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# Employed and unemployed women's perceptions of lobolo: a Q-methodological approach

**Masuku, Cornelia Nokuthula**

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**MASTERS DEGREE IN ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

# Employed and Unemployed Women's Perceptions of Lobolo: A Q-methodological Approach

Done By: Cornelia Nokuthula Masuku
Student Number: 598643
Research Supervisor: Prof. Gillian Finchilescu




"A research proposal submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master's (Industrial/Organisational Psychology) in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 10 March 2020."

# Acknowledgements

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the following people for their contribution towards this research study:

My supervisor, Gillian Finchilescu for her guidance and assistance with my work.

My parents, for their constant support, encouragement and patience during this long process.

My sister, Ntombi, for constantly checking on my progress and her encouragement.

To my all my friends who offered me support during this long journey.

To my participants, who gave me their time by taking part in this study.

# Abstract

Lobolo is one of the most long-standing African customs and appears to be a significant aspect of African marriages. The practice has been criticized for how it promotes gender inequality in the manner in which it is practiced and the expectations it places on men and women. In light of these concerns regarding gender equality and African customs, this study aimed to explore perceptions of lobolo among South African black women. The study also aimed to reveal whether women's perceptions of lobolo were a reflection of their employment status/economic activity. Q-sorts were completed by each participant, and these were analyzed to extract the factors. Three factors that reflected the women's perceptions of lobolo emerged from the analysis. The first factor was African feminism, which represented the women who had positive regard towards lobolo but still had reservations about its gendered aspects. The second factor was Traditionalism, which represented the women who advocated for the practice and showed no reservations towards the aspects that might hinder the achievement of gender equality in African marriages. The third and last factor was western feminism, which represented the women who shared strong feministic views about the practice and had no positive regard towards any aspect of the practice. Thus, these factors indicated that there are differences in how women perceive lobolo. However, their views on the practice did not indicate a significant effect on their economic activities nor their labour force participation.

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# Chapter 1

## Overview

This study aimed to investigate South African black women's perceptions of the African matrimonial practice called lobolo. The sample consisted of employed and unemployed black South African women. The aims of the study were achieved through the use of a Q-methodology research design. Q-methodology uses people's subjective points of view on a particular topic to develop clusters of perspectives that allow the researcher to build theories regarding the topic under discussion. Thus, the methodology quantitatively classifies individuals based on their viewpoints and perceptions. Q-methodology has the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods and it is said to be a bridge between the two methodologies (Akhtar-Danesh, Baumann & Cordingley, 2008).

Q-methodology allows the researcher to apply quantitative methods of analysis to the study of subjectivity, and the beliefs and opinions that guide people's behaviour and how they make sense of their world (Finchilescu & Cooper, 2017). Subjectivity is understood as a person's judgment, based on their personal impressions, feelings, and opinions instead of the facts about a particular topic or situation (Akhtar-Danesh et al., 2008). Q-methodology allows the researcher to systematically explore and gain insight on a variety of perspectives about a particular topic. It also allows the researcher to also identify any areas of overlap while also exploring the opposing views that provide new ideas on the phenomena under investigation (Akhtar-Danesh et al., 2008). As a result, the nature of Q-methodology was useful in this research in analysing the perspectives held about lobolo, especially when taking into consideration the multifaceted viewpoints South Africans have about the practice, and how the meaning of the practice continually shifting and being renegotiated in post-apartheid South Africa.

## Conceptual Framework

The study thus extends on the previous literature on lobolo by exploring women's perceptions of lobolo through a Q-methodology analysis, but also by exploring the potential impact of lobolo and traditional gendered values systems on South African black women's participation in the labour market. The study used two approaches to understand the sample's perceptions

of lobolo and relating them to the practice's influence on black South African women's empowerment, gender equality, and financial empowerment. The Western Feminism, African feminism and Traditionalist perspective was used to provide an understanding of the perception's the women in the sample held about lobolo. Furthermore, lobolo's impact on women's participation in the labour force was explored using theories on cultural factors.

## Introduction and Rationale

The custom of exchanging goods as part of the marital process is not unique to black African cultures, but has existed as far as 3000 BC in ancient civilizations such as the Egyptians, Mesopotamians, and these payments were required to legalize the marriage (Anderson, 2007). Even in present times, customs similar to lobolo are not unique to black African cultures. They also occur in different parts of the world, such as in Islamic and Asia cultures, but in different forms (Anderson, 2007; Hague, Thiara, & Turner, 2011). For example, In Islamic marriages, the groom is required by law to pay Muhr, which is money or goods that the groom, his father or his family pays the bride, but in this instance, the money or goods go to the bride and not her family (Hague, et al., 2011). In Indian cultures dowry is paid during the marriage arrangements, which is a sum of money or goods the bride's family gives to the bride to either pay to the groom's family or take with her into her marriage to support both her and her husband (Anderson, 2007; Hague et al., 2011; Randeria & Visaria, 1984). In the case of South Africa, the marital transfer of goods is called lobolo; where the groom's family gives the bride's family money or goods in order to get the bride's hand in marriage and also gain certain rights over the bride (such as having the wife and the children take the husband's name among others) (Heeren, Jemmott III, Tyler, Tshabe, & Ngwane, 2011; Nkosi, 2011; Shope, 2006).

In South Africa, there is no uniformity on the particular process to follow when it comes to the practice. According to authors such as Ansel (2001), the lack of uniformity on how the practice is practiced - along with the lack of common understanding regarding the practice - is often attributed to the influences of the colonial powers that dominated all of Africa and shifted many definitions of African traditions and cultures. However, even in light of the circumstances that have affected black South African's heritage, lobolo remains an essential aspect of African marriages. Studies have indicated that the practice has had incredible longevity and still has a significant impact on black South African's lives. According to Mubangizi (2012), gendered

cultural practices, such as lobolo, function as a means to socialize women and men into specific gender roles that they must adhere to within their marriages. Hence, paying of lobolo indicates that the groom is capable of financially providing for the bride. In this way, the practice works to socialize the man to be the provider for the family, and the woman to being the caregiver and homemaker (Mubangizi, 2012). Thus, the payment of lobolo cements the expected roles that black men and women are to play in their households (Mubangizi, 2012). However, the literature review will demonstrate how these roles often work to limit the woman's gender-equality and their active participation in the labour market.

The rate of female unemployment in South Africa is estimated to be at 41.5 % in 2019, with black women making the majority of that number (Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 2019). These rates differ based on province. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (2019) of South Africa has indicated that the rates of unemployed women in rural areas remain higher than those in urban (metropolitan) areas. According to Jansen van Rensburg, Claassen, and Fourie's (2016) study, women in South Africa are 53, 1 % less likely to be employed as compared to men. The study indicated that women in South Africa are even less likely to be employed when they are married than if they have been divorced or have never been married (Jansen van Rensburg et al., 2016). Most research in the area of the factors that impact women's participation in the labour market has used human capital variables to explain the low rates of female labour force participation among black women (Whitehead, 2011). However, it is also essential to consider the role of traditional gender values and cultural factors (Gedilki, 2013; Whitehead, 2011). Therefore, this study assumes that women who hold on to and guide their lives according to the traditional gender roles espoused by practices such as lobolo, are less likely to actively participate in the labour market. This assumption was explored through analysing the women's Q-sort responses in conjunction with their reported employment status.

# CHAPTER 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Background

The Recognition of the Customary Marriage Act defines lobolo as: *"the property in cash or in kind, whether known as lobolo, or by any other name, … which a prospective husband / the head of his family undertakes to give to the head of the wife's family in consideration of a customary marriage"* (Bayi & Hawthrone, 2018, p. 581). Lobolo is one of the most widely practiced African customs across South Africa and Africa alike by black ethnic cultures. Though it is practiced differently by each country and each cultural tribe, the fundamental structure (of the groom offering a negotiated sum of cattle – either in the form of cattle or in the form of money) - as stipulated by the Recognition of Customary Marriage Act - remains the same though out Africa (Bayi & Hawthrone, 2018). Within South Africa most of the cultures that practice lobolo do so by a similar structure, though its significance to every respective cultural group along with the amount requested differs. The practice is known by many names (e.g. *bohali, bogadi, mogadi, xuma, or llovola*), that are specific to each cultural group/tribe, that practice it in South Africa. However, the Nguni word lobolo or lobola has gained popularity and has become the commonly used word in South Africa and in most South African literature (Ansel, 2001; Bayi & Hawthrone, 2018). Given that lobolo is particular to Africa, there are no English words that can accurately describe it. Words such as "child-price," "bride-price," "bride-wealth" and "marriage goods" have been used to describe the practice as an equivalent to the word lobolo in the English language (Bayi & Hawthrone, 2018). These terms are often used in most literature and by most scholars to describe the practice. Thus, the following sections will elaborate on the functions of the practice, the requirements of a valid customary marriage, and how the practice has changed throughout the eras in South Africa.

## Functions of Lobolo

There are many functions and interpretations regarding the meaning and significance of lobolo to African culture. Many believe that lobolo functions is a sign of commitment, it helps create ties between the two families and transfers wealth between families. According to much research that has been conducted about lobolo, most of those who practice lobolo believe that the process helps to bring the two families (that of the bride and the groom) together. In the process of affirming the couple's commitment to each other and their union, a new relationship

is created between the two families (Knoetze, 2000; Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Ansel, 2001). The practice also functions as a sign of the man's willingness to marry and commit to the bride and provide for her and their family (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Heeren et al., 2011; Rudwick & Posel, 2014). Some believe that lobolo also functions as a mechanism of transferring wealth between the two families and generations. Since the husband and his family is gaining the bride's earning potential, most believe that it is reasonable to compensate the bride's family for their loss (Posel & Rudwick, 2011). However, Ngema (2012) argues that it is not possible to adequately compensate the bride's family for the loss of her earning capacity and the expenses incurred in raising her. Thus, the amount rendered is at best mere psychological compensation (Ngema, 2012).

Lobolo is also believed to function as a mechanism for stabilising the marriage (Khomari, Tebele & Nel, 2012). According to the findings of Heeren's et al. (2011) study most black men and women believe that the payment of lobolo strengthens the marriage. Therefore, if it is not rendered to the bride's family it is believed that the longevity of the marriage will be compromised (Heeren et al., 2011). Additionally, it is argued that the non-payment of lobolo not only affects the stability of the marriage, but the families often do not recognise or accept the marriage as legitimate if lobolo is not rendered (Mwamwenda & Monyooe, 1997). Thus, it is likely the couple might not receive the necessary support from their families, which will further affect the stability of the marriage.

Majority of those who practice lobolo also believe that it forms a significant part of their identity as Africans (Shope, 2006; Rudwick & Posel, 2014; Khomari et al., 2011). They believe it defines and gives significance to their woman or manhood as they transition from singleness and into marriage (Shope, 2006; Rudwick & Posel, 2014; Khomari et al., 2011). Thus, the practice is said to form a significant part of their self-determination journey as Africans. This belief was indicated in Rudwick & Posel's (2014) study - which investigated the connection between lobolo and marriage outcomes among Zulu speaking participants from Kwa-Zulu Natal using quantitative and qualitative data. The results of the study indicated that most of the participants believed that lobolo is a significant marker of their cultural, social, gender and spiritual identity as Africa women and men. As such the study concluded that for many black South Africans lobolo symbolises their African heritage (i.e. an indicator of being a Zulu, Swati etc. woman or man). Thus, like how circumcision is viewed as a marker of a boy's transitioning into adulthood among the Xhosa tribe, lobolo is seen as a man's transition into being a husband.

Similar findings were made by Khomari et al.'s (2011) study which explored college student's perceptions of lobolo as to determine the social value of lobolo and woman's rights from a modern context. The study found that most of the female respondents in the study believed that lobolo gave them an understanding of who they were as African women within their different South African contexts. Thus, existence outside of the practice is not considered an indication of being an African man or woman, but is considered a loss of your African culture and heritage. It is seen as an indication of subscribing to Eurocentric or western ideologies (Khomari et al., 2011).

Among all the above-mentioned functions of the practice, lobolo is also believed to function as a means to transfer the reproductive capacity of the woman or bride to her husband and his family (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). Within this transfer, lobolo then plays the role in determining the guardianship of the couple's children. Under customary law, if lobolo has been rendered as per the bride's family's requirements, the husband and his family obtain full parental rights of the children born in the marriage (Knoetze, 2000). As such, parental rights are determined through the payment of lobolo – whether lobolo has been partially of fully paid (Ngema, 2013). Under customary law, a father does not have automatic parental rights to his children, nor does he have the right to have them take his name. Thus, his right to his children and the family name that the children affiliate with is determined by the payment of lobolo (Moore & Himonga, 2000; Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Prinsloo et al., 2000). In instances where lobolo has not been paid and the couple is not married under civil marriage, custody of the children goes to the wife's family if the bride dies (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). According to Prinsloo et al., (2000) 83% of the respondents in the study agreed that the husband and his family are entitled to guardianship of the child and the children are expected to carry the father's last name because of the lobolo that has been paid. However, the transfer of custody thought the payment of lobolo is not always straight forward, especially if it is legally contested. This was indicated in the case of Hlope vs Mahlalela (Moore & Himonga, 2000). In this case the court did not approve of the role of lobolo in determining the custody of the child, along with parental responsibilities and rights (Moore & Himonga, 2000). In spite of the position of customary law regarding child custody, the court chose to disregard the customary law principles in favour of the common law principle of "the best interest of the child" (Ngema, 2013; Knoetze, 2000; Moore & Himonga, 2000).

Lastly, one of the most significant functions of lobolo is that it functions as a token of appreciation to the bride's family from the groom and his family (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Khomari et al., 2011). As a token it is intended to give thanks to the bride's parents or guardians for giving the groom a wife and his family a daughter (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Khomari et al., 2011). Based on the results of Khomari et al.'s (2011) study, though times have changed significantly in the lives of black South Africans and though these changes have had a significant impact on their socio-cultural environment - this perception or belief about lobolo is still held among even the younger black generation (post-apartheid generation). Hence, though many different interpretations and meanings of lobolo have emerged through the ages, the Khomari et al.'s (2011) study indicates that this is still one of the most agreed upon functions of the practice among the young and old generation.

## Requirements for a Valid Customary Marriage

The manner in which lobolo is enforced in customary law differs for every cultural groups in South Africa and in Africa alike, and it has been adapted to the specific local conditions (Ngema, 2013; Ansel, 2001; Heeren et al., 2011; Posel & Rudwick, 2011; Rudwick & Posel, 2014). One of the requirements is the payment of an agreed sum. Negotiations are often done by the close male relatives, normally the father and uncles of both the groom and the bride (Heeren et al., 2011). In some communities the amount of lobolo that should be rendered is fixed as part of the accepted custom of the tribe (Ngema, 2013; Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Heeren et al., 2011; Posel & Rudwick, 2011). In these instances, the groom's family has to render that amount before the celebration of the marriage can commence (Ngema, 2013; Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). However, in other communities the amount is not fixed - which is the case for majority of the South African tribes (Ngema, 2013; Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). Thus, in these cases the marriage is often permitted to proceed depending on whether the groom has rendered a reasonable enough amount of lobolo (Ngema, 2013; Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Posel & Rudwick, 2011). Contrary to what those who practice customary law believe, the payment of lobolo is not essential in making civil marriage valid or legal as is in the case of a customary marriage (Ngema, 2013). South African law rules that the guardians or parents of the bride and those of the groom are not entitled to enforce customary law practices in cases where the couple chooses to perform a civil marriage (Ngema, 2013). Even if the lobolo has been rendered in a civil marriage, lobolo is considered to be ancillary to the civil marriage contract (Ngema, 2013).

As such, lobolo is a requirement under customary marriage only, unless the couple chooses to perform both a civil and customary marriage.

Along with the payment of lobolo, another requirement for a valid customary marriage is the transfer and integration of the bride into the husband's family after the wedding (Moore & Himonga, 2000; Van Rensburg & Van Rensburg, 2002). Integrating the bride into the groom's family meant having the bride go live with the groom's family for a given period of time after the wedding. The aim was for the bride to learn the customs of her new family and also be taught certain domestic skills that were expected from a wife. This is still the case in most families; however, some families no longer enforce the integration. Therefore, in this age, for a customary marriage to be considered valid, it is more important for lobolo to be paid as per the agreement. Other requirements of the practice have become secondary, less important and dependent on family preferences. However, some scholars disagree that lobolo is an essential requirement for a valid customary marriage, thus it should not affect the validity of the marriage. One of the reasons is due to the fact that the practice is practiced differently by all families. Some families require that lobolo should be rendered in full before the wedding, and for others a subset of the amount can be rendered and the other rendered after the wedding. Another reason, based on South African law, lobolo is not essential for a valid customary marriage. The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998 states for a customary marriage to be valid, the prospective couple should be over the age of 18, both parties must give consent to be married to each other under customary law and the marriage must celebrated and entered into according to customary law (Knoetze, 2000). Therefore, it is argued that the continued practicing of lobolo and the view that there can be no marriage without it is based on social reason and cultural values. This then makes lobolo a natural requirement for a valid customary marriage and not necessarily an essential one (Knoetze, 2000).

## Changes in the Institution and Westernisation of Lobolo

Lobolo has been integral to marriage in African countries since the pre-colonial times (Khomari et al., 2011). Initially, there was one type of marriage among black South Africans, namely customary marriage, where the lobolo process functioned in concluding the customary marriage (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). However, numerous changes have taken place in the structure and process of marriage among black South Africans. For instance, traditionally

lobolo was paid using cattle because majority of black people lived in rural areas and used cattle and livestock for the purposes of trade (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Heeren, et al., 2011; Posel & Rudwick, 2011; Rudwick & Posel, 2014). However due to a variety of factors such as colonialism, apartheid, urbanization and capitalism that have influenced South Africa's socio-economy and cultures, money has become the most easily accessible form of exchange - especially among those who live in urban areas and do not own cattle (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Heeren et al., 2011; Mubabgizi, 2012; Posel & Rudwick, 2011; Rudwick & Posel, 2014). Thus, lobolo is now rendered in the form of money. However, the money given by the groom is still requested in the form of "cattle", where a particular sum of money is considered to represent a particular number of cows (Mubabgizi, 2012; Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). Furthermore, the groom now bears the responsibility of gathering the amount necessary for lobolo. Previously that was not the case. Traditionally, the obligation to pay lobolo fell upon the groom's father, which as a result meant that the father could choose a bride for his son (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). If the son refused the chosen bride, the father could refuse to pay lobolo on behalf of his son (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). However, in modern times black men no-longer need their fathers financial support when getting married nor their permission when choosing a bride (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). Most of them these days are financially independent of their fathers or parents and strive to pay lobolo for their chosen brides themselves (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). As a result, their fathers are not obligated to assist or contribute to the process (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). Thus, also in this regard, the emphasis of customary marriage has shifted from being about family involvement and fulfilling the intentions and wishes of the family, to being about serving the interests of the individual couple (Van Rensburg & Van Rensburg, 2002). The change in the practice of lobolo no longer being the responsibility of the groom's father has resulted in some constraints when it comes to being able to get married. The amount of lobolo paid is often determined by a number of factors and one key factor is the groom's financial situation and the likelihood that the bride's family will have sympathy for the groom (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Ansel, 2000). A higher amount is often requested when the groom is financially stable. As such, many have argued that the practice has become commercialized, which has made it difficult for groom to afford lobolo (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018).

Due to urbanization, materialism, and westernization the amount of lobolo requested and paid now depends significantly other factors such as the bride's social status, her educational background, her profession and her fertility (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Posel, Rudwick &

Casale, 2011). This has resulted in some families asking for considerable high amounts of money for their daughters. It is argued that lobolo is now used by families as a mechanism to make money at the couple's expense (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018). This further makes it increasingly difficult for couples to get married. In Posel & Rudwick's (2011) study – which investigated the connection between lobolo and marriage outcomes among Zulu speaking participants from Kwa-Zulu Natal, using quantitative and qualitative data – the authors found that based on the responses of the participants in the study, the current high cost of lobolo was expressed as a concern by most of the participants. These participants indicated that this is one of the ways in which the practice has lost its true purpose and change over the years. As such Posel & Rudwick (2011) argue that the manner in which the lobolo is being currently practiced (particularly the amount that is requested) is part of the main reason why most Zulu South Africans do not get married. According to the study, approximately half of the participants who had never married attributed lobolo as the primary reason, with 60% being Zulu males. Similarly, Posel et al., (2011) argue that the commercialization of lobolo may be one of the factors that can be attributed to the low rate of marriage and the increasing rate of cohabitation among black South Africans. According to the authors, the average value of lobolo for Zulu males from KwaZulu Natal who were married between 1985 to 1998 was between R20000. This sum was found to be 13 times the average monthly earnings of these men in 1988 (Posel et al., 2011). When considering the direction that the South African economy has taken since 1998, it is likely that the amount request is now considerably higher.

Though the Zulu society is not representative of the whole of South Africa's black societies, it is possible that these circumstances and views might also be shared by those from other black ethnic groups such as Swati, Xhosa, and Ndebele etc. Ansel (2001) argues that the ideological aspects of the practice cannot be separated from the materialistic or economic aspects. According to the author, lobolo provides most families with substantial items of income and expenditure that are considered as gifts, that they would not have otherwise been able to obtain. This is especially true when taking into consideration the poor economic conditions many black families live under in South Africa. It becomes easy for the money rendered to be approach from a place of gaining wealth. However, regardless of this perspective, many still argue that the value and meaning of the practice has been lost as most of South African black societies have adopted Eurocentric capitalist philosophies and standards, which as a result, have influenced and alter the manner in which lobolo is practiced and viewed (Khomari et al., 2011).

However, even in light of the many factors that have influenced, shifted, redefined and restructured many of the traditions and practices of black South African's, studies have indicated that lobolo still remains a strong part of marriage even among those who chose to participate in a civil marriage. For instance, Heeren's et al., (2011) study found that majority of the participants in the study believed that paying lobolo was still a significant part of South African culture. Furthermore, Posel & Rudwick (2011) also found that lobolo remains a widely valued African tradition among the Zulu tribe and it remains an integral and defining part of marriage. Similar views were indicated in Mwamwenda & Monyooe's (1997) study, which examined the extent to which South African university students still support lobolo. The results of the study indicated that 88% of the participants supported the practice. This was consistent among both single and married participants, with 89% stating that they would request lobolo for their daughters.

Lastly, despite the essential role that lobolo plays in the lives and marriages of Africans, the practice has been subjected to much criticism by scholars, human rights activists as well as women's groups (Khomari, et al., 2012). The practice has been accused of commodifying women and violating women's rights (Khomari et al., 2012). Furthermore, the practice has been criticized for its perspectives on polygamy. Through the practice of lobolo, a man is permitted to marry more than one wife (Heeren et al., 2011). As such, many argue that this plays a role in the spread of sexually transmitted deceases and HIV, especially if one partner contracts an infection (Heeren et al., 2011; Khomari et al., 2012). However, these view specifically have been faced with much push back from those who support the practice.

# Gender Roles

### social role theory.

According to the social role theory gender differences result from the social roles inhabited by men and women (Cramer, Million & Perreault, 2002; Harrison & Lynch, 2005). Women are expected to live up to the feminine role and men are expected to live up to the masculine role, and these social norms are used to maintain women and men's adherence to these traditional gender roles (Harrison & Lynch, 2005; Vogel, Wester, Heesacker & Madon, 2003). Norms provide people with knowledge about how to behave in certain situations based on how other people behave in those situations, thus people look at the behaviours of the same sex to

determine what behaviour is appropriate, especially in situations that are open to interpretation (Harrison & Lynch, 2005). When women and men deviate from these norms, they are likely to experience social disapproval (Harrison & Lynch, 2005). Depending on the culture, certain activities are believed to be better accomplished by or meant for men and not women (Eagly & Wood, 2012), such as paying lobolo for instance. In this the man has to take up the role of being the head of the family and providing for the family and the wife has taken the role of homemaker and nurturer. Thus, socialisation plays a major role in the ascribing and adopting of seemingly "appropriate" gender roles (Nkosi, 2011). Socialisation is continued and fostered by certain social institutions such as marriage, the church, formal schooling, the family structure, etc., to ensure that both girls and boys grow up knowing what is expected of them and which gender roles they must ascribe to (Nkosi, 2011).

As lobolo is a practice within the institution of marriage that that encourages the adoption of certain behaviours and gender roles based on either being male or female, it also plays a significant role in the African culture in socializing both men and women into the expected, appropriate gender roles (Nkosi, 2011). Power dynamics (such as the negotiation of power between men and women) play a role in the acknowledgment and practice of gender roles (Nkosi, 2011). Institutions such as marriage and lobolo, play a role in placing people in positions of power and placing others in subordinate positions. They argue that lobolo – how they practice lobolo, based on who and who receives it and who gets to be involved in the negotiations – places men at a position of power and women in subordinate positions.

## Western Feminism

Bayu (2019), defines feminism as a global movement that aims to emancipate women from political, economic, and social oppression. It is a movement that aims to create a society in which women able and welcome to achieve full self-determination in their lives without any political, social, sexual and patriarchal oppression, and hindrances (Salo, 2001; Stone, 2010). From the rise of the movement, feminism has adopted different variations and perspectives based on the different contexts on which it was conceived and the different views on how to protect women, and their rights (Bayu, 2019). Feminism is often understood through 3 different waves, which all constitute a particular period in feminist activity (Hawthorne, 2007).

The first-wave feminism is dated back to the early days of the Second World War, and it was developed in North America and Europe as part of liberal enlightenment (Hawthorne, 2007; Stone, 2010). Second-wave feminism relates to the re-emergence of feministic activity after the Second World war, which focused on debates about women's status post World War Two and women's participation in higher education (Hawthorne, 2007). According to Hawthorne (2007), both the second and first wave feminisms are defined by liberal agenda, with the expansion into areas of equal pay, reproductive autonomy, sexuality, cultural representation, and theories on patriarchy. The second and third wave of feminism is considered a response to and born out of critiques of first-wave feminism. Thus, from the different feministic waves, different feministic perspectives emerged, namely liberal, Marxist, socialist and post-structural feminism (Hawthorne, 2007; Milojevic, 2008). These perspectives are thus called "Western" feministic perspectives due to the fact that they were developed by authors from America and Europe (Hawthorne, 2007). Though they all have particular themes that define and separate them, they are all born from the first wave of feminism and all share the central theme of "aiming to understand and provide ways to overcome the causes of women's oppression (Hawthorne, 2007). Therefore, though all the different perspectives have defining features that define and separate them form the others and they all draw from each other as each perspective is born from a response to a lack in another. (Nkosi, 2011). For the purpose of this study, only the three perspectives - Marxist, radical and socialist feminism - will be discussed.

## Marxist feminism.

Though there are many different perspectives in western feminism, this paper only focuses on Marxist, radical, and socialist feministic perspectives. Marxist feminism is born from Marxist theory (see: Tong, 2008). For the purpose of this study, only the feministic perspective will be discussed. Marxist feminists argue that women's struggles are due to the capitalistic nature of society (Bulbeck, 1997). Instead of using gender to explain women's oppression, they used class analysis (Tong, 2008). They argue that the private ownership of property and the fact that the means of production is own by a few men who created the capitalistic system, has resulted in the social and economic inequality women experience (Hawthorne, 2007). They argue that "the same capitalist economic forces and social relations that brought about the oppression of one class by another, one race by another, and one nation by another also brought about the oppression of one sex by another…" (Tong, 2008, p. 107).

Though Marxist feminists agree that women are subordinate to men in patriarchal societies, they disagree that all women experience this oppression equally or that women do not oppress each other (Tong, 2008). Thus, based on this understanding, class determines a person's position of power in society. This argument supports those made by African feminists who argue that there cannot be one feminism that represents all women due to the oppression that black women have faced at the hands of white women. Thus, Marxist feminists argue that for women to overcome this inequality, the capitalistic system must be replaced with a socialistic system (Bulbeck, 1997; Hawthorne, 2007). From a Marxist understanding, women can only achieve emancipation and self-actualization through engaging in the labour force and taking back their economic freedom (Bulbeck, 1997). According to Bulbeck (1997) women with wages have individual freedoms and opportunities that women without wages lack. Thus, through being part of the labour market women will be able to escape any and all factors in their society that are constraining (Bulbeck, 1997). This is true as many women who depend on their husband's financial support are likely to be subject to their husband's rules and desires.

Marxists feminist argue that the capitalistic system appropriated men's labour-power to develop ideas such as the 'mode of 'production', which has led to what Marxists call alienation. Due to the class distinctions and the highly specialized and segmented nature of work and production, most workers have lost their unity and wholeness, i.e. alienation (Tong, 2008). Workers, are firstly alienated from the production of their labour, as they have no say in the commodities they produce and they never realize the fruit of their labour (Tong, 2008). Secondly, workers are also alienated from themselves as due to the dehumanizing nature of work, as they are placed in a position where they experience work as something unpleasant that they have to live through (Tong, 2008). Lastly workers are alienated from other human beings due to the need to compete in the workplace for jobs and promotions and they are also alienated from nature due to the inhumane nature of the working environment (Tong, 2008). The capitalistic system structures the work environment in such a way that the human cannot co-exist with nature. Therefore, the appropriation of men's labour led to the development of notions such as the 'domestic mode of production' that further worked in fueling the capitalist system (Bulbeck, 1997). Through the domestic mode of production, husbands appropriated their wives' labour in the home through not paying for its full value, like capitalists. Thus, capitalist also benefited from women's unpaid labour in the home, because they are then able to pay workers less than what their labour is worth (Bulbeck, 1997). Thus, it is women's labour that sustains the worker (men) through providing clothes, food and emotional support, thereby

keeping the capitalistic system running (Tong, 2008). Thus, Marxist feminists focus on women's reproductive potential, and they argue that it is as essential as the means of production and labour-power, because it ensures the continuation of the human race (Bulbeck, 1997). However, capitalists have downplayed the importance of women's reproductive potential because recognizing it might mean that women will have to be compensated for their domestic labour (Bulbek, 1997; Nkosi, 2011).

Therefore, when we consider the lobolo system from a Marxist feminist perspective, it can be argued that the practice promotes capitalistic values through the appropriation of women's domestic labour. The payment of lobolo places an obligation upon the women to perform particular roles, of which they are not to expect any payment for (Nkosi, 2011). The woman's role under the lobolo system is to take care of the family both physically and emotionally, while the man's role is to provide materialist things for his family. Thus, from a Marxist feminist perspective, women perceive their value in their ability to meet the physical and emotional needs of their families. Nkosi (2011) argues that women's family-focused identity is exploitive and alienating as it is an uncompensated sacrifice, while wages compensate men for their physical sacrifices at work. Therefore, Marxist feminists believe that overall, the oppression faced by women, be it gender-based or race-based, is an integral aspect of capitalism (Oyewumi, 2003). Thus, based on this approach, the basis of all oppression is due to capitalism (Oyewumi, 2003). Hence, Marxist feminists critique other forms of feminism (such as liberal and radical feminism) based on the fact that they neglected the class dimension to women's oppression (Bulbeck, 1997). They argued that women in working-class are more exploited than women in middle-class and that in more instances than not middle-class women often exploit and benefit from the exploitation of working-class women (Bulbeck, 1997).

## radical feminism.

Radical feminists focus on patriarchy as the main reason behind women's oppression and gender equality in society (Oyewumi, 2003). They argue that all women have been oppressed by patriarchal systems on the basis of their sex across time (Bulbeck, 1997). Their focus is on women's need for sexual and reproductive autonomy, along with issues regarding rape, violence against women, women's sexual subordination, and objectification (Bulbeck, 1997). Radical feminists hold the view that the key to women's emancipation from gender oppression is through the abolishment patriarchy (Kaplan, 1992). They believe that for women to thrive in

society, they have to adopt lifestyles that are independent of men (such as all women businesses and organizations) (Kaplan, 1992). Radical feminist argue that patriarchy is a gendered system that places the male roles as superior and gives them economic privilege, thereby giving them power over women (Eisenstein, 1999; Hawthorne, 2007). Men then maintain this power through social structures such as marriage and the family, and the gender-based division of roles in these structures. Patriarchy is therefore manifested by male force and control of women's sexuality and reproductive potential (Eisenstein, 1999; Kaplan 1992).

The aim of radical feminists is therefore to bring awareness of the hierarchical divisions of roles based on sexuality that exist in society and in the family (Eisenstein, 1999). The hierarchical division of which roles are where particular roles are considered masculine and others are feminine, and are expressed through the sexual divisions of labour in society and in the family (Eisenstein, 1999). Women's labour is expressed through their placement in the home, while that of men is express through their labour at work. According to Eisenstein (1999), this division, therefore, implies that sexuality determines the roles, purposes and activities of one's labour. This separation of sexuality and the patriarchal approach to women is also expressed by the lobolo system, as the exchange of lobolo provides the man with domestic and childbearing rights over the woman (Knoetze, 2000; Nkosi, 2011; Moore & Himonga, 2000; Ngema, 2013). Women are therefore expected to stay at home and fulfil domestic roles and bear children, while men are expected to work and provide for the family (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Heeren et al., 2011; Mubangizi, 2012).

Thus, from a radical feminist perspective, the exchange of lobolo for the woman's reproductive potential gives men control over their sexual capabilities, while constraining their economic and social freedom. Furthermore, though women are no longer confined to the home, and are now able to work and be mothers, they are still expected to remain the homemakers and play double roles. Thus, the lobolo system works to reinforce sexual division by emphasizing to the couple the gender-appropriate behaviours and attitudes they must embody (Nkosi, 2011). As a result, these behaviours and identities that have been ascribed to define what is masculine and what is feminine, work to empower men and disempower women (Tong, 2008). Tong (2008) argues that because women are the ones who experience the entire childbearing process from conception to pregnancy to birth, patriarchal society has made it seem as if women are the only ones who should and are most capable of raising children. Therefore, radical feminists argue

that these assumptions further oppress women, because women are then expected of women to stay at home and be dependent on men for income (Tong, 2008).

## socialist feminism.

Socialist feminists' critique both Marxist and radical feminists for their one-dimensional approach to women's oppression (Tong, 2008). They argue that though the Marxist approach to feminism succeeds in explaining women's oppression based on class and as workers, it fails to account for women's oppression based on gender (Mikell, 1997; Kaplan, 1997). Thus, socialist feminists aim to combine the ideas of radical feminism (relating to patriarchy) and Marxist feminism (relating to capitalism), as they believe that there is no one explanation for the oppression faced by women (Hawthorne, 2007). They argue that both class and gender oppression are significant and interrelated (in that both capitalism and sexism work together to exploit and oppress women) (Hawthorne, 2007; Tong, 2008). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, this branch of feminism will be the main focus of discussion as it takes into consideration the different aspects of women's oppression that are emphasized in both Marxist and radical feminism.

Socialist feminists critically assessed the different aspects of radical and Marxist feminism and thus developed a new perspective that embodied the strengths of the two former perspectives (Tong, 2008). Like radical feminists, social feminists agree that the gendered roles that women are expected to follow have socialized men into believing they have power over women and hence women are expected to be submissive and dependent on them (Tong, 2008). Furthermore, social feminism also believe that capitalism plays a role in keeping women at home for the purpose of child bearing. Therefore, patriarchy gains its power and influence over women through the control of their labour, and reproductive capacity, thereby keeping them subservient (Mikell, 1997). "Therefore, it seems that women are confined to their homemaker, sexual and reproductive roles which are concealed as their natural and unique abilities, in a political effort to maintain male superiority" (Nkosi, pp. 28).

Socialist feminists, therefore, argue that women experience alienation as a result of the class and gender oppression they face (Tong, 2008). According to Tong (2008), alienation occurs when one perceives their life or self as insignificant and they have to draw a sense of meaning about who they are from illusions or ideas they build in their minds. Their experiences of life are profoundly fragmented, and they view things that should be connected as separate (Tong,

2008). As expressed under Marxist theory, wage workers experience alienation from the product of their work through capitalism and exploitation. In a similar way, women experience alienation from the product of their bodies and work through the exploitation of women's domestic labour under capitalism and patriarchy (Eisenstein, 1999; Nkosi, 2011; Tong, 2008). Tong (2008) states that:

> *"The man exists in the social world of business and industry as well as in the family and therefore is able to express himself in these different spheres. For the woman, however, her place is within the home. Men's objectification within industry, through the expropriation of the product of their labour, takes the form of alienation. But the effect of alienation on the lives and consciousness of women takes an even more oppressive form. Men seek relief from their alienation through their relations with women; for women there is no relief. For these intimate relations are the very ones that are essential structures of her oppression." (Tong, 2008, p. 102).*

Women experience this alienation in many forms. For instance, socialist feminists argue that women do not always have the final and total say about when, or how their bodies will be used (Tong, 2008). Therefore, not having the autonomy to make reproductive decisions such as when and how many children they want to have, alienates them from the products of their bodies (Nkosi, 2011; Tong, 2008). Thus, when we consider the lobolo system under this argument, it seems that women married under customary marriage experience similar kinds of alienation, as the transfer of lobolo signifies the yielding of control of their sexual and reproductive capacities over to their husbands (Nkosi, 2011). The man, therefore gains the right to determine when the woman should have babies and how many (Nkosi, 2011). Thus, this alienates women from the product and process of reproduction (Tong, 2008). However, as would be expected, many scholars who support the practice argue against the above stated feministic views of ownership, oppression and control of women by men, specifically regarding lobolo. For instance, Ngema (2012) argues that the perspective that lobolo promotes ownership of women is discredited by the view that those who practice lobolo do not view the process as a sale or a transaction. Furthermore, the Ngema argues that lobolo does not give the man ownership rights over the bride as the bride's guardians still retain the role of protector. The bride may also return home if she feels she is being mistreated by her spouse (Ngema, 2012). In terms of the arguments surrounding childbearing and lobolo, Ngema (2012) argues that it is important to understand that lobolo and marriage reflect two different institutions. While the purpose of marriage is often procreation, he argues that, that is not the purpose of

lobolo (Ngema, 2012). Thus, in his reasoning, lobolo does not give the man the right to control when and how their bodies will be used for reproductive purposes. He argues that control is brought upon women through the institution of marriage. He argues that at this time, any feministic critiques and actions against the practice are likely to be faced with inaction from those who practice lobolo. His views are based on the fact that, as previously stated, those who practice lobolo do not completely agree with the many criticisms that have been put against it. Though many are aware of the negative consequences of the practice, they often attribute these consequences to human nature and not lobolo. They argue that issues such as domestic violence, STD's and discrimination based on gender are evident in other ethnic groups and races. Ngema (2012) therefore states that:

> "*... there is no justifiable argument that shows ilobolo as a custom perpetuates unfair discrimination against women or as a custom violates the dignity of women. In summary therefore, perceptions and argument of CEDAW are unlikely to change the current recognition and popularity of ilobolo in South Africa. On the contrary the abolition of ilobolo is most likely to result in a paper law that the public will largely ignore.*" (Ngema, 2012, p. 46).

## African Feminism

Third-wave feminism was marked by postcolonial and non-western feminist's move away from just focusing on class and gender oppression to arguing against racial oppression as well. Feminists of colour in Africa and America argued that they were not only marginalized by the capitalistic and the patriarchal systems, but they were also marginalized by the same white sister who they were meant to stand with (Bulbeck, 1998; Oyewumi, 2003). According to Bulbeck (1998) non-Western feminists criticized western feminism for assuming that all women shared a universal experience of oppression by virtue of their shared biological, social and psychological experience. Oyewumi (2003) also states that, it was hypocritical of western (white) feminist to advocate for a global sisterhood that was founded on unity, harmony and unconditional love - while at the same time they still exercised their class and race privileges on non-white women. White feminists were accused of conceptualizing and defining feminism and gender related struggles from their cultural experiences (De La Rey, 1997; Oyewumi, 2003). Their voices dominated that narrative, which as a result, lead to black women's voices being overshadowed by (and defined from) the voices and experiences of white women (De La

Rey, 1997). The lack of recognition on a racial level left a divide and a lack of common ground between black and white women (Ezeilo, 2005). Hence this resulted in feminists of colour's decision to shift from western feminism and develop a more culture-oriented version of feminism, as they believed that western feminists could not fathom their experiences, nor could they assist them without bringing in racial stereotypes (Bulbeck, 1997; Ezeilo, 2005). Thus, culturally specific forms of feminism such as African feminism, Islamic feminism, Iranian feminism and so on were born (see: Mikell, 1997; Naghibi, 2007; Oyewumi, 2003).

African feminism is an African focused perspective that speaks to the feministic movements of African black women. As African feminists they stand in refusal of gender-based oppression and advocate for African black woman's emancipation from all other forms of oppression (such as emotional, physical, psychological, socio-economic, political and racial) (Salo, 2001). African feminism seeks to challenge the status quo and voice out how patriarchies in modern-day Africa work to constrain and hinder black women from reaching their full potential as hard-working, self-sufficient individuals, beyond just their traditional gender roles (Salo, 2001). This feministic approach was born out of a need for African women to separate themselves from the westernised understanding of feminism that took very little consideration for the culture and customs of African people (Mikell, 1997; Salo, 2001). Therefore, African feminists felt the need to distance themselves from a white-dominated conceptualization of feminism that only catered to the white woman's struggles, while downplaying the racial based oppression faced by women of colour (Bulbeck, 1997; Salo, 2001).

Just as there are many perspectives and approaches to understanding the struggles faced by different nations and cultures - especially in terms of racial and socioeconomic issues – it is then impossible to assume homogeneity among women and their struggles (Bulbeck, 1997). Through African feminism, African women seek to define and voice out their struggles and to make known the material circumstances and the cultural histories of African societies (Arndt, 2002; Salo, 2001). Salo (2001) argues that African women have different struggles to Western women, and the significance of culture, class, and race cannot be disregarded when conceptualizing the gender relations that affect them.

However, like all feministic perspectives, African feminism has faced its own share of criticism. Many black feminists who support western feminist notions believe that African feminism is cannot be distinguished from other forms of feminism. They argue that, for the

most part, the struggles faced by African women, such as gender-based oppression and discrimination are faced by all women elsewhere in the world regardless of their race (Atanga, 2013). Though Atanga's (2013) arguments are valid, it cannot be denied that black women have and still face oppression and discrimination based on their race and their struggles cannot be likened to those of other women in the world. Thus, there is a need for African women to distinguish their struggles from those of Western women and have their own voice, because of these racial divides, especially when we consider the historical background of South Africa. Therefore, Goredema (2010) states that African feminism can be described as:

> "*... a justice that aims to create a discernible difference between women who were colonized and those who were deemed the colonizers, and a social movement that aims to raise a global consciousness which sympathizes with African women's histories, present realities and future expectations"* (Goredema, 2010, p. 34).

On that account, African feminism challenges the deconstructive language used to describe African customs (Ezeilo, 2005). Furthermore, African feminism resists the unwarranted and insistent emphasis of western feminism on sexuality and it also resists the exclusion of men from the dialogues and efforts to emancipate and empower women (Lewis, 2001). African feminists believe that it is necessary to approach men as partners in solving the problems faced by women and in enforcing social and economic change, as men must be involved in the issues of women's advancement (Ezeilo, 2005; Lewis, 2001). Thus, African feminism emphasises a collaborative approach between genders (Ezeilo, 2005). For that reason, Ezeilo (2005) states that African feminism is gender-neutral approach to feminism, that emphasizes connectedness, balance, reciprocity and compromise - as opposed to western feminisms that are characterized by gender divides.

Furthermore, African feminism resists and stands against radical feminism's harshness against motherhood and childbearing (Ezeilo, 2005; Lewis, 2001). African feminism places emphasis on the cultural resonance of motherhood as a symbol and a tradition, and it celebrates and affirms gender roles of service and nurturing (Lewis, 2001). This feministic approach, therefore supports the positive standpoint that many black women South African hold towards lobolo when it comes to the practice's ideologies about womanhood and motherhood. For instance, lobolo emphasises the idea of "motherism" and that the woman should take lead in nurturing and caring for the family. Thus, these identities challenge the myths and stereotypes of western feminism regarding womanhood and femininity (Lewis, 2001). However, the amount of

influence and impact that African feminist can achieve in reforming cultural practices, traditions and gender roles in African societies is hindered by the bad reputation that is attached to feminism and the criticisms of the approach. Many of the stereotypes held about feminism among traditionalistic African societies relate to the hatred of men, or the promotion of lesbianism and / or the rejection of motherhood (Arndt, 2002; Salo, 2001). Furthermore Atanga (2013) critiques African feminism and claims it tolerates practices that violate the rights of women in an attempt to maintain cultural identities. According to Atanga (2013), though African feminists seek to maintain their cultural identity while fighting for women's right to earn a living and still take care or their families, the valuing of family and culture above all else might also lead to the acceptance of gendered cultural practices such as female circumcision and polygamy. She further argues that African feminists are uncritically holding on to culture and cultural practices and they are rejecting foreign inspired practices that are beneficial, just because they are of western origin (Atanga, 2013).

Nevertheless, even in light of these critiques, African feminists remain adamant to get to the bedrock of African women's struggles from their standpoint. They aim to shed light on the causes and consequences of gender inequality in Africa, thereby achieving the liberation of all women in African. They seek to establish African women's liberation from within their cultures and traditional customs by critically weighing the customs that are positive and empower women, against those that are harmful and no longer serve them (Ezeilo, 2005). African feminists aim to achieve a society where women and men can co-exist separate from misogynistic and patriarchal gender roles and while still celebrating their cultures and traditions (Arndt, 2002).

## African feminism and lobolo.

As previously discussed, though lobolo is a highly respected practice among those who practice customary marriage, the practice has been the subject of many controversial debates. Mainly regarding gender inequality and the associated negative consequences that impact black women's lives. Studies have associated the practice with domestic violence, and the spread of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) due to the fact ideals that are perpetuated through customary law that often have negative consequences for married women (Heeren et al., 2011; Khomari et al., 2011). However, many of those who practice lobolo along with some scholars who advocate for it, argue against these assertions. For example, Heeren et al. (2011)

found that most of the participants in their study believed that there is no association between a husband's sexual behaviour and the payment or non-payment of lobolo. The participants argued that lobolo does not determine a husband's sexual behaviour and fidelity to his partner, as infidelity in marriages exists even in cultures that do not practice lobolo (Heeren et al., 2011).

Criticisms of the practice initially focused on the interpretations that the lobolo system was synonymous to the purchasing of a wife, for that reason lobolo was accused of violating the human rights of black women, and taking away their dignity (Khomari et al., 2011; Knoetze, 2000; Mubabgizi, 2012; Ngema, 2012). As a consequence, it was argued that lobolo commodified black women. As previously stated, some argue that the practice has become commercialised due to the high amounts that are requested that take away the aspect of lobolo being presented as a gift of thanks and making the process seem like a transaction (Rudwick & Posel, 2011, 2014; Venganai, 2015). Lobolo has also been condemned for the gender inequality it promotes through the sexual double stands that work to benefit only men, as they are the ones who pay lobolo (Walker, 1992). As indicated in Walker's (1992) study, most African men who practice lobolo often hold the view that marital fidelity is expected from women and not men, hence the acceptance of polygamy under customary marriage (Walker, 1992). Horne, Doodoo and Doodoo (2011) argue that under the lobolo system fidelity is used as a tool to control the woman's sexuality and the paternity of the children, to ensure that the children that are born in the marriage are biologically that of her husband (Walker, 1992, Horne et al., 2011). Therefore, lobolo has also been criticized for the norms it espouses that work to restrict black women's reproductive autonomy, and thereby affecting their reproductive health and their economic activity.

From a socialist feminist perspective, it's argued that the practice maintains and strengthens men's authority and domination over women. Once married the woman does not have a significant amount of power to make decisions and have influence in the marriage because she is expected to be submissive and financially dependent on her husband (Walker, 1992; Hague et al., 2011). As such, Hague et al., (2011) argues that, due to the gendered expectations imposed on both women and men the practice, the payment of lobolo almost always makes the marriage unequal. Additionally, Hague et al. (2011) argues that lobolo both produces and reinforces inequality between men and women, as women are likely to be regarded as property. It gives men authority and control over women, and women are placed in a vulnerable position in the marriage. Thus, this makes it possible for women to be exposed to different levels of

abuse (Horne et al., 2013; Wadesongo et al., 2011). As a result, a number of research has been conducted in an effort to indicate the connection between lobolo and gender-based violence.

For instance, Abramsky et al.'s (2011) study explored the factors that are associated with intimate partner violence (IPV). The results of the study indicated that among many other factors, the payment of bride-price (lobolo) was also associated with high domestic violence (Abramsky et al., 2011). However, though an association was found, the patterns of risk were difficult to interpret (as the payment of lobolo was associated with decreased IPV among certain instances and associated with increased IPV in others) (Abramsky et al., 2011). Similar results were indicated by Kaye et al.'s (2005) study, which explored the implications of bride price payments among women in Uganda. The study indicated that the majority of their participants believed that there is a strong connection between the payment of bride price and domestic violence (among other implications) (Kaye et al., 2005). However, as previously stated, despite the evidence of inequality a great majority of black women in South Africa, and Africa alike, maintain their positive regard for the practice (Ansel, 2001; Shope, 2006; Walker, 1992). This positive regard is significantly influenced by the belief that the practice shows that the woman is valued and respected by her husband (Ansel, 2001; Shope, 2006; Walker, 1992). According to Walker's (1992) the positive views were held towards lobolo were held by both women from rural and urban areas, along with female students and women who fell in the semi-skilled categories of employment. In addition, Ansell's (2001) study of high school students' perceptions of lobolo in Zimbabwe, also indicated that most of the participants, particularly those who were female, held the view that lobolo is a valued African custom and it must be maintained.

African feminists who also advocate for lobolo hold the view that it is not the practice that requires abolishment, but rather the gendered views and gendered expectations that both men and women perpetuate through lobolo (Ansel, 2001; Venganai, 2015). According to Shope's (2006), there are some women in South African black communities that are making efforts to change the gendered aspects of lobolo. These women advocate that lobolo should be maintained, not because they are unaware of how men have appropriated and manipulated the practice to suit their interest, but because they believe that lobolo and gender equality can exist together (Shope, 2006). Through the use of income-generating groups, these women are able to hold workshops where they educated and empowered each other when it comes to taking control of lobolo negotiations and their rights (Shope, 2006).

Shope (2006) states that:

> *"…They do seek to alter the gendered expectations tied to it. From their perspective, male privilege is not a necessary condition for the maintenance and practice of tradition. Equality and lobolo are not inherently antithetical. …It is here, at the intersection of the past and the present, and gender and cultural relations, that we find many of South Africa's black rural women holding on to what they wish to preserve and challenging what they wish to change. They are attempting to renegotiate the practice by emphasising the relational aspects of the tradition while downplaying its gender obligations"* (Shope, 2006, pp. 70-71).

Hence, this indicates some of the efforts that South African black women are making to stand against gender inequality in their communities, while still holding on to their African heritage. The manner in which the practice was practiced in the pre-colonial era is significantly different to how it is practiced today, indicating that the practice is not static and incapable of acquiring alternative interpretations (such as those that forester women's emancipation) (Mwamwend & Monyooe, 1997; Shope, 2006; Tamale, 2008; Venganai, 2015; Walker, 1992). Therefore, African feminists make the assertion that it is not the practice in itself that threatens African women, but more the meanings and perceptions attached to the practice through patriarchy and socialization. Hence, Ansell (2001) argues that if cultural customs such as lobolo are to allow for the empowerment of women and girls, we need to present the coming generation with flexible notions of their cultures.

## African feminism and cultural relativism.

In light of the above arguments, the following section will further discuss how African feminism argues for culture and cultural relativism when it comes to African customs, and the emancipation and empowerment of African women.

Scholars such as Ngema (2012) argue against the notions that African customs such as lobolo violate the human rights of the women who practice it (see: Ngema, 2012). These notions of human rights violations have often been rejected by both African men and women who practice lobolo. According to Tamale (2008), this rejection is probably due to the impact of imperialism and colonialism on African cultures. Ezeilo (2005) argues due to the negative impact of the colonial era, African people might feel the need to redefine and regain their African identity by holding on to certain aspects of their culture. In contrast to these arguments, Western feminist

ascribe African women's motivation and continued participation in gendered cultural practices to patriarchal control and the passive acceptance of patriarchal domination (Ezeilo, 2005). However, they ignore the many other equally important factors (such as deep-seated beliefs) that might explain why African women hold on to gendered practices. Ezeilo (2005) uses the example of female circumcision to explain this, and she states that:

> *"... deep-seated beliefs about the consequences of non-performance of female circumcision compel Africans in diasporas throughout the Western world to continue the practice in their new location or to send their women and girls home for rituals"* (Ezeilo, 2005, p. 242).

According to the author, it is important to question why women who are intelligent and highly educated and agree with the need for gender equality, still cling to customs that are considered to violate their human rights. According to the author, this could be due to their need for self-determination from within their cultures.

As a consequence, African feminist argue against using only human rights concepts from Western contexts to address issues in Africa (Bawa, 2012; Ezeilo, 2005). According to Nayak (2013), because these moral principles were developed in western cultures, they are not entirely representative of African people's experiences. Thus, African feminists call for a cultural relativist approach to the issues in Africa. A cultural relativist approach is one where a person's culture and cultural practices are assessed and understood from the perspective of their own culture and not from the reference point of another (Bawa, 2012). Nayak (2013) states that, according to cultural relativism, using western values to determine human right violations of non-western cultures clouds and negates the inherent cultural differences that exist in the world. For that reason, African feminists believe that western notions and concepts of human rights are often culturally insensitive and do not place the needs of African women first (Ezeilo, 2005). Thus, Bawa (2012) argues that the battle for gender equality will depend on gender activists' ability to advocate for an all rounded approach to human rights, one that recognises cultural differences and endorses the protection of women from within their cultures. Furthermore, Ezeilo (2005) states that African feminists must find a delicate balance between universalism and cultural relativism when approaching cultural practices such as female circumcision and even bride price (lobolo).

She further states that:

> *"It has become imperative to develop new frameworks, not necessarily for counteracting the cultural relativism argument, but for engaging in cross-cultural*

> *dialogue aimed at establishing a new grounding for claims to universalism"* (Ezeilo, 2005, p. 247).

Taking into consideration the frameworks and perspectives of other cultures will allow for the rise of alternative notions that strengthen human rights, as there is always something in every culture that we can build on (Ezeilo, 2005). Additionally, in the endeavour to create universal, yet culturally sensitive and inclusive human rights, Venganai (2015) argues that cultural beliefs such as Ubuntu can be used to complement existing conventional laws that promote gender equality and women's rights. This will ensure that interventions are not solely informed by the western individualistic human rights discourses, but also build from African values that black women and men can identify with (Venganai, 2015). Thus, African feminist insist that the aim must be to create empowering discourses of African culture that protect girls and women from gender-based oppression (Tamale, 2008; Venganai, 2015). Such efforts are being made in Kenya through an initiative called Co-Exist. The aim of this initiative is to work with traditional leaders and boys in changing the negative discourses that perpetuate ideas and beliefs that negatively affect and oppress African women (Venganai, 2015; Wafula, 2013). The Co-Exist initiative argues that negative masculinities are what maintains women's vulnerability; hence they aim engage with men in communities as custodians of culture to build a culture that respects and protects women (Wafula, 2013).

Thus, considering the significant role that lobolo plays in many African women's lives, it is possible that the best resolve in dealing with the practice's gendered aspect is through similar initiates. Initiatives that will focus on changing the sexist aspects of lobolo while maintaining those positive aspects that women hold dear (Shope, 2006; Venganai, 2015; Wafula, 2013).

## Lobolo and Labour Force Participation

Lastly, the following section discusses the role of cultural factors such as lobolo in black women's participation in the labour market.

Black South African women's participation in the labour force has significantly risen in the last century, especially among women who are mothers and/or are married. However, though many developed countries have made significant advances in the participation of women in the labour force, developing countries such as South Africa, are still falling short (Henye, 2017).

Studies argue that the rise in female labour force participation in the twenty first centaury can be attributed to structural changes in the labour market, decreasing fertility rates and an increase in women's education levels (Henye, 2017). These advancements have thus made it possible and profitable for women to be in formal employment. Along with these factors, institutions that provide support for the reconciliation of work and family, such as day-care centres, have played a significant role in female employment (Henye, 2017). However, although considerable developments have taken place, some researchers argue that gendered cultural factors still come with consequences that are likely to impact women's participation in the labour market (Gedikli, 2013). There have been debates about the effects of cultural factors on economics, where some economists argue that culture might play a significant role in an individual's labour market behaviour (Ho, 2011). Henye (2017) argues that culture has an independent effect on female labour force participation, as lower rates of labour force participation among women are also related to attitudes social norms that do not support women working outside the home. It is argued that cultural constraints are probably a greater determinant of labour force participation than an individual's pursuit of personal interest, as culture plays a significant role in individual's behaviour (Ho, 2011).

Thus, with the initiatives that South African gender activists have made in empowering women and improving their participation in the labour force, it is necessary to consider how role that traditional cultural perspectives might influence black South African women's decisions to engage in the labour market. An example of the role that culture and gender roles play, especially in marriage, was indicated by Mazonde and Carmichael (2016). The study explored how Zimbabwean female entrepreneurs navigate and work around the patriarchal barriers that exist in the traditional sociocultural contexts they live. The study indicated that cultural values and behaviours played a significant role in enabling or hindering women's entrepreneurial success (Mazonde & Carmichael, 2016). Majority of the female entrepreneurs that were interviewed in the study held the view that their household roles were non-negotiable. They expressed that their domestic roles as a basic instinct of their womanhood that they fulfilled without hesitation of second thought (Mazonde & Carmichael, 2016). According to these women, their roles as wives and mothers were to be submissive and nurturing and these roles came first, before work and any career related activities (Mazonde & Carmichael, 2016). Though some women expressed that their family's commitment and support towards their careers assisted in motivating them to pursue their entrepreneurial goals. However, not all the female entrepreneurs in the study expressed having received such family support for their

entrepreneurial ambitions, as some expressed that their husbands looked down on their entrepreneurial activities (Mazonde & Carmichael, 2016). Zimbabwean black women share similar views to South African black women regarding the practice of lobolo and the role that the custom plays in their lives as women and wives as indicated by Ansel's (2001) study. As previously indicated the norms that are promoted through the lobolo system about women and their place in the world are similar to those expressed by the women in Mazonde and Carmichael's (2016) study. For that reason, it is likely that women married under the lobolo system in South Africa also share similar views and experiences regarding their roles as mothers and their work-related aspirations.

Among the above stated research, further research has been conducted to understand how factors such as age, education, access to non-labour income (such as social grants provided by the Government to unemployed mothers), marital status, number of children a woman has, and/or the region in which they live might affect black South African women's decisions to engage in the labour market, along with their autonomy and bargaining power in the marriage (Ntuli & Wittenberg, 2013). Marital status and age have been found to be the most significant determinants of participation in the labour force. According to Jansen van Rensburg, Classen, and Fourie (2019) marriage has different effects on men and women's labour force participation. The study found that among men, marriage increased their likelihood of participating in the labour force while it decreased that of women (Jansen van Rensburg et al., 2019). Jansen van Rensburg et al.'s (2019) study analysed the impact of marital status on employment in South Africa and found that when compared to married men, married women were more likely to be unemployed. As such, the authors concluded that marriage influences the labour market outcomes of women differently than those of men. Jansen van Rensburg et al., (2019) argue that women who depend on their husbands or partners for financial support, often do not have the liberty (or see the need) to obtain financial assets. Hence it can be argued that married women are more likely to choose to stay at home and take up more family and household-oriented roles than to work (especially in situations where there is no need for the extra income that might come from the wife being employed).

Similar results were found by Ntuli and Wittenberg's (2013) study. The researchers investigated the changes that have taken place in black South African women's participation in the labour force in the post-apartheid era. They found that marriage is a significant determinant of black women's labour force participation, as it considerably reduces their

likelihood of seeking employment (Ntuli & Wittenberg, 2013). The study indicated that while education has a positive effect on women's labour force participation, age and marital status have been found to have a negative effect (Ntuli & Wittenberg, 2013). According to Ntuli and Wittenberg (2013) women's labour force participation decreases with age as there is a shift in their responsibilities as they get older - such as the need to get married and have children. The study further indicated that being divorced increased women's likelihood of labour force participation (Ntuli & Wittenberg, 2013). This is probably due to the fact that once divorced women no longer have financial security and stability that comes from being married when their husbands are employed. Furthermore, Ntuli and Wittenberg (2013) found that the chances of participation are even much higher among single women (Ntuli & Wittenberg, 2013). For that reason, Ntuli and Wittenberg (2013) and Jansen van Rensburg's et al. (2019) studies support the argument that one of the most significant influence of a black woman's decision to participate in the labour force is her marital status.

Another factor that is argued to play a significant role in black women's participation in the labour market is fertility. According to De Jong, Smit and Longwe (2017) the prospect of being employed among black South African women, especially those who are married, decrease in the presence of one or more children below the age of six years old. De Jong et al.'s (2017) study aimed to determine whether there is a causal relationship between African women's fertility and their labour force participation in non-agricultural work in Sub-Saharan Africa. The results of the study indicated that the number of children a woman has (that are under the age of six) has a negative effect on her participation in the labour force, especially when the children are twins. The study concluded that child bearing negatively affects the chances of black women working in non-agricultural jobs that force them to be away from the home. According to De Jong et al. (2017) when black women get married and decide to start a family, they often decide to drop out of the labour market or opt for jobs (such as agricultural work) that will keep them closer to home and their children. Furthermore, De Jong et al. (2017) argue that, based on the results found in the study, educated women with more children are less likely to profit from the advantage of being educated.

Lastly, similar research to that discussed above was also conducted by Mackett (2016), in the area of marital status and labour force participation. The study investigated the factors that determine labour force participation outcomes in South Africa based on gender differences. The author found that, when marital status was used as a labour market outcome, over half of

the married women in the study were unemployed, as compared to the men in the study (Mackett, 2016). In addition, when the number of children in the household was used as a labour market outcome, the results still indicated that women were more likely to be unemployed, as compared to men (Mackett, 2016). Hence, marriage has negative outcomes towards women's employment. Women are constrained by their gender roles and obligations and might find it difficult to reconcile these obligations with their desire to be employed or pursue a career.

Contrary to the findings of the above studies (regarding fertility and labour force participation