of results by presenting and preserving the meaning of what the participant said in the interview, as well as how they said it (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

4.6 Data Collection

The data for the study was collected using a semi-structured interview. Within the interpretative phenomenological approach, in-depth semi-structured interviews were prominently used as a method of inquiry. The use of semi-structured interviews enabled insight into the subjective realities of participants to be gained regarding the phenomena of gender role development and their experiences of it in their lives. The semi-structured interview questions were based on

four thematic areas; gender role experiences, gender role development, experiences of traditional and non-traditional gender roles, and lastly experiences of gender roles in private and public spaces. The research questions of the study provided the outline for the interview questions, the researcher engaged in a more in-depth probe into meanings, practices and experiences highlighted in the four themes. The semi-structured interview did not coerce the participant into the researcher's expected direction, but rather allowed the participant to guide the researcher through a deeper level of understanding of their experiences (Jamshed, 2014). The participant's point of view became the focus, and an in-depth understanding of their lived gender role experiences was achieved as they responded to open-ended questions (Jamshed, 2014).

4.7 Data analysis

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the interview transcripts. The central purpose of the use of IPA in this analysis was to enrich the understanding of the phenomena in question by deeply exploring the participants' real life experiences of gender roles and experiences related to it. The IPA's concern with understanding how the participants made sense of their gendered experiences is achieved through analysing the thematic patterns and important issues which arise in the social interaction of the interview conversations (Griffiths, 2009). The use of the IPA method of data analysis allowed the researcher to play a collaborative role with the participants through the exploration and analysis of how they made sense of their experiences and personal world (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

The analysis of the study's findings made use of the three characteristics associated with the IPA methodology which are the idiographic, inductive and interrogative features (Griffiths, 2009). The idiographic feature refers to the saturated and detailed examination of the small sample size of the six participant interviews which resulted in the findings being integrated to formulate overall themes to address the research topic (Griffiths, 2009). In the IPA methodology, small sample sizes of between five to ten participants are considered as adequate samples for extensive analysis of particular phenomena. The inductive feature allowed for unpredicted and unanticipated themes to be identified and emerge in the findings' analysis (Griffiths, 2009). The interrogative feature contributed to the depth of the analysis in order to unveil phenomena that might not be expected and reveals experiences which are unique to each individual in the sample of participants (Griffiths, 2009).

Consistent with the interpretive interest of the study, the IPA was aimed towards answering the four thematic areas in the research questions highlighted in the study by analysing the interview transcripts and understanding the way gender roles are constructed and what these constructions mean in the participants' gender role relations and experiences. The researcher made use of the IPA five-step method which was proposed by Elliott and Timulak (2005) to manually analyse and interpret the data as accurately as possible. This manually analysed data following the IPA five-step method is stored in an electronic word document in a password protected Google drive folder.

The first step followed in the Elliott and Timulak's (2005) IPA process was collecting data during the interview process which was prepared during the interview process. This preparation consisted of the researcher listening to the recordings repeatedly and then transcribing them verbatim. During this process of transcription, the researcher ensured that measures were put in place to protect participants' confidentiality by removing any identifying information such as personal names. The researcher then read the transcriptions and made notes of any insights, observations, and understandings that began to emerge. Any identified redundancies and repetitions in the data collected was left out of the interpretative analysis process.

The second step required the researcher to separate the data into characteristic "meaning units" which referred to any similar or dissimilar meaningful data which was noted. This would provide sufficient information of the phenomena of gender role experiences which the study was exploring to the reader of the study's findings. These meaning units identified and labelled emerging themes of the experiential quality of the participants' accounts from different sections of their interview (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). The third step required the researcher to organise the relevant data from the meaning units and link them to thematic areas which were arising. The researcher included new unanticipated data that was not included in the literature review or thematic areas when it arose during this step which was relevant to the research topic (Elliott & Timulak, 2005).

The fourth step required the researcher to "code" or "categorise" the meaning units to align them with the study's thematic areas based on the research questions section. The researcher refined the categories and new categories which were associated with gender role experiences were developed. During this process of coding, the researcher theoretically analysed the data with specific reference to the research questions and the ecological systems theoretical framework. The researcher subsequently made meaning out of all the categorised verbal and

non-verbal information during this process. The final step of the IPA process required the researcher to link the different categories together, which were derived from the different sections of the interviews, in order to describe and interpret the gender role experiences in the gathered data. This allowed the researcher to highlight the results in meaningful main and subordinate thematic clusters. The researcher included quotes from the interviews to emphasise these thematic clusters to adequately portray the participants real lived experiences within the final report of the findings (Elliott & Timulak, 2005).

4.8 Trustworthiness of Study

In the qualitative paradigm, the concept of validity and reliability are redefined as rigour and trustworthiness; which includes credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability and reflexivity (Golafshani, 2003; Elo et al., 2014). Credibility refers to the level of confidence that can be placed on the truthfulness of the findings of the study. Credibility emphasises the importance of ensuring that the findings have been reported accurately and that the interpretations of the findings reflect the original views of the participants of the study (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The researcher ensured the credibility of the content of the study by interpreting and conveying the content with integrity, validity and accuracy. The researcher maintained integrity, validity and accuracy in the transcription process and findings process by transcribing verbatim the accounts of the participants in both English and vernacular languages, and by ensuring that participants elaborated the complex English ideas and thoughts which they presented, and that they interpreted their vernacular terminology.

Transferability ensures the reliability of the content of the study by stipulating that the degree of the findings of the study can be applied in similar contexts (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The researcher aimed to achieve transferability in this study by not only describing the subjective behaviour, meaning and experiences of the participants, but by also describing the context in which the study takes place. By so doing, the study could provide results which not only provide meaning of these experiences to readers, but can also be generalised in different contexts which could potentially influence these experiences. It is to be noted however that this issue of transferability is subjective to the researcher, and it is therefore difficult to definitively make a conclusion that these findings can be applied or considered relevant to a different context and to different people. The researcher can instead speculate that the situations or

phenomena presented by the participants are unique and specific to their direct experience of their context.

Dependability refers to the constancy of the interpretation of the findings obtained from the study as well as the relevance of the recommendations that were developed for the study over time (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The researcher also consulted with their supervisor who inspected how accurate the transcripts were against the recordings, and gave approval for the reported findings and recommendations section based on these transcripts. Confirmability refers to the degree of neutrality in the research findings. Other researchers should be able to confirm the interpretations of the findings of the study or researcher bias may be considered as being present in the findings (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Dependability and confirmability in the study was therefore achieved through a transparent description of research steps from the planning process to reporting the findings.

Reflexivity was also considered to ensure confirmability and the researcher's reflexivity was checked throughout the research process. Reflexivity refers to the researcher's awareness of their implicit and explicit assumptions, preconceptions and values and how these could potentially impact the study (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The researcher engaged in continuous personal reflection and theoretical reflexivity throughout the research process to check their biases and emotions during the process. Reflection and reflexivity was achieved through supervision consultations which contained and explored the researcher's feelings which could be shaping their perception of the analysed data. The researcher also reflected on their entire research process through a research notebook which contained their thoughts, feelings and ideas regarding the process and content which arose during the process.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

In beginning the research process, ethical clearance was initially obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand's Ethics Committee (MACC/21/05) which allowed the researcher to proceed with the data collection process. The first participant was recruited through an acquaintance of the researcher and was unknown to the researcher, and an appointment for an online interview was scheduled. Rapport was quickly established with the first participant which may have been due to knowledge of having a mutual acquaintance. Subsequent participants were recruited through the snowballing participant recruitment method which also

appeared to influence the quick rapport building with these participants. Rapport was established through the researcher introducing themselves, their affiliation with the university as well as the personal interests and experiences with the research topic. The participation information sheet, informed consent form, and consent to record the interview was discussed at length, and participants were given an opportunity to ask questions about the contents of these forms before proceeding to sign and consent to continue with the interview. Once consent was obtained, the participants were again informed about issues of confidentiality and anonymity which were discussed in the participant information sheet, to reiterate that pseudonyms would be used for quotations and that none of their identifying information would used in the final report of the study. The participants were informed of free counselling services and were provided with contact details of these services which they could make use of should they need to after the interview process.

In an effort to ensure the comfortability of the participant with the interview process, they were requested to freely share some information about their background and interests which saw them take charge of this portion of the interview as they introduced themselves. Participants were observed through verbal and non-verbal cues as easing into the process during this beginning stages of the interview. They were also encouraged to speak in their vernacular language and ask questions whenever they needed to during the process.

At the time of the data collection process, South Africa had been placed under a lockdown which contained contact restrictions and mask requirements (South African Government, 2021). Due to these restrictions and requirements, the data collection process was conducted online. The participants were asked beforehand about their comfortability with the online platform of Zoom, and they all consented to being interviewed online, reporting that they were accustomed to the "new normal" of online engagement. The participants were requested to find a private space where they could be alone during the interview process to ensure privacy and confidentiality. They were also informed that they could request data which would be provided to them, and three of the participants were provided with data due to reported financial restraints. The participants were informed that should connectivity issues arise, the interview would have to be rescheduled for another time to resolve the connectivity issue, and this occurred with one of the participants. No other connectivity issues were experienced during the course of the interviews.

Although the researcher ensured that privacy was achieved on the online interview platform of Zoom by password protecting access to the meeting, the researcher was also mindful that participants were in their home environments during the interviews and inquired about the privacy of the space at the beginning of each interview. Some participants informed the researcher of the limited space in their home and that although they were alone in a room, they could be overheard by others in the house. The researcher raised the issue of comfortability and privacy, and requested participants to ask family members to remain outside for the duration of the interview, which they agreed to. Participants were informed that they could discontinue the interview at any time, especially if their level of comfortability to share and privacy declined, and they were informed that they could decline to answer questions at any time. Once the interviews were in full swing, participants opened up about painful experiences, and the interviewer was aware of any emotions that arose during the interview process, and allowed for time and space for the participants to freely and openly experience any of these emotions.

The researcher was aware of the emotional difficulties linked to the participants experiences of gender roles as well as the intersectional social justice issues linked to their experiences. The participants relayed their subjective experiences of marginalisation which were related to their gender role experiences. Although the participants reported on experiences of perceiving themselves as victims of circumstance in relation to their gender role experiences growing up in Soweto, they also perceived themselves as being empowered to achieve social change through their voice and determination as potential agents of change in their small society. They were also conscious of the gendered trauma of the previous generations as they opened up about their past experiences of gendered oppression and marginalisation which they had to endure and perpetuate as a result of their upbringing. The participants were not encouraged however about their ability to change the previous generations' perceptions of gender roles but stated being encouraged to change future generations' experiences and perceptions of gender roles. The researcher encouraged the participants to seek psychological assistance to help them make further meaning of their experiences and learn how to cope and manage with these personal challenges linked to their gender role experiences.

4.10 Limitations of Study

Raina (2015) states that although snowball sampling provides an advantage in locating hidden population groups or groups of people within a specific population, which in this instance was youths from Soweto, this methodology has some limitations associated with it. The first limitation is its liability for biases, especially community biases (Raina, 2015). In this study's community bias, the first participant had a strong impact on the overall sample which was eventually recruited which may contradict the snowball sampling's conventional aims of random selection and representativeness. This community bias makes it difficult for the findings from the pool of participants to be generalised to the larger population of Soweto. It would therefore not be possible for this snowball sample population to provide definite knowledge of and insight into the phenomena of the ecological experiences of gender roles which are experienced by the larger population within the context of Soweto. It was important to be aware that although phenomenology is concerned with questions of knowledge, perception and truth, the researcher was cautioned to not search for "truth" in the use of the ecological and phenomenological frameworks, but instead explore the personalised experiences of gender roles in the participants' lived experiences. The researcher was also cautioned to not seek to uncover unexpressed and unexplored meanings in the participants' accounts (Parker, 2005). It was crucial for the researcher to take on this qualitative enquiry by avoiding imposing their own preconceptions on the collection of data in order to fully appreciate the subjective data from the participants (Griffiths, 2009). The researcher therefore aimed to construct the subjective gendered identities and experiences of the participants and make meaning of the stories shaped by various ecological and intersectional influences which rang true to each participant in their personal ways.

Despite this small pool of participants however, the trustworthiness of the contents obtained from their accounts was not compromised and did not lack a rich understanding of their gendered experiences within the context of Soweto. It was also not possible for the participants of the study to portray an accurate reading of the demographics of the general community of the study, however it provided an adequate young adult age range which was required for the study. The study also could have employed a cohort study by using a target population of households that consist of different generations, who have different exposure and experiences to gender roles and gendered norms, and who have different sexual orientations, to allow for

higher representation and transferability of the research findings in similar contexts in future studies (Setia, 2016).

Another limitation was language, which is a central component within phenomenology in revealing experiences of the world (Inkpin, 2016), the interview questions were developed and delivered in English which made the participants feel obliged to respond in English. The researcher, who is fluent in multiple South African languages, became aware of this obligation and encouraged participants to communicate in their home language whenever they could not think of the English terminology during some interviews. The reasoning for this was due to the awareness of the subtleties and nuances that exist in the linguistic differences between the English language and vernacular languages which can significantly obscure the meanings of participants' accounts, and these obscurities may undermine the accuracy of what the participant was attempting to relay during their interview (Squires, Sadarangani & Jones, 2020).

Once participants relayed information in their home language they managed to quickly and accurately translate what they said again in English. The encouragement to use their vernacular language appeared to encourage participants to engage in code switching, which refers to a person alternating and stringing together two or more different languages during a conversation (Cacoullos, 2020), which participants were observed as doing with ease during the interview process and this code switching helped them maintain an authentic voice throughout the interview process. Their ability to code switch also helped to maintain the rigour and quality of the information collected throughout the data collection process as the participants were able to translate their home language into English. However, in other studies an interpreter will be required for researchers who do not speak the language of the participants to assist with translating information to avoid a language barrier limitation.

Another limitation was social desirability bias which was observed in some participants who appeared to respond in a way that they may be considered to be desirable or in line with social norms because they know they are being observed or measured (Dalton & Ortegren, 2011). This bias was observed in some of the female participants who sometimes stated that their responses are socially acceptable when they reflected on traditional gender role experiences, and when asked what they would have really wanted to say despite the social norms, they truly reflected on their feelings. Dalton and Ortegren (2011) suggest that females are more prone to

the social desirability response bias compared to their male counterparts, however females may also provide more ethical responses when requested to in comparison to males. This social desirability bias may have occurred due to the interview environment being within the family home which may have urged these participants to respond in a socially desirable manner and feel apprehensive about sharing their personal experiences. Although a different interview environment was not feasible and practical during the time that the data collection process was conducted, this option may have mitigated this response bias.

4.11 Reflexivity

Our African diaspora prides itself in its rich history of storytelling, and I had the privilege of being exposed to real lived experiences and meaning making of these experiences through the phenomenological methodology and ecological framework as I explored the gender role experiences of each research participant within their lived gendered Sowetan context. Sitting online and conversing, one would think there would be a coldness and disconnect from the experiences shared, but instead I felt pulled into the realities of the participants and I admittedly felt strongly reminded of my own personal experiences of being raised in Soweto as a young girl and woman. Each participant account echoed feelings of confusion, resentment, stress, pain and hope which resonated with me, and these participant accounts allowed for their voices to be heard, when they were previously silenced or ignored. Their accounts echoed contemporary subjective truths of their realities of racialised and patriarchal gender role development and experiences within a post-Apartheid Soweto.

In exploring the participants' experiences with them, I was aware that I had my own biases of being raised in the same environment, under the same racialised and patriarchal gendered conditions. This awareness made the difficult task of individually collecting, analysing and making meaning of a closely subjective experience a lot easier. As I began the process of collecting and analysing the participants' gendered experiences, I had the privilege to constantly reflect on my thoughts and feelings with my supervisor and consistently engage in reflexivity which significantly reduced the difficulty of the data collection and analysis task.

Reflexivity is at times considered as being addressed superficially in qualitative research, however this practice helped me open myself up to self-conscious critique and evaluation of my subjectivity and influence on the research process (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022). During this

reflexivity practice I became aware that it was impossible for my own story and experiences of gender roles in Soweto to be completely disregarded for the purposes of objective analysis, and instead I learned to embrace the value of my subjectivity while understanding how this subjectivity can have a significant influence on the research process (Griffiths, 2009). Unlike in quantitative research, which strives to reveal fundamental truths which are free from researcher bias, this qualitative interpretative research process revealed how my subjectivity shaped my inquiry and detailed examination of the research data to produce findings which accurately made meaning of the participants' gender role experiences (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022). I was aware that my failure to attend to reflexivity as a researcher would negatively impact the knowledge that would be collected, received and developed through the qualitative inquiry, and potentially harm and affect those connected to the topic (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022).

I started the reflexive process off by reflecting on my positionality in reference to the topic of contemporary gender role experiences in the township of Soweto, as well as my positionality in reference to the participants who are experiencing this research phenomenon. This allowed me to reflect on my personal identity, gender presence and identity, sexual orientation, language, education, class, race, ethnicity and age, and how this would impact participants who would be close to this positionality (Roulston, 2010). This conscious and introspective reflection of myself revealed that this positionality positively influenced rapport building and allowed participants to quickly feel comfortable during the data collection process. Despite this perceived advantage which is posed by my contextual positionality, I was also aware of the power dynamics within researcher-participant relationships which may have played a role in participants opening up quickly about their intimate experiences, due to their perception of me as an authority figure. It was therefore important to inform the participants of their consent, that they had the option of what they would and would not like to share, and the option to stop the interview at any point which would be fully respected. In their openness, I understood that their accounts could not be easily shared elsewhere and therefore I treated the interviews, which quickly became intimate, with much respect. There was also critical awareness of the potential for intersubjective influence which could have played out in response to the similarities in the researcher and participants' contextual positionalities (Walsh, 2014). This reflexivity went beyond reflection, in my acknowledgement of my positionality and exploring its relationship with the context of the data collection process (Roulston, 2010). This reflexivity therefore allowed me to carefully explore my relationship with the participants and the context site without bias, and also openly explore how I used this positioning to construct knowledge based

on the meanings the participants have made from their experiences with my supervisor (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

When reflecting on my positionality in reference to the topic of contemporary gender role experiences in the township of Soweto, I thought of my gogo and mama educating me on what it means to be a girl during my early childhood. I recalled memories of being scolded to not play in the streets "ngoba intombazane ayifuneki estradini" (a girl should not be seen in the streets), and being told "ulala kanjani uma uyintombazane endlini engcolile " (how do you sleep as a girl in a dirty house) after coming home from school exhausted or resting during a school holiday. I remembered feeling angry after being told this, especially because my younger brother and cousin/brother were often encouraged to play outside during school holidays or rest after a long day at school, while I was subjected to housework which left me too exhausted to do much of my homework afterwards. I also remembered this anger quickly being suppressed because of teachings that a girl does not outwardly express her anger.

These memories made me realise how significantly my identity became centered around being a conservative black Zulu Catholic girl, and in all aspects of this identity reality, traditional gender roles played a significant role in shaping my beliefs, behaviours and interactions within different environments. In an African diasporic society where black identity is attached to the negativities of colonialism (Adeyelure & Roux, 2023), my black Catholic Zulu girl identity was strongly influenced by the racialised colonial gender expectations of females not being seen and heard, being modest, reserved and conservative, and most importantly being nurturing and caregiving. These identity characteristics were linked to my gender role development from an early age and I felt obliged to maintain these features in the different environments I interacted with in order to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance from what society expected to see from me. From an early age I learned that society accepted the female who exhibited these features without contestation, and I therefore needed to do the same.

Life felt heavy with all of these responsibilities and teachings being placed on me at a young age. I felt like I became an adult before I even got to experience my childhood. My gogo would often proudly relay her earliest memory of me by saying "you started washing dishes when you were 4, pulling up a chair to the sink and stepping on your tip toes to reach it". From a young age, I believed that I needed to take on the role of a homemaker and that I needed to nurture and care for my younger brother and older sister who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. This

homemaker role was especially reinforced in me throughout my development as a girl child being raised in Soweto's Emndeni. During my childhood, I was exposed to the same socialisation my mama went through, when she was raised by her own gogo, and through these experiences, history was obviously repeating itself. A pattern emerged of generations of daughters being raised by their gogos and other maternal figures, who socialised them early in their lives on how to be "intombazane ekhuthele endlini" (a girl who takes pride in taking care of her home responsibilities) while their brothers were encouraged to play outside freely.

These memories were echoed by the female participants' experiences, and as they made meaning of these experiences in their lives, themes of pain, feeling burdened by adult responsibilities at a young age, and feelings of resentment towards male child privilege emerged in the interviews. I resonated with their resentment towards the patriarchal experience of traditional gender roles, because of my own experience of being subjected to those roles growing up. However, I could not help but notice that as the female participants spoke about their anger and resentment, they showed little expression of this anger and defeat. This reminded me of my own suppression of anger towards my experiences as I remembered my socialisation of not expressing anger as a female. In perceiving this suppression of anger and defeat in the female participants' eyes, I asked about the meaning of these experiences and they reflected on the impact of adultification on theirs, their mothers and sisters' development and the subsequent learned disempowerment in their younger selves that was carried through to adulthood due to their racialised, patriarchal gendered socialisation.

During the female participants' accounts, I was reminded of Frantz Fanon's (1952) Black Skin, White Masks literature, particularly in his interrogation of the colonial impact on blackness and the experience of gender. His writings during the colonial French era referenced the racially constructed disempowerment and subjugation of black females which resulted in the black female being bound, early in her life, to the traditional ideological socialisation and presentation of a submissive, dependent, poor, domesticated black female (Fanon, 1952). His representation of the racially socialised black female reflected the female participants' experiences, even in their contemporary lived experiences, in a completely different location but contextually similar experience within a racially-bound heteropatriarchal Soweto. These similar experiences after multiple decades and in a post-colonial period emphasises the painful perpetuation of the colonial conception of the black identity and gender role norms.

There was meaning in our similarities as young black women, who were raised in colonially conceptualised locations such as Soweto, coming from similar heteropatriarchal black households and cultures, with similar gender identities, gender presences and experiences. This meaning is that there is a continuous existence of a disempowered, adultified black girl child who feels resentful for not having a childhood because she is forced to grow up quickly, is encouraged to develop a domesticated identity, is unseen, and has a negatively impacted self-esteem (Jurkovic, 1997). This adultified black girl child does not have the confidence to voice out her concerns and she develops her gender role identity solely based on her racially conceptualised traditional heteropatriarchal gender role socialisation (Blake & Epstein, 2017). She does not contest the roles enforced on her because she wants to feel accepted as a competent traditional female and feel a sense of belonging in her family, peer group, school, and community (Blake & Epstein, 2017). As an adult woman, she feels disempowered in her womanhood and trapped in her subordinate gender roles (Mikkola, 2022), while yearning for the gender freedom and power offered by non-traditional gender roles.

I yearned for this freedom and empowerment too, and when I was exposed to environments outside of Soweto that socialised a different form of femalehood in my early adult years, I became confused. This confusion stemmed from feeling conflicted about leaving a developed gender role identity which was very traditional, and although it felt restricting, it was all I knew about myself. Consolidating this confusion was quite a difficult task, because I needed to constantly remind myself to be traditional at home, and to be non-traditional anywhere outside of my traditional ecological environments. I observed the same confusion and guilt in the female participants in their yearning for and engagement with non-traditional gender roles. A theme emerged of feeling like they were betraying an identity they had been socialised to develop from a young age, which made them feel a sense of belonging within their ecological environments, while yearning to leave this same identity as it made them feel disempowered, unseen, voiceless and lost in their sense of self. This made me wonder if they felt the same in their heteropatriarchal traditionally gendered homes with their strong yearning for the freedom afforded by non-traditional gender roles. The female participants spoke softly as they relayed these yearnings in their family homes, often being inquired to elaborate on these feelings and the meaning they have made of them. This highlighted their fear of ostracisation for expressing their thoughts towards an alternative gender role experience while in their family homes.

The male participants, on the other hand, were observed quite differently in comparison to the female participants in their accounts for theie need for alternative gender roles. They openly verbalised their frustration and anger towards traditional gender roles and the differential treatment their sisters/female cousins experienced, as well as their yearning to adopt non-traditional gender roles. This made me wonder if the male participants were more expressive in their anger in the interviews due to their male socialisation which encourages confidence and open expression of anger, while the female participants were soft-spoken due to their fear of deviating from the norms which expect a modest, quiet and gentle "demeanour (Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014; Mofokeng, 2021). The males' voices were also dominant in the findings section and this indicated that both the males and females were true to their reported traditionally socialised gender role expectations.

Growing up in Soweto, I had an initial bias towards the male experience due to my perception of the male as being privileged at the beginning of the data collection process, however with extensive collection, analysis and interpretation of the male interviews, reflection and supervision, this bias disappeared. The interpretations from the male participants' interviews exposed a black male who experiences struggles of pain from the social expectations placed on them, just as the black females do. The male participants' accounts exposed the pressures placed on black male children to attain status and wealth which is overwhelming and impacts their ideas of manhood and masculinity, which made me empathise with the male gender role socialisation experience. The male participants' experiences were filled with painful and harmful stereotypes which I had not been aware of before and I felt sadness for them in having had this experience.

I listened quietly and with curiosity as I was exposed to a stressful Sowetan male experience. The male participants' reflected on themes of losing a childhood experience due to pressures of toxic masculinity and criminality, traditional gender role pressures to compete in different ecological environments, and the adultification of the male child who is expected to provide for and protect the home even if it places his safety at risk (Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014; Blake & Epstein, 2017). These experiences closely resembled Malose Langa's (2020) literature on the Alexandra born and raised males who ascribed to the toxic hegemonic masculinity which expected them to engage in physical violence and criminality, be competitive with other males, be emotionally unresponsive, help to provide for the family home, and take part in risky

behaviours as a way to prove their manhood. This suggested the existence of eerily similar gender role experiences within South Africa's townships.

I also observed a sombreness and softness in the male participants which was different to their previously loud and confident voices, as they reflected on these difficulties of adhering to toxic hegemonic masculine expectations. I observed them subconsciously removing the toxic masculine "mask" by embracing their vulnerability based on their pressured and painful experiences. Their vulnerability did not subscribe to the typical "township boy" stereotype, and instead reflected an authentic and honest demeanour as they endeavoured to be seen in their painful experiences, which are often dismissed, unseen, unheard or unappreciated (Langa, 2020; Brown, 2013). This removal of the mask and presentation of vulnerability in the male participants' accounts echoed Raewyn Connell's (1995) suggestion that hegemonic masculinities are capable of being broken down and recreated into alternative masculinities, and this was evident as the male participants broke down the hegemonic masculine identity and presented a subordinate masculinity.

The black Sowetan male experience from the male participants' accounts revealed a wounded child, who is socialised to not speak out against harmful patriarchal practices. He finds himself trapped in a patriarchal world that does not want him to claim his true feelings and hide them behind heteropatriarchal expectations of him (Hooks, 2018). He learns early in his childhood that the patriarchal world expects him to be anything but himself in order to be accepted by others. He hides his true feelings in order to fit into the heteropatriarchal expectations of him to be pleasing to others. He becomes an adult male who learns to hide his woundedness and puts on a mask of strength and resilience, and shows little to no emotion besides anger as a way of expression (Hooks, 2018).

In analysing the accounts of both the male and female gender role experiences, as well as my own personal experiences, within the Sowetan ecological context, the colonial heteropatriarchal expectations were considered as having created, reinforced and perpetuated painful gender role experiences for the participants starting from their home space to the different ecological environments they interact with. These experiences were often perpetuated by the very present maternal figures struggling with the absence of paternal figures. The participants were observed as feeling suffocated and restricted by these racialised and patriarchal gender role experiences, which were passed down for generations through the

colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid eras. These generations have unfortunately suffered in silence and developed a resilience, masking the wounds that were inflicted by their colonially conceptualised gendered developmental experience.

The different voices that contributed so much to this topic opened doors to very different but similar gendered worlds within the context of Soweto. Their voices exposed the stories of many unheard voices, and with my personal reflexivity I found my voice too. I now think of what this literature could mean for the future generations who are raised in heteropatriarchal homes and communities, who may find themselves feeling restricted and oppressed in their gendered experiences and yearning for gender freedom. My hope for them is to believe that they have the power and confidence to develop gender role identities beyond the racially conceptualised socialised roles which have been generationally preserved and perpetuated. I hope that they believe that they have a choice to take on roles that align with their sense of self and satisfies their yearning for gender freedom, without judgement from their ecological environments for not being “man enough” or “woman enough”.

Traditional is by no means wrong, and I do hope that there will be growing interest in the future for the decolonisation of an oppressive racially conceptualised gendered socialisation experience, so black communities can go back to their pre-colonial traditions and cultural roots. The pre-colonial roots which socialised an equal and neutral gender role experience which does not focus on the male or female taking on a role simply due to their sex, but instead focuses on community building by honing and encouraging people's strengths. Thus, to re-imagine an Africa where gender roles are non-traditional, this would require critical evaluation of what that would mean for the traditionally gendered traditions, cultures and identities that have been well-established for generations, on the foundation of a colonial and culturally imperialist gendered experience. The decolonisation of the gender role phenomenon would also require evaluating the continued effects of Western colonialism on gendered experiences in ways that are sensitive to the individuals who experience and make meaning of this phenomenon.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the details of the methods and methodology of the research study. It provided information about the reasons for the qualitative research method which was employed in the study, as well as a description of the IPA as a data collection and analysis methodology within the study. This chapter also outlined the participants and their recruitment

process. The trustworthiness of the study was lastly explored as well as ethical consideration which were central to the research. Lastly, the chapter outlined the reflections and critical reflexivity of the research topic by the researcher.

Chapter Five

Research Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the main themes and subthemes which were revealed during the analysis of the data collected from the research. The main themes are defining masculinities and femininities through the Soweto gendered experiences, the ecological influences of gender role development within Soweto, the past and present gender role experiences in Soweto, and the emerging implications of contemporary gender role experiences in Soweto. The first theme explores the subthemes of the conflation of sex, gender and gender roles, the process of gender role socialisation and the subsequent social acceptability of gender roles. The second theme discusses the subthemes of microsystem in gender role development as well as the arising conflicts in the meso-, macro, and chronosystems in gender role development. The third theme explores the subthemes of traditional gender role experience of Soweto, the generationally influenced experiences of gender roles, gender role resistance, and a move towards non-traditional gender roles in search for empowerment. The final theme discusses the subthemes of erasure of childhood through adultification, the effects of gender stereotyping, and lastly the negotiation of conflicting gender roles in a gender shifting trend. This section therefore aims to respond to the research aims and objectives by providing a picture of the experiences of gender roles of young adults living in Soweto and how they came to develop these gender roles. As well as highlighting the lived experiences of traditional and non-traditional gender roles for these young adults, and how these experiences play out in the private and public spaces within their small-lived experiences in Soweto.

5.2 Defining Masculinities and Femininities: Soweto, the Gendered Experience

This theme explores participants' developed meanings of sex, gender and gender roles. An evident conflation is present in their developed meanings and these conflated meanings are unpacked in this section. The theme also chronicles the participants' understandings of gender role socialisation and details the process of gender role socialisation which they underwent during their gender role development. The theme lastly highlights how the participants experiences with social acceptability during their gendered socialisation in Soweto.

5.2.1 The Conflation of Sex, Gender and Gender Roles

In a globalising world, meanings and experiences of gender roles have seen shifts in various ecological environments around the world (Tahira et al., 2017). As a result of this globalisation, there has been a subsequent modernisation of gender experiences which is amplifying social deviance from subscriptions to traditional gender roles towards more non-traditional roles (Tahira et al., 2017). Significant changes are therefore being reported in heteropatriarchal societies on the types of gender roles which are being adopted by young males and females in contemporary communities (Cifaldi & Malizia, 2021). Taking these global gender role changes into consideration, one may assume that a similar trend is occurring among the youth in the contemporary, heteropatriarchal ecological space of Soweto.

In understanding whether this trend is occurring, it is important to first understand the contemporary conceptualisations of participants' meanings of sex, gender and gender roles before unpacking their lived gendered experiences in the ecological environment of Soweto. When unpacking the meanings participants had of sex and gender, a clear distinction and articulation in the difference between these two concepts was not present. The biological nuances of the term "sex" are confused with the social and cultural nuances of the term "gender". In biological literature, sex refers to the physiological differences between males and females, but this definition is conflated by the participants with the social construct of gender which denotes to how society expects individuals to behave based on whether they are male or female (Perry, 2016). The social nuances of gender and gender roles are also conflated by some participants, as they confuse gender's definition of male and female expectations with gender role's definition of roles which are ascribed to males and females (Roshchynskaya, 2010). The participants' conflations are consistent with a growing number of researchers reporting contemporary society's struggle in differentiating the nuances of sex, gender and gender role terminology, due to the concepts being closely interrelated resulting in them being assumed as mutually determined concepts which do not differ from each other (Perry, 2016; Becker et al., 2022).

In the extracts below, Shaka and Nomusa define gender, but conflate the biological aspect of sex with the cultural and social concepts of gender and gender roles. They use these three concepts interchangeably and they become confused when later asked to define the terms sex and gender roles, realising that they may have conflated the definitions:

"How I would define gender is uhm, I would use anatomy to define gender. To me, to define gender is whether someone is a female biologically or a male biologically. So gender is basically the line that separates people, according to their biological, uhm what can I say, it's something that identifies people based on what they are biologically… Okay, so I don't know if it's going to be confusing, but the fact that I've posed two definitions of the same word that are very different from one another, it's going to allow me for my own benefit to just hop around the two definitions." (Shaka)

"Okay I would say gender is defined by the genitalia, yeah that's how I would put it. So I would say gender is what you are assigned at birth, as you grow older there are certain expectations that are attached to that gender that you were at birth. I am describing the word using the word itself for failure of having another word for it." (Nomusa)

Shaka conflates anatomy and biological difference with social gender constructs. By thinking of gender as purely biological and then later talking about gender as being social, Shaka's discomfort becomes evident as he expresses concern that he may be confusing the interviewer due to his own confusion with the terms. His perception of gender as being both biologically- and socially-nuanced indicates a conflict in his understanding of this concept and subsequently results in him experiencing cognitive dissonance. Nomusa also shows evidence of this cognitive dissonance as she states that she uses the word gender as interchangeable for sex, suggesting that the social term can be defined with reference to the biological nuances of anatomical sex. Nomusa then subsequently indicates a discomfort with her description of gender as she states that she is unable to identify a different term to elaborate her definition of gender.

Nomusa and Shaka's conflated responses are due to their perceived interrelatedness of these concepts which influences a conceptual disconnect in the way they think about the concept of sex as more of a social construct and less of a biological concept. The Ecological Systems framework attributes this conceptual disconnect to the participants' positioning in being raised in a conservative ecological environment that focuses on socially-related teachings over biological teachings (Härkönen, 2007). This aligns with research which suggests that biological sex differences are often avoided within the system environments of particularly traditional and conservative communities, during their children's socialisation process (Draper, 1985).

The socialising agents (ie. parents, teachers etc.) within these conservative system environments focus on the social constructs of gender and gender roles as they shape the child's social and gender identity early in their socialisation process (Draper, 1985). These socialising agents thus influenced the participants' to accept the concepts of sex, gender and gender roles as interrelated concepts early in their childhood, and this knowledge was reinforced as they navigated their nested, conservative, heteropatriarchal ecological environment (Shen-Miller et al., 2011). As a result of this conservative development and socialisation of gender knowledge, the participants had more of an emotional understanding of and conceptual connection to the constructs of gender and gender roles, because this knowledge came from significant social figures within their ecological environment who helped to shape more conservative gendered meanings and experiences (Gelman, 2009).

5.2.2 A Process of Socialisation: Society's Gender Role Expectations

The term "socialisation" is used in the above section as a significant role player in shaping the understanding, meanings and experiences participants have with the terms sex, gender and gender roles in their ecological environment, but what is socialisation? Gecas (2001) defines socialisation as a process of social influence which results in participants acquiring social and cultural knowledge to shape their social and individual identity. During the socialisation process, participants are taught to become proficient members of society by being influenced to internalise the standards, norms, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours expressed within their ecological environment. Participants are therefore expected to conform to these standards, norms, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours as they are considered as being socially desirable and appropriate for them to play a particular role in their environment (Parke et al., 2008). The socialisation of gender roles is therefore the participant's internalisation of their ecological environment's socially imposed standards, norms, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours which are desirable and appropriate for males and females through social education and social influence (Carter, 2014).

In the process of gender role socialisation, there are specific gendered social values, which are shared by people within the specific Sowetan ecological environment, that emphasise expectations for what is appropriate for males and females (Cerbara et al., 2022). These expectations are socially imposed on the participants as social norms which are considered to

help regulate their behaviours, beliefs and attitudes through the use of social sanctions, social control and exclusionary processes (Cislaghi & Heise, 2020). Participants are subsequently socialised from an early age that there are social agents who enforce and influence people to adhere to certain gendered social norms. Participants are considered as not simply holding onto these gendered beliefs, norms and values on their own but that they do so as a way to survive in their ecological environment by adhering to the socially constructed expectations placed on them (Cislaghi & Heise, 2020).

Based on the above literature, the process of socialisation can therefore be considerd as one that largely includes socially imposed norms, values, behaviours and beliefs which influence the participants' gender role development in their Sowetan ecological environment. This social imposition during socialisation is evident as participants' describe the socialisation of gender roles as a gendered teaching process which children are exposed to at an early age. Their descriptions make one think of a child who has been forcefully placed in a classroom and is being taught to know and engage with what is appropriate for their gender. Winnie, Khwezi, Shaka, Sizwe, and Nomusa portray themselves as being vulnerable to this gendered social imposition process which imposed "roles", "rules", "expectations" and "norms" on them based on their being male or female during their gender role development. They subsequently state that their knowledge of these socially imposed gendered expectations influenced their acceptance and subsequent adoption of these roles, rules, expectations and norms in an attempt to avoid punishment or discrimination if they did not adhere to them. In alignment with their classroom analogy, just as children in a classroom who are in a school within a community, the participants have all interacted with different systems such as their home, school, community, social media, culture and policies for example, in their ecological environment taught or socialised gender roles which were reinforced in these different systems and these systems imposed rules which led to punishment if they did not adhere to them as they navigated through these different ecological systems.

In the extracts below, Winnie and Khwezi describe the gender role development process as one that is not inherent, but rather is socialised:

"Gender roles is like the roles that groom us to become who we are or rather the ones that when we grow up, we are told that we need to behave this certain way, you know. Because you are a certain class of gender, you need to behave a certain way." (Winnie)

"Well to me gender roles is what society perceives as correct for females and for males, you understand? I feel like it's more of what is expected in terms of uhm lifestyle, for females and for males. I think that's what gender roles are with my understanding." (Khwezi)

Winnie describes gender role development as a socialisation process by stating that there is a "class of gender" in which one is socialised or "groomed" into from a young age and throughout the participants' gender role development. She states that during this development an individual is characterised as being part of a particular gender and they are subsequently expected to take on specific gender roles based on that gender. Khwezi also portrays gender roles as a socialisation process which places expectations on participants and enforces standards and norms that would be considered as appropriate for males and females' "lifestyles" within society. These statements align with literature which states that the participants' gender role development begins early in childhood as they are taught as children about sex and gender differences, and are socialised into adopting gender-typified behaviours, values and identities which are perpetuated throughout their life based on their ecological environment's social expectations and norms (Carter, 2014; Eagly & Wood, 1991). Gender theory also states that the enforced standards and norms which Khwezi refers to, result in behavioural differences between boys and girls which are influenced by persistent socialisation of different gendered social roles and play a significant role in the participant's identity as they are perpetuated well into their adult life (Carter, 2014). Based on this literature the ecological framework places gender role development as beginning in the microsystem as the participant goes through a "grooming" or socialisation process, and once they become exposed to other systems such as the meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystems and navigate them through a bi-directional influence of gendered behaviours and attitudes, they develop a gender role identity which is considered as socially acceptable within their larger ecological environment (Liben, 2017).

Winnie and Khwezi also describe the social imposition of gendered expectations, which describes as an obligatory relationship that develops through the socialisation process which results in participants feeling obligated to adhere to their socialised gendered norms, expectations, beliefs and values in order to form socially appropriate gender identities and feel a sense of belonging to their society (Carter, 2014). Winnie describes a conditional experience which is enforced by an ecological environment which stipulates how people should and should not behave based on their "class of gender". Winnie and Khwezi make use of words such as

"we need to behave this certain way", "what society perceives as correct", and "what is expected" which further emphasises the gendered obligations that participants experience within their ecological environment. Participants subsequently internalise this obligation and feel forced to adhere to these strict social norms in order to be accepted socially or feel fearful of facing social discipline or punishment when they do not adhere to the gendered standards, norms and expectations within their environment. This strict gender role experience is considered as contributing to gender stereotypes which are largely accepted by the different systems within the ecological environment, and eventually become accepted by participants as they interact with these systems during their socialisation process.

5.2.3 Gender Roles and Social Acceptability

Socialisation and social imposition is highlighted above as having significant influence over participants to adhere to, accept, and subsequently adopt gender roles within their ecological environment. The social acceptance of imposed differences between males and females is largely influenced by their social and cultural norms which are highly influential over their behaviours and adopted beliefs (McBreen et al., 2011). Should participants not adhere to these norms within their ecological environments, they face adverse consequences such as social exclusion, social discrimination, and loss of belonging and identity (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). The perpetuation of this critical process of socialisation therefore influences a generation of widely spread acceptance within an ecological environment as well as the development of individual gender identities which are considered as socially appropriate and acceptable as they navigate the different ecological systems (McBreen et al., 2011).

The unspoken gendered social obligation drives participants to want to achieve social acceptance by internalising the socialisation process of gender roles and adhere to gendered social expectations, or face negative consequences. This social obligation subsequently creates fear of social rejection, which participants within the ecological environment of Soweto believe they will experience if they deviate from these social expectations (Gaia, 2013). In the extract below, Shaka reinforces this literature by suggesting that tradition and culture are significant role players in the endorsement, acceptance and adoption of gender roles within communities:

"We shouldn't, we shouldn't dismiss the fact that most gender roles within the community, in the townships, or in the rural areas wherever we come from as black people, most gender roles are fuelled by our tradition and culture."(Shaka)

Shaka reflects on his frustration towards an unspoken obligation which people in the townships and rural areas adhere to due to the widely social influence of the macrosystem's traditional, cultural and social expectations which are forcefully placed on them as black people within the ecological environment of Soweto as socially accepted norms. These gendered cultures and expectations within the macrosystem leave participants feeling upset as they are ultimately obligated and restricted to experiencing the influences of the macrosystem within their microsystem personal gender role development. This personal gender role development is then forcefully developed over time within the chronosystem. Shaka's experience with his macrosystem environment leaves him feeling trapped between being angered by his obligation to accept the imposed cultural gender role socialisation or rejecting this socialisation with the risk of being ostracised by his family and community within his microsystem.

Themba and Nomusa build on Shaka's reflections of the system environments' influence on their gender role socialisation process. In the extracts below, they reflect on the different system environments they have interacted with, and how these environments exposed them to gendered knowledge which they have internalised after feeling obligated to accept and develop these particular gendered experiences:

"So in the home where I resided, uhm duties were actually given according to that, so females would do this and us males would do that, you know." (Themba)

Themba opens up about his interaction with his family environment within the microsystem and he describes being socialised to understand that males and females have different gender roles and responsibilities which are assigned in the family home. He describes this experience as being structured with each individual in his household being given "duties" to adhere to. These duties are strictly traditional in nature as girls would be expected to cook and clean, while boys are expected to play outside and lock the gate at night. Themba recalls being taught that each gender has a strictly distinctive gendered experience, which led to him to accept his gender role experience as a way of life without any questioning. He states that his lack of

questioning has been due to his fear of being rejected for not adhering to the set and structured way of life presented to him within his microsystem environment, as well as due to his knowledge of the social norms of gender roles which are often emphasised in his macrosystem which he knows result in ramifications when questioned. Themba's account echoes the issues of social obligations and social acceptability and the significant role they play in influencing gender role development within the microsystem.

"Ok then I went to creche and even there you were taught that ok stop playing rough like a boy, when you are wearing a skirt you need to sit properly and walk like a lady don't just walk nje ngephara [like a gangster]."(Nomusa)

Nomusa reinforces Themba's accounts of gender socialisation, and reports on her experiences of this process as occurring as early as her preschool years. She states that she was taught that there are socially appropriate behaviours which are expected from a girl child. She states that her early childhood experience within her schooling environment reinforced her already socialised traditional gender roles which she was socialised into accepting by her family within her microsystem. Nomusa reports that this similarity in traditional gender role socialisation from her schooling and family environment led to non-conflicting interactions in her mesosystem. These non-conflicting mesosystem interactions strengthened her need to accept and adopt the gender roles which were already being emphasised within the conservative heteropatriarchal macrosystem. She states that her family, teachers' and peers' acceptance of the gendered teachings she received in her early years in her microsystem made her want to accept them as a way to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, while fearing discrimination and judgement if she deviated from the traditional gender norms.

Nomusa's accounts of her gendered socialisation aligns with literature that states that social norms influence social acceptability of traditional gender roles, and the acceptability of these norms result in the early socialisation of these norms so that children can adopt them into their personal gender role identities from an early age (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). These norms normalise gendered standards which stipulate how girls and boys should play at an early age, and how girls and boys should dress and behave, which the participants internalise and adopt early in their childhood as a way to feel like they are similar to their socialising agents which makes them feel like they belong in their conservative ecological systems. These norms are embedded in each system within the ecological environment, and as a nested structure, they

significantly influence gender role development within and between the system environments (Härkönen, 2007).

The acceptability of participants' traditional gender roles is therefore linked to their need to feel a sense of belonging within their Sowetan ecological environment by accepting socialised gendered norms, expectations and standards that are deemed socially acceptable within the chrono-, macro-, exo-, meso-, and finally microsystems. Their acceptability results in their development and maintenance of traditional gender roles well into their adult lives, as a way to experience social inclusion and avoid social judgment, isolation and discrimination. Based on Shaka, Nomusa and Themba's accounts, the social acceptability of gender roles is exacerbated by different ecological experiences which have been referenced so far, and are further explored in the following section.

5.3 The Ecological Experiences of Gender Role Development within Soweto

When certain behaviours and beliefs are consistently developed and reinforced in different environments and contexts, the social acceptability of these behaviours and beliefs become more likely. This results in participants acquiring gender identities which are based on the consistently reinforced gender role ideology during their interactions with different environments and role players in their lifetime (Fan & Marini, 2000). These environments and role players are known as 'systems' in Ecological Systems Theory, and these systems give individuals cues on socially appropriate and acceptable behaviours and beliefs based on the individual's sex (Blackstone, 2003). Gendered cues are then developed in the microsystem and are subsequently reinforced in the meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystems. These systems play a significant role in influencing continuous reinforcement of social acceptability of gender role ideology through interactions between the systems (Paquette & Ryan, 2011). Based on these systems, this theme explores the ecological influences of gender role development through the participants' lived gender role experiences within different contexts, as well as exploring the reinforcement of their gendered identities through the systems' interactions.

5.3.1 The Microsystem of Gender Role Development

Participants state that they have been largely influenced by the environment during their gender role development, and this environment pressured them to accept socially imposed gender role

expectations. In the extract below, Shaka describes his environment as "governing" socially acceptable roles based on his gender, which emphasises an ecological experience in his socialisation, acceptance and adoption of gender roles. His interaction with multiple interconnected ecological environments significantly influenced his adherence to and adoption of socially imposed gender roles during his gender role development experience (Shen-Miller et al., 2011).

"We come from the townships and they contribute a lot to the way that we view the whole ideology of gender roles.. Ultimately, because I'm living under the roof of my family, the elders and community, they govern the laws and values that they instil or they abide by and there is not much I can do about it."(Shaka)

Ecological environments include different social agents such as family, friends, peers, schooling, religion, mass media, and overall society, and these agents all play a significant role in exposing individuals to gendered knowledge, shaping their gendered experiences, and reinforcing their drive to adopt gendered social norms in order to be deemed as socially acceptable (Ayalew, 2021). In Ecological Systems Theory, these abovementioned agents are part of the microsystem which refers to the people, groups and institutions that directly influence the participant's growth and development (Berk, 2000). Within this microsystem, participants are initially introduced to the ideas of gender roles during their childhood by their parents according to their sex, and as early as they are born, their parents expressed the gender stereotypical ideas of what the participant should be like as a boy or girl child (Raley & Bianchi, 2006).

In the extract below, Winnie opens up about her gendered experience within the microsystem and states that her family is the first and most significant influence in her exposure to gender roles:

"So I stay with my mom, granny and my family, my aunts, my uncles, and some of my nieces and nephews. So it's actually like a very big family and growing up in a big family, I was exposed to gender roles, you know. I think that's the first place where you notice these things happening." (Winnie)

Winnie gains extensive knowledge of the different gender role experiences from her extended family members who she resides with within her microsystem. She learns how her different family members develop a particular gender role identity based on the roles and behaviours they undertake within the home. This is Winnie's first exposure to the process of gender role socialisation and the exposure from multiple social agents taught her what is expected from different members within her ecological environment and that internalising similar sex roles into her gender role identity can help her become a socially accepted member of her society (Härkönen, 2007).

Based on the participants' responses, the gender role socialisation process that participants undergo within their family home initially reflects a non-traditional and somewhat neutral gendered experience during their early childhood years, however as they mature, a change occurs towards a more traditional gender role socialisation experience around the ages of 6 and 7. In the extract below, Nomusa reflects on how her biological maturation influenced her parents to move from a neutral gender role socialisation towards a more traditional gender role socialisation:

"Ok so growing up, I was quite close with my cousins and they were in my age group. So there was a female and a male and we would all have to bath together and we would play in the bath and then yeah. Then came a time where now we're not bathing together, everybody has their own bath time, and now we were used to bathing together, and then we were like why? I mean we had more fun when we were bathing together so why can't we anymore. And they would say look, you are getting older and males need to bath by themselves and females likewise also need to bath by themselves. And that's when I now understood that ok so we are actually different, there is a male and a female. I was now taught that you need to stop playing rough like a boy, and when you are wearing a skirt you make sure you sit properly. You walk like a lady, you don't just walk nje ngephara (like a gangster). You stay indoors and take care of the house, and you don't go outside…"(Nomusa)

A change in gender role socialisation is evident in how Nomusa was treated and socialised compared to her male counterpart cousin during her their childhood. She reports that this difference in socialisation resulted in her becoming more aware of her sex and gender at an early age, and due to the continued and reinforced socialisation process within her family home, she began taking on the relative roles expected of her based on her sex and gender, because

these were taught to her and were expected of her as she grew older. Due to this gender role change, Nomusa learns at an early age that there is a traditional normative system for female social beings within her family environment, and this normative system requires her to develop and maintain the feminine roles which are taught to her, without any contestation. She describes the teaching process with resentment as she recalls the list of rules and expectations which were imposed on her, which she came to accept as her gender role identity.

Like Nomusa, the other participants resonate with an initially neutral socialisation within the microsystem's family home, which turns towards a more traditionally gendered socialisation experience. The female participants experienced the change in socialisation as an unwelcome shock which left them feeling restricted and bound to burdensome gender roles within the family home, while the male participants welcomed the change as they felt privileged to have less pressured expectations during their childhood. Both the male and female participants state that their parents and family members within their microsystem played a significant role in the internalisation of their traditional gender role socialisation during their childhood, and that this socialisation has been perpetuated over generations as an ecological Sowetan family experience. This traditional gender role socialisation within the family home strongly reflects what is socially acceptable both inside and outside the family home, and the participants are motivated to internalise these early socialised experiences in order to avoid conflictual interactions within their family environment and within their general microsystem (Härkönen, 2007).

In the extract below, Shaka states that previous generations' acceptance and compliance of traditional gender roles within the family home resulted in his subsequent socialisation of these gender roles as a newer generation. He reports that his acceptance of this gendered socialisation was due to his awareness of these teachings being generationally passed down in his family home, which has created an unbreakable chain of norms for gender role identity development in his microsystem. This aligns with Härkönen's (2007) proposal that participants may maintain socially accepted behaviours and beliefs which they observe within their microsystem environment, and different generations may reproduce these socially accepted behaviours and beliefs over a period of time within this same environment through the chronosystem. Shaka has therefore observed the traditional gender role socialisation as being accepted and adopted over different generations in his family through the chronosystem, and he has reproduced this

phenomena in order to maintain the perceived permanency of traditional gender roles within his microsystem environment.

"I would like to put my foot forward and say, I blame largely the old school people you know. The people who raised us you know, I mean my family, my grannies and grandfathers, those people. They strictly complied to all forms of gender roles. So for us, or for me as a black man growing up under the guidance of black grannies and grandfathers who strictly complied to gender roles, chances are I'm going to be more prone to applying these gender roles and internalising them and making them part of my identity and not being cognisant of the fact that times are evolving, you know."(Shaka)

This strict maintenance of traditional gender roles frustrates Shaka in his young adulthood, as he now perceives his previously accepted socialisation process as being inflexible and restricting. This change results in his growing frustration with his family environment and causes a conflict during his continued interactions within this inflexible microsystem environment. Härkönen (2007) states that in the microsystem family environment there should be a bi-directional influence in which the parents have an influence on the participant and the participant has an influence on their parents. However, if the parents' beliefs and behaviours are inflexibly influencing the participant, without much consideration of the participant's changing beliefs and behaviours, it can hinder the participant's future development and may cause resistance or gender role ideology conflict during their interaction with other environments which socialise differing beliefs and behaviours. Shaka's perceived rigidity in his family environment is therefore causing gender role ideology conflict as he feels that his environment is inflexible and does not allow change in gender role norms.

Another fundamental and common environment within the microsystem, which results in conflict as the participant develops their gender identity, is school. Schools play an important role in helping participants develop their gendered beliefs and behaviours through play and other activities assigned to children, as well as preferred subjects which may be requested based on gender-typical lines (Etaugh & Liss, 1992). The social construction of gender identity and gender roles are reinforced within the schooling environment from early childhood as participants attend preschool, to adulthood as adults attend university (Powlishta, 2004). Schools and teachers therefore fulfill an important secondary role by supporting the primary socialisation experienced within the family environment (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

The participants' attended the conservative Christian schools of Soweto which reinforced the traditional gender roles they were taught at home, while also socialising non-traditional gender roles. This combination of socialisation influenced new behaviours and beliefs during their gender role development, but also seemed to make their understanding and experiences of gender roles more complex during adolescence. Shaka reflects on this complexity in the extract below, by stating that although he enjoyed being introduced to non-traditional gender roles as a boy in a school that fought against gender inequality, he felt confused as to why traditional gender roles were still being reinforced on his female counterparts within the intermediate and senior phases of the schooling system.

"So I went to a Catholic high school here in Soweto and in my opinion it's a very inclusive high school you know. It fought against inequality in my own perspective, in such a way that on Fridays, we had cleaning to do. We called them cleaning Fridays. So Mondays to Thursdays, the boys were sweeping the classrooms. So it was the guys who were supposed to sweep the classrooms, and Monday to Thursday the females don't do anything. And then on Fridays the females, they would clean and mop and polish, only on Fridays. It seemed fair, because if you factor in the amount of time that the guys spend sweeping every day and then you take some of that time, you put it into mopping and take some the time to polishing. You find that at the end, it's more or less the same amount of time they would have used, the same amount of time the females use on Fridays to do all those three things, because usually Friday the school comes out earlier than from Monday to Thursday. So they had more time to clean. But as I am saying this, I think I have identified gender roles, my question is why is it that it was the guys who had to sweep but didn't have to mop and polish the floor you know? Is it not an inherent ideology that females are cleaner or it's the females that must have the domestic duties?"(Shaka)

Shaka's confusion reiterates Härkönen's (2007) statement that differing beliefs and behaviours in the microsystem environments can cause gender role ideology conflict. The first conflict Shaka opens up about is in reference to his socialisation to adopt more non-traditional gender roles at school while his family home environment still expected him to continue adhering to traditional gender roles. The second conflict Shaka highlights is the reinforcement of traditional gender roles of females in the schooling environment, which he considers as being contradictory as his school was aimed towards a fight against inequality. His conflicts suggest

that he perceives the gender role socialisation process which occurs at schools as being contradictory and further perpetuating harmful stereotypes about femalehood.

Peer relationships also play a significant role in the gender role development of participants from early childhood to adulthood in the microsystem. In the extract below, Shaka opens up about early childhood experiences with his peers which included unspoken gender roles playing out in the playground, he also expresses a confusion as to where they could have learned these gender roles at such a young age. The children created a seemingly pseudo-microsystem during their play based on their modelled socialisation from their different microsystem and macrosystem environments. A picture is portrayed in this play which suggests that his friends experienced similar traditional gender role socialisations in their personal microsystems, and they may have been socialised to develop similar gendered desires based on the expectations emphasised in the macrosystem (Härkönen, 2007).

"I remember we used to play with other kids. I think we were like seven, eight years old you know, we used to play with other kids and, and we used to play like umadlalisa. So umadlalisa is basically like umama nobaba, meaning mother and father you know. So it's basically we are kids playing adults. So my friends, same age as me, would be making as if he is my father and I'd be his child. And then a female usually used to be either a teacher, a nurse or a mother you know. As kids, we were still kids, but these are things that you don't see like a male being a stay-at-home dad, or saying no, I'm going to stay at home to take care of my babies or you know, and most males would say no, I want to be a policeman you know. There wouldn't be any females who would say, I want to be a policeman you know? And you're looking back, it's crazy because no one, I mean I don't remember anyone ever teaching us like it's only females who must be nurses. So I'm torn because I don't understand where those gender roles came from."(Shaka)

The extract below from Winnie reflects on how her peers' family background played a role in influencing their gender role development during their adolescent years. During their maturation, her female peers appeared to separate their traditional family and schooling socialisation from their peer environment, while her male peers maintained and even reinforced their traditional family and schooling socialisation within their peer environments. Priess and colleagues (2009) propose that the reason for this experience is that gender role pressures intensify during adolescence with the onset of puberty in order for adolescents to better adapt

to adult roles. This social pressure therefore influenced Winnie and her peers during their adolescence to be more concerned with their interpersonal relationships with others which led them to be more accommodating and compliant with their gendered socialisation. In line with this compliance and accommodation, Winnie and her female peers tended to be less traditional in their gender role attitudes when around their peers, while her male peers increased in traditionality of gender role attitudes when around their peers (Priess et al., 2009).

"I think with my female peers, everything goes, you can try whatever you want to try and say whatever you feel like saying in your opinions and stuff right. But with some of my male friends, you can see that they grew up from very traditional, like traditional families you know. Uhm when you do certain things, they will somehow sometimes say that uhm 'lento ayivumelwanga' meaning like this is not allowed… Yeah, so you're just like, yes we are peers, but that's where you see that you know, where we grew up and in our cultures they kind of mould the people that we are in our peer groups."(Winnie)

Social media users are considered as exercising social participation through the use of online tools in which they can contribute, collaborate and share information in the virtual microsystem (Rondán-Cataluña, Sanz-Altamira & Peral-Peral, 2017). The social participation and social connections emulate a microsystem which the participants interact with, in a virtual, globalised and media-dominated world. The participants perceive these platforms as spaces where they can receive trusted information and get recommendations and advice from an online ecological environment (Rondán-Cataluña et al., 2017). Khwezi reports experiencing social media as a platform that portrays traditional roles which are ascribed to by certain users, as well as a growing number of users who are ascribing to non-traditional gender roles. This growing engagement with non-traditional roles amongst the youth seems to be giving Khwezi and other participants hope, encouragement and freedom to adopt these roles in their personal lives. In the extract below, Khwezi opens up about the influence social media has had on her gender role development. She reports that there are advantages and disadvantages in the influence social media has on her as she continues to develop her own ideas of what it means to be a female in life. She also reflects on the hope social media has given her to take on any roles and behaviours she wants despite her sex and gender.

"I mostly developed my gender roles through social media. In as much as social media can have it's negatives, but it also has the upside to it, because through social media. I, I learned

that me being a woman does not stop me from being anything. Me being a woman does not stop me from being a bus driver or being a taxi driver. Me being a woman literally means that I can do anything that a male can, you understand? So I could say that social media built that in me… And I am really grateful because if it wasn't for social media I don't know, I would have been lost. It would have been different because it still feels like a woman needs to clean, a woman needs to cook, and that is considered as my job you know. But now you get into social media and you see that girls are doing good, girls are buying cars, girls are graduating, girls are opening businesses. So now that's not something for males only, I can also do that."(Khwezi)

The neighbourhood of Soweto, as a microsystem, also plays a role in influencing gender role development. Within this microsystem, gender-typed activities exist which are assigned to males and females in public spaces (Sadoughianzadeh, 2013). In the extract below, Khwezi reflects on the differences in the gender roles she engages with in her social space, and she states that her public engagement with gender roles has been mostly traditional within the Sowetan environment. She states that her gender role experiences differ in public and private spaces, with her public environment expecting her to ascribe to traditional gender roles while her private environment, outside of the family home, allows her to ascribe to more non-traditional gender roles. According to Chandler & Munday (2011) public life is governed by shared norms, beliefs and values within the ecological environment, while private life is based on individuals' intimate, personal identities and free will. This aligns with Khwezi's actions of adhering to traditional gender roles in the public sphere in order to be perceived as a socially acceptable member of society who conforms to the gendered standards set by society. Her adherence to non-traditional gender roles in her private spaces on the other hand, aligns with her personally developed authentic identity outside of society's standards and expectations, as well as her need for freedom from enforced gender roles.

"I'd say my gender roles are not the same uhm cause with the environment that I'm in, in Soweto, so there's different expectations from the community, the people around, in terms of my gender roles. So they are not the same because the public gender roles that are expected of me are mostly traditional and with my private experiences it's more of non-traditional and yea it's just not the same." (Khwezi)

Based on these differences in gender role ascriptions in the public and private spheres, we can look to Bronfenbrenner's proposed deficit model within the Ecological Systems Theory which highlights the lack of support participants receive from the public sphere in their personal development, and this lack of support is especially experienced by those coming from struggling families (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). In this deficit model, the public sphere is considered as creating problems for the participants during their development as it does not value a culture of independent growth and development (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). This degree of failure from the public sphere in the microsystem results in conflicting and problematic interactions which the participants experience within the microsystem. This failure results in the participants' reinforced helplessness as they are consistently exposed to traditional gender roles within their family, schooling, community and social media spaces, while feeling a growing need to develop more non-traditional gender roles within these very same spaces. The participants do not receive much support from the people present in their microsystem environments within contemporary Soweto, which results in conflicts arising in the different ecological systems the participants interact with.

5.3.2 Arising Conflicts within the Meso-, Macro- and Chronosystems

The mesosystem refers to the relationships and interactions between the microsystems within the participant's life. The mesosystem focuses on the environments within the microsystem, for example, it explores the interactions between the family home and school, school and church, peers and social media etc., and how these interactions influence the partcipants' development (Härkönen, 2007). If the socialisation within these microsystem environments differ or oppose each other, the participants become conflicted as to how they should continue developing their behaviours and beliefs. They become pressured to adhere to differing experiences, expectations and standards in different environments which can greatly impact their gender role identity development (Härkönen, 2007). There is therefore a conflict which the participants have experienced in authentically developing and maintaining a gender role identity due to conflicting gendered socialisations within their microsystem.

"We come from the townships and they contribute a lot to the way that we view the whole ideology of gender roles. So in them contributing so much in the way that we perceive gender roles means that even when we have a different type of or set of ideals we got from

somewhere else like university, then they still want us to keep those original ideas instilled into us."(Shaka)

This conflict is highlighted by Shaka in the extract above, as he reflects on the different gendered beliefs his family, school and neighbourhood environments socialised him with, which have left him confused and consciously aware of which gender roles and ideologies he engages with which are considered as socially appropriate in a particular ecological context. His conscious awareness of and conscious engagement with his gender role identity helps him fulfil his need to feel a sense of belonging in the different microsystem environments he interacts with, as well as prevents him from experiencing his overwhelming fear of social judgement if he does not adequately adhere to the socialised gender roles of a particular environment. His confusion, fear and conscious awareness of his environments reflect the significant role these environments have in Shaka's maintenance of traditional gender roles in his conservative heteropatriarchal ecological environment, despite his preference for non-traditional gender roles.

Similar conflicting experiences also arise in the macrosystem, and this system refers to the general culture that influences the participants as they develop during their childhood. The macrosystem is considered as the blueprint for a particular culture and the broader social context (Härkönen, 2007). Culture is a significant influence on human behaviour which shapes the attitudes and perceptions about what is happening in the world. Cultural dimensions reflect the assigned and assumed roles in an ecological environment which are related to gender and sexual difference (Neculaesei, 2015). In their cultural associations, the participants associate with isiZulu, xiTsonga, Sesotho, and tshiVenda cultures, which they state create a multi-cultural foundation for a general contemporary Sowetan culture, alongside other traditional South African cultures. The participants state that a common traditional experience, which is found in the multi-cultural macrosystem of Soweto, is socialised within the family home, and then reinforced in various social spaces such as school and other microsystem environments (Neculaesei, 2015).

In the extracts below, Nomusa and Themba describe their experiences with gender roles within the Sowetan macrosystem, which was influenced by their culture:

"You know with us Venda people, we have a home in the city and a home in the villages. And as you go to the villages, girls are expected to wake up, collect water from the river, collect wood if there is no electricity, cook, be back by this time to make sure that you are cooking, yeah it is quite traditional. In the city it is also the same, it's just that there is a lot less energy when you have to do some of these things. So, for example, you don't have to go carry firewood, you don't have to go fetch water from the stream or river, because such things are readily available, but you are still expected to come back at a certain time and cook if it's your turn to cook. You are still expected to wake up early and make sure that the house is in order. You are still expected to make sure that the visitor is comfortable, that they have refreshments and so forth as the girl."(Nomusa)

Nomusa describes the tshiVenda culture as being quite traditional and having certain expectations for females. She reports that the traditional values from the villages provide a framework for the Sowetan macrosystem and influence this macrosystem into developing traditional Venda gender role socialisation. Nomusa's awareness of her macrosystem's gender role norms and expectations allowed her to cope socially and avoid cultural judgement. Nomusa however expresses a frustration in having to be constantly aware of her cultural implications on her gender role development, as it does not allow her to authentically engage with traditional gender roles and causes a cultural conflict when she engages in non-traditional roles within her conservative Sowetan macrosystem. A common theme in Nomusa and the other participants' reflections on their experiences with their macrosystems, exposes a conflict between the traditional cultural expectations of gender roles imposed by the macrosystem and the contemporary non-traditional gender role experiences the participants want to adopt for themselves within their microsystems.

The final system within the ecological environment is the chronosystem, and just as the other systems have experienced conflict, Shaka reflects below on how the chronosystem has also experienced arising conflicts in the ecological environment of Soweto:

"There are less, there are way less stories or parables or Bible verses that guide us as black people into gender roles, than there are cultural beliefs that push us to comply with these gender roles over the years, for a long time. So culture is, it's the foundation. It's really the basis of gender roles within the black community and it is passed down as such… In this

context, there's a huge, huge conflict now between my culture and the new modern way of doing things."(Shaka)

Shaka's statement aligns with ecological literature's definition of the term chronosystem, by stating that "*there are cultural beliefs that push us to comply with these gender roles over the years, for a long time"*. Bronfenbrenner (1992) describes the chronosystem as including cultural shifts which are perpetuated from generation to generation, and occur over a short or long period of time, which influences participants' gender role development. Although traditional culture remains unchanged in the gendered socialisation of children over multiple generations in Soweto, the changes in time accompanied by globalisation and modernisation creates conflict in gender role socialisation over time, as differing forms of socialisation emerge (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). With changes in time and cultural shifts, new roles, rules, beliefs and values develop which are significantly influencing the participants' gender role identity development (Härkönen, 2007).

There is a clear pattern of conflict in these ecological systems which is impacting the growth and gender role development of the participants. It is therefore important that the ecological layers of family, school, peers, neighbourhood, tradition, culture, and time all play a significantly positive role on individuals' development by engaging in bi-directional influence with each other based on this ecological systems gender framework. This bi-directional influence can include an awareness of and mutual understanding and acceptance of the different systems and environments within the ecological system (Härkönen, 2007). However, if these conflicts continue to occur, these identified implications will continue to arise during the participants' gender role experiences within the ecological context of Soweto.

5.4 A Very Gendered Soweto: Past and Present Gender Role Experiences

This theme explores the participants' lived experiences of gender roles following a breakdown of their socialised gender role acceptance as well as the ecological influences of their gender role eperiences in the previous sections. The theme delves into the participants' personal traditional and non-traditional gender role development, their family's generational gendered experiences, as well as the implications of adopting these gender roles in their lives.

5.4.1 The Traditional Gender Role Experience of Soweto

Traditional gender roles are described in the previous sections by participants as a strict and socially-enforced social construct which they feel obligated to adhere to, as these roles are widely accepted within the ecological environment of Soweto. This obligation to adhere to traditional gender roles has been emphasised by all of the participants, and it has influenced each of them to adopt traditional, conservative, heteropatriarchal gender roles during their socialisation process. This socialisation process in a traditional heteropartriarchal ecological environment taught them that males are expected to strictly ascribe to masculine roles and females are expected to ascribe to feminine roles (Ngidi, 2022).

Traditional heteropatriarchal township male gender role expectations include independence, leadership, heading the household, successfully providing for and protecting the home, limited engagement in homemaking and child-rearing activities, limited emotional expression except for expression of anger and frustration, dominance, being respected and powerful, engaging in substance use and other risk taking behaviours, being sexually knowledgeable, and being street smart (Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014). Traditional heteropatriarchal township female gender role expectations include being nurturing, childbearing and a homemaker, community building, being submissive to and dependent on males, being kind and friendly, being emotionally expressive, being unselfish, supportive and giving, being homebound due to homemaking expectations and lack of safety, not engaging in substance use and other risk taking behaviours, being respectful to males, and being chaste and modest (Mofokeng, 2021).

In consideration of these stereotypical traditional gender roles within the ecological context of Soweto, Nomusa provides a description of her traditional female gender role experience in the extract below, which aligns with these stereotypical expectations for females.

"To me, my traditional gender roles as a woman is being expected to clean, cook, wash the dishes, make sure everyone is well taken care of and basically put everyone's needs before my own…" (Nomusa)

Nomusa describes her traditional female gender role as a stressful lived experience, especially within the microsystem, as this system expects a level of nurturance and care from her which

results in her subsequent self-neglect. Her depiction of traditional femalehood initially resonates with the macrosystem's age old values of *Ubuntu* [meaning humanity towards others] within the African diaspora, however as she continues, her listing tone reflects anger and disappointment in her ecological environment's expectations of her as a woman to place herself before others in ways that do not benefit her wellbeing. Nomusa's traditional gendered experience is synonymous with the ethics of care, which places her as a female in the homemaker, nurturer and society builder role within the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems (Chisale, 2018). However, as a custodian of care within the ecological environment, Nomusa and other female participants are placed as the only person who is exclusively capable of caregiving, and this exclusively perceived feminine trait becomes burdensome for them as females, as they are socially expected to take on this overwhelming role of care as a social norm over time within the chronosystem.

The feminine traditional gender roles which place the female participants in a custodian of care role from an early age, negatively impacts them and has significant consequences for them. These negative implications include a negatively shaped self-perception, a negative attitude in their relationships with others, and limited participation with their social environment (Lips, 2016). As a result of these implications, Nomusa and the other female participants learn to become compliant with their social expectations and do not take any risks due to fear of social judgement and rejection. They then become withdrawn due to the pressures they experience from the gendered expectations within their ecological environment (Reay, 2001).

In the extract below, Khwezi perceives femalehood as a "sin" which she does not want future generations to experience, reflecting her evident resentment and hatred towards the expectations placed on her to adhere to traditional gender roles in her ecological environment. She reflects on hers and other females' compliance in adhering to these social expectations for fear of judgement from their parents within her microsystem. She states that her compliance to these roles have strongly prohibited her from engaging in particular things as she interacts with the different systems in her ecological environment due to her microsystem's socialised traditional gender role expectations.

"I do not want other females in the future to feel what I felt, I don't want them to feel like being a female is a sin or being a female is 'I can't do certain things because I'm a female' you know... I want other females to feel like they can do anything, anytime and anywhere,

without having to feel like 'Oh I'm a female I'm not supposed to do this'…Yeah I don't want anyone to feel the way that I felt you know, yeah, because it makes you hate being female because at some point like I wish I was a boy, you know and be able to do anything I want at any time without having to be scared of what my parents will say or what."(Khwezi)

In the extract below, Themba provides a much less pressured heteropatriarchal male gender role experience in comparison to the heteropatriarchal female gender role experience:

"I mean it [traditional gender roles] became a norm in Soweto you know. It has become a normal thing, that okay you're supposed to do this as a boy and they are supposed to do that as girls. And often they [the girls] would complain at times like 'why aren't the boys doing that and why are we doing it?'. Obviously it was a norm. Also as a boy child if you are doing nothing you're happy because you're just doing nothing but just watching the girls work. So it was a norm, it was normal. It was actually fun because you are watching people working at that age. Obviously it makes sense at that age, and it is normal." (Themba)

Themba states that traditional gender roles are the norm within the Sowetan ecological environment. He reports that these gender roles are especially evident in the microsystem's family home as the home strictly complies with the social norms that state what "you're supposed to do as a boy" and what "they are supposed to do as girls". Themba appears unapologetic about his male privilege as he reports not being expected to do much as a male child in the home, and that it was "fun" for him to watch his female counterparts do all the housework. He states that although these norms appeared to be unfair to his female peers when he was growing up, he did not contest these norms, as these norms and standards are widely accepted as "normal" throughout the larger Sowetan ecological environment.

"That is actually very simple, you are automatically in alpha positions as a male. So opportunities are preferred to be given to a man. So like privacy, if there is an outside room in the home, preference is given to the man. If there is a car in the yard, and I am a male, it will be given to me you know. Like for instance, if you're familiar with the thing of black people properly, so if you're a male child, you're the heir in the home, you are automatically going to be the head of the household. So my sisters and whatnot, they know kukhala esami isicathulo la, meaning that you either do as I say or you're out."(Sizwe)

In the above extract, Sizwe reflects on male privilege and states that it is due to a gendered social hierarchy within the different systems of the ecological environment which places the male as an "alpha" and subsequently places females in subordinate positions in the home. He states that this gendered placement is socialised and maintained within the microsystem, particularly in the black family home. This gendered positioning is due to the social legitimisation of gender hierarchy ideologies in the heteropatriarchal exosystem environment which results in rules and regulations that influence the socialisation of boys to adopt traditional masculine ideals and behaviours in order to achieve higher social status and social power, as well as to protect traditional masculinity (Valsecchi et al., 2023). Sizwe states that male privilege has become a goal and way of life for boys and men in the ecological context of Soweto, and that the social norms and expectations of what it means to be a man in Soweto only exacerbates this privilege.

Although the above extracts portray the traditional heteropatriarchal male gender role experience as having significant privilege in the traditionally gendered ecological environment of Soweto, Sizwe also raises some masculine gender role expectations in the context of Soweto, which have negative implications on males as they try to prove their manhood:

"In Soweto indoda ayikhali [a man does not cry]. A man doesn't bow to another man…If you are a different type of boy in comparison to your peers, you're not man enough. If you like dancing, what are you doing because that's woman's things uyanhlanya? [are you crazy?]. That doesn't make sense, we as men are literally supposed to play dice or play soccer you know, like anything that is trying to exert your manliness by appearing to be superior amongst your peers you know. When you fight or when someone beats you as a man or boy, you can't apologise or retreat from the fight, you need to prove your worth you know. So it's like a jungle you know, you constantly try to prove yourself that you're better than that person you know. So I mean like to be quite honest there is some advantages and disadvantages to it because like you eventually learn to realise that in life it's either you're strong or you're not strong, and to be strong is a very necessary advantage in this life we live in. So there are a number of toxic traits that you pick up as growing up as a boy from Soweto. But I am not ashamed of growing up in Soweto, because of it, had it not been for that, I would not be the man that I am today. Because in my own opinion there are certain things that I discovered them to be wrong and some that have made me the man that I am today."(Sizwe)

Sizwe opens up about difficult and "toxic" experiences of boyhood and manhood which include proving male superiority, lacking emotionality, lacking feminine traits, engaging in violence and proving physical strength which are socialised and reinforced in the micro- and macrosystems. Sizwe's experience aligns with the term "toxic masculinity" which has been attributed to traits like misogyny, homophobia and violence (Harrington, 2020). He states that males within the ecological Sowetan context, including himself, have felt a need to prove themselves through "toxic" traits in order to be perceived as "*indoda*" (a man). He portrays these experiences as being both advantageous and disadvantageous to him as a male child, and states that lived experiences would determine if an individual benefits or suffers from their male experiences. He states that the impact of gender role experiences in a male child's life is based on the roles, behaviours and beliefs the individual consistently develops over time. Sizwe also emphasises a pride in his male experience in the ecological context of Soweto and he states that this context influenced his personal growth and view of manhood. He is protective of his experiences of boyhood and manhood in his reflection of the male experience in Soweto, and he views the context of Soweto as playing a significant role in his current gender role identity as well as the overall identity of who he is today.

Significant differences are reflected by the male and female participants in their gender role experiences in the ecological context of Soweto, and these differences are considered to date back multiple generations. This generational gendered experience has reinforced the traditional gender role experiences of newer generations over the years within this social context, resulting in females being consistently positioned as burdened custodians of care and males being given privilege of care in the home and burdened as providers of the home.

5.4.2 A Generationally Influenced Gendered Experience

A common thread emerged in participants' reflections of their gender role experiences, indicating that the norms, beliefs and standards were passed down generationally, with older generations teaching younger generations about gendered social knowledge and behaviour through the chronosystem. This intergenerational transmission of social information between the different ecological systems is especially prevalent in collectivistic and generationally blended ecological environments such as Soweto. The transmission of social information in these collectivistic environments is used as a way to shape the participants' sense of identity

and belonging within their microsystem, based on the macrosystem's beliefs and expectations (Farré & Vella, 2007). This is consistent with the participants' reports of feeling that their gender role socialisation has been passed down generationally and has played a significant role in their personal gender role identity. It is also consistent with participants' reports that intergenerational transmission of gendered social information during their interactions with the different ecological systems has also reinforced their fears of social judgement, discrimination and social exclusion if they deviate from what they were taught growing up.

This teaching of the macrosystem's traditional gender role social knowledge and behaviour can be traced as far back as the beginning of the colonisation of the collectivistic community of South Africa, where gender role stereotypes were developed and passed down over generations. These gendered stereotypes were carried over through the years through the chronosystem, using laws and socialisation from the exo- and macrosystems, resulting in the significant social acceptance of traditional gender roles and participants' sense of identity being reinforced in these traditional gender ideologies within the microsystem (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Participants' reflections of their parents and grandparents' adoption of generational gender role socialisations indicate how traditional gender role ideology has been carried through the chronosystem and how the chronosystem influenced gender role identity development and gender role experiences over a certain period of time. Based on the participants' accounts, gendered identities and gendered roles have been reinforced over generations, and Basow (2014) suggests that this results in the younger generations having similar gendered experiences to the older generations over the years within an ecological environment. The development and maintenance of heteropatriarchal traditional gender roles is evident in the ecological context of Soweto, as participants share their personal experiences of gender roles, their parents and grandparents' gendered experiences during colonisation and the apartheid regime, as well as their siblings' post-apartheid gendered experiences.

Nomusa, Sizwe, Khwezi and Shaka report on the patriarchal colonial system which imposed gendered norms that conditioned their native South African grandmothers and great grandmothers to adopt a caregiver and homemaker role within their rural homes, while their husbands, brothers and sons were given titles as heads of households and were encouraged to provide for the home by going away to work in the nearest towns. The participants' reports suggest that there was a development and subsequent maintenance of traditional gender roles within this chronosystem, at the start of the colonial period, which was previously not the way

of life in a different chronosystem. These accounts align with historical accounts of pre-colonial Africa being matriarchal and having neutral roles for males and females, and historical accounts of the colonial system being patriarchal and enforcing a gendered experience which imposed social expectations of what is socially appropriate for males and females which was then adopted within the native South African ecological environment (Medie, 2019; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

"Uhm when it comes to my grandparents right? Uhm with both my maternal and paternal grandparents, both my grandmothers were not educated during apartheid, instead they were both housewives and they were expected to be matriarchs of the family. They were expected to cook, to clean, to make sure that the laundry is done, the kids are taken care of, their husband is happy, all while the husband had to go and work all day… So my maternal grandmother, being that legal wife, if I were to put it, legal traditionally, in the traditional sense of traditional life, she was the first wife. So she was expected to be understanding because who is she to question my grandfather? So there is sort of like a willingness to the way they were expected to be, they were not expected to question a lot, they were not expected to act smart. My grandfathers, both of them, they stated how things are going to be."(Nomusa)

In the extracts above, Nomusa describes her grandmothers' gender role experiences as being traditional in nature as they were both expected to be homemakers and nurturers. A contradiction does however arise after Nomusa describes her maternal and paternal grandmothers as "matriarchs" of the family home. Her initial use of the word matriarch suggests that her grandmothers occupied the precolonial position of the woman as a powerful leader of the African household, however as she continues, she conflates this initial description by describing her maternal grandmother as being in a subordinate role to her husband and having no power and authority in the home. Sanday (1998) suggests that cultural evolution influenced a conflation of the term "matriarch" which now describes the traditional role of a woman in the household as a mother, nurturer and homemaker in contemporary society, and has moved away from the 19th century description of the woman as the head of the household who holds social power over men. Nomusa's conflation may therefore be due to this cultural evolution, and she is therefore describing her grandmother with the former description of a matriarch.

Nomusa describes her maternal grandfather as being in an empowered and privileged role as a polygamist, who had a choice for women and had a voice in the family, while her maternal grandmother is described as being expected to not have much of a say in the family home and being expected to suppress her intellect as a way of adhering to traditional social expectations of her. She reflects on the patriarchal and powerful positioning of the male through her grandfather who has more freedom, say, and power within the microsystem, and the subordinate and powerless positioning of the female through her grandmother who "*was expected to be understanding because who is she to question my grandfather*". Nomusa critically states that the enforced expectation placed on her grandmothers to accept traditional gender roles resulted in their degraded self-perception, a reduced ability to stand up for themselves, and lack of happiness, while the enforced gendered norms placed on her grandfathers resulted in them developing a sense of power, feeling respected and feared, and having freedom and choice, particularly in the microsystem. Nomusa's critique of her grandmother's forced compliance reflects her resentment towards generationally imposed gender role compliance which she was similarly socialised to adopt and maintain decades later within the chronosystem.

"My grandmother was literally homebound and stopped attending school in grade seven. Before she met my granddad she was like taking care of her siblings and her brothers' children do you understand. So male kids were given preference in jobs and you could go be a farmer or something so that you could get money for the family. Male kids were sent to schools to go learn how to work with their hands and stuff like that, whereas the female kids didn't get an education because there was that perception that they don't need an education to be cleaners. As soon as girls of were of age, they were sent off to go clean madam's house." (Sizwe)

In the above extract, Sizwe resonates with Nomusa's accounts about a gendered colonial experience, by stating that his grandparents' experiences were also gendered. Sizwe states that a gendered social hierarchy existed in his grandparents' ecological environment, which resulted in the social acceptance of male children being given "preference" by receiving an education and being encouraged to find a job to provide for the family within the microsystem, while female children were perceived as being subordinate to the male child and were encouraged to take on domesticated tasks and stay at home. Sizwe's grandparents' early gendered experiences align with literature on adultification. According to Jurkovic (1997) children are given roles,

which resemble that of their parental figures' roles, to ensure that the executive needs of the family home are met. Sizwe's grandparents were therefore made to take on child-rearing, home provision, and other functions to support the struggling family system. His grandparents' and other children's adultification, as part of the gender role socialisation process within this particular ecological environment, has been transmitted across generations through the chronosystem and influenced the contemporary normalisation of strictly imposed gender roles placed on children in the family home (Chase, 1999). Systematic racism within apartheid Soweto's ecological environment exacerbated the adultification of black children like Sizwe's grandparents into social, emotional and physical adult roles which negatively impacted their development and was harmful to their sense of innocence and self-identity (Koch & Kozhumam, 2022).

"So for my mom and her sisters, she told me they had to take on the responsibility of being a parent to their younger siblings at a very young age you know, because the parents were, always had to work and there was no time for them to actually do things for their kids in the house. So my mom and her sisters had to take on a parental role for their younger siblings. So you know, there's not enough time to learn about yourself, and to know about yourself and what you want. Your needs are not even considered at that time because you're now a parent. She always told me that they even had to make sure that their brothers or sisters are vaccinated, which is something that is done by a parent. But now, because they had to work, they had to, it was it was tough. So they were expected to be women at a very young age and with everything that was going on, I feel like, they grew up knowing that, or believing that as a woman, 'I need to take care of the household in the sense that I need to take care of the kids, I need to clean', because that's how they grew up. With my uncles there was always an expectation for them to protect. At that young age, you know you have to protect the household. My mom would tell me that her younger brothers would have to go to the extent of gambling just so that they can be able to buy bread and they would say 'because I am a boy, and as much as I am young, I'm a boy. I need to hustle for that money, get bread, so everyone can go to bed full'. And my other uncle went to an extent of going out of the country and joining the army to protect and provide. So those are the roles that were expected of them as males. What they did at a very young age, I feel it took a lot out of them, and it took potential away from them because they were black and they were at a disadvantage you know. It was tough, it was tough [sighs]." (Khwezi)

Khwezi opens up about a lack of change in traditional gender roles from her grandparents' experiences to her mother's experiences. She states that her mother's experiences of gender roles were similar to her grandparents' experiences, decades later, under a more formalised oppressive apartheid system. Khwezi reports that the restrictive apartheid system limited her mother's gender role experiences to remain racialised, traditional and gender-typed. Her mother's gender role experiences resemble the earlier themes of adultification and gender-typification in Sizwe's reflections, which seem to strongly disadvantage and negatively impact the black child during these times of oppression and strict traditional gender role adherence. She states that her mother's adultified role at such a young age negatively impacted her self-care and personal growth abilities as a child, as she always placed homemaking and nurturing of others first, and she put her schooling last and did not further her education. She also states that her uncles' adultified roles negatively impacted them as they were expected to seek ways to provide for the family early in life which took time away from school and other development which would have provided them with potential for a better life. Khwezi sighs as she reflects on these difficult experiences in the extract above, and seems to empathise with how difficult these experiences were for her mother and her siblings.

Based on the participants' reflections, little to no change is evident in the way gender roles were socialised from the Silent Generation to the Millennial Generation, suggesting a prolonged period of a phenomena within the chronosystem. There was growing resentment for these roles developed over the years within the ecological environment of Soweto. Despite this growing resentment, the collectivistic environment developed a culture of silent suffering, as generation after generation silently experienced difficulties in their traditionally lived gendered experiences. According to Rajkumar (2023), this collectivistic environment developed a culture of silence in response to their adopted harmful gender role norms. This culture of silence is influenced by the environment's members being fearful of social discrimination and rejection if they were to speak out against the established gender role norms, which are widely accepted within the different systems in the ecological environment. This culture of silent suffering became prevalent in Soweto due to the systems' efforts to maintain their developed collective heteropatriarchal traditional gender role identity.

As South Africa experienced democracy and broke free from the oppressive shackles of the apartheid regime, a born free Generation Z continued to experience the largely heteropatriarchal traditional socialisation of girls and boys within the ecological environment

of Soweto (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). However, some changes are reported by the participants in their personal lived experiences, which they have attributed to globalisation, modernisation and "*changing times*" within the chronosystem. The female participants state that they have been furthering their education and finding jobs to help provide for their financially struggling family homes and male participants are becoming more open to engaging with more feminised roles in the household to assist their female counterparts. These changes are quite different from previous generations' gender role experiences.

In the extract below, Shaka reflects on his personal gender role experiences as a Generation Z. He highlights the gender-typification he witnessed in his own gender role experience compared to his female cousin's, and how this impacted both of their lives. Shaka reflects on the privilege he received as a male child due to traditional gender roles, while his female cousin was disadvantaged as she was expected to take on extensive domestic chores. He also opens up about his own recent open engagement with perceived feminine roles in his microsystem due to feelings of guilt and shame for not contesting the traditional gender roles which negatively impacted his female cousin during their childhood. Research indicates that a growing number of males are reporting experiencing guilt in the privilege afforded to them through heteropatriarchal social standards due to their knowledge of how this privilege has contributed to gender inequality (Schmitt et al., 2012). Although studies indicate that females experience significantly higher levels of adaptive guilt than males, Shaka and the other male participants reflected experiences of adaptive guilt which led to self-reflection, empathy and changes in their gender role perspective and actions to relieve the burden which their female counterparts experienced in the traditional microsystem (Eisenberg & Triana, 2005; Benetti-McQuiod & Bursik, 2005).

"So like I didn't clean the house growing up, I never cleaned the house, it was only my female cousin. The dishes ahh sometimes I would only do them sometimes you know. And also, it would be a thing of now it's my choice, like now I want to actually do the dishes because sometimes she's cooking. So she had that added strain yokuthi [that] she has house chores more than me, because after school I just wash my socks then I go to soccer training you know. I come back and we do homework. Yena [she] after school she washes her socks and igym dress [school tunic], and then she has to start preparing to cook you know. And

then only after that, then she can join me for homework…But now I don't mind doing the dishes all the time or even cooking you know, as long as I am helping…"(Shaka)

Based on the participants' reflections of theirs, their parents and grandparents' gendered experiences, gender role experiences have been largely traditional, from Soweto's colonisation era to present day post-apartheid Soweto. Traditional gender roles continue to be strongly reinforced after five generations within the contemporary ecological Sowetan environment. Participants state that these traditional gender roles which have been reinforced through the chrono-, macro- and micro-systems now make up a significant part of their gendered identity. Despite traditional gender roles making up a great part of their identity, participants state that they also want to incorporate and adopt non-traditional gender roles as part of their gender role identities in a modernised external ecological environment.

5.4.3 A Gender Role Resistance

The move towards incorporating non-traditional gender roles is often met with resistance and hostility in a heteropatriarchal traditional ecological environment. Despite this resistance and hostility however, a growing number of youth want to move towards adopting more flexible gender role experiences within their contemporary chronosystem. Sizwe describes traditional gender roles as "*putting labels on things created to try and exclude or include a particular gender in this day and age"* and Shaka states "*Why are they so important? What happens if you do not conform to them? Are you going to get arrested? Are we going to die? Like why, you know?"*. Shaka feels defeated by these traditional gender roles in his rhetorical questioning, while Sizwe angrily describes the exclusionary nature of these roles which seem to not align with the modern chronosystem. Alongside Sizwe and Shaka, the other participants also reflect their feelings of frustration and anger towards these enforced traditional gender roles. The participants state that their feelings are due to the roles being exclusionary and difficult to maintain in a changing world, and their yearning to openly adopt non-traditional gender roles without judgement.

With this resistance and hostility, one may argue that in light of globalisation and modernisation, as well as exposure to different ecological systems, the traditionally gendered aspect of gender roles may feel restricting and outdated for these young adults in their contemporary ecological context. There is a yearning for the "gender" aspect to be removed

from the term "roles" in the participants' responses, as there would be more freedom for people to engage with these roles.

"*It [gender roles] strips away your own freedom, like freedom of action, your freedom of speech like, you know. You can't handle yourself a certain way as a man because people do not expect that from you, because that is not your role, you know, based on your gender… But then why is that, why is that the term gender is still in there like 'non-traditional gender roles'? Because once you say gender roles, you are saying that this role is specific to this particular gender, can't you say non-traditional roles?....We're bringing about equality, and a strong point is that if most females are fighting for equality, then it makes absolutely a lot of sense to instil equality also in gender roles." (Shaka)*

In the above extract, Shaka expresses his anger towards gender roles and describes gender roles as stripping away his freedom. He feels an overwhelming sense of restriction in his ability to freely be himself and freely express himself due to fears of how society may react to his social deviation from the social norms and expectations placed on him as a man. Shaka feels imprisoned by these social expectations associated with gender roles and he feels he cannot break free from the shackles without judgement. He may therefore hide his engagement with non-traditional gender roles in his traditional micro- and macrosystem environments, and constantly try adapt to his environments, gender role expectations, causing him to experience gender role identity conflict in the process. His gender role conflict therefore influences feelings of loss of freedom and feeling imprisoned by his experiences with traditional gender roles, which makes him resentful of these roles. His removal of the term "gender" from the term "roles" is thus his pathway to freedom, equality and empowerment during his interactions with his different ecological systems and contexts.

5.4.4 A Move Towards Non-Traditional Gender Roles: Yearning for Empowerment

Basow (2014) suggests that although gendered experiences remain somewhat similar over generations within the chronosystem, shifts begin to occur over time across cultures, contexts and social classes within the macrosystem. Based on participants' responses, a small shift away from traditional gender roles is becoming prevalent in contemporary Soweto among the youth, and they themselves have been working towards openly adopting non-traditional roles in their lived contemporary experiences within their ecological context of Soweto. The participants all

shared traditional gender role experiences in their early childhood and adolescent years, and as time progressed through the chronosystem, they reported becoming more open to engaging with non-traditional gender roles.

Perrone (2009) defines non-traditional gender roles as roles which individuals wish to occupy which are not associated with their gender. Nomusa, Winnie, Khwezi and Shaka's description of non-traditional gender roles align with the literature on non-traditional roles and exclude the term "gender", they also make reference to choice, freedom and individual preference with regards to the roles and responsibilities an individual wants to take on (Perrone, 2009). Nomusa, and Shaka report that as they grew older, they became exposed to a different macrosystem outside of the ecological context of Soweto, and were exposed to social spaces, cultures, traditions, individuals and ways of being which made them consider non-traditional roles as a more relatable and necessary gender experience for contemporary life. Nomusa and Shaka's feelings and thoughts towards non-traditional gender roles resonated with the other participants as they also shared a yearning to abandon traditional gender roles and take on more non-traditional gender roles, which they consider as allowing for self-prioritisation, self-expression without judgement, self-care and overall freedom.

"The non-traditional part of it is that you don't have to do all that. You can ensure that you are ok before you put anybody's needs after yours, not before right? Because you cannot pour from an empty cup. We need to make sure that your cup is filled first before you can now start ensuring that everyone around you is okay. So I think that is what I would associate with non-traditional gender roles." (Nomusa)

In the above extract, Nomusa states that non-traditional roles are beneficial for individuals and suggests that these roles keep the female's wellbeing in mind and gives the female a choice in how she engages with certain roles. She describes the female as having freedom and an opportunity to care for herself with little to no social expectation to serve others to her own detriment within her ecological environment. There is a sense of empowerment afforded to the female through these non-traditional roles, which Nomusa does not feel is afforded to females through traditional gender roles. There is a sense of safety and security which is yearned for as Nomusa defines these non-traditional roles. Her emotional, developmental and wellbeing experience with these roles is very different to the experience she described previously with

traditional gender roles, as she experiences empowerment, freedom and choice as a female during her engagement with these non-traditional roles.

The participants shared their knowledge of non-traditional roles, however they appear to struggle to define the roles without reference to traditional gender roles. This difficulty in defining non-traditional roles may be due to their lowered experience with these roles within their lived ecological environment within Soweto, which results in them being unable to stipulate what these roles entail and how they are carried out. The participants mostly associate non-traditional role experiences with liberation and freedom, and in the context of Soweto, they suggest that engagement with these roles results in social judgement and discrimination.

"Being a non-traditional woman, it's more like you know, doing things that makes you feel like they are good personally, that you feel like, it's when you feel more liberated. You feel like you can do whatever that you want to do, regardless of what culture says or what culture defined as is what a typical woman has to do and then being traditional is then whereby you follow, you're following the rules of the tradition, following what the culture says you must do." (Winnie)

In the above extract, Winnie, like Nomusa, describes experiencing freedom and an improved wellbeing in her non-traditional womanhood. She reports that non-traditional roles move away from traditional and cultural expectations which are emphasised in her macrosystem, and move towards personal values and personal liberation which she can work towards developing within her microsystem. Other participants report that there are less restrictions placed on females and males to engage in, and hold onto certain behaviours, beliefs, standards and norms based on their gender during their engagement with non-traditional roles. Khwezi, Nomusa and Shaka state that although their traditional gender role experiences played a role in their traditional, public and cultural growth through their interactions with the macrosystem, they mostly preferred non-traditional roles in their private life within the microsystem. All the participants state that although they cannot actively or constantly engage with these non-traditional roles, they attempt to ascribe to these roles outside the ecological context of Soweto, as these alternative ecological contexts perceive these roles as being more gender equitable, less gender-typed and allows for society member's personal growth.

The participants report that they are constantly working on learning ways to find a balance in their experiences with traditional and non-traditional gender roles. They state that finding this balance would be important to them as it would allow them to avoid the judgement they receive from family, friends, peers and community members within their microsystem who still strongly ascribe to traditional gender roles, without compromising their personal values, needs and beliefs. In the extract below, Shaka opens up about this conflict and how challenging it has been for him to cater to his need to ascribe to non-traditional roles while being judged by older adults and other individuals who ascribe to non-traditional roles in the contemporary ecological Sowetan context.

"We come from the townships and they contribute a lot to the way that we view the whole ideology of gender roles. So in them contributing so much in the way that we perceive gender roles, means that even when we have a different type of or set of ideals they still want to instil those original ideas into us. So with them, in most cases it's old people, and in most cases, they don't want to change their ideals in which they view gender roles. Whereas with us, young adults, we are more open-minded, so we are more prone to changing the way we perceive gender. We're ever-growing, ever-evolving, it's always, things are always changing you know, so we're always being forced to adapt. But also, we are in university, and we are exposed to different environments you know, so that also alters the way that we view the world." (Shaka)

In expressing their preference for non-traditional roles, Themba, Shaka and Nomusa argue that it is important to note that although patriarchal ideals from the macrosystem can taint traditional values, the general traditional gender roles and experiences are not wrong when socialised in the microsystem. In the extract below, Shaka argues that traditional beliefs are not always malicious, and that non-traditional values should be perceived in the same way too, as being non-malicious and feeling appropriate to the individual who is choosing to ascribe to them. He states that if an individual truly believes in either traditional or non-traditional gender role ascriptions, or even a combination of both, then that individual should be respected for their choice. He states that as long as individuals' gendered experiences are not harmful to others, they ought to be respected as an appropriate choice and experience for that individual and that society.

"And we can't say people who are very traditional, cultural and who only obey those cultural beliefs, we can't say they are wrong. You know, as much as, especially if they are not hurting anyone in the process of them, like applying those cultural values or ways of being. And we can't say people who want to fight the shackles of gender roles and are fighting for equality between genders are wrong, you know. And as long as no one is stepping on anyone's toes because I mean, if we are a couple and there are gender roles within our relationship, gender roles that are agreed upon by us as a couple, then who is anyone to say that the fact that we have gender roles is wrong, especially if we both have consented and we've both agreed to, you know, to go by them… And respect, because as people we all want to, there's something we all want benefit out of the relationships and experiences we have, there's always something that we stand to benefit you know. So if we are in a relationship and we agreed upon having gender roles, gender roles that are beneficial for you and some are beneficial for me, then I mean let it be." (Shaka)

With this soft shift in their gender role ascriptions within the ecological Sowetan context which is hindered by fears of judgement and discrimination, the participants all expressed a hopefulness and aspiration to fully ascribe to non-traditional roles in their future homes. The participants state being in a process of developing a gender identity which incorporates a balance between traditional values and non-traditional experiences. Non-traditional roles appear to provide the participants with empowerment and freedom of choice which they want to fully adopt and interact with within their ecological environment of Soweto, and move away from the negative implications which are associated with traditional gender roles in this environment.

5.5 Emerging Implications of Gender Roles in Contemporary Soweto

From the above sections, it is clear that the participants have been living in a gendered ecological environment due to their constant exposure to traditional gender role socialisation processes within different ecological systems. This exposure to gendered environments has subsequently impacted them in different ways as a result of a socially pressured gender socialisation process. This theme explores the traditional gender role implications based on the participants' lived experiences within this ecological environment. In the section below, the

participants reflect on the challenges they have experienced as a result of their gender role socialisation which includes issues of adultification, gender stereotyping and gender bias, gender role switching, gender-based violence, as well as other challenges they associated with their gender role development.

5.5.1 The Erasure of Childhood Through Adultification

In most environments, childhood is considered as a period of innocence, however in other environments children are given roles and responsibilities which take away their sense of innocence and negatively impact their childhood experience. This experience, which was briefly touched on in a previous section, is referred to as "adultification" in which children take on parental roles in the family home from an early age in an attempt to strengthen the stressful family situation. The children become parental figures in the family home and take on roles and responsibilities which are given to them by their adult caregivers who struggle to fully take on these roles and responsibilities themselves (Jurkovic, 1997).

Blake and Epstein (2017) state that adultification results in a gendered racial bias which is developed against black females, and this bias influences a stereotype in which adults view young black girls as more adult-like, mature and lacking innocence in comparison to their black male and white female counterparts. This adultification of the black girl is especially prevalent in economically disadvantaged ecological environments and in low-income families, and these environments expose the child to adult knowledge, roles and responsibilities at an early age (Burton, 2007). In the extract below, Khwezi reinforces this experience of adultification bias against black girls by opening up about her personal experiences of having to take on a homemaker role within her family home, since her early childhood years.

"My family restricted me from going out with friends because I'm a female and I need to take care of the house. The way I was being monitored with my dress code was because I'm a female and I have to dress "proper" like a lady. It even got to the point of cooking nje in general you know, I was expected as the girl child to come back home from school, and cook and clean everyday but that was not expected from my cousin/brother. Why is that? So I always feel I am different from him, you feel like you're different because they expect so much from you since from being a child, and I felt it was not fair..."(Khwezi)

Khwezi expresses a frustration in the differential treatment she experienced as a girl child compared to her cousin/brother, and she states that her family's expectations of her as a girl child were overwhelming and unfair. She feels like she was placed on a higher standard compared to her cousin/brother due to her family's expectations of her to take on adult roles and responsibilities. Khwezi's experiences highlight a gender role norm that influences the non-acceptance of the black girl as a child, as well as an early socialisation of the black girl child as a maternal figure in the household within the microsystem (Blake & Epstein, 2017). The other female participants also report on experiences linked to adultification and they share a frustration in being adultified while their male counterpart cousin/brother was allowed to play and "*be a child*" (Nomusa), while the girl children were expected to take care of the home by cooking and cleaning and not being allowed to go outside the house. The female participants perceive this gendered bias as punitive and influencing a subtle harm which is placed on them as black girls to behave in more adult-like ways resulting in the subsequent erasure of their childhood innocence.

Shaka attributes the adultification of the black girl child as being influenced by the maternal figures within the family home. Socialised adultification is often observed in mothers or female figures in a child's life who intentionally instill maturity, strength and independence in their black girl child as a tool to help them in the structural and intersectional issues they will face in different social environments (Blake & Epstein, 2007). Black women are considered to pass down generational knowledge to their daughters through the chronosystem, which originates from racially oppressive colonial periods which developed the adultification bias against black girls. This oppressive biased experience was then normalised in black communities within the macrosystem under the guise of helping black girls thrive by protecting them from societal and structural inequities. In the extract below, Shaka identifies his grandmother as enforcing the expectations of being a homemaker on his female cousin and not on him as a male child. He perceives his grandmother as a maternal gatekeeper who managed the expectations of the female child as a domesticated child and the expectations of the male child to not be involved in the maintenance of the family home.

"The fact that my cousin had to clean the house and cook after school, not because it was her choice, but because she was instructed to do so by my gran you see. As a kid I used to ask a lot of questions, like fine, are you telling me that this domestic work, these domestic duties are only for females? While me as the male has to simply go play outside."(Shaka)

Other participants shared similar experiences of maternal gatekeeping in their gender role development. Gaunt (2008) describes maternal gatekeeping as the unintentional beliefs and actions of mothers which contribute to the development and maintenance of gendered divisions in parental and child responsibilities. Maternal gatekeepers are described by participants as being their grandmothers, mothers, aunts and sisters who take on the nurturing, rearing and home responsibilities in the family home and enforce these responsibilities on their granddaughters, daughters, nieces and sisters. The participants reflect on the maternal gatekeeping behaviours and beliefs as resulting in the boys and fathers within the family home being limited from participating in childcare and housework, and girls being encouraged to develop these skills in the family home instead.

During their maternal gatekeeping the mother appears to engage in a generational socialisation process which is aimed towards domesticating the female participant in an effort to empower her in the only space where she can fully enjoy the same power, authority, control and status that the outside world affords the male child (Gaunt, 2008). Mothers and grandmothers may therefore be trying to afford the female participant a sense of feeling in control and empowered in a context that validates this need in a feminine way during her childhood, especially in an microsystem environment of the family home which is not male-dominated like the rest of the outside world. The maternal figures therefore keep away the male participant during his childhood as he could affect his female counterpart's opportunity to feel a sense of control and power within the home. In a sense, the maternal figures are trying to maintain their need to feel needed and in control of the home by ensuring that there is a lack of male involvement in the home, and they may want to maintain this power over multiple generations within the home by socialising the social acceptance of their female children to be domesticated in their microsystem environments. In the extract below, Nomusa reflects on the different generational maternal figures' which have influenced her personal gender role development in a way that seems to afford her a sense of a validated female identity, autonomy and empowerment through maintaining and taking care of the family home:

"So my sister is, I think my sister is like six or seven years older than me. So by the time I realised that oh I am actually a female, she had already gone past that stage. She was now

living a life where like, how can I put this, like what was expected of her from my mother and grandmother, was what she was doing. And with my mother and grandmother coming to teach me that, ok, now you're supposed to learn how to cook, now you're supposed to do the cleaning, you're supposed to do this and that. My sister was already doing that, so it sort of like showed that ok, someone older than me is already doing that, this is probably the right thing to do. So whatever that I was taught, my oldest sister was already doing. She was sort of exemplary to me." (Nomusa)

As in the case of adultified black girls, adultification is also a prevalent experience for the black boy child in the ecological Sowetan context. The male participants, who were black boy children from low-income homes, were expected to start assisting in providing for their families in their childhood and early adolescent years, which is a burdening pressure that negatively impacts them during their childhood development (Gaunt, 2008). Most of the participants reflect on how boys are expected to take on provider roles, and the male participants painfully reflect on the unfairness of how some financially vulnerable families place boys in adultified roles as providers, leaders and protectors of the home. The participants perceive the adultification of the male child as an experience which robs the black boy of his childhood.

In the extract below, Sizwe opens up about his personal adultified role as a male child and reports being expected to take on a provider role after his father suffered a stroke during his early adolescent years. He reveals feeling the pressure of being forced into this provider role at an early age due to the difficult financial situation in his home and the painful emotional toll it took on him as he was forced to grow up quickly. Sizwe experienced clear emotional and developmental difficulties due to this experience and impacted his view of manhood and traditional gender roles when he developed his personal gender identity. As an adultified boy child, Sizwe was socialised to take on his father's adult traditional gender roles within the microsystem of his family home, and once he internalised these roles he continued to maintain and develop them as his personal gender roles into his young adulthood.

"Before the age of 16 I had to like do things on my own understanding that my dad is not ok and my mum is most definitely not ok too because she had to take care of herself and her husband who was super sick after a stroke. At that point in time I had to try to mend myself,

as a teenager I was going through a roller coaster of emotions and stuff so I had to grow up and become a man I guess because I had no choice but to skip certain stages of my life and become a protector, now I had to be in charge of the household. I had to make sure that the gate is always locked, and that the safety of the yard, if anything gets broken I had to make sure that I get to see to it that I get work so that I can provide for my family. So on Saturdays and Sundays when I was not going to school I was actually employed with @Home and I used to work there to make sure I provide for the family because that's apparently what a man is within the family you know."(Sizwe)

One may perceive the adultified roles of the female and male child within the ecological Sowetan context as fostering independence and resilience in them, however it also results in the loss of their innocent childhood experience and significant emotional difficulties as they grow older. Based on the female participants' reflections of their adultified experiences within their microsystem, the black girl child develops resentment towards traditional gender roles, and she feels a need to break free from the family home in order to experience freedom, and feel adequate and empowered outside of her traditional and conservative ecological Sowetan environment. On the other hand, the male participants' experiences of adultification reflect the black boy child as developing a sense of guilt and shame due to his complacency with traditional gender roles within his microsystem. He then develops a resentment towards gender roles, as well as a pressure to overachieve and succeed as a way to get their family out of their financial woes. The black boy child cannot escape his microsystem in the same way that the girl child openly dreams to do, as he is considered as the lifeline of the family and community.

5.5.2 The Effects of Gender Role Stereotyping

Gender role stereotypes refer to the socially acceptable notions of what is desirable for males and females (Roshchynskaya, 2010). Colonially-formed and enforced gender role stereotypes have come to be adopted and reinforced within the black ecological Sowetan context, and these gender roles have influenced gender stereotypes which have been reinforced over the ages through families, communities, peer relationships, and the overall ecological environment in expressing what is socially acceptable norms for males and females. In the extract below, Shaka defines gender roles as imposed, stereotypical and generalised expectations of females and males which he resentfully states strips away one's freedom.

"Gender roles are like imposing like ideas, like stereotypical, generalised ideas on what they expect that men should be like or that males should be like and how females should act like. It has less to do with, like about the individual themselves you know, and it has more to do about what the people outside or what the society deems fit for that person, which is kind of weird. And now people are, like me as an individual, I'm supposed to live my life based on what or how you expect me to live because you have this ideology of roles that you have instilled for me. And now I must conform to them. It strips away your own freedom like freedom of action, your freedom of speech like you know."(Shaka)

Shaka states that these gender role stereotypes, which are formed and reinforced within the macrosystem, are harmful as they restrict males and females' capacity to develop their personal abilities and choices. The traditional view of males and females can be perceived as even more harmful when compounded with intersectional experiences such as race, age, location, socioeconomic status etc. (The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2023). In the extract below, Sizwe reports on intersectional experiences that have influenced stereotypical male gender role stereotypes in Soweto. He reports on his race, age, location and socioeconomic status as influencing pressure to adhere to gender role stereotypes related to substance use, violence, male dominance, male strength, a lack of male emotionality besides anger and aggression, and actively seeking wealth.

"Like I said, having to feel like I need to do certain things as a black guy or I'm not good enough, for instance, smoking and drinking alcohol to seem cool because I'm a black man. Having to fight people even though I know I don't have to fight people at that point in time but just because I'm a young man or a teenager I have to. Or not being buff enough or looking fat because then you don't look like a man. Not being wealthy enough, awunamali awusiyindoda, meaning you don't have money so you're not man enough. The key issue is these social aspects of it, it's the social expectations for me to be a man or to be deemed man enough through these things."(Sizwe)

Sizwe states that these intersectional expectations which pressure people to take on certain stereotypes are harmful to the people who are influenced by these stereotypes. He further states that these stereotypes influence inequality, gendered conflict, and a growing sense of lack of control in the lives of those who are affected by them within the overall ecological environment of Soweto. This statement is reinforced by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human

Rights (2023) which states that harmful gender stereotyping contributes to discrimination, inequality, as well as the violations of rights such as adequate standards of living, family relations, freedom of expression and movement and freedom from gender-based violence.

"These are the types of stereotypes that eventually grow into things where there's no equality or safety in life and we go back to blaming a certain gender because now we've created the precedent of believing that I'm not in control of my life type of thing."(Sizwe)

Both the male and female participants report on feeling pressured by these stereotypes and feeling the need to break free from them, however they also state feeling worried about no longer feeling a sense of belonging if they do not adhere to these gender role stereotypes. This yearning for a sense of belonging is driven by individuals' motivation to remain integrated within the society by participating in gendered stereotypes in their ecological environment (Master & Meltzoff, 2020). Khwezi empathetically states that both males and females experience pressure from the gendered expectations placed on them within Soweto, and she reports that these stereotypes have resulted in increased substance use, violence and crime.

"So you know in as much as we as females get pressured and all, they, I also feel like males are equally getting pressure from these expectations. That's why you find people being driven to drugs, alcohol, violence and crime because of that pressure."(Khwezi)

Gender role stereotyping has also influenced the perception of "male privilege" and the "overlooked female" in the ecological Sowetan context. Male privilege refers to the unspoken preferential treatment and automatic benefits males receive based on being perceived as a dominant member of gendered social hierarchy, which subsequently results in the female being overlooked. Connell (2005) states that this discrimination of women and the privileging of men is emphasised through the normalisation of hegemonic masculinity norms and social structures in a patriarchal ecological environment.

The male participants report experiencing a conflict in their perceived male privilege that comes with gender role stereotypes. They reflect on the difficulty of adhering to these stereotypes as socially expected, because they caused pain to their female counterparts. They also open up about the challenge of not contesting these stereotypes as they placed them at an advantage. This conflict reflects their fear of challenging hegemonic masculinity which grants

privilege to all males regardless of their ascription to this masculinity. Connell (2005) refers to males who do not actively challenge the male privilege afforded by hegemonic masculinity, as complicit masculinity. In the extract below, Shaka opens up about his personal experience with complicit masculinity, stating that he initially did not understand the difficult position his male privilege placed his cousin/sister in, while also feeling complacent in the imposed gender roles which have been harmful to her.

"How do these gender roles imposed on these people make them feel? We don't think about those things, we just impose them. There was no point in my life where I could think literally like that was I was more privileged than my female cousin. There was no point because there was no, not at any moment did I even question or ask myself like how, how does the fact that you must come back home and clean or cook make her feel, like does she enjoy this? Like you know sometimes she would tell me that 'hai I'm tired, I don't feel like cooking but you know, I got to do what you got to do' type of thing. But there was no way I would sit down and really question like my privilege as a man within the realm of gender roles. So in growing up, that's when I started to question a whole lot of these things."(Shaka)

Winnie states that males are privileged to own businesses, get opportunities to access tertiary education, are encouraged to work hard and dream big in the ecological environment of Soweto, while females are mostly expected to have children and be homemakers. The male is considered as having a natural advantage to succeed based on his socialisation, while the female is encouraged to aspire to reproduce and be a homemaker during her socialisation. This traditionally gendered socialisation exacerbates the gender inequality faced by females, resulting in a problematic gendered privilege being afforded to males while females remain invisible and disadvantaged (Schwiter, Nentwich & Keller, 2021).

"This goes back to where I grew up, so where I grew up a lot of businesses are owned by male people right. Yeah a lot of males are the ones who even today are still graduating you know, they're still making things out of their lives. And with females, it's just you know, you just have to have a baby and that's pretty much it."(Winnie)

These issues of gender inequality are also prevalent in the work force, and they prevent young women from pursuing certain careers for fear of gender-related rejection in the industry within the exosystem. In the extract below, Winnie reflects on her personal experience of rejection

due to her being a female in a particular industry and how this rejection hindered her from pursuing a dream career. This is an issue faced by many females in male-dominated occupations as they are further exposed to male privilege and marginalisation outside of the family home as well (Schwiter, Nentwich & Keller, 2021). Winnie reflects on her sadness that females do not get much opportunities to further pursue their education beyond matric and feels frustrated that those that do pursue their education have to prove they are just as capable as their male counterparts in the workforce, just as she did.

"I remember this one time in matric right, so we used to attend these other uhm virtual expos and stuff. And then I saw this other pamphlet, I don't remember which company it was, so it had like different requirements of the type of candidates they wanted. And one of the requirements was that they wanted male participants uhm you know, so like it kind of like it was confusing a bit to know haibo and then what's happening here? That time I've always felt that I'm more attracted to the side of mining and construction you know, but because of this I have always avoided like applying for engineering courses you know because it is seen as a male only career… A lot of people that I grew up with, especially females, and it's a few of us like I could count numbers of who were able to actually you know go to school and like do things that could better their future. But I feel like it's a matter of where they grew up, and which is in Soweto. They still have this thing in Soweto, that males, if you're like, a male person compared to a female person, a male is always going to out achieve a female person. Like with us females, I feel like we need to fight for whatever, that you do, you need to fight twice as much, than male people to get whatever that you want."(Winnie)

Khwezi attributes the male privilege and overlooking of females to the colonial period, wherein male freedom fighters were often praised and acknowledged more than the female freedom fighters. She states that the past played a significant role in teaching generations that the male has to be glorified at all times. This aligns with the pervasive image of the woman being portayed as poor, oppressed, homebound and defenseless in history (Busch, 2019). Khwezi states that the male is celebrated in his achievements while the female's achievements are overlooked. She sadly states that although this has not made her feel confident as a female aspiring for success, she does aspire to become a role model to younger females to encourage them to reach beyond the glass ceiling.

"I think it just also goes back to you know that type of even the role models that we have you know. Uhm as I was growing up, it was more of uhm you can see your Nelson Mandela as being celebrated more than you know, more than your Winnie Madikizela-Mandela you know. So it's more of like that, we're just used to celebrating male people, more than women, female people. So I think with females also, it's just like you know, it's fine, even if I don't do anything because at the end of the day, they will still celebrate the male person. Like it doesn't make me feel good you know. But at the same time, it kind of motivates me to be like more, to fight more so that the young girls and can also have like proper like you know, female role models where they can also see that it's also possible with them and it's not only possible with male people."(Khwezi)

In the extract below, Khwezi reflects on the need for both males and females to take on the responsibility for change in the conservative ecological context of Soweto and reshape masculinities and femininities to be more liberal and beneficial to both males and females.

"I could say the responsibility falls on both the female and the male, but because now we are the ones that want to be accepted, we are the ones that want to share this knowledge. Well it has to start with the female you know, but it would make things easier if also men shaped those changes. If also men who have accepted the changes would share also with other people, teach other people, you understand. It would be much better if also the male did the same and shared the knowledge, I think people would be more convinced if it comes from the opposite gender you know."(Khwezi)

The participants state that a lot of change needs to occur in order for the pressure to be reduced within the conservative ecological context of Soweto, suggesting that there is a growing need to push against these gender role stereotypes. They view these stereotypes as being harmful, and they report that a growing number of youth, including themselves, are moving towards finding a balance between traditional and non-traditional gender roles as a way to address these problematic gender role stereotypes.

5.5.3 The Gender Shift: Negotiating Conflicting Gender Roles in Contemporary Soweto

The "gender shift" is a new trend which relates to the fundamental changes in the foundational, traditional gender roles in the global society (Pichler, 2017). Gender roles are transforming,

and participants find themselves negotiating between traditional and non-traditional roles in different ecological systems. Males and females are dealing with the conflicting old and new expectations of femininity and masculinity, resulting in constant and everchanging evaluations of what gender roles are and what they mean to different individuals and societies (Landsberg, 2020).

The participants report on experiencing an increasing yearning to engage in gender role switching, suggesting that the gender shift trend is prevalent within contemporary Soweto. Within this gender shift, individuals find themselves negotiating and adapting to different gender roles, similar to the act of code switching in language, as a way to survive and feel a sense of belonging in the different ecological systems they find themselves in (Pichler, 2017). Participants report feeling conflicted in this gender shift trend, as they feel obliged to maintain their traditional gender roles in their family and ecological Sowetan contexts, while yearning to engage with non-traditional gender roles in system environments outside of Soweto.

In the extract below, Shaka states that his negotiation with gender roles is due to his interactions with his family and different system environments. He states that his experiences within the ecological Sowetan contexts force him to strictly conform to traditional gender roles, while different microsystem environments external to the ecological environment of Soweto allow him to adopt more flexible, non-traditional gender role experiences. He reflects on feeling conflicted as he adapts to these different gender role ideologies as a way to feel accepted within and outside of the ecological context of Soweto. He therefore switches his gender role identity expressions by switching between traditional and non-traditional gender roles in different system environments, in order to feel a sense of belonging.

"External environments, societies and organisations teach you that the reason why you might be acting like this, based on their understanding, is that you come from a background where you probably conform strictly to traditional gender roles but you need to be cognisant of the fact that now you're in an environment that is very fluid you know. So now you need to step away from all those background ideologies that come from the townships or the rural areas or wherever you come from, and you need to see the world in this light because this is where you're living now. We are with these people so you have to act in a more generic way."(Shaka)

Shaka makes use of the words "conform strictly" in reference to traditional gender roles, suggesting a frustration and resentment to his adherence to these roles. These traditional gender roles are portrayed by his "fluid" and more flexible system environments as being problematic and inappropriate. Based on his account it seems that his negotiation of gender roles occurs alongside a struggle for acceptance in a more modernised and non-traditional ecological context. His negotiation of his gender role identity in different ecological contexts also reflects the culture of the social spaces he finds himself in, which dictate how he should behave in the macro- and microsystems. His family and community spaces in Soweto hold onto traditional gender role values, while his university and other social circles ascribe to non-traditional gender roles. Shaka reflects an awareness that his gender role identity is linked to a need to be accepted and feel a sense of belonging by adhering to a particular context's gender role ideology, resulting in an identity dissonance as he is in constant conflict due to his traditional values being at odds with a non-traditional modern world.

"In order for you to be accepted or to be, I don't know how to put this, but there is a certain way of doing things that makes you identifiable within the family and within the community in such a way that even when you are out there, they can say like you belong to this type of family. There's a certain way of living or doing things, so me coming with my own gender ideologies it makes me, I'm ostracising myself from the family… So in order for you to feel as though you are actually part of the family, there are certain things that you would give up a part of who you actually are, who wants to feel as though you are a part of the family. And that's actually a very sad thing, it's a very sad thing, it happens especially in the black families you know…"(Shaka)

There is an evident conflict in Shaka's negotiation of gender roles in the extract above, as he reflects on issues of family, cultural and community ostracisation, losing a sense of belonging, as well as acceptance from an external ecological environment in their negotiation of gender roles. He yearns to adhere to non-traditional gender roles, which reflect his personal values and identity, however he believes these roles will never be accepted or adopted by his family, community or his culture. This reinforces the earlier section on social acceptability, stating that the adoption of gender roles is due to the social acceptability of these roles and the subsequent fear of rejection if one does not adhere to these gendered norms (McBreen et al., 2011). Shaka reports a need to learn how to balance both traditional and non-traditional gender roles as he interacts with different systems in different ecological contexts. This need for balance would

allow him to avoid experiencing social ostracisation within the macro- and microsystems and also avoid the loss of his personal gender role identity and sense of self. He reflects in a defeated tone on the "conflicting" nature of this search for a balance.

In the extract below, Khwezi reflects on actively taking on and practicing non-traditional gender roles both publicly and privately. She states that she has received judgement from applying non-traditional gender roles in the public context. This judgement in the public space is due to it being socially constructed and largely organised by society and its traditionally gendered beliefs and values (Sadoughianzadeh, 2013). Khwezi states that despite this social judgement, she is adamant about ascribing to non-traditional roles in an effort to encourage and educate others about them.

"So whatever the gender roles, I have and that I believe in privately, I try by all means to also practice that also in public. Although I know that it comes with a lot of judgement, it comes with a lot of eyes on you and all that, but it's what I believe in and I also remember that we want to move into a space where everyone else around us is educated about this and knows about it. So me doing it privately only will then not help out in any way, you know. So now whatever I do privately with my gender roles, I try by all means to also apply it publicly."(Khwezi)

Other participants have also received judgement from engaging in both traditional and non-traditional gender roles and they express a need to find a way to make these two gender role ideologies work for them, as they are part of their personal and cultural identity. In the extracts below, Sizwe reports that in his negotiation of gender roles, he wants to perceive himself as a human being and let go of the social labels which would be less pressuring and more peaceful for him. Nomusa on the other hand, states that her negotiation of these gender roles will help her prioritise herself. For Sizwe and Nomusa, achieving a balance between traditional and non-traditional would have significant emotional benefits as they engage in roles that are kinder to themselves with less focus on pleasing those around them.

"With the changes that I've gone through, I see myself as a human before anything else. So now if I feel like I'm not okay, I accept that I am not okay and I express myself you know in human nature. Not in my nature or woman nature, you know not the labels. I have disbarred the labels and I'm so much more peaceful."(Sizwe)

"I would say before getting to the position of where I am comfortable with the gender roles I play, I think I want to adopt having the ability to say no to putting another person first and I'm unable to carry this load. It's too much for me as a woman to be an imbokodo, a rock. But I don't want to be that rock, I want to be soft. So I want to change the narrative that a woman doesn't have to always handle everything that is thrown her way and do as others expect of her. "(Nomusa)

In a changing world, the participants appear to yearn to achieve a balance between their ascription to traditional and non-traditional gender roles as a part of their continued identity development. They experience the expression of both gender role types as being beneficial in specific contexts and want to work towards maintaining both of these roles without social judgement and rejection.

5.6 Conclusion

This section highlighted the participants' reflections of theirs, their grandparents and their siblings' traditional and non-traditional gender roles experiences in the conservative ecological context of Soweto. The participants' opened up about how each set of roles played an important role in moulding their personal and social identities as they interacted with the systems within their ecological context of Soweto. They pointed to the significant roles played by the micro-, meso-, macro-, exo- and chronosystems within their ecological environment during their traditional socialised gender role development and experiences. Participants opened up about the implications of ascribing to the two conflicting traditional and non-traditional gender roles, with references to gender bias, racialised gender socialisation, gender inequality, gender stereotyping, adultification, gender role identity confusion, social ostracisation and rejection, and discrimination to name a few. They also reflected on the harmful implications of the structural, racialised gender role socialisation which have influenced adultification of the black child, gender-based violence and harmful gender power dynamics, the oppression and subjugation of the black female and subsequent black male privilege, and generational silent suffering. Despite these implications, they reported feeling hopeful for changes to occur in the conservative ecological context of Soweto which would allow for a more balanced and equitable gender role socialisation process and gender experience to develop. The participants' future expectations for gender roles in the contemporary context of Soweto include

expectations to eradicate the racialised gender role socialisation as well as empowering people through their gender role development.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides insights into the overall research and outlines the main themes which were derived from the findings. It summarises the topics and concepts which were raised by the research questions and highlights the participants overall experiences with the research topic. The chapter also highlights the reasoning and benefits of using the Ecological Systems framework which was used to unpack the participants' gender role experiences, as well as their personal and environmental influences in their gender role experiences. Lastly the chapter concludes with insights into recommendations and implications for future research on gender role studies in South African townships.

6.2 Concluding Thoughts

The purpose of this paper was to respond to the rising challenge in academia to explore the contemporary gender role experiences in youth, who are raised in traditionally heteropatriarchal communities with exposure to contexts which accept less traditional means of living. This objective was achieved by exploring the contemporary gender role experiences of young adults living in the heteropatriarchal context of Soweto through the use of a qualitative Ecological Systems theoretical framework. The interest in responding to this challenge was aimed towards adding contemporary experiential knowledge to the knowledge of gender role development and gendered experiences, as these are everchanging concepts in an ever-evolving society. By inquiring and answering the following research questions in this research paper: "what are the gender role experiences of young adults living in Soweto?, how have young adults living in Soweto developed their gender roles?, what are individuals' experiences of traditional and non-traditional gender roles?, and what are individuals' experiences of gender roles in private and public spaces?", this paper helped to explore whether there are normative changes in gender role development and gender role experiences in contemporary Soweto.

The ecological lens employed in the exploration of the gender role experiences of these young adult participants helped to understand their gender role experiences in a multidimensional

manner by exploring the individual, their gender role experiences, their interconnecting system environments, and the various nuances and social issues that exist within these ecological environments which impact their gender role experiences and development. The Ecological Systems framework helped to uncover the knowledge gained by the participants as they interacted with different systemic structures to make meaning of gender roles based on their gender role socialisation and subsequent developed gendered sense of self within their lived Sowetan context.

The contemporary gender role experiences of young adults within the ecological context of Soweto were reflected in the study as being influenced by various ecological system environments, and influenced by racialised colonial gender role socialisation processes which have been passed down over generations. These ecological system environments were identitfied as the micro-, meso-, macro-, exo- and chronosystems and these systems significantly contributed to how the participants of the study constructed their gender role identities as they navigated and interacted with these systems. Within the conservative, heteropatriarchal ecological environment of Soweto, the micro-, meso-, macro- and chronosystems were considered as playing the most significant roles in the social acceptance, development, and maintenance of traditional gender roles, which participants' were subsequently socialised to develop and maintain in their contemporary personal gender role identity and experiences. The socialisation of these traditional gender roles was thus attributed to interactions between family, peers, teachers, neighbours, community members, tradition, culture and time. Exposure to alternative ecological environments outside of the context of Soweto led participants to develop non-traditional gender roles, and yearn to find a balance between their traditional and non-traditional gender role identities. These non-traditional gender roles are however not socially accepted within their contemporary ecological Sowetan context, resulting in the participants reporting gender role identity confusion, and inauthentic and resentful engagement with traditional gender roles.

The Ecological Systems framework also revealed that the systems within the ecological environment influenced the social acceptability of stereotypical traditional gender roles within the Sowetan context, and this acceptability led participants to feel obliged to adopt these roles during their gender role identity development. The participants' fulfilment of this social obligation was linked to their overwhelming need for family and community belonging within their microsystem, as well as their need for general social acceptance within their macrosystem,

especially during their early childhood to early adult years. As a result, traditional gender roles were adopted by the participants without contestation and were described as restricting the freedom of choice and gender role behaviour of participants in some systems within the ecological environments. Traditional gender roles were also reported as influencing harmful gender stereotypes for males and females, influencing discrimination against those that deviate from these stereotypical expectations of their gender, placing unfair burdens on female and male participants to take on adultified roles, influencing female subordination and male privilege, and influencing criminality and gender-based violence (Roshchynskaya, 2010). These implications are considered to have influenced a culture of silence in the overall ecological environment of Soweto in relation to the emotional and developmental impact of traditional gender roles, and this culture of silent suffering has been perpetuated over multiple generations (Rajkumar, 2023).

Traditional gender roles were revealed in the study as being maintained in different ecological environments through maternal gatekeeping within the microsystem, which saw mothers and female caregivers and society members being portrayed as ensuring that females exclusively engaged in housework and caring for the children as a way of empowering the female, while males were encouraged to lack involvement in the family home (Gaunt, 2008). The prevalent absence of the father in the ecological Sowetan context was revealed as exacerbating maternal gatekeeping and also negatively influencing the balanced development of masculinity and femininity in children (Mandara et al., 2005). The maternal gatekeeping and absence of the father in the Sowetan ecological space influences the adultification of the black child who experiences the consequence of adopting adult roles in order to ensure the survival of the family home and general social context (Muthwa, 1994). This adultification was revealed in the study as being especially experienced by the black girl child who was expected to mature early, socialised to become a pseudo-mother in the family home within the microsystem, and is also inappropriately sexualised at an early age resulting in her harassment as township culture within the meso- and macrosystems. In an effort to reduce these implications of traditional gender role experiences, participants developed a preference for gender role switching. Gender role switching allowed participants to switch between the non-traditional gender roles which they were exposed to in external ecological spaces outside of Soweto, and the traditional gender roles within the ecological spaces of Soweto.

Despite the many implications that participants associated with traditional gender roles, they also expressed the significance of traditional gender roles on their social and cultural identity within the macrosystem, and they suggested that there was no right or wrong when adopting and ascribing to any particular gender roles. They also expressed an appreciation for the freedom of choice afforded by non-traditional gender roles in external ecological environments outside of Soweto, which enabled their individual gendered development and identity. Ultimately, the participants shared their preference for non-traditional gender roles in a contemporary, globalising world and yearned for the social acceptance of these roles in their lived ecological Sowetan environment.

The overarching influence of the adoption of traditional gender roles in the contemporary experiences of young adults in Soweto, is attachment and social acceptance. The participants' needs for belonging and acceptance influenced them to maintain traditional gender roles during their adult years. This need ensured that participants maintained their developed gender roles, even when they no longer aligned with their changing gender role beliefs and attitudes during their gender role development. Switching between their maintained traditional gender role beliefs and newly developed non-traditional gender role beliefs, revealed the participants' need to be socially accepted while also being trapped in a need to freely express themselves. Experiencing a sense of balance and social acceptance when engaging with the two gender role experiences in the different ecological environments they interact with without judgement or ostracisation, would liberate the participants in their expression of gender roles. The gender role switching behaviours thus reinforced the ecological framework's suggestion that the participants' developed within different intertwined social environments which influenced and embedded significant gendered beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, expectations, roles and ideologies which were subsequently adopted by the participants as they interacted with these environments. The gender role switching behaviours therefore allowed the participants to construct their gender role identities freely in ecological backgrounds that offered diverse gender role socialisation and flexible gender role behaviour acceptance.

Alongside the ecological framework, uncovering the gender role experiences of these young adults in the Sowetan context through the exploration of the racialised colonial gender role socialisation processes allowed for greater insight to be gained from participants' accounts about their parents and grandparents' gender role experiences during the apartheid era. The legacy of colonisation and racialised laws and policies influenced the perpetuation of racialised

gender role experiences across multiple generations, and into the participants' contemporary lived environment of Soweto. These racialised policies and laws influenced the adoption and maintenance of heteropatriarchal traditional gender roles as a social norm in the township household, despite the abolishment of the racialised era (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). These racialised heteropatriarchal gender role foundations significantly shaped the contemporary ecological system which the participants within this study still interact with. These foundations therefore influenced the participants of this study to adopt gender-typified traditional gender role experiences in their contemporary experiences which they received from their ecological environment's socialisation processes within their family home, peer environments, school context, their community, cultural contexts, the media, the interaction between these environmental spaces, the gendered cultures that develop within these environments, and their lived time period. This rich history of experiences helped to explore the ecological environment of Soweto in both its past and present being.

The gendered ecological framework alongside the colonial exploration of gender roles allowed for the use of qualitative Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the interview findings. This phenomenological analysis was not concerned with finding a "truth" on gender role experiences, but was rather focused on gaining knowledge of the participants' perceived personalised lived experiences and their truth of these experiences. The researcher therefore worked with the participants to help them construct their subjective gendered identities and experiences, and to help them to make meaning of their stories which were shaped by the various ecological gender influences which rang true to them in their personal ways.

The themes that emerged from the study reflected overall issues of enforced traditional gender role socialisation, generational silent pain and suffering from traditional gender role experiences, racialised gender divides perpetuated over generations, pervasive patriarchal gender role expectations influenced by maternal gatekeeping in contemporary Soweto, absent fatherhood influencing problematic gender role dynamics, childhood burdening through the adultification of the black child, gender stereotyping and discrimination, gender role switching and social ostracisation as a result, and gender-based criminality which emerged from traditional gender role experiences. Each theme was delved into both through literary review and through participant interview findings, and this information uncovered experiences related to gender role experiences within the contemporary ecological Sowetan context.

There were some limitations which were observed in the study, which need to be considered alongside the future recommendations suggested for the study. These limitations included community bias which made it difficult for the study to be completely generalisable in other communities or generalisable for specific demographics. However, in light of this, the reliability and validity of the study was not compromised. Another limitation was the participants' perceived obligation to respond in English which limited their self-expression. When encouraged to speak their home language however, they were observed as code switching throughout the interview process often translating their home language back into English. This could pose language barrier limitations to those unfamiliar with code-switching. The power dynamics between the researcher and participants, as well as unspoken social norms influenced social desirability bias during some portions of the data collection process. This limitation may have been mitigated by a different interview environment.

In conclusion, although contemporary gender role experiences are complex and conflicting for the participants of the study, they expressed future expectations for a Soweto that offers acceptance in balancing between traditional and non-traditional gender role experiences. They spoke of a future that allows them and future generations to negotiate gendered ways of being and living in ways that will be of best interest to them. A desire was revealed from the participants for the eradication of the term “gender roles” with more of a focus on neutral, non-gendered roles with the aim of giving people the power to choose what works for them, rather than them feeling restricted by imposed problematic gendered ideals. A hopefulness echoed in the participants as they hoped for changes in their family, community, peer, schooling and other ecological spaces that will afford them the peace and freedom to live beyond the boundaries of gender roles. This desire and hope reflects the need for empowerment and agency through the revision of structural, racialised gender role socialisation which has become harmful to the black community.

6.3 Recommendations of Study

In light of the above account it is apparent that despite there being increased scholarly attention on South African township experiences, a lot more needs to be explored with regards to the colonial and racialised experiences of gender and gender roles, and the social implications of these experiences in contemporary townships. The above account also suggests that there is not enough known about the psychological and developmental implications that may be

experienced by younger post-apartheid generations who appear to be experiencing a hinderance in their gender role identity development due to the clash they are experiencing between their contemporary, non-traditional gender roles which they are exposed to in a globalised context, and their racialised, traditional patriarchal lived experiences within their Sowetan township context. Based on the above, recommendations are provided in this chapter for further research on specific issues raised in this paper.

It is clear from the participants' accounts that there is a growing gender role identity conflict when they interact with various environments in their ecological systems. The first recommendation is therefore posed to academics and action researchers to move beyond a preoccupation of exploring gendered experiences at separate social levels, and employ an increased focus in deeply exploring the rising conflict in the interrelating social and ecological levels which are socialising conflicting gender role experiences. An ecological exploration into this experience may help to pinpoint the prevalence of gender role conflict, as well as how different environments that individuals interact with, impact their gender role development and gender role experiences. Sample populations which can help in exploring the prevalence of gender role conflict can include individuals who have mostly patriarchal lived gender experiences but also interact with non-traditional gendered contexts, however researchers are cautioned against biases with this sampling.

Further exploration can thus help to provide awareness of the experience of gender role conflict and it can help to educate different ecological environments on how they can collectively target and advocate towards changing harmful and/or conflicting gender role attitudes and socialisation processes. The conceptualisation and understanding of the phenomenon of gender role switching in patriarchal African townships, which are growing in their exposure to the effects of globalisation, may help to further question the prevalence of this experience within the traditional African household and community by identifying the potential dynamics and factors which influence this conflict. This gender role-focused research may provide useful findings which can go as far as influencing policy and interdisciplinary approaches if the work is published in unfragmented ways to increase the visibility of, and address these issues in the South African township contexts.

A second recommendation is based on the study's findings that suggest that there is exploitation of black girls and boys through adultification in the traditionally gendered Sowetan household. This adultification was portayed as often going uncontested and being normalised

through traditional social norms. Adultification was also portrayed as arising due to financial difficulties which result in children being placed in adult roles for the survival of the Sowetan household. The continued intra-household and community disregard of the exploitation and burdening placed on black children, in particular black girls which was highlighted in this paper, requires continued academic research exploration and policy contestation of this experience which currently is growing nationally and internationally in academia and action research (Davis, 2022; Mathews et al., 2015). Continued academic research exploration and contestation can encourage the development of child protection and safeguarding policy and practice which can influence social change and eradicate the adultification bias, particularly in the South African context. Narrative research is therefore recommended to further explore gender conceptualisation in relation to positionality by examining generational family gender role experiences in the South African context. This will help to capture the nuances and complexities of not only gender role development in the context of South Africa, but will also capture the nuances and complexities of the heteropatriarchal and racially perpetuated experiences of adultification through different generations with African storytelling and meaning making. Narrative research would also illustrate the harmful implications of adultification on gender and identity formation, which can deeply inform South African child safeguarding policies and parental education initiatives which aim to transform harmful gender ideals through the use of an interpretive and analytical, social constructionist framework.

Parental education is required in the prevalent experience of adultification within the context of Soweto, and this education should be designed to help parents learn how to improve their skills on how to adequately care and provide for their children's developmental needs in ways that do not influence their psychological development negatively (Selvaraj & Selvaraj, 2017). Parents and caregivers can be educated on the complex dynamics of gender relations and how they influence gender-typified adultification processes and how the household helps to maintain these dynamics and perpetuate gendered expectations of children over generations. Parental and family education can help to challenge the problematic view that children need to contribute towards adult roles and responsibilities within the home, as the family will become equipped with the necessary techniques for the survival of the household without unequal burden being placed on children (Selvaraj & Selvaraj, 2017). There should not only be pressure placed on individuals and parents for social change, there is also a need for greater systemic and political accountability and remediation, which can be achieved through systemic and policy changes in order to eradicate the practice of the adultification of children.

A third recommendation is that there should be more research which helps to unveil the significant contribution made by maternal gatekeeping and the absent father in the perpetuation of traditional gender roles as well as its influence in the adultification of black children in townships. Women, whether partnered or not, carry the heavy burden of fulfilling primary household responsibilities and child care as a form of feminine validation and empowerment, and they often socialise their daughters to carry this heavy burden to empower them as well (Gaunt, 2008). Maternal gatekeeping thus normalises the female being valued in the family structure by carrying this burden which has become necessary for the survival of the family home. The absence of the father in the home as well as lack of male involvement in the home, exacerbates this burden which is carried by females in the home. In the light of this, social policy should strive to encourage equal roles for the survival of the family home, in order to reduce the burden which is subsequently placed on the black girl child and enhance the female's consciousness of their oppressed position and challenge their racialised gendered subordination (Muthwa, 1994). Valuable social networks should also be created to help women and girls, and men and boys organise themselves to discuss common issues associated with gender roles and unite to challenge the racialised gender experiences they were socialised to adopt. These social networks may contribute towards challenging gender issues, normalising gender issues, and helping individuals feel supported in the challenges they face regarding their gender role experiences. These social networks can encourage and educate individuals on how to access psychological assistance to help them with emotional expression, make meaning of their gendered experiences and socialisation, and how to normalise and manage psychosocial stress which is related to their gendered experiences with a mental health practitioner (Postl & Jenkins, 2019).

The changes in South Africa due to globalisation and democracy have provided exposure to different gendered social spaces which can help individuals in racialised patriarchal environments build their confidence to position themselves to challenge the structures of colonial gender role socialisation. In light of these changes, females and males in African townships, alongside action researchers who ensure that gender issues do not go unnoticed and remains visible within publications, academia and policy influences, which allows future generations to experience gender empowerment and feel secure in their choice and control of their gender role identity development.

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Appendix A

Participant Information Sheet

Greetings,

My name is Fundiswa Mdunge and I am a Master's student in Community-Based Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my studies, I will be undertaking a research project focusing on the experiences of gender roles in young adults living in Soweto. I would like to invite you to participate in this research project.

By agreeing to participate in this research project, you will take part in a single interview. The interview will be 45 minutes to an hour, and during the interview I will be asking you questions about your personal life experiences related to gender roles. I am hoping to gain an understanding into the experiences you have, both past and present, in relation to gender roles and how you have made sense of these experiences. I would also like to gain an understanding of how these experiences shaped your identity within the context of living in Soweto. In taking part in this research project, you will be assisting us in learning new-age experiences of gender role development and gender role experiences within the context of South Africa.

Due to South African Government Coronavirus (Covid-19) regulations, the interviews will take place on a virtual meeting platform called Zoom. With your permission I would like to record the interview on Zoom using the screen record option. The recording will be used to aid me in accurately writing up your interview responses, as it is very important that your responses are not misinterpreted during the transcription process. Your confidentiality is of utmost importance during this interview and transcription process, and it will be maintained throughout the entire process until the final report is examined. Your identity will be protected with the use of fake names (pseudonyms) and the recordings will be password protected, and only my supervisor and I will have access to these recordings and interview scripts. I may use direct quotes in my final report, but please note that your confidentiality will still be maintained. After the recording has been transcribed word-for-word, the original screen recorded Zoom interview will be stored in a password protected file, and should you request to have your recording destroyed after the report has been examined, it will be deleted. The transcripts derived from the recordings will also be stored in a password protected file that will only be accessed by my supervisor and I until my degree is completed.

Data costs will be incurred if you participate in the research project. Any participants who may struggle with getting data or a device that supports Zoom, may request a face-to-face interview which will be voice recorded. The same process to ensure confidentiality as in the case of the screen-recorded interviews will be adhered to. Government stated Coronavirus (Covid-19) regulations pertaining to physical contact will be adhered to. Social distancing of 1.5 metres will be maintained, both myself and you will wear masks throughout the interview and windows and doors will be open.

You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in the research project, but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or choose to not answer any question if you do not want to. You are free to ask a question to clarify anything you do not understand during and

after the interview. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point during the interview process, we will stop the interview or reschedule for another time. If you need some support or counselling services after the interview process is complete, there are available counselling services at the following places:

- LifeLine Johannesburg: 24/7 National Toll Free Counselling (086 132 2322)
  : 24/7 Counselling (011 728 1347)
  : Whatsapp Counselling (065 989 9238)
- Emthonjeni Centre : 011 717 4513

Interested participants who would like to participate in the research project or if you have any questions, please contact me (details below). The study will be written up as a research report which can be accessed through the Wits University library website and may be used for other research purposes. If you wish to receive a copy of this summary report, I will be happy to send it to you. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of the study, you are welcome to contact The University Human Research Ethics (nonmedical) Committee, telephone 011 717 1408 or email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Your sincerely,

Fundiswa Mdunge
(Phone number: 066 242 3284)
(Email address: 2325920@students.wits.ac.za)

Research Supervisor: Ruby Patel
(Email address: ruby.patel@wits.ac.za)

Appendix B

Interview Consent Form

Title of project: Experiences of Gender Roles in Young Adults Living in Soweto

Name of researcher: Fundiswa Mdunge

I, _____, consent to participating in this research project and to be interviewed by Fundiswa Mdunge. The research project has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve.

Please circle the relevant option in the following statements:

1. I understand that my participation in this research project is voluntary **YES NO**

2. I agree that my participation will remain anonymous **YES NO**

3. I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes with the use of a pseudonym (fake name) from me in her research report **YES NO**

4. I agree that the interview will be recorded **YES NO**

5. I understand that I may refuse to answer any questions during the interview process **YES NO**

6. I understand that I may withdraw my participation from this research project at any time before the research report is examined **YES NO**

7. I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymous way (using a pseudonym) and after the project has ended, it may be used by other researchers subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained **YES NO**

8. I understand that there are no risks or benefits in participating in this research project

YES NO

9. I understand that none of my identifiable information will be included in the research project (name, surname, age, address etc.)

YES NO

10. I understand that once finalised, the research report findings will be available to the public via the Wits library

YES NO

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

- The aim of the interview is to obtain in-depth, subjective experiences and meanings from participants that pertain to the topic of gender roles
- Aligning with the goals of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, themes have been developed to help in exploring participants' experiences in detail and understanding how they make sense of the world
- Themes of the project are derived from research questions

Themes associated with gender role experiences research report:

1. Gender role experiences of young adults living in Soweto
2. Gender role development
3. Experiences of traditional and non-traditional gender roles
4. Experiences of gender roles in private and public spaces

Interview Structure:

1. Build rapport
    a. Introductions
    b. Easing participant into interview process with formalities (reading consent form and participant information sheet and asking if participant has any questions)
    c. Asking participant about themselves
2. Questions about gender role meanings and experiences (focus is on experiences in Soweto)
    a. What does gender mean to you?
    b. What gender do you identify with?
    c. What does the term gender role mean to you?
    d. Can you tell me about your experiences of being a woman/man within the context of Soweto?
    e. What would consider as benefits of being a woman/man?
    f. What has been your most challenging experience as a woman/man?

3. Questions about gender role development
    a. Can you tell me a little bit about how you developed the roles you associate with being a woman/man?
    b. What role did your family play in you developing these roles?
    c. What role did your culture play in you developing these roles?
    d. What role did Soweto play in you developing these roles?
4. Questions about traditional and non-traditional gender roles:
    a. How would you describe the roles you associate with now as a woman/man?
        i. Would you describe them as traditional or non-traditional, and why?
    b. Can you tell me about the benefits that you associate with traditional and non-traditional roles?
    c. What challenges do you associate with traditional and non-traditional gender roles?
    d. What role does your family play in you maintaining these roles?
    e. What role does your culture play in you maintaining these roles?
    f. What role does Soweto play in you maintaining these roles?
    g. Based on your personal experiences, how would you describe the roles women and men are expected to play in Soweto?
5. Questions about gender roles in public and private spaces:
    a. What roles are expected of you, as a woman/man, when you are with your family?
    b. What roles are expected of you, as a woman/man, when you are in the social context in Soweto (friends, social gatherings etc.)?
    c. If you had/have your own home what roles would you take on as a woman/man?
    d. Based on your personal, family and social experiences, how do you feel about your public and private experiences of being a woman/man and why?
6. Ending of interview:
    a. Have you ever wished you could take on a different role as a woman/man?
    b. If you could imagine a perfect world, what would the roles be like for both men and women?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add about being a woman/man?
8. Thanking participant for their participation and time

Appendix D

Ethics Clearance Screenshot

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE:	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MACC/21/05**
PROJECT TITLE:	Experiences of Gender Roles in Young Adults Living in Soweto.
INVESTIGATOR	Mdunge Fundiswa (2325920)
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	SHCD/Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	01 June 2021
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	Low Risk
EXPIRY DATE	31 December 2023

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 21 June 2021 **CHAIRPERSON** ___ (Dr Vinitha Jithoo)

Cc: Ms Ruby Patel (Supervisor)

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

_____ ___21___/____06___/___21____
Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix E

Turnitin Report

