

BUA PUO PHA: A women's Transgenerational Dialogue on the struggle between personal and cultural expectations in Ntoane Village.

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Lastly, I dedicate this paper to the women of Ntoane of the Bantoane.

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31 October 2019

ABSTRACT

This research explores the tension between women's personal wellbeing, expectations and desires and the expectations imposed by cultural practices, customs, beliefs and norms. We know that there are harmful traditional cultural practices which violate the rights of women and that policies and legislative instruments have been put in place to outlaw these practices. Examples of such practices in South Africa include marriage by abduction, child marriages and virginity testing (Wadesango, et al., 2009). So far, the nature of interventions that deal with women's rights in rural South African communities tends to focus on advocacy and education, but fail to recognize the existence of intergenerational conflict among women. This conflict compromises the ability for interventions focusing on women's rights to have sustainable impact on the community and gives opportunity for further violation of women's rights through harmful traditional cultural practices. This study demonstrates and offers the use of Story, in Applied Theatre and Drama (Chinyowa, (2001), Fox (2006), Mutwa, (1965), as a tool to engage women on traditional cultural practices which violate their rights. It takes a Generational Approach (Howe and Strauss, 2007) to understanding the underlying causes of the continuation of such practices by engaging with the personal narratives of an intergenerational group of women from Ntoane Village, Limpopo, South Africa. Using Narrative Inquiry (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997), Reflective Practice (Schon, 1987) and Narrative Practice (Gubrium and Holstein 1998) in partnership with Story, women from Generation X and Y cohorts embarked on a four-day process which revealed how the characteristics and behavioural patterns of each generation impact and determine the positioning of women in the community and ultimately women's experiences of traditional cultural practices. The research findings suggest that applying a Generational Approach to social development processes in rural South African communities, as it proves in this research, may contribute to the sustainability of sociological interventions in such environments.

Key Words: Intergenerational conflict, traditional cultural practices, Women, Generational Approach, Transgenerational Dialogue, Story, Reflective Narrative Practice.

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MANTWA'S JOURNEY BEGINS

Introduction

The night is abuzz...wedding preparations are underway in Ntoane Village. Children are playing Mokoko-Mahe (hide & seek), the first wife is resting in her bedroom, the second and third are getting their hair done, the fourth is seeing to the children and Mantwa is stirring a big three-legged black pot of pap. As she sweats from the steam rising from the pot, she looks around her and wonders, "How did I find myself as the chief's fifth wife?"

The tension between women's personal wellbeing, expectations and desires, and the expectations imposed by cultural practices, traditions and norms has been an area of interest and debate among social development practitioners. We know that there are harmful traditional and cultural practices which violate the rights of women and that policies and legislative instruments have been put in place to outlaw these practices. Examples of such practices in South Africa include marriage by abduction, child marriages and virginity testing (Wadesango, et al., 2009). So far, responsibility has been placed on national and local government to outlaw traditional cultural practices which violate the rights of women and emphasis has been placed on the need to address the existence of a dual legal system in South African communities.

The nature of interventions that deal with women's rights in rural South African communities tends to focus on advocacy and education (Wadesango, et al., 2009). These efforts have advanced the gender equality and transformation discourse significantly in post-apartheid South Africa and deserve recognition in this respect. In spite of these interventions, however, the practice of harmful traditional cultural practices continues in these areas (Wadesango, et al., 2009). What has been and is still missing from past and current efforts is the recognition of intergenerational conflict (Rice, 2007) among women in rural areas and the impact it has on women's behavioral patterns, understanding of themselves and their experience of traditional cultural practices.

This conflict compromises the ability for interventions focusing on women's rights to have sustainable impact on the community and gives opportunity for further violation of women's rights through harmful traditional cultural practices.

This study seeks to explore the tension between women's personal wellbeing, expectations and desires and the expectations imposed by traditional cultural practices through the use of story in Applied Theatre and Drama. The study takes a Generational Approach as proposed by (Howe & Strauss, 2007) to understand the underlying causes of the continuation of traditional and cultural practices which violate women's rights. Furthermore, the study will describe and illustrate how the concept of a Transgenerational Dialogue was developed and used to facilitate women's storytelling and sharing. To this end, it also demonstrates how story can be an effective tool to engage women on traditional cultural practices which violate their rights.

This research falls within the space of women's rights and is in the field of mitigating harmful traditional cultural practices which violate the rights of women. It is concerned with the wellbeing of black girls and women in rural communities and recognizes the need to build stronger communities by creating spaces for its women to identify, plan and act towards making changes that they want to see in their lives and communities. This research study involved fieldwork during which I facilitated 4 workshops with an intergenerational group of women from Ntoane community in Mautse East Village, South Africa, using story as a primary research tool. The group consisted of participants from the Generation X (1965 – 1981) and Generation Y (1982 – 2000) cohorts (Chambell, Hoffman, Lance & Twenge, 2010).

Research Question

In this research, I seek to answer the following questions:

- How do women, from different generations, experience harmful traditional cultural practices?
- What are some of the underlying causes of the continuation of harmful traditional cultural practices that violate the rights of women?
- In which way/s can Story be used as a tool to facilitate a women's transgenerational dialogue?

Aim

The purpose of this research is to explore the tension between women's personal wellbeing, expectations and desires and the expectations imposed by traditional cultural practices, customs, beliefs and norms.

Objectives

The objective of the study is to unpack and highlight the impact of intergenerational conflict among women in Ntoane Village on the continuation of harmful traditional cultural practices and to make links between dialogue and transformation in rural South African communities through the use of Story as a method to elicit dialogue

Research Context

Mautse East Village is a 20-acre piece of land set in the tranquil Limpopo landscape, 160 km north east of Johannesburg in South Africa. The village comprises of 25 smaller villages whose common town is Groblersdal, a small but developing town. Socially, the community of Mautse East has a high prevalence of HIV, alcohol abuse and teenage pregnancy (UNESCO, 2013).

Culturally, the community is patriarchal and quite conservative. The socio-cultural dynamics of the community make it challenging for its members to engage in dialogue on issues considered taboo and protected by customary law.

According to Himonga and Bosch (2000) customary law or ‘living laws’ is the written and unwritten rules which have developed from the customs and traditions of communities. These traditions and customs become laws because they are known to the community, followed by the community and are enforceable. Although in most rural communities’ customary law is the most important law in people’s lives governing areas such as marriages, property and the right to inheritance, some customary laws discriminate and make people vulnerable (Himonga and Bosch, 2000). These laws tend to give women less power than men and unfairly discriminate between family members on the basis of gender and their status within the family. In as much as the Bill of Rights protects the right to culture it also protects the right to equality and non-discrimination and the right to dignity. It takes into account that there are cultural practices which deserve to be protected because they do not discriminate and that there are cultural practices which should be done away with because they discriminate unfairly (Bill of Rights, 1996). In Mautse East Village, such practices include incest, which according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a form of Gender Based Violence (GBV) against women and is a direct violation of human rights (UN General Assembly, 1948). In this study, several traditional cultural practices of the Bantoane will be identified and explored within a women’s rights framework based on participants’ personal stories and experiences.

The study was undertaken with an intergenerational group of women from Ntoane village. The workshops were conducted at Ndlovu Care Centre in Elandsdoorn village, both villages are part of the greater Mautse East Village. Ntoane village is part of the tribal homestead, where the chief of Mautse East Village resides. The community comprises five clan names; Mokone, Makitla, Mathebe, Mathabathe and Mohlamonyane, with Mathebe being the chieftaincy’s clan name. Being part of the royal homestead, the Ntoane community observes and practices a number of traditional cultural practices which may violate the rights of women.

The study was specifically undertaken with women from Ntoane village as they are a constituency of the ruling tribe. The Bantoane are considered as the rightful custodians of the culture and heritage of the Mautse East villages and it is from Ntoane that power is centralized and disseminated (Thakhuli-Nzuza, 2013). With this consideration, I realized that for change, transformation and sustainability purposes, Ntoane serves as a high leverage point where a small amount of change can cause a significant change in the behavior of the broader community in Mautse East Village.

Background to the study

In 2011, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) identified Mpumalanga as one of four provinces in South Africa with the highest spread and prevalence of HIV (UNESCO, 2013). In Mpumalanga, Mautse East Village was selected as an area of interest in which community dialogues would be facilitated in order to understand the underlying causes of the spread of HIV. At the time Moutse East Village still formed part of Mpumalanga province but has since been relocated to form part of the Limpopo province, a political move which has brought some community leaders into disrepute.

In 2012, The Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF) commissioned Drama for Life (DFL) in partnership with Themba Interactive to hold and carry out 71 dialogues throughout four sites in Moutse East Village, namely Elandsdoorn, Phooko, Uitspanning and Ntoane. The dialogues were conducted by a trained group of Applied Drama and Theatre facilitators using the Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) Methodology (Gueye , et al., 2005). The Dialogues were aimed at taking the community through a ‘Community Change Process’ with hope to assist the community in identifying and hopefully uprooting the underlying causes of the continued spread of HIV. I was one of eight facilitators selected to conduct community dialogues within Moutse East Village. My co- facilitator and I conducted dialogues at the Ntoane Tribal Office, the Royal Homestead of the Bantoane people.

It was during the dialogue process in Ntoane that I learnt of the challenges that were faced by the youth and the community at large. What particularly stood out was the level of frustration the youth had with their inability to fully express themselves due to limitations imposed by the culture. Coming from the royal homestead, the youth of Ntoane felt restricted when raising their opinions about issues that affect them due to the protocols which need to be observed by community members when raising concerns. Although protocol gives one a framework in which to operate, in this case, the youth felt that culturally imposed protocols do not necessarily work in their favor. The tribal office, which serves as a mediator in the community, will always consider first the implication that an issue may have on the image of the royal homestead in deciding on the best way to respond.

Through the dialogues and the subsequent reports compiled, I learnt of the breakdown in communication and lack of dialogue between the youth and elders of the Ntoane community, particularly in Moshate (the Royal Kraal). My interest in the broken narrative fiber of this royal community intensified when in one of the dialogues, a young woman spoke about how some girls were being impregnated by their own fathers. We learnt that many cases of incest go unreported as no incident which could have a negative impact on the image of the Royal Kraal may become public knowledge. The youth thus felt a sense of powerlessness towards fully addressing the challenge by themselves.

I wondered how the conversation would have unfolded if older women had been present in the dialogues. What contribution would they have made? How do they feel about what is happening to the younger women in the village? What role do they play in the community's cultural practices? Do they have a say or are they silenced? Lastly, I thought "If the young women and older women were granted a moment to dialogue on these issues, what would unfold? And that which unfolds, what impact would it have on the community?"

Based on my observations from the 2012/13 dialogues in Ntoane, I hypothesized that there are some traditional cultural practices that violate the rights of women that are still being practiced in parts of South Africa and that it is possible that the lack of intergenerational dialogue among women contributes to this continuation. I suspected that the breakdown in communication and meaningful engagement between women of different generations in black rural communities fuels intergenerational conflict among women within a society which in turn, strengthens and perpetuates the practice of traditional and cultural practices which violate the rights of women.

It is from this premise that this study focuses on the problem of the struggle between women's personal expectations and the expectations imposed by culture and tradition, and suggests that intergenerational conflict among women contributes to the continuation of harmful practices that violate the rights of women. The study will engage with three core questions pertaining to participants' personal experiences of traditional cultural practices, the underlying causes of the continuation of these practices and the use of story as a tool to elicit transgenerational dialogue. The study is located within the space of women's rights in the interest of mitigating harmful traditional cultural practices and points out that some customary laws enable harmful traditional cultural practices such as incest, which under the UDHR is a direct violation of human rights. It advocates for the need for the facilitation of transgenerational dialogue among women if interventions that deal with women's rights in rural South African communities are to be sustainable. A generational approach will be applied as a lens to engage with, read and present the findings generated from the study. A picture of the Mautse East Village and the Bantoane socio-cultural clout allows us to consider the power dynamics and relationship between the Ntoane community and the rest of the Mautse East village communities which makes Ntoane women suitable participants for this study and a high leverage point to facilitate possible change.

INTERGENERATIONAL CONFLICT, DIALOGUE AND THE INTERPLAY WITH CULTURE AND CHANGE

The following chapter gives an overview of the literature that speaks to intergenerational conflict, generational theory, generational approach and generational dialogue; and serves as a foundation to understanding the key drivers of tension between different generations, its origins, causes and effects in rural South African communities. I offer an introduction to Karl Mannheim's Generational Theory (1960) to frame the scope and lens through which the research was conducted and Howe and Strauss's Generational Approach (2007) to understanding the repetitive cycle of the characteristics and behavioral patterns of different generations and how these impact the personal narratives and experiences of each generation. I use Harviland's (1990) perspective on culture and change to weave together the relationship between intergenerational conflict, culture, change and the significance of dialogue. I later define, unpack and make use of Howe & Strauss's Generational Dialogue (2007) to inform the concept of a Transgenerational Dialogue.

An overview of Intergenerational Conflict

Intergenerational conflict among black females can be traced as far back as 1905 when the Natal legislature passed a poll tax on unmarried men who were 18 years and older (Carton, 2000). When summoned in early 1906 to pay tax, many young men refused, leading to disturbances and a revolt which lasted until 1908. Those liable for the tax were part of the first generation of black youths to come of age with expanding access to paid employment, redress of grievances in colonial courts and refuge in Christian missions (Carton, 2000, p2). The young men confronted both a Natal government that took their wealth and their own male elders, many of whom hated white rule yet appeared to consent in its growing disruption of family life. The revolts were later called the "Bhambatha's rebellion", after the chief who was said to have sparked it (Carton, 2000, p 2).

Through independent gain of wealth by younger men, intergenerational conflict was deeply characterized by economic conditions. As a result of young men's growing independence, gerontocratic¹ authority became more fragile, therefore the control of women became the most powerful hold elder men had over their juniors (Walker, 1990). Although black male youths were at the forefront of the defiance, the division waged by the elders acceptance of colonial rule and the ensuing rebellion had a direct impact on the thinking and behaviour of young black females who took advantage of the weakened gerontocratic rule. It was during the rebellion that young women who were meant to be married off ran away from their proposed husbands to the Mission Stations. This meant a loss of labour and lobola² for their fathers' homestead causing tensions between mothers and daughters and the potential in-laws (Carton, 2000). The Mission Stations became a symbol of girls defiance against cultural traditional norms and those who succeeded in staying at the mission station were ex-communicated from the homestead. Disputes over a young man's wages was another source of intergenerational conflict among women. Mothers and wives clashed over the control of the son's money, with some wives being returned back to their maiden homes as a result of the growing animosity between the women. Having returned back to her mother's home, a young woman would rely on extended family for support for her children. Rice (2007) highlights the dependency of two younger generations on an older generation as largely contributing to rising tensions between women in rural South African communities.

In some parts of rural South African communities, most especially in the Eastern Cape, traditional cultural practices such as *ukuthwala*, a marriage by 'legal-abduction', has been the source of deep seated intergenerational conflict among women. The practice involves a young or old man abducting a girl to make his wife. Once the girl is in his home, a message would be sent to the girl's family and it would be up to the father to decide if it is a suitable partnership or not (Rice, 2014). Although mothers were aware of the high possibility of gang rape, excessive abuse and domestic violence that usually accompanies a marriage by abduction (Rice, 2014), the family's economical gain that comes with a daughter being married overshadowed the girls

¹ A form of social organization in which a group of old men or a council of elders dominates or exercises control. Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 18 Mar. 2018.

² Bridewealth cattle paid by men for their future wives.

wellbeing and desire to return home. A daughter's return home was often associated with the mothers failure to raise a resilient, obedient and respectful child who knows her place in society. Mothers were humiliated and daughters scorned by the trauma they endured and the lack of empathy from their mothers. When interviewed in a social study on *ukuthwala*, an elderly woman stated that with the advent of democracy and rights, mothers find it problematic that their daughters can report them to police for marrying them off to their abductors. This for them is proof of the level of the disrespectful ways of today's youth (Rice, 2014).

It is with noting that socio-economic conditions in rural communities have had a colossal role in contributing to family dysfunction and societal breakdown. Walker (1990) discusses economic transformation and industrialization of the South African industry as the roots of much gendered and intergenerational conflict in rural communities. The conditions under which intergenerational conflict among women manifests itself today are similar to those of the 1900's where common law gives women less power than men and unfairly discriminates between family members on the basis of gender and their status within the family (Bill of Rights, 1996).

Generational Theory

Karl Mannheim, a German sociologist, investigated the phenomenon of generations and discovered that young people are inadequately socialized because of a gap between the moral beliefs they have learned from older generations and the realities they experience (Mannheim, 1960). He describes a generation as a social location that has potential to affect an individual's consciousness in the same way that class and culture does. He explained how a person develops meaning based on personal experiences within a social context, "...which is different from other generations" (Mannheim, 1960, p. 278). Mannheim suggests that young people learn values from their families and communities and are likely to abide by these throughout their lives. As they experience life within their own era however, they begin to see society differently.

These experiences shape their attitudes and behavioral patterns as well as shape their perspectives of life. In applying Mannheim's theory, one can assume that women who are of different generations, are taught and socialized in different ways and that when the younger generation interacts with the world, they will begin to form their own understanding of their existence based on the current social, political and ideological context. This engagement with the external world leads to young women forming their own opinions of what it means to live and how to navigate the world which is, at times, necessarily different and may be in conflict with the moral beliefs they have learned from the older generation.

Mannheim describes a generation as being 20 years in length, representing the time from the birth of a particular group/cohort, to the time when they mature and are ready to have their own children. According to Mannheim, the current living generations include the Traditionalists (1930 – 1949), Baby Boomers (1946 – 1964), Generation X (1965 – 1981) and Generation Y (1982 – 2000) (Chapman, Hoffman, Lance & Twenge, 2010). For the purpose of this research, I will focus on the X and Y generations, as these are the research participants' generational cohorts. Drago (2006) describes generation X's coming of age as being characterized by social and economic unrest. The cohort was influenced by Music Television (MTV), the HIV/AIDS epidemic and an unstable competitive economy (Bannon, 2001). Members of this generation experience family, financial and societal insecurity, diversity and quick change. To this cohort, the only thing that is constant is change. The Y generation grew up in the technological advancement era and is therefore also referred to as the 'Dot.Com Generation' or the 'Net Generation' (Egnatoff, 1999). They are mostly impacted by the socio-economic conditions and are the biggest generation to form part of the professional workforce. It is also referred to as the 'Why' generation due to its curious nature. Members of this generation are highly self-confident and represent almost 40% of the South African population (Bevan-Dye, 2012). Although these descriptions are generalizations, they offer us a way to read and understand human behavior at a group level based on the societal and cultural circumstances they were born in.

Generational Dialogue

In order to understand how generational attitudes and behavior impact societal change, Howe and Strauss (2007) established that careful observation of the interaction between members of different generations needs to be made. According to the Strauss-Howe generational theory (2007), generations follow noticeable historical patterns and thus offer an effective tool for predicting future trends. The Generational Dialogue, as they termed it, represents the interplay, movement and change in behavior across generations. They posit that there are four archetypes or universal patterns in generational values which they have termed 'turnings'. These turnings are called Prophet, Nomad, Hero and Artist generations which repeat themselves over an 80year cycle (George, 2016).

The first stage of the cycle starts with a generation in crisis, the generation may be dealing with a hostile situation either politically, socially or economically. The children born during this stage tend to keep to themselves like the Silent generation. Stage two sees the end of the crisis and the next generation of that time comes into an era of optimism and a rebuilding of society ensues. At this stage the Silent generation gives rise to the Baby Boomers who are positive about the future and their view point about the world is more positive. In stage three, idealism gives way to a period of economic hardship and the negative viewpoints on society turn sour and the Baby Boomers give rise to generation X who begin to view things cynically again. Stage four millennials, generation Y, are the last stage who grow up witnessing a crisis. As a result, the cycle will begin again with the next generation, Z, experiencing a global crisis that will cause social upheaval and renewal to accrue (George, 2016). Thus generation Z will respond to the crisis as those in stage one and the pattern will continue over the next 80 years. The ability to predict future trends can assist in predicting how members of different generations will react and behave in significant moments which may bring about change.

Howe and Strauss (1991, p.21) further shared three characteristics of how generations move through the dialogue and interact with each other:

1. Each rising generation breaks from the young adult generation, whose approach is no longer relevant in the present time.
2. It corrects what it perceives as an overabundance of the current midlife generation, sometimes as protest
3. It fulfills the social role being vacated by the exiting elder generation.

A Generational Approach

In rural South African communities, the existence of intergenerational conflict and the lack of understanding thereof by social development processes compromises transformation objectives as well as socio-cultural change. Ongoing research shows that a generational approach to understanding society and groups of people is scientifically acceptable and well-grounded in good social science (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2005). Mannheim (2014) explains that people of the same age are likely to have similar underlying value systems, regardless of their country or community of birth. These "value systems" are the drivers of behavior and attitudes, and are good predictors of behavior and expectations. Understanding the generational behaviors of each cohort and being able to predict a generations action or reaction offers us a way to engage with an intergenerational group of people in a way that can enable sustainable change for the next generational cycle. A generational approach is therefore the intentional application of a generational lens in social interventions as a means to understand and work with existing intergenerational relations, tensions and hopes.

Culture, Social Development and Change

The interaction of GEN X and GEN Y are the focus of this study in order to understand the relationship between generational conflict and societal change. A relation that needs to be established in order to observe the participants' responses to change in the process through a generational approach. According to Haviland (1990, p. 477), change is often caused either by

accidents, or caused by people's deliberate attempt to solve a perceived problem or finally, change may be forced upon one group in the course of especially intense contact between two societies (Haviland, 1990, p. 446). Generational Theory suggests that the generation gap has a significant impact on the progress of a society. For a society to progress, the baton of the history of the people has to be passed on to the next generation. This history or inheritance however, needs to be negotiated with the next generation implying that the inherited culture, values and norms may need to change. This change, as articulated by (Haviland, 1990) can either come about through dialogue or by force.

Social development in the South African context has been reviewed and critiqued by numerous scholars with the intention to assist the African National Congress (ANC) to fashion policies that will enable the government to be more responsive to the real needs of all South Africans (Edigheji, 2007). Amongst such scholars is Graeme Bloch and Lebohang Mokoena whose articles were published as the part of the publication; 'Rethinking South Africa's Developmental Path: reflections on the ANC's policy conference discussion documents' (Edigheji, 2007). Bloch's article titled "*What Happened to the People?*" addresses the complexity of transition, critiquing government's strategies towards social transformation (Edigheji, 2007). Bloch suggests that to imply a technical approach towards social transformation (i.e. infrastructure) will not come to terms with the complex and changing structures of marginalization, exclusion and power in South Africa (Edigheji, 2007, p. 96). According to Bloch, if focus should be placed on people and people driven approaches focused on social development, then the facilitation of people through the transition should be priority. Citing Gramsci, Bloch encourages the development of an approach which centralizes active participation of citizens in addressing problems of their own lives (Edigheji, 2007).

The nature of South African communities informs us that people, although individual; exist as part of a whole. This type of communal existence suggests that as part of the whole, everyone within the society has responsibilities towards the development and maintenance of the community. Both the youth and the elderly thus form an integral part of society and need to

make critical contribution for the community's development. Mokoena (2007) author of '*Beyond the impasse: youth as agents of social transformation*', views youth development as an important aspect of social transformation, advocating for the need for the youth to become drivers and participants in post-apartheid social transformation processes.

Dialogue

In light of the above stated complexities of generations and transformation, it is proposed that a people centered and driven approach to coping with socio-economic change be considered if society is to cope with change. Dialogue, is one of the ways in which such transitions can be facilitated. Swidler (2013) refers to dialogue as a whole new way of thinking in human history. In his definition; "Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views, the primary purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that he or she can change and grow" (Swidler, 2013). Over the past years, particularly since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, the term dialogue has evolved from its literal meaning as described by Swidler.

The term dialogue and dialogues in the South African context encompasses development processes which seek to include community members and stakeholders as active participants and whose perspectives are granted a voice in a physical space where government and development practitioners seek to facilitate change for the community. These processes are strongly rooted in the tradition of 'consultation' in politics, especially within the African National Congress (ANC). In his lecture on *War & Peace* at the University of South Africa (UNISA), Willie Esterhuyse (2012) describes how "talks" (a political term used for dialogue) were the main ingredient and a necessary tool for meaningful engagement on conflict resolution, peace and transformation which contributed towards the ending of apartheid in South Africa. He emphasizes the necessity for dialogue should there be any desire for change. I make reference to Esterhuyse's use of "talks" as these dialogues were facilitated with an aim to achieve political change. The political situation of the time had direct consequences on the social location of communities, which in

turn impacted individual consciousness. This consciousness as suggested by Manheimer's generational theory (1960) had a direct implication on the generations who shared common experiences at the time, these experiences then affect the way in which that particular generation may deal with and address challenges. Hysteresis acknowledges and advocates for dialogue as a critical tool for the facilitation of transformation in a peaceful manner.

Story and Dialogue

Having established the important role of dialogue in the South African context, I would like to look at the relationship between dialogue and story, particularly what it means to the people of Ntoane village. Dialogue in Bantoane language is *ho xoxa* which can be loosely translated as 'to tell'. The act of dialoging in Ntoane is aligned with the telling of one's story and the subsequent interaction of that story with another person's story. Dialogue among the Bantoane therefore serves as an engagement platform through which stories interact with one another.

"The telling and hearing of stories is a bonding ritual that breaks through illusions of separateness and activates a deep sense of our collective interdependence."

(Simmons, 2009)

African civilization and formation dictated that one lives as part of a whole. The concept generally referred to as UBUNTU – I am because you are. This notion has always been aligned with the idea of collective living and co-dependency instead of independent individualism. The circular structure in which huts were built was intentional in order to inform connectivity as a people. In a village for instance, the huts would face each other in a circular formation, one would always be confronted by others the moment you step out of your door. This meant that what went on in your home, affected all other homes within the circle and that you were affected by others too. In the instance where there were disputes or unease in one hut, the matter would be prioritized and a *lekgotla* (gathering) would be convened in order to settle the issue. The *lekgotla* was headed by both female and male elders of the tribe with the intention to restore balance (peace) within that home, which in turn meant restoring balance/peace in the village. The thought of a dispute going unresolved or unattended was discouraged as the implications it would have

on the rest of the village would be dire. But in order to maintain this healthy state of being and consciousness as a people, a considerable amount of sharing of personal, intimate and private stories was required. The telling and sharing of one's story is thus not only about the sharing of a personal experience, but has a larger responsibility that it plays in the community's wellbeing.

The role of storytelling

According to Credo Mutwa, the practice of storytelling has been an inherent part of the Bantu people's preservation for countless generations (Mutwa, 1965). Its use and purpose varying from the transference of knowledge to the teaching of significant life lessons. Mutwa explains that the role of the storyteller was one of educating the people about themselves, their connection to each other, nature and the creative force of the universe, which governs all people. To this end, Mutwa describes the story teller as a particular kind of person within the community, one with birthmarks in the palm of their hands, who is initiated and taught about the mysteries and histories of the people (Mutwa, 1965). The storyteller thus carries the tribe's secrets and knowledge and has a gift to teach others through capturing their imaginations with word and sound. Lessons taught through story were centered on one's understanding of themselves as part of the whole. This meant that by virtue of being part of a people, one is held accountable for their actions, their tribe and the implications of their behavior on others. The act of telling stories thus carried specific knowledge about a tribe's values, beliefs and practices through time.

(Fox, 2006) states that the role of story is primarily to transfer knowledge and moral codes from one generation to another. He describes stories as being primarily the carriers of cultural knowledge and not merely entertainment. Through narratives, community members' experiences are shaped into and relayed as stories for others to witness and affirm as relevant. It is in moments when people share commonalities or differences in their stories that an opportunity to interrogate, make sense of and connect one's story to a broader community arises (Fox, 2006). Explaining that it was through stories that the elders would teach the children lessons which would help them understand and overcome life experiences, Christie and Mhlophe state that the

culture of storytelling in Africa survived colonialism and Christianity because of its intangible and universal character (Christie & Mhlope, 1996). Unlike other more material aspects of culture, storytelling could not be manipulated, stolen or suppressed.

“Storytelling survived because the colonialists never bothered to learn African languages, and it was carried from generation to generation whenever people were together” (Christie & Mhlope, 1996)

According to Christie and Mhlophe, the transference of knowledge and information through story has played a significant part in carrying important cultural codes, norms and values from one generation to another. These codes, norms and values are reflective of the time, space and condition of the people. Although Mhlope suggests that stories have remained the same through time, (Haviland, 1990) teaches us that culture is not stagnant but rather fluid, meaning that stories that are told at a particular time may carry traces of their histories, but also carry present experiences which shape the re-telling or narration of any story at a particular time.

A Transgenerational Dialogue

Considering that currently in some rural South African communities’ women are still being subjected to harmful traditional cultural practices, it becomes inevitable that the cultural codes, norms, values and lessons passed down through stories told by women will highlight inequalities between women and men. In the research, the intangible and universal character of story was used to allow for women’s experiences of traditional and cultural practices to be carried through the narration of their own stories, allowing them to share their experiences through a code (storytelling) in which they could use symbols, metaphors and idioms to express their intangible realities. Borrowing from Mannheim’s Generational Theory (1960) and inspired by Howe and Strauss’s Generational Dialogue (2007), I would like to posit the concept of a Transgenerational Dialogue. Mannheim makes us aware of the phenomenon of generations and Howe and Strauss bring to focus the advantages of observing generational behavioral patterns. Whilst the Generational Dialogue serves us well in predicting future trends, Feit (1972) warns us against the cyclic nature of patterns of action. As the purpose of this research is to elicit dialogue on harmful

cultural practices that violate the rights of women, embedded in this purpose is the requirement to move beyond observing the interplay between generations, to creating a platform for members of each generation to engage in conscious dialogue with each other on a perceived problem in order to break the cyclic pattern of action.

The purpose of the dialogue was not only to share and teach, but to also transcend generational barriers and to transfer valuable information through story. Transcending the generational barrier is rooted in the conscious sharing of personal stories across generations in an effort to nullify existing intergenerational conflict towards achieving a goal of mitigating traditional cultural practices for an entire generational cycle. A process which culminates in what I propose to be a Transgenerational Dialogue. This kind of dialogue asks for us to first, deliberately apply a generational approach in social development processes, secondly to observe and contextualize the generational behavioral patterns of community members/participants, thirdly to present a perceived problem which will be engaged with through sharing of personal stories, fourth is to find the red thread in the stories and lastly, to use the red thread as a ‘taproot’³ of the problem which participants need to decide on the best way to ‘cut’ off.

The above chapter gave an overview of generational conflict among women as a result of the historical migrant labor system supported by Walker’s assertion that economic transformation and industrialization of the South African industry gave rise to most of gendered and generational conflict in rural communities. In it I outlined Manheimer’s Generational Theory (1960) to assist the reader in understanding generational behaviors and expectations informed by generational beliefs and values and proposed the use of dialogue through story as a means to facilitate sustainable transformation in rural South African context. I showed the relationship between the scope of the literature review with the use of story in the study. I placed the storyteller, according to Mutwa’s description as knowledgeable, wise and right. Lastly, I explained the benefit of using a Generational Approach (Howe and Strauss, 2007) as a tool to

³ In social science interventions, the taproot represents the main problem from which other social problems emerge. As in plants, by cutting of the taproot of a social problem, the envisioned goal is to prohibit the growth of linked problems and the ‘tree’ as a whole.

predicting future generational behavior and went on to support my positing of a Transgenerational Dialogue for the purpose of potentially breaking the generational cycle towards mitigating the continuation of traditional cultural practices which discriminate against women.

A REFLECTIVE NARRATIVE PRACTICE

In this chapter, I will outline the different methodological approaches I used to engage with the study, the participants and their stories. I will unpack and justify my use of Narrative Inquiry (Chase, 2005), Reflective Practice (Schon, 1987) and Narrative Practice (Gubrium & Holstein, 1998) to carry out the research and to analyze the data generated from the study. I will show how I used Process Recording (Graybeal & Ruff, 1995) to serve both purposes of data collection and as a thought tracking tool. I will also give a brief demographical description of the research participants and the workshop space.

The focus of this study was to unpack and understand the tension between women's personal wellbeing, expectations and desires and the expectations imposed by traditional cultural practices. It highlights generational conflict as a key contributor in the continuation of traditional cultural practices which violate the rights of women. It encourages the use of story as a tool to foster transgenerational dialogue among women who are subjected to these practices. It was my assumption that by applying a generational approach in unpacking these tensions, that the research participants would be afforded a space to critically engage and reflect on the generational impact of these injustices, with the possibility for them to realize that they can make decisions and take actions that could mitigate the continuation of such practices. As such, the research placed the women of Ntoane village in the center of this study and relied on their sharing of personal experiences, stories and reflections.

Narrative Enquiry

Narrative enquiry is the study of people's experiences through story (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). It offers researchers a way of enquiring about, collecting and analyzing participants' stories in order to form new theoretical understandings of people's experiences. As this research is qualitative in nature and relies on the participants sharing of their stories, I went into the

workshops with the intention of using narrative enquiry as my methodology. My choice of narrative enquiry was informed by the fact that the methodology would provide me with a way of thinking about, studying, exploring and representing human experiences regarding a phenomenon by analyzing and presenting the subjective narratives of individuals (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997); (Polkinghorne, 1988) (Riessman, 1993). Considering ways in which women are personally affected by traditional cultural practices and requiring them to share their narratives on this, required a framework which would allow me to collect, organize and analyze these stories.

As narrative is retrospective meaning, the ordering of past experience allows individuals to understand their own and other people's perspectives which allows them to organize their experiences into a meaningful whole and creates the opportunity for them to see the consequences of events and actions in their community over time (Chase, 2005). Through participants sharing of their narratives, they are able to share their own and hear other women's perspectives and experiences of traditional and cultural practices which violate their rights in a retrospective manner. This in turn gives them an opportunity to see the impact the practices have on (them) women and the consequences these may have on future generations because people, according to Chase (2005), shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and interpret their past in terms of these stories. In this case, narrative becomes a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is defined. Narrative inquiry would therefore allow me to gather, organize and analyse information from participant's subjective experiences of traditional cultural practices

Upon entering the community however, I soon realized that narrative enquiry alone would not be sufficient if I were to engage the women in a critical dialogue. Although I would be able to gather and organize the women's stories through narrative, I needed to be able to engage them in a process which not only allows them to share their stories, but one which also encourages them to critically think about their experiences in the process of sharing. To support narrative enquiry, I therefore used Reflective Practice strategies to structure in reflection into the narrative process.

Reflective Practice

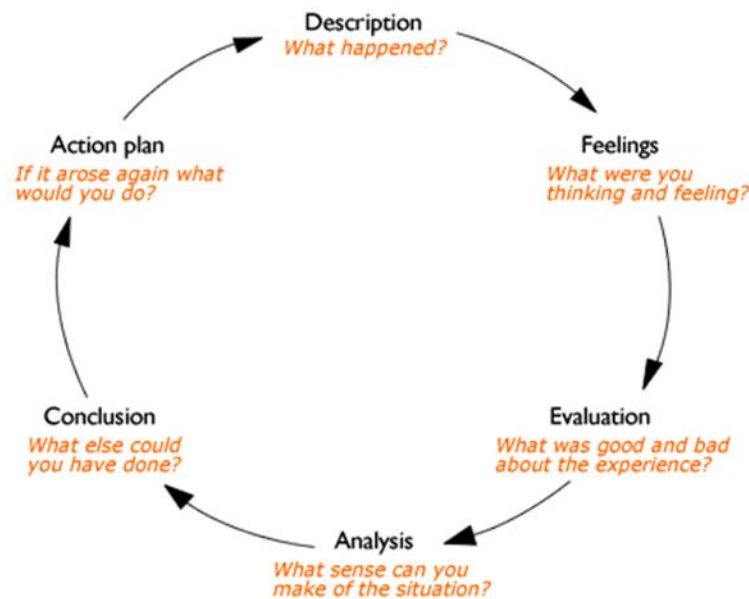
There are a number of definitions and descriptions of what Reflective Practice is in teaching, healthcare and organizational culture (team work). Schon (1987), who coined the term, describes Reflective Practice as a dialogue of thinking and doing through which one becomes more skillful. He drew his ideas on reflective practice from the work of John Dewey, a philosopher of education, whose work was based on reflection. Dewey described the work of reflection as an active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions on which it tends (Dewey, 1933). Dewey's work on reflection inspired Schon to develop Reflective Practice as a conscious process of learning from experience.

Among these definitions, is one offered by Boud (1985) which for the purpose of this research I found more suitable and adaptable for the intentions of creating moments for the research participants' reflection during the narrative process. Boud describes reflective practice as "...a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to a new understanding and appreciation" (Boud, 1985 in Mann, et al. 2009). The words, intellectual and affective indicate that the process of reflection is both a thinking and emotive process where the 'feeling trigger' is as an important attribute of reflection as the 'thinking trigger' is. This means that *how* one feels in a particular situation informs the analytical thinking behind asking *what* happened (Dawson, 2012). After conducting a systematic review on reflective practice, Mann concluded that there are three things that reflection does, he states that reflection allows an individual a moment of deep understanding, that it is most effective when shared in a group and that it improves self-assessment (Mann, et al, 2009). In this the research, the element of reflection would serve the purpose of allowing the women a moment of deep understanding of their own and other's experiences of traditional cultural practices, with the hope that they would identify the necessity for change for themselves and for future generations.

According to Schon (1978), there are two types of Reflective Practice, Reflecting in Action and Reflection on Action. Reflecting in Action is thinking through different approaches to handle a situation while the situation is accruing. Johns (2013) argues that this type of reflection is difficult as it requires one to think logically in the moment which not all practitioners/people are able to do. Reflecting on Action is thinking through a situation after the situation has occurred. It is retrospective and challenges you, your previous knowledge and your values in order for you to act differently next time. Johns describes it as action upon feedback as it allows you to come up with new strategies for the future, gives you time to rethink and is much easier than reflecting in the moment (Johns, 2013). As narrative is meaning that is made from past experiences, I applied Schon's concept of Reflection on Action to challenge the teller's and listener's previous knowledge, beliefs and values. To conjure these moments of Reflection on Action I used Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988) as a tool to allow the women a moment to 'step away' from their stories in order to engage with them critically.

Gibbs Reflective Cycle is a cyclical process consisting of six steps for assessing an experience in order to develop/learn from it. The process begins with describing the event/ experience looking at **what** happened, **where** it happened, **who** was involved and what they were doing, what your contribution was and what the outcome was. The location is important as it may have associated issues which can influence what happened. This step is purely descriptive. The second step is about your feelings and emotions at the time of the event as well as during the event, **how** other people felt and how you feel about the event now (post event). Third is the evaluation of the situation, focusing on what you were thinking and feeling at that moment. This step asks you to look at what was good about the situation, what was bad about it and what you learnt from the experience (how are you different because of the experience). The fourth step is the analysis of the situation, looking the issues behind what went well/right and what went wrong, with you asking yourself **why** did things happen as they did. The fifth step is a conclusion and is a summary of what you have learnt from the experience, with you looking at what you could you have done differently. If you had used a different approach would it have given you a different outcome? And if so, why? Last step is action planning and making suggestions for the future to

improve the situation. You consider what you have learnt, look at how things can be improved and may make recommendations which may go forward for someone else to implement in the future (StudyVids, 2017).



Gibbs Reflection Cycle

In a regular Gibbs reflection process, one would move through the entire cycle and end up with developing plans for different actions that they or others may carry out in future. In this study however, I employed the first three steps of the cycle and did not take the women through the whole process as would be usual. This was due to the fact that the intention of the study was to elicit and facilitate a transgenerational dialogue on participants' personal experiences of traditional cultural practices that violate the rights of women in Ntoane village. To this end, I knew that we would not go through the entire cycle as the intervention itself had time constraints with the scope of the research, at this stage, being the creation and facilitation of a transgenerational dialogue. The first three steps allowed me to take the participants through an internal reflection with focus being on their experiences, their feelings about the experience and what they learnt from the experience. Steps four through to six require participants to reflect on the external factors of the experience, looking at factors that enable the situation to occur and analyzing these in order for you to think about how you could have acted differently which then

allows you to plan for the future. It was my opinion that for the research, the women were not yet in a position to interrogate, from a position of power, external factors that enable some of their experiences in order for them to plan for the future. I therefore focused on the first three steps to facilitate a critical internal self-reflection in relation to others experiences.

Earlier on I mentioned that the first step in Gibbs Reflection Cycle highlights the importance of the location in which an event/situation/experience took place as it may have associated issues and influence on what happened. Having previously worked in Ntoane Village, at the tribal office, I observed how the setting restricted participants' engagement and freedom of expression. This called for serious considerations of space and location for this research and justifications on the need to move the workshops from Ntoane village to Elandsdoorn village. I thus worked with the understanding of space and its impact on stories through a Narrative Practice lens.

Narrative Practice

In analyzing narrative, Gubrium and Holstein's form of narrative inquiry features the storytelling process as much as the story (Gubrium and Holstein, 1998). They argue that the conditions/setting/environment in which a story is told should be of equal importance as the story itself. Arguing that narrative methods which don't take the setting into consideration exclude valuable data provided by the setting. They view personal narrations as being instinctively linked to the interplay of conversational actions and the circumstances of storytelling, which in contemporary life are more multi-sited than ever (Gubrium and Holstein 1994; 1995b). Gubrium and Holstein coined the term "Narrative Practice" to offer social researchers using narrative inquiry a more holistic approach towards understanding narratives, by simultaneously characterizing the activities of storytelling, the resources used to tell the story and the environment under which the stories are told (Gubrium & Holstein, 1999). They considered personal stories and their coherence as matters of practice, thus centering the attention on 'how' the story was told and through 'what' was the story told.

Inspired by Gubrium and Holstein's observation of the necessity to think through the impact of the setting in the storytelling process, I chose to facilitate the workshops at Ndlovu Care Centre in Elandsdoorn, 35 km from Ntoane Village. Having witnessed the silencing affect the tribal office setting had on young women's ability to share their perspectives and experiences, I knew the deep sense of guilt that was attached to speaking about taboo issues that transpired in the village which could negatively taint the image of the royal homestead. It was my understanding that moving the women's engagement to a different location would, to a degree, allow them room to navigate the telling and sharing of their stories in a space that was not embedded with the burden of the Bantoane metanarrative. Together with the setting/location/environment in which a story is told, Narrative Practice also calls to our attention the need to be aware of the activities of storytelling and the resources used to tell the story, stating that by being mindful of these elements, social researches are able to get a holistic approach to understanding narratives. To this end, in the workshop process I asked participants to make use of objects, images and photographs as resources through which they could share their narratives. Their relationship to some of these objects were explored and unpacked for further understanding of the Bantoane traditional cultural practices

Data collection

Journal

To collect data during the workshops I used a journal. In the journal, I captured parts of participants' narratives verbatim, parts of the group discussions, questions that came up from discussions as well as descriptions of the process. Physical data collected from the workshops included photographs of group images, drawings and creative writing pieces that participants created as part of their reflective processes. Participants' responses to some of the games we played were captured verbatim on a white board in the space which I later took pictures of. In the journal I describe the exercises I used, the reasoning behind them and what transpired during some of the engagements. Whenever stories were shared I would observe if it had any impact on

the other women (listeners) through observation of their body language (uncomfortable small shifts or movements), extreme silence or loud laughter and excitement.

Having worked with the Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) methodology which describes stories that arouse heightened emotions from participants as ‘burning issues’ (Gueye, et al., 2005), I knew that I had to pay attention to the ‘ripple effect’ of stories and captured these observations in the journal. According to Gueye et al, these are issues that when they come up among community members, they are able to shift the energy in the room. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to constantly be aware of which themes were ‘burning issues’ for participants, as it is on these issues that participants have to be critically engaged, in order for meaningful dialogue to take place.

This required me, as a researcher and facilitator, to be constantly aware of what was happening in the room, looking at what was shared, who shared it, how it was shared, whether it had an impact on other participants or not, who was affected, how they were affected and why they were affected. I structured the workshop process in a way that allowed the women to share their stories through different mediums, I then used reflective practice tools to assist them to ‘step away’ from the story for them to reengage with it in dialogue with others. This multifaceted engagement, observations and recordings required me to find ways of tracking my own perspectives, engagement and intentions throughout the process.

Process Recording

Process Recording is a tool that helps facilitators/practitioners/researchers who work with people to use introspection to identify the thoughts, feelings and responses they had during an interaction with a participant/client/interviewee during a workshop/consultation/interview experience (Woolston, 2018). Although popularly used by training nurses and social workers, the tool is adaptable for use by most professionals who work with people and are engaged in fields of social service and development. In it, the practitioner records the story/dialogue/comment verbatim in the first column, the practitioner’s feelings, thoughts and analysis of the dialogue are

then recorded in corresponding columns (see diagram below). The tool is designed to help practitioners to be less reactive and more proactive in their engagement process which assists one to be more culturally competent in the space. It gives practitioners an opportunity to challenge their biases and gut reactions towards participants and allows one to become more mindful towards participants as it enables the practitioner to reflect on why they (the practitioner) responded in a particular way and what they can do to improve future interactions (Graybeal & Ruff, 1995).

Process Recording

Story/Dialogue/Comment	Feelings	Thoughts	Analysis
Captured verbatim	How did you feel in this moment? - Angry - Sad - Frustrated - Happy - Scared	What was going through your mind?	Why did you feel like that? Why did you think that? What does this mean

Simple process recording framework

As a researcher and facilitator who was working with an intergenerational group of women in a rural community on the impact of traditional cultural practices on women, process recording helped me have better understanding of myself, my emotions and my actions in the process by helping me analyze my interactions with the women in retrospect. This was not easy as it was constantly reminding me to keep my intentions in check. At times when participants dropped out of the workshops and did not return, not only did it affect the numbers of the research participants but it affected me too as I found myself questioning my intentions for carrying out such a research. I had thoughts that maybe the women did not want to participate, and that

maybe they didn't want to be having such conversations, and that maybe what I perceived to be a problem of generations in the community was only in my head. Through the tool I was able to put my emotions and thoughts into perspective and realized that each time I was told a participant was not coming to a workshop my anxiety was misplaced as I made it about the potential irrelevance of my research instead of realizing and acknowledging how much of themselves the women were giving and sharing in the mist of what is considered taboo in their own community. Process recording helped me highlight moments which evoked notable emotions in me and allowed me to interrogate why certain stories, conversations and/or questions inspired particular thoughts in me. The analysis of these allowed me a moment to regroup myself, question my intentions and plan for the next workshop. Process recording also helped to carry me through the process, which became quite fluid and organic as the outcomes of each workshop informed my planning of the next workshop.

The methodological approach to this study required the use of Narrative Enquiry to help me collect, organize and analyze the participants' stories. In addition to this, I made use of Reflective Practice tools to create moments for the women to critically reflect on their experiences in relation to each other's narratives and possible implications for the future. Having understood, from my previous engagement at Ntoane, the limitations prompted by the setting, I also applied a Narrative Practice lens to incorporate the importance of the setting and the material condition in which the story is told as part of my practice/research. What emerged from the combined use of narrative enquiry, narrative practice and reflective practice strategies within the narrative process is what I began to refer to as a Critical Reflective Narrative Practice. A practice that involves story, reflection, space and materiality. I outlined my use of a journal for data collection and showed how I used Process Recording as a tool to keep track of the dialogues, my feelings, thoughts and analysis of these as to inform and improve my relation with the participants.

JOURNEY WITH A MONTWANE OF THE BANTWANE FROM NTWANE

Considering that this research makes use of participants' narratives to facilitate a dialogic process on the themes outlined in the literature review chapter, this chapter will provide a detailed account of the workshop process through which a transgenerational dialogue was facilitated. The process will guide the reader through each workshop, the data collected, my reflections and analysis of the outcomes. The chapter will provide an account of my own process in re-entering the community, ethical considerations as well as a description of the participants and the workshop space. In it I describe my relationship with the community at the time of the research and will share some of the challenges I faced during the process.

Ethical considerations

In our very first workshop I explained to the women that although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, anonymity can be achieved as none of their real names will be used in the final report and their comments during the workshops will not be attached to their names.

As a young black female researcher and facilitator working with other black women's stories, I was reminded of Casdagli's notion of trust between the practitioner and the participant, stating that trust is the one ingredient that necessitates full engagement between a participant and a practitioner. Casdagli (1999) states that a participants need to develop trust in the practitioner in order to allow herself to open up to engagement, furthermore, she suggests that the practitioner too has to have trust in first themselves, secondly trust in the process and thirdly trust in the participants. This sometimes-difficult power relation between participant and practitioner calls to attention the need for the practitioners understanding of herself in relation to others and the applied theatre practice, before she can even negotiate her way with participants.

All these elements were at play in the research workshop process which required me to be conscious of my position as a practitioner, a young female and a black woman in relation to other black women in the space who could as well be my siblings, mother, aunt or friends.

The purpose of the workshops was to investigate ways in which story can be used as a tool to unearth and facilitate dialogue between women of different generations, specifically between GEN X and GEN Y. The women in question are the Bantoane women who are from the royal family and therefore carry a higher social status in the broader Mautse East community. I invited the women to come together to explore their personal narratives on being a Montoane, I invited them to come together to converse on the Bantoane cultural practices and their experiences of being a woman in Ntoane Village. I invited them to come share their personal views and thoughts about being a Montoane woman and how it shapes their thoughts and actions, particularly regarding cultural practices. I invited the women to dialogue with each other on the pros and cons of the Bantoane cultural practices as experienced by different generations.

The Participants

In the week of 28 November to 1 December 2016, I facilitated four transgenerational dialogue workshops with an intergenerational group of Bantoane women. The workshops began with 7 participants and ended with a consistent group of two women aged 40 and 45 respectively and two younger women aged 25 and 31. Below is a brief description of all participants who were present in the first workshop.

*⁴Mpho is 31 years old and is a primary school administrator at a Primary School in Ntoane,

*Lerato is 25 years old and is a youth program facilitator at a local community centre,

*Fikile is 45 years old and is a mother of 5 and grandmother of 3,

*Tshepiso is 40 years old and is a retrenched nurse and mother of 3 children.

*Thato is 22 years old and is studying Human Resource management at Pretoria University; she is currently at home for the holidays.

*Names of participants have been change to protect participants' identities.

*Ntswaki 43 years old and is a mother of 4. She used to practice as a nurse but has been unemployed for the past 6 years. She sometimes gets piece jobs at Ndlovu when they need extra hands.

*Ntwanano is 26 years old and is an orphan. She lives with her grandmother and survives on her grandmother's social grant and doing odd jobs here and there.

The Space

The dialogue workshops were held at the Ndlovu Care Sports Centre in Elandsdoorn, 35 km from Ntoane Village. The venue is used for an after-school youth program run by the Ndlovu Care Group. The dialogue room was a foyer space upstairs in the administration block of the building. Although the space was not the most comfortable as it received extensive sunlight and was in an open area, it was most of the time private and a relatively safe space as it was outside the royal homestead and only four staff members were in the building at any given time in a closed office. This provided the women with a reasonable "safety net" as it allowed them to participate in discussions considered to be taboo in Ntoane. We held the dialogues between 3-5 pm in the afternoon to accommodate all the women.

Renegotiating entry into Mautse

As mentioned in the background to the study, I was a part of a team of facilitators who conducted community dialogues in Mautse East Village between 2012 -2013. The dialogues were conducted in 8 villages, one of them being Ntoane Village where I and a local facilitator were assigned. This is where I met the women of Ntoane. During the community dialogues in Ntoane Village, it was notable that there were more males than females participating in the community change process. The male voice and interest was considerably louder than the female and only at rare moments would the female voice find enough strength and opportunity for their experiences and woman specific challenges to be heard. And at times, only to be dismissed or

rationalized, through cultural dominance by the males, who were responding out of fear that the issues raised may accuse the Bantoane cultural system of being oppressive towards women.

One of the young women who were brave enough to speak her mind and share her opinion was Mamohudi. Mamohudi is one of a few privileged young women who had an opportunity to study Psychology at the University of Pretoria, Tshwane, a city 160 km South of Mautse East Village. When we started the community dialogues in 2012 she was one of the leading youth members of the Tswelopele Youth Initiative who encouraged the community to participate in the process. In the context of Mautse, Mamohudi is considered as a rebel, loud mouth, and generally perceived as a ‘miss know it all’, particularly by older men. Prior to my research workshops I had last seen her in 2013 at the last community dialogue in Ntoane Village, where she also lives.

Navigating the Mautse East Village socio-cultural dynamics is complex. Navigating one’s way through the Bantoane socio-cultural dynamics is further complicated by the tribal office protocols. Outsiders are generally perceived in two ways; either as researchers with self-interested intentions to extract information from the local people for their own benefit or as economically interested organizations who extract the wealth of the people through opportunities, cheap labor and even through the natural resources from the land. Entering the community and gaining the people’s trust is a lengthy process in which one must prove that she has real interest in the wellbeing of the people. In as much as there is skepticism among the people however, the people of Mautse East long for development, especially economic. As a result, they engage in programs and interventions with the hope that they will add value to their lives.

Coming into this research, I was encouraged by young women such as Mamohudi, who showed a strength and resilience in the face of the staunch cultural traditions and conditions present in Ntoane. It was Mamohudi and other young women who were brave enough in the dialogues to ‘name without shame’ some of the practices which are overtly and covertly harmful to women.

So naturally, when I thought of someone who could help me organize women, Mamohudi came to mind. After 3 years since the dialogues, I made contact and shared my research objectives with her while simultaneously asking if she would be willing and able to find a group of women who would be interested and willing to participate.

I spoke frantically over the phone, hoping to reconnect in some way, hoping that she remembered the dialogues. She paused for a while, once I had given her a chance to interject, she asked, “Fo eng?” meaning, what for? And in that moment, I had to find clarity about why I really wanted to engage in this research beyond my academic impetus. “I just want to know what the older women have to say about the issues you raised during the dialogues. I wonder if they know how you and other younger women feel about harmful cultural practices and I wonder what they think and feel”. And I suppose somewhere there... I wondered about my own mother....and grandmother and our own understanding or misunderstanding of each other (Thakhuli-Nzuza, 2016).

Mamohudi agreed to help. I could not travel to Mautse to talk to participants myself and knowing how skeptical the Bantoane are of outsiders, I surrendered the process to Mamohudi, only asking her to invite ten women to participate, five between the ages of 20 – 30 and five between the ages of 40 – 50. Three weeks later, Mamohudi called to let me know that she has identified, approached and confirmed interested participants. A week later I was in Mautse ready to conduct the research workshops.

Entering Mautse

Traveling from Ntoane to Elandsdoorn, where the workshops took place, with public transport takes too long, so I agreed to pick up the participants in groups at different spots. After picking up the older women from their respective points; we met with the younger women who were already in the space. As we settled down I noticed that the group separated and the women

gravitated towards their own generational groups, the younger women seemed to be familiar with each other and the older women seemed to also know each other well, but the two groups had not necessarily shared an intimate space together before.

The youth were chatting loudly about their work and something that had happened over the weekend. The older women were seated behind a table in the room and talked softly about something. They were scanning the room. All three had their handbags on their laps clinging onto them for dear life. One of them called Mamohudi (who was there to introduce me to the group) and pointed at her watch, I assumed she was enquiring either about when we are going to begin or end the workshop. Either way, I immediately understood that time was important. A few minutes later, I asked the group to come together and we sat on chairs in a circle. I introduced myself by name and surname and asked the participants to do the same. After the round of introductions, I noticed their eyes still fixed on me. I started to introduce the reason for this workshop and my intentions. I gave the participants a brief overview of the community dialogue process held in 2012/13 which inspired my current research interest and the reason for these workshops. The younger participants recalled the dialogues but only one of the older women remembered a time when her daughter used to attend the dialogues. I explained that it was from this premise (community dialogues) that I became interested in conducting further research on possible ways to encourage communication or dialogue between older and younger women of the Bantoane community. The women nodded their heads. I proceeded to take them through the participant's information sheet and emphasized that although it was highly recommended that they participate in all 5 workshops, they were free to discontinue the process at any point.

Ethnographic description of the workshops

The following is an ethnographic description of my encounter with the group of women from Ntoane Village. Through it, I invite you to join our four-day journey, venturing into the lives and lived experiences of a humble, innately intelligent and self -knowing/aware/conscious group of women (as you will discover). From this journey; I highlight specific moments in the process

which helped me to identify stories and experiences which created moments of dialogue among the women. In most cases, I indicate with a GEN X or GEN Y to show which generational group a participant belongs to. This is so that you can read and contextualise participants' responses through a generational lens and for the purpose of identifying similarities and differences between generations.

Workshop 1

The aim of this workshop was to introduce participants to each other and the facilitator. It served to set the tone for the process and to introduce participants to the idea of reflection by taking them through an exercise to allow them to unpack their observations and experiences of what, in their opinion, it entails to be a woman.

Exercise 1

We stood together in a circle, I asked the women to walk in any direction in the room, filling the empty spaces. As they walked, I asked them to get into groups of 2 as quickly as they could and to share their name, surname and where they were from with their partners. After sharing, I asked them to walk again and whilst walking, I asked them to get into groups of 2 with a different person and to share the name, surname, where they were from and one thing that they liked about themselves. Once they had shared, I repeated the same process again, this time asking them to get into the last group of 2 and to share their name, surname, where they were from, one thing that they liked about themselves and one thing they would have liked to improve/change about themselves.

The objective of the exercise was to introduce participants to each other through sharing basic information such as name, surname and where one is from. The exercise was also meant to introduce the idea of sharing personal information with each other through the sharing of their personal 'likes' and 'areas of improvement'. It was also a way of starting to build trust among participants. After each round of sharing, I asked each pair to relay what their partner had shared

with them. During the last round of ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’, the following was shared with the larger group.

Participant	Generation	A Like	Area of improvement
Thato	Y	I love my lips; I think they look juicy	I want to be more patient. I’m easily irritated and I don’t want to be.
Lerato	Y	My nose is the perfect shape. Not too big or small, and has an “English” shape to it. It’s really nice.	I would like to work on my confidence. I would like to stand up for myself and be independent in what I do and how I think.
Fikile	X	I am able to love and give a lot of love. Even if you upset me, I will still love you.	Nothing I can think of. No, nothing
Ntswaki	X	I can say “I’m patient”.	I can’t think of anything
Tshepiso	X	I am patient and can tolerate a lot of things. I don’t get upset very easily. I don’t allow myself to.	Shakes her head to signify that she does not want to say anything.
Mpho	Y	I come from a big family and I love it. I’m never alone or lonely and I appreciate that.	Would like to be a better listener and speak slower
Ntwanano	Y	I love my family; there are many of us in the house so it’s always alive and active. There’s always something going on.	I want to be more patient

Table 1: Participant ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’

From the exercise I noticed that the GEN Ys referred to a physical feature (i.e. nose, mouth) as something that they liked about themselves and referred to an element of their character or personality as something they would like to improve/change about themselves (i.e. being patient, being confident).

The GEN Xs referred to something about their character (i.e. being loving, patient) as something they liked about themselves and said that there is nothing that they would like to improve/change about themselves. The above suggests that the younger women of Ntoane are currently at a stage where they are more concerned about their physical appearances whilst recognizing their shortcomings in the development of their characters. The older women value having a strong character and appear to have little desire to improve much about themselves. According to Howe & Strauss (2007), the older women are at a stage where as their focus is on building and shaping their children's and grandchildren's characters. They seem to have passed the stage of desiring change and do not see the necessity for further development.

Exercise 2

After a short break, I divided participants into their generational groups, (Gen X and Gen Y). Group 1 was the older generation and group 2 was the younger generation. In their groups, I asked them to discuss, based on their experiences, what they thought was exceptional about being a woman and what they thought was challenging about being a woman.

From the exercise, I wanted to establish the women's views on what their experiences of being a woman were based on what they viewed as exceptional and challenging aspects of being a woman. I then asked them to share some of the points they discussed in their groups and recorded them verbatim a board as they spoke. These are some of the responses from both groups to both questions:

What is exceptional about being a woman?		What, for you, is challenging about being a woman?	
Lerato GEN Y	We can multitask	Fikile GEN X	Women experience a lot of pain from their husbands and children. Men cheat and children give you a hard time growing up.
Thato GEN Y	We are strong	Thato GEN Y	Childbirth, the pain is unbearable. Men would probably die.
Mpho GEN Y	We can face challenges straight, especially difficult situations, women always find a way to deal with a problem, unlike men.	Ntwanano GEN Y	Being a girl child, you are expected to clean, cook, do laundry for your brothers. It's like you are a slave.
Fikile GEN X	Women are creative, when there is nothing to eat; a mother can make a plan with the little she has.	Tshepiso GEN X	As a woman you do so much to clothe, feed and school your children and your husband gets the credit for it.
Thato GEN Y	Women are beautiful.	Mpho GEN X	Periods can be so annoying and the pains are sometimes unbearable and you still have to go on like everything is fine.
Ntswaki GEN X	Women are resilient. She can stay with a man who cheated and had a love child and still take care of that child as if it were her own. Men would never do that; they are unforgiving when it comes to cheating.	Fikile GEN X	If your husband passes away, you are dressed in all black for 12 months so everyone can know you are in mourning and it becomes so restrictive. All men have to do is wear a black shirt, if you don't know he is in mourning you wouldn't be able to tell and his life can continue as normal.

Table 2: Participant views on the pros and cons of being a woman

During the discussion, I noticed that there was excitement as the women shared what they felt was exceptional about being a woman. I also noticed that when some participants shared some of the challenges they would laugh about it. Some participants expressed these aggressively. Others sat still in thought as others shared. Most of the women's responses/perceptions to what they thought were exceptional about being a woman was centered on women's strength and resilience

in the face of adversity. Mpho spoke about a woman's ability to face a challenge head on, especially in difficult situations. She described a woman's strength as being her ability to "always find a way to deal with a problem". In a similar token, Fikile commended women's creativity as she is able to "create" a meal, when there is nothing to eat, from the very little she has.

Having been away from Mautse East Village for 3 years I realized that not much had changed with regards to women's need for a space to dialogue. Although the younger women were more vocal than the older women, my observations of their excitement to share made me realize how much women appreciated a space of their own. Through the first exercise we were able to build a sense of community which enabled the women to share sensitive personal experiences of the challenges they face as women. Ntwanano's reflection on the challenges was followed by a moment of silence which deepened the level of trust building among the group. After Ntwanano had shared her experience, I was reluctant to probe further regarding her statement about "feeling like a slave" instead; I observed the women's responses as a guide to assist me on how to drive the narrative forward. The women said nothing; as a result, I said nothing.

The participants' reflections made me think about the way in which women are inclined to search for and even create meaningfulness even in difficult situations. The discussion spoke about women's resilience, suffrage and survival and the urge to still find and create beauty and positivity out of an under resourced "life". Both generations mentioned the idea of 'women's strength' lying in her ability to survive. In this workshop I began to identify gender roles, gender positioning and attitudes. It raised questions about whether women in Ntoane are living or surviving. I made a note of this question with hope that it will be answered as we engage further in the process.

At the end of the workshop I asked the participants to find an object which represents them as a woman and an object which represents them as a Montoane woman. I asked them to bring these objects to the next workshop.

⁵Workshop 2

Theme: Being a woman in Ntoane

The aim of this workshop was to allow participants to reflect on their understanding of themselves firstly as women and secondly as Bantoane women. We made use of object as a way to help participants speak back to their experiences of some of the Bantoane culture. Ntwanano and Ntswaki excused themselves from the workshop, they told Mamohudi who told me. Mamohudi stated that while both women gave no explanation, she suspected that Ntwanano had too many responsibilities at home which were being compromised by her attendance at the workshop. This resonated with the statement that Ntwanano made yesterday which was revisited in this workshop.

As the women entered the workshop space I noticed a slight difference from yesterday, Fikile and Mpho were in conversation about something. My reading of the interaction was that the women had an existing relationship outside the space which could not manifest yesterday due to uncertainties about the workshops and the space. I thought that this could mean that they were becoming familiar with the environment. Narrative Practice (Gubrium & Holstein, 1998) highlights the need to be conscious of the space in which narratives are shared as the spaces in and of themselves are socially, culturally and politically charged and will therefore have an influence on the narratives shared in the space. Knowing this, I was pleased to see the women outside of the frame set by the exercises.

⁵ Not: Ntswaki and Ntwanano asked to be excused from the workshops and were not present from the second workshop onwards.

Reflection

I began the workshop by asking the women to reflect on something that stood out for them in the previous workshop. After a moment, participants shared the following

Participant	Generation	Reflection
Lerato	Y	I didn't realize how much I had in common with other people when it comes to how I feel as a woman.
Tshepiso	X	It was interesting to look at the things that I like about being a woman because sometimes we forget and only remember the pain.
Fikile	X	I was sad to hear Ntwanano say she felt like a slave in her home because of all the duties she performs for others. When I was growing up, I did the same and thought it was normal even when I was tired, I realized how much truth there is to what she said.
Mpho	Y	I just got so fed up realizing how much we go through as women for other people, your husband, children or community. We always doing things for somebody else
Lerato	Y	I saw that women have to deal with a lot and put up with a lot and yet they still manage to make everyone feel good, even when they are down.

Table3: Participants reflections and observations.

Fikile shared about how heartbroken she was when she heard Ntwanano's lived experience at her home. To recap, in the previous workshop I had asked the women to share the exceptional and challenging aspects about being a woman, Ntwanano shared the following as a challenge, "being a girl child, you are expected to clean, cook and do laundry for your brothers. It's like you are a slave". Fikile's reflection was followed by a moment of silence.

I sensed the tension and asked her to elaborate. What followed was a discussion on the roles and responsibilities of the girl child in Ntoane Village households. Fikile explained that a girl child is expected to clean the house, clear the yard, do the laundry, cook and wash dishes. She recalls being exhausted as a child but not having the vocabulary to describe how she was feeling, as being tired was associated with laziness and incompetence. In her reflection, Fikile stated, “I was sad to hear Ntwanano say she felt like a slave in her home because of all the duties she performs for others. When I was growing up, I did the same and thought it was normal even when I was tired. I realized how much truth there is to what she said”.

In that moment I realized that Fikile had encountered her younger self through Ntwanano and was confronted with the truth about an aspect of her childhood. Before that moment then Fikile had not critically thought about what she had experienced growing up or questioned the role she was expected to fulfill. In identifying with Ntwanano’s story, she could empathize with Ntwanano’s current lived experience and potentially her own daughters and granddaughters. By identifying with Ntwanano’s experience, Fikile began to question the prescribed roles cast upon female children in Ntoane. She has brought it to her own attention and is now conscious of the implications these expectations have on the lived experiences of young women. As she listened to Ntwanano’s story, she revisited her own experience and was potentially challenged to think about the experiences of her daughters and granddaughters. Having encountered herself through Ntwanano, Fikile was made aware of a different perspective to the duties imposed on the girl child and will have to make her own decision, now an informed decision, on how to shape these experiences for her next generations.

Mpho and Lerato gasped and almost simultaneously expressed how ridiculous and impossible these expectations were. Tshepiso supported Fikile’s story. The women went on to compare notes about the possibilities and impossibilities of certain expectations. The conversation came to an abrupt end when Fikile said, “Yes it’s ridiculous, but that’s our culture”, Mpho and Lerato shook their heads in disagreement.

Although both generations agreed that expectations placed on the girl child were cumbersome and had traces of slavery, the older women felt that nothing could be done to change the situation

and resorted to explaining it as being part of the Bantoane culture. Both generations expressed a desire to see the situation change, but the GEN Xs could not see how. The GEN Ys on the other hand, stated that the situation did not necessarily have to be this way although it was the current situation. I asked myself, whose responsibility was it, between the two generations, to initiate the change?

Projected play as story

In the next exercise, I asked participants to place, in the center of the room; objects which best described them as women and to observe these without making any comment. I then asked participants to place, in the center of the room; objects which best describe them as Bantoane women. Going around the circle, each participant presented their objects and shared the associated meaning with the group. The purpose of the exercise was for participants to reflect on what they associated with as women and what they associated with as Bantoane women. The exercise also served as a tool for participants to reflect on similarities and/or differences between their perspectives on being a woman and being specifically a Montoane woman.

Presentation of objects and their implied meaning:

- Mpho presented a sanitary pad to represent her as a woman and ammoniated cleaner (commonly known as Handy Andy) to represent her as a Montoane woman.
- Lerato brought a sanitary pad to represent her as a woman. She did not bring an object that represented her as a Montoane woman, when asked she replied that she could not find any object she found suitable for this.
- Fikile brought a *doek* (head scarf) to represent her as a woman and a picture of herself in full Montoane woman traditional regalia to represent her as a Montoane woman.
- Tshepiso brought a white cleaning powder in a small transparent plastic bag to represent her as a woman and a wraparound piece of material to represent her as a Montoane woman.

As the women presented their objects and the meanings they carried, narratives of Bogwana (childhood), Bongwanana (girlhood) and Bosadi (womanhood) unfolded. According to the Bantoane, one is a child from birth till their early teenage years when they are considered ready to go to initiation school. After attending an initiation school, a girl child is now considered as a young adult and when she is married and bears children she will be regarded as a woman. These phases were articulated through the stories shared from the object narratives.

Mpho and Lerato spoke fondly of a time before they started menstruating. How much easier life was when they didn't have to worry about pads and period pains. They reminisced about a time when they didn't have to worry about adulating (a term used to describe the process of having to become responsible, create long term goals and make the 'right' decisions). They remembered and missed their childhood, a time when they did not have to worry about the terms and conditions which were already applied to them as Bantoane girl children. Jeanette picked up the Handy Andy and spoke about hard labor being what she identifies with as a Montoane woman. I viewed Lerato's not bringing of an object that symbolised being a Montoane woman as very telling of the possibility of a conscious or unconscious resistance of the younger generation to conform to cultural norms and values passed down from previous generations. In this moment, I read Lerato's actions in relation to Mannheim's (1960) observations of the different behaviour patterns carried by different generations.

Fikile and Tshepiso referred to the *doek* as a symbol of being a woman. Describing how as a fully grown, married woman, one wears a *doek* in their new home (in-laws home) as a sign of respect, humility and submission not only to your husband but to his entire family. Fikile showed the group a picture of her in full Montoane woman traditional attire. She named the different parts of the attire which make up the dress and what each meant. From her presentation I learnt that Fikile has been initiated into womanhood, is married and has three children through her traditional attire. She spoke about how beautiful and simultaneously heavy the attire is and that it is often worn at weddings, initiations and ancestral ceremonies. Tshepiso has one too but doesn't like to wear it because it's too heavy. As she shared her vast knowledge on the traditional attires

of the Bantoane, Fikile reminded us of Ntwanano again. This time she drew our focus to the two red and white beaded necklaces that Ntwanano wore in the previous workshop. She explained that each necklace represented a deceased parent which meant that Ntwanano was an orphan. This might also explain why she may have felt like a slave in her family's homestead. Fikile explained that in Ntoane, one can tell a person's position in society, whether you are from the royal family or not, if you are married, widowed, born out of wedlock, have lost a parent, are orphaned, divorced or unmarried with children and living with your parents through symbolism (beads, traditional clothing items, decorations on head wraps). The traditional cultural clothing and accessories of the Bantoane serve as signifiers through which one's story is told. Narrative Practice informs us that the resources (materiality) through which a story is shared are just as important in reading, analyzing and understanding the narrative (Gubrium and Holstein, 1998). Fikile's story told of a system in Ntoane that uses symbolism through clothing to inform and potentially separate.

During the discussion Mpho and Lerato began to make links between how they had witnessed some of their fellow learners being ill-treated by teachers at school and thought that the treatment could have been informed by the fact that the teachers knew that the learners were either orphans or born out of wedlock with an unmarried mother, statuses which are both shunned in the community. Through this, I learnt how symbolism may serve to include or exclude individuals, families and even communities (non-Ntoane communities). The Ntoane tribe, being the home of the tribal office, holds cultural clout over other villages in Mautse East. This means that the Bantoane are generally considered as having a higher status to members of other communities. Their traditional clothing thus serves as a signifier during rituals and ceremonies, of who is a Montoane and who is not. Being able to differentiate in Ntoane is very important as it upholds and perpetuates the notion that the Bantoane are of a better status than others. Similarly, within the Bantoane, differentiation is still important in identifying who has direct relation to the chief and the chieftaincy and who can be considered a peasant among them.

Historically, through the symbol, less fortunate community members could only be identified by other clan members, who would then take up the collective responsibility to ensure that the community's most vulnerable persons are protected and taken care of. Through time, colonization and transformation, the role of the symbolism in traditional clothing has shifted to becoming one that is concerned with the less fortunate being treated with less respect, and prayed upon due to their poor economic statuses. The symbol also allows men to pray on vulnerable girls and women in the community. How does all the above relate to how the participants felt and towards the idea of change?

Creative drawing as narration

In another exercise I asked participants the following question: What comes to mind when I say the word Family? I presented participants with drawing materials and paper and asked them to draw an image that represents their thoughts. The objective of the exercise was to give participants a moment to reflect on their relationships with their families as our value systems are shaped in the first decade or so of our lives by our families. It was also to unpack their understanding of themselves in relation to their families. This session focused on families as they form the structures and foundations from which individuals are taught who they are in relation to others, the community and the world (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2005). I used socio-metric exercises as they are built to help participants place and examine themselves in relation to others, themes, understandings and preferences. The exercises allow for deep questioning of the self relationally and helps with accountability and responsibility of one's choices.

Below is a description of two participant's drawings made during the exercise. One drawing was made by Fikile (GEN X) and another by Lerato (GEN Y). I chose their drawings as they had both contrasting and similar images. I described the images drawn and how they were built up in response to questions asked during the process. I then compared and contrasted the images made in relation to how each participant responded and drew up a conclusion about what the similarities or differences tell us about the two participants and their generational cohorts.

Fikile

To the question, what comes to mind when I say the word family, Fikile drew an image of herself surrounded by 7 children playing with a ball. Next to the image she wrote: Me and my kids (family). To the question, what comes to mind when I say; my partner and I, Fikile drew an image of a man in a blue suit with a woman with an orange and white outfit with curly hair. Next to the couple is a car and above the car she wrote: My partner. To the question, if I were not here where would I be, Fikile drew an image of a 3-tiered building with a car next to it. Above the building she wrote: Where would I be? Owning a big company. Above the image of the car she wrote: My own car. (See appendix 1)

Speaking back to her drawings, Fikile explained that when she thought of family, her grandchildren come to mind. The image represents her playing netball with her grandchildren. She explains that she spends most of her time with them as their parents are working, making her their primary guardian. Regarding her partner, Fikile explained that her image represents her husband (in the blue suit) and a woman Fikile imagined to be her husband's lover (in the orange and white outfit). Fikile's husband works in Johannesburg and comes home once a month. She is convinced that he has built another life for himself in Johannesburg, one that is completely different to their life together in Ntoane. She imagines her husband's girlfriend as an outspoken, confident woman who goes for what she wants.

Fikile says she can't drive, doesn't have time or the energy to take care of her physical appearance and therefore thinks that these are the elements that could have attracted her husband to this woman. In reimagining herself Fikile believes that if she could, she would have liked to run a facility which supports women in the community. A facility which would prioritize women's wellbeing and a place where they can learn skills to help them become self-sustainable, independent human beings. Through the success of helping other women, Fikile said she would be able to acquire her own car. A sign of independence

Lerato

To the question, what comes to mind when I say the word family, Lerato drew an image of a circle and a heart next to each other and connected the two with a line made up of half circles. Above the line she wrote: My family and inside the heart she wrote: Forever in my heart. To the question, what comes to mind when I say My partner and I, Lerato drew an image of a double story house, four figures, three cars and an image of herself above the house with and an image of a bank note. She then connected the image of herself and the bank note with a line made up of half circles and above the line she wrote: Me. Above the image of the three cars she wrote: My partner. To the question, if I were not here where would I be, Lerato drew an image of a building with seven figures inside the building. On the roof of the building she wrote: Women's Organization. (See appendix 2)

Speaking back to her drawing, Lerato explained that she was very close to her family and she felt that they have a very strong relationship which she desired for her own family. Her image of a partner did not have a figure drawing of a partner; instead it had an image of three cars with the words: My partner written above the cars. She said that her partner should be able to provide for her and her four children (she wants to have four children in future). She would like to live a comfortable life in a double story house, be able to look and feel good and desires to be financially secure. She spoke about being able to afford herself and not being dependent on her partner, but wants him to be able to provide. She spoke about how most men in Ntoane are unemployed and how those who are employed use their money to take advantage of women. She envisioned herself, running a women's organization to help with the dissemination of schooling, working and entrepreneurship opportunities for women only. She said the lack of information to access opportunities was the biggest disadvantage for young women in Ntoane.

From Fikile's responses to the exercise I realized that the older women of Ntoane had dreams, dreams which may have been deferred or compromised due to the socio-cultural conditions of their generation, but they had dreams to become and achieve more than what their current realities reflect about them. From Lerato's responses to the exercise I realized that the younger

women of Ntoane have dreams; they recognize the need to access opportunities and possibilities for them to live a self-determined life and although conscious of the restrictive principles of the Bantoane culture, they are willing to transgress these boundaries in order to achieve their goals. This is of course not without its challenges living in a context where women's roles are pre-determined. Fikile's reflection suggests that in order to survive in a very patriarchal community, she had to compromise her desires to manifest her full potential by accepting the predetermined gender roles of the Bantoane, adhere to them and embody them as being the only way to exist in the world. Such a compromise or bargain can be recognized as what Kanduyo (19881) calls a ⁶Patriarchal Bargain. Making the bargain has allowed Fikile to be exist in the context, but the thought of her husband having another life in Johannesburg with a woman she thinks of as being confident, self-determined and knowing what she wants, reminds Fikile of her personal desires and aspirations of what she could have become. The image she created of the 'other women' can be seen as a projection of what Fikile wanted/could have been. Lerato's reflection suggests that she has dreams to manifest her full potential beyond the boundaries set by the cultural norms and expectations for women in Ntoane. It is significant that she did not have an image of her partner but had clearly defined his role in her life and that of her children's. Who he is, what he looks like, is overshadowed by a strong understanding of who he should be in her life. Just as women's roles have been predetermined in the culture of the Bantoane, Lerato stated her expectations of her potential partner in her drawing.

By so doing, Lerato was actively engaging in the process of shaping her reality. She is not just a spectator in the unfolding of her life's story but an actor who is both observing (reflecting) and participating in the drama (her life) to drive the action forward (critical thinking). Lerato can therefore be seen as critically reflecting in the unfolding process that is her life and making decisions on what she would like to see happening next.

The exercise also revealed the common denominator between Fikile and Lerato as their concern and interest in supporting other women. Fikile and Lerato's definition of success was running an

⁶ A patriarchal bargain is a decision to accept gender rules that disadvantage women in exchange for whatever power one can rest from the system. It is an individual strategy designed to manipulate the system to one's best advantage, but one that leaves the system itself intact.

organization that worked with women. Both participants showed concern about the state and status of women in Ntoane Village. In the previous workshop, in my observations of participant responses to the first exercise, I suggested that the older women seem not to have desire or see the need for self –development or change as they could not name one thing that they would like to improve/change about themselves. Fikile’s reflection, in today’s exercise however, revealed that the older women had desires, which I believe they still have but do not think that change is necessarily attainable for them. Fikile’s organization would have been a place where women can learn skills to help them become self-sustainable and independent human beings while Lerato’s organization would be a place where young women can access information about opportunities to further their studies, work and business. Their organizations are women focused with a goal to improve the experiences and living conditions of women. Through the first three steps of Gibbs Reflective Cycle, both participants were able to reflect and communicate their visions for the women of Ntoane which tells us that both of them know that the current traditional cultural systems and beliefs of the Bantoane in relation to women do not necessarily work in their favour.

⁷Workshop 3

Theme: The cultural Practices of the Bantoane

The aim of this workshop was to enable participants to identify and name some of the most important cultural and traditional practices of the Bantoane and to discuss the impact these have on the women.

At the end of the previous workshop, I asked participants if they wanted to have today’s session in the garden at Loskop Valley Lodge. They agreed and seemed to be excited about the idea. Loskop Valley Lodge is a Bed and Breakfast establishment 15 minutes out of Elandsdoorn. I had been staying at Loskop during the workshop process. Tshepiso stated that she had never been to Loskop and was sad that she would be missing the workshop because today was her grandson’s graduation ceremony at crèche. Her daughter could not get leave from work so Tshepiso

Note: Thato asked to be excused from the workshops and was not present from the third workshop onwards, she went to visit a relative. Tshepiso was also not present for this workshop due to a family commitment and rejoined us in the 4th workshop.

attended the ceremony on her behalf. Rice (2007) highlights the dependency of two younger generations on an older generation as largely contributing to rising tensions between women in rural South African communities. Tshepiso could not attend the workshop as she assists her daughter to take care of her children, she was disappointed that she would miss the workshop and made it clear that there was no alternative support for her daughter accept for her.

By shifting location, I wanted to deliberately remove the participants not only from Ntoane Village but out of Elandsdoorn which is influenced, although to a lesser degree, by the Ntoane Tribal Council. Knowing that today's session would require the participants to explore the cultural practices which form the pillars of the Bantoane culture, I felt it necessary for participants to engage with the process outside of a space which may carry reminders of the cultural context. By placing participants in a different environment that has little or no cultural reference to the Bantoane, the space offered participants a moment to step out of their comfort zone and to look at their context from an alternative perspective.

Reflection

We were seated under a thatch roof lapa in the middle of a beautiful garden. It was summer and it was warm, it smelt sweet and we had ice cold water on the table. We sat on black steel garden furniture and began the process by taking a deep breath in and out as we settled down. The women looked around the garden and commented on the beauty of the space. After a moment of taking in the setting, I handed out writing material and asked the women to write down/draw anything that stood out for them from the previous session.

Mpho drew a picture with 13 figures inside a square, above the figures she wrote; my big happy family. One of the figures, on the bottom right hand corner, had its head and neck inside the box and the rest of the body outside the box. Below the box Mpho wrote a dedication to her family and the title read; sharing a little that we have. Another line read; my big loving family. Upon reflection Mpho explained that the figures represent her big family, how connected and how

interdependent they are. I pointed out the figure whose body was not completely inside the box and asked if it had any significance. She paused for a while, took a deep breath and started to make connections in her head. She went on to say that maybe the figure was her and that it could possibly represent her conflicted feelings when it came to her family and her personal growth. On one hand she acknowledges the love and support that her family has shown her and appreciates the sharing of the little that they have which also strengthens the family bond. On the other hand, Mpho explained that she would like to do more, see more and achieve more. Her family's economic situation however, does not allow her to take a leap of faith as she felt that this would make her feel as though she would be abandoning her family. She felt conflicted and torn between her own self-actualization and her family's survival. (See appendix 3)

As the eldest sibling, who is employed and does not have any children yet, she assists with the families' financial needs and helps support her nieces and nephews. Although unsaid, Jeanette said that she knows that her mother also expected her to play this role. The half in half out body stands in representation of Mpho's internal critical thought process and current predicament. Since the first workshop, Mpho had expressed the contradictory feelings she had about her relationship with her family in different ways through various exercises. She is the eldest among her siblings and does not have children unlike her younger siblings. She works as an administrator at a local primary school and contributes to the family's upkeep monthly. In the second workshop Mpho shared with the group how her family saved her life when she was an adolescent and 'out of control', the advice, patience and love they showed her through this difficult stage made her feel very grateful for them, and said that had her family not been there she would have probably ended up as a street kid.

The emotional commitment and attachment Mpho expressed towards her family can be seen as healthy for the survival of the family and as digressive for her growth. The constellation of family structures in Ntoane is such that the survival of the family unit is more important than the empowerment of one person. In more economically stable families, some children receive opportunities to further their education with the hope that they will return home to further

develop the family. But what happens when one is unable to further their studies due to economic restrictions? Although Mpho can be considered as one of the lucky few, like her drawing she is 'sitting on the fence'. She is exposed to other ways of being and thinking through interactions with colleagues at work, her graduate friends, as well as through reading and observing. As a result, Mpho is aware of the greater potential which exists for her, but is also reluctant to access these opportunities because of what it would mean for her family if she was not making an income. If she would choose to peruse her own development, become more critical, gain confidence and speak her mind, she is likely to be viewed as a rebel, loud mouth, and generally perceived as a "miss know it all". Either way, Carol Hanisch (2009) captures the predicament clearly in her essay, *The personal is political* when she says, 'It is no worse to be in the home than in the rat race of the job world. They are both bad.'

Exercise 2

I asked the women to find another space in the garden where they could engage in the next exercise. I asked the women to think back to some of the discussions we've had over the past two days and to share with each other the moments which stood out for them. After a few moments, I asked them to think of the different cultural and traditional practices which they have mentioned in the past two days. I then asked them, which of these of these traditional and cultural practices, in their opinion, are the pillars of the Bantoane practices. The women thought long and hard, each shared their opinion before agreeing on the most common practices. The objective of this task was to allow the women to think of and place, in order of importance, cultural and traditional practices of the Bantoane which are most significant to them and thus have the greatest impact on their lived experiences as Bantoane women. The women came up with four practices which they consider to be the pillars of the Bantoane culture. These are written in the order that the participants presented them together with what they think are advantages and disadvantages of each:

Practice	Advantage	Disadvantage
Initiation School		-Expenses - Health - Waste of Time - Traditional Doctors
Mourning	-The period is long enough to heal. -It helps to stay the period prescribed, it helps to stay away from men.	-Everyone sees that you are mourning and feels sorry for you. -Every day reminder that you have lost somebody in your life. -People isolate you. -Women are those who show more than men
Ancestral Practices	-It teaches us to know our roots	- Expensive -They teach you to be a witch -They connect you with evil spirit -They contradict with Christianity
Lobola	-Your parents get rewarded for raising you	-Seyantlo -Expenses

Table 4: The four pillars of the Bantoane cultural and traditional practice

According to the women, initiation school plays a vital role in the life of a Montoane woman as it marks the difference between being a young girl and a woman. Womanhood is considered as a prime stage of one's life as it grants you access into further and deeper knowledge about the Bantoane culture. Access to exclusive knowledge about the tribe can only be tapped into after initiation has taken place. A non-initiate female can never be considered as a woman and access the world of womanhood as practiced by the Ntoane which excludes you as an individual from the rest of the women in the community. The participants did not name any advantages of the practice as they had previously, in the second workshop, and concluded that the way in which young women are being initiated now is far removed from the purpose which Tshepiso and Fikile knew it to be. In this discussion, the women emphasized the expenses associated with the practice and raised concerns about the health and safety of the initiates. They mentioned the dangers that the HIV epidemic has brought and how it affects initiation schools. Tshepiso, being

a former nurse, feared that traditional doctors who conduct the rituals are not conscious of the link between the practice and the spread of HIV in the village.

The women described the mourning ritual of the Bantoane as one which allows a widow to mourn her husband for a whole year, granting her the time to process her loss and heal. It also serves in the widow's best interest as it discourages men from pursuing a relationship with you before you have had enough time to mourn your loss. The women felt that this served their best interests as some women may be tempted to get into a relationship with another man due to financial challenges she might be experiencing at the time. On the other hand, the participants expressed frustrations with the discrimination that comes with the visibility of mourning. Unlike men, who wear a black/navy shirt during mourning, women must wear black/navy from head to toe. This signifier makes the women feel exposed to the public and are constantly reminded of their loss in the way that people treat and react to them. They are treated as fragile, bordering on pity instead of empathy which heightens their feelings of loss and makes it difficult for them to see themselves as capable again.

Ancestral worship is a principal practice within the Bantoane culture. The women spoke of how one is taught about and connected to their roots through ancestral worship. One gains a sense of belonging and collective identity as a Montoane through the rituals. The contradiction between ancestral worship and Christianity however, is evident within the community and stigmatizes an individual as either being lost or un-rooted (Christian) or as a witch (ancestral worshiper). The women raised their concern about the relation between ancestral practice and witchcraft. They believe that the way in which the rituals are conducted, opens a portal for evil spirits to enter you. Another disadvantage of ancestral worship according to the women is the expenses associated with the rituals.

Lastly, the women identified lobola or *magadi*, the practice of paying a bride price, as one of the pillars of the Bantoane culture. They appreciated the fact that by paying lobola, a woman's parents are rewarded for raising her but were also discouraged by the way it made them feel as if they were owned and sold by their parents to their husband. Fikile shared that, in her experience,

a man feels entitled to a woman after paying lobola instead of seeing her as his partner or equal. In this way the practice becomes a transaction instead of the building of a new relationship, which is how the participants described it in reference to the way in which a husband can be abusive towards his wife and justifies it with the fact that “he paid for her”. Another disadvantage the women identified were the high costs that come with the negotiations, lobola payment, the traditional engagement ceremony, gifts for both families and the actual marriage celebration. Lerato said that by the time all rituals were done, the newlywed couple could have probably afforded to buy a low-cost house with the same money that they now have to find ways to repay friends, family and/or the bank (as most don’t have immediate access to money to cover all costs).

According to the women’s expression, three of the four cultural and traditional practices including initiation, mourning and ancestral practices carry strong elements of stigma, exclusion and othering. If one is not initiated, she is excluded from the Bantoane concept of womanhood and is excluded from accessing certain knowledge about being a Montoane woman and will be treated as such, an insider outsider. The participants could not identify a single advantage of the initiation practices although they have all been through it.

Whilst they may not see the necessity of the practice, by virtue of them being initiates, they are perceived to be more womanly than those who aren’t initiated. This means that they, to a certain degree, are more advantaged than women who are not initiated and may not be able to identify with the prejudice those women face. It is possible that they may also carry these prejudices unconsciously. During mourning, through clothing, a woman is exposed to scrutiny and pitiful gazes as the story of her loss is made public knowledge. The disadvantages of the signifier of mourning outweigh the advantages and therefore call for attention to be paid to the necessity of *Seaparo* (mourning clothing) in the current context. The tension between ancestral practices of the Bantoane and Christianity are a point of contention as both stigmatize the other in the community. As the village is predominantly cultural, Christians tend to be shunned and referred

to as un- rooted women who have forgotten and lost their way. Christians in turn view and refer to women who observe traditional practices as witches.

A common thread between the cultural and traditional practices is the expenses that are associated with them. All the practices need a considerable amount of money in order to be carried out. Whether it is initiation, mourning, ancestral practices or lobola, all rituals require one cow or more, goats, traditional beer and enough food to feed the entire village. In the case of lobola in addition to the above, gifts are bought for both family representatives. Assessing the cost implications against the general economic status of the common Bantoane household, it suggests that Bantoane cultural and traditional practices carry a heavy financial burden for its people and that the women are negatively affected by the stresses that come with having to source and pay back the money to carry out the costs for the practices. This questions the rationale behind the way in which the rituals are conducted and carried out and for whose benefit, if the people who are meant to gain from them feel overburdened and stressed out by the carrying out of the rituals.

The discussions which emerged from this workshop revealed the extent to which women in Ntoane are overburdened by the cultural expectations placed on them. In it, participants name 4 cultural practices which, according to the woman, are the pillars of the Bantoane culture

Workshop 4

Theme: The role that women play

The objective of this workshop was to allow participants to take a deeper look at the Bantoane cultural practices, how they perpetuate the spread of HIV and to challenge the role that women play in these practices. For this workshop we returned to Ndlovu Care Sports Centre, in Elandsdoorn. As we settled down Lerato announced that there would be a World Aids day celebration at the center tomorrow. The women started to converse about the work the center has accomplished with regards to HIV treatment and care in Mautse East. They went on to talk

further about stigma and death. I realized that they were invested in the conversation so I decided to use it as an entry into the day's theme. For the workshop, I had planned to create a space that would allow the participants to reflect and discuss the role that women play in harmful cultural practices of the Bantoane. Stemming from the previous workshop, where the participants named four traditional cultural practices which, in their opinion are the pillars of the Bantoane culture. These practices, as they unpacked seemed to have more disadvantages than advantages for women. Considering that, this workshop was aimed at identifying the roles that women play in these practices.

As a researcher and practitioner who included a critical reflective element in the workshop process, I decided to incorporate the content that the participants brought with them into the space. I therefore used our daily strategy of reflection and asked them to draw/write what comes to mind when I say the word; HIV. To reflect on the responses from the exercise, I looked at Tshepiso's and Lerato's drawing and writing. Tshepiso's reflection was based on the relationship between her family and HIV, whilst Lerato's reflection paints a picture of people's attitudes towards HIV in the community. Their responses gave me an understanding of the public and private relationship that the Bantoane have with HIV which impacted our unpacking of the role that women play in traditional cultural practices which violate the rights of women.

Tshepiso drew a picture of herself dressed in her nurse's uniform standing at the beginning of a pathway that led into a yard with a house and six children (see appendix 4). In a speech bubble she wrote the word; positive. Tshepiso explained that the drawing represents her having knowledge about HIV which she, at that moment, realized that she should teach her grandchildren about. As a former nurse, Tshepiso was aware of how widespread HIV was in Mautse East village and among the Bantoane. She stated that it is her responsibility to transfer the information she has to her grandchildren so that they can be informed. In that moment, Tshepiso saw herself as a carrier of knowledge and recognized the need for her to transfer this knowledge to the younger generation (her grandchildren) to equip them to make informed

decisions. A characteristic which (Christie & Mhlope, 1996) and (Fox, 2006) describe as being the primary role of storytelling.

Lerato wrote down thoughts that came to her sparked by the word HIV. In her writing she spoke about how she viewed HIV not only as a disease but as a human rights issue. She explained this by stating how the environment in which they are living in has a high rate of HIV but that does not make people scared of it. She wrote and I quote, “We are still living in an environment where one man can marry/sleep with more than one woman (e.g. being a Bantoane king or our president)”. Lerato’s writing went on to describe the behavioral patterns of some women in the community who consciously engage in sexual relationships with men who have partners and also writes about the high rate of teenage pregnancy although there are condoms available in almost every school. In her analysis, she viewed women as being more scared of falling pregnant than contracting HIV (See appendix 5). The distribution of condoms is a very controversial issue in Ntoane and other parts of South Africa, but for the purpose of this study, the fact that the rate of teenage pregnancy is still very may indicate that the learners are possibly being impregnated by older men and not their peers. This phenomenon is common in Ntoane where, as Lerato described, out of school youth will protect themselves against pregnancy via contraception such as The Pill but be vulnerable to HIV while learners in school are perceptible to both pregnancy and HIV. Although the availability of contraception presents women with an option, the socio-cultural and economic conditions of Ntoane still renders women vulnerable to men. Lastly, Lerato predicted that she sees the country raising an HIV generation. In her reflection, Lerato made a link between human rights, HIV, polygamy and the Bantoane king. This moment revealed an intrinsic connection that Lerato had made between women’s rights, cultural practices and gender in Ntoane village. This confirmed the existence of cultural practices which violate the women’s rights in Ntoane village.

Exercise 2

In the next exercise I asked participants if they could make links between the spread of HIV and the four main traditional cultural practices of the Bantoane. The connections they made revealed

that the named traditional cultural practices of the Bantoane had a direct and indirect contribution on spread of HIV in the village (see appendix 6). I noticed that a 5th practice (Seyantlo) was added to the list of cultural practices and asked about it. The women explained that Seyantlo is a practice whereby a man who has lost his wife through death, is encouraged and allowed to marry her younger sister. When I asked why they did not include the practice to their list yesterday, the response was that they felt that it was included with the practice of lobola. It was only during the process of unpacking the link between the traditional cultural practices with the spread of HIV that they realized that while paying lobola does not necessarily spread HIV, it is the reason why one would be paying the lobola that may spread HIV, and the practice of Seyantlo is a common reason why lobola is paid among the Bantoane.

Using the outcome of the exercise, I then asked participants to discuss if women played any role in the named traditional cultural practices. Almost immediately, the women said yes. They then went on to discuss the ways in which women participate in the named practices. The outcome of the discussion is captured in the table below.

Practice	The role played by women in practice
Initiation School	- Every role is played by women, from the start to the end
Mourning	- The old widow should dress the new widow in black/blue clothes. - The aunt is the one who makes the beaded necklace and gives it to the last born after the death of a parent.
Ancestral Practices	- Women are the ones who make traditional beer
Lobola/Magadi/Lenyalo	- The first wife must allow the husband to marry the second wife and if the husband wants to marry the third wife, the second wife must give permission
Seyantlo	- The little sister must agree to marry her sister's husband when the sister passes away

Table 5: Women's roles in cultural practices

As the participants unpacked the roles that women play in the named traditional cultural practices that violate the rights of women in Ntoane village, I noticed that the participants' volume was low and the speed at which they spoke was quite slow. It was as if they didn't want anyone, even themselves, to hear what they were saying. What was revealed, through the exercise, was the significant roles and amount of power that women had in traditional cultural practices which could be seen through their contribution in the practices. In the Seyantlo practice for instance, it is up to the younger sister to make the decision whether she wants to marry her late sister's husband or not. It can be argued that she may have little choice in the matter because of the way in which other women (within the family and community) will "punish" her by excluding her from knowledge only accessed by married women. She none the less still holds the power to participate or not, with each decision bearing its own set of consequences.

The exercise also revealed that although women experienced negative consequences from the named traditional cultural practices it is often at the hands of other women, who must either dress a widow (mourning), allow a husband to take another wife (polygamy) or to take a young girl through the initiation process. The traditional attire and beads that Fikile referred to as 'revealing the story of your whole life' are made by women who also facilitate the dressing of the clothing. I read the participants' decreasing volume as an indication of an internal process of realizing the role that women play in the continuation of the traditional cultural practices which violate women's rights. They were beginning to critically think about how they are both the oppressed and oppressor in this regard. It also showed how practices which are harmful to women continue because women continue to participate in them and that it is women who punish other women who might not want to participate.

In concluding this chapter, I realize that participants' narratives and participants' relationship to their narratives were shifted by the use of Reflective Practice in conjunction with Narrative Enquiry. What was revealed was the way in which narratives were used to facilitate a dialogic process on harmful traditional practices which violate the rights of women in Ntoane village. The chapter provided a detailed account of the workshop process through which a transgenerational

dialogue on the struggle between women's personal expectations and cultural expectations was facilitated. The reader was taken through each workshop, the data collected, my reflections and analysis of the outcomes of each workshop.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In this chapter, I will share the key findings generated from the analysis of the workshop process using a generational approach as a lens to engage with, read and present the findings of the research.

General findings

I used Howe and Strauss's generational dialogue table to express the research findings in relation to generational values and behavioral patterns. It has been noted in previous chapters that story and storytelling are central in the dissemination of knowledge and information in South African rural communities. Based on the data collected from the research workshops and my subsequent analysis of the shared narratives and the resulting dialogues, I found that: The sharing of narratives afforded the women of Ntoane village an opportunity to reflect on their shared or contrasting views on their experiences and struggles between personal expectations and expectations imposed by some traditional and cultural practices.

- During the 2012/13 community dialogues, the challenge expressed by young women from Ntoane regarding traditional cultural practices was the issue of incest, whereas in the 2016 research workshops with an intergenerational group of women from Ntoane, four cultural and traditional practices were identified as pillars of the Bantoane culture which had negative impacts on women. This implies that the presence of older women in these workshops broadened the scope regarding the number and ways in which traditional cultural practices negatively affect women's lives in Ntoane village as older women are also impacted by harmful cultural and traditional practices.
- Although both generations agreed that women are strong, creative and tolerant, they strongly objected with the expectations placed upon the girl child and the women of Ntoane. The cultural and patriarchal structures have forced them into difficult roles that

the women did not choose for themselves. According to Strauss's generational dialogue, both generations are unlikely to confront authority in an effort to redress the matter as their views on authority do not necessarily call them to action. The younger generation however, is willing to transgress boundaries set by the previous generation without asking for permission.

- Although the older women expressed feeling powerless and not thinking that they can do anything to change the status of women in Ntoane, they did not discourage the younger women from expressing and offering different views. GEN Xs perspective on life is one of self-reliance whilst the GEN Ys are civic minded. This indicates that while the GEN Xs are unlikely to participate in mass action for change, in the interest of self-preservation, they are likely to support the GEN Ys in their quest to change the status quo for Bantoane women.
- One of the causes of intergenerational conflict among women in Ntoane village is the fact that the different generations could not identify with the social, structural, political and economic conditions which determine the thoughts and actions of the other generation. Whilst the GEN Xs are skeptical and reluctant to commit, the GEN Ys are hopeful and loyal which causes tension between the two as their polarized views make it difficult for them to agree with each other. It was apparent that the economic conditions of the community limited the choices that women have in protecting themselves and advancing their lives.

In my observation, the Gen X women from Ntoane reflected a reluctance to share, question and interrogate traditional cultural practices which they cannot make sense of in the current socio-political context. They carry a deep sense of loyalty towards historically prescribed norms and values, whilst struggling with interpersonal dissatisfaction with the cultural system. On one hand they believe that certain traditional cultural practices once played a significant role in the survival and continuation of the tribe, but on the other hand they agree with the youth who pose questions about the relevance of these practices in the present time, stating and showing the

current implications, they have on women at an individual level and the collective. Part of the Bantoane culture is built on patriarchy and makes use of exclusion and othering to keep a level of control over women. It is only a matter of time before it falls under the pressure of rising concern and consciousness from its women and when the time comes, it will either be torn down by the women who would have had enough or transformed through a process of dialogue, because change, as articulated by Haviland (1999) can either come about through dialogue or by force.

Recommendations

According to Sheahan (2006), most of research undertaken with a generational theory underpinning has mostly been conducted in Europe and America with a few cases in South Africa. Of the few in South Africa, the research has been in middle class societies and in the business development field. It is therefore recommended that:

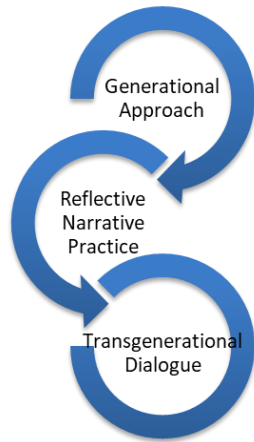
- A generational approach be taken in applied theatre and drama interventions to assist practitioners to get a better understanding of communities through gaining insight of generational values, beliefs and behavioral patterns. By so doing, researchers and practitioners will be able to make informed decisions regarding the suitability of interventions by predicting behavior.
- The research was a formative evaluation on the use of story and generational theory that highlighted the need to understand the existence of intergenerational conflict in rural South African communities. To this end, I recommend that generational Theory be incorporated in social development work and interventions in understanding relational complexities between generations and its impact on sustainable transformation in such contexts.

Limitations of study

- There were limitations in the sample used as only two participants were present to represent each generation (X and Y) as required for the research. This affected the number of narratives shared by each generation to enable me to conclude them as being generational perspectives.
- The study was conducted in a specific location at a specific time; as such the findings of the research may not be applicable in other contexts.

General Conclusion

In concluding this research report, this study sought to demonstrate the use of story, in applied theatre and drama, as an effective tool to engage women on traditional cultural practices which violate their rights. The research findings revealed that women's narratives are central in locating the 'weak points' in interventions that seek to facilitate change in rural women's lives. Their perspectives reveal community dynamics which make it difficult for them to see themselves as able to change their relationship to traditional norms and values. The study used a generational approach to understanding the underlying causes of the continuation of traditional and cultural practices which violate women's rights. Through this, it was revealed that women of different generations have different attitudes and behaviors towards their engagement and understanding of the impact of harmful traditional cultural practices. It was revealed that the sharing of personal stories of women's experiences applying a Reflective Narrative Practice enabled a Transgenerational Dialogue to take place.



Journey towards a Transgenerational Dialogue

The dialogue provided the women a moment to look at themselves, their personal desires and aspirations, the expectations imposed by Bantoane traditional cultural practices and the role that they play in these practices. It was also revealed that one of the underlying causes of the continuation of these practices was because of the women's active participation in them and the older generations reluctance to question authority, a characteristic of GEN X. Going into the research, I thought that the older women would assume a position of authority and that I would have to work hard to level out power dynamics in the room. To my surprise, age was not an obstacle for the women to engage with each other; instead it created a curiosity among participants. Each generation was interested in the perspective of the other. This curiosity provided fertile ground to unearth, share and reveal that which has gone unsaid. It was also revealed that both generations have a desire and longing for change, but GEN X perceives GEN Y to be hasty while GEN Y perceives GEN X as reluctant. This dilemma is synonymous with intergenerational conflict which slows down efforts to redress gender equality in rural South African communities.

The study noted the impact of economic transformation on intergenerational conflict and the concept of culture and change. Through our engagement, the women shared deep seated frustrations with the economic condition of most Ntoane households which is also impacted by the cost related to traditional cultural practices of the Bantoane. Financial literacy among the

Bantoane captured my interest as the financial implications of some cultural practices are a burden to both men and women.

The study described and demonstrated how a Transgenerational Dialogue was used to facilitate women's understanding of themselves in relation to each other, the community and the socio-cultural context. By so doing, through the four-day process, the women embarked on a journey in which they were challenged to interrogate the role that they play in cultural practices that violate their rights and how their contribution perpetuates the continuation of such practices. By the end of the process, I began to think about the combined use and application of Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) methodology, Transgenerational Dialogue and Reflective Narrative Practice as a potential long term intervention.

This research has inspired and challenged me to take a closer look at generational dynamics, conflict and dialogue in everyday life and to better understand the way in which people who are regarded as oppressed or marginalized may unconsciously and conditionally contribute to the oppression, and ultimately on how one could apply a Generational Approach in finding ways of breaking the cyclic pattern of oppression by breaking the cycle pattern of behaviour.

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APPENDICES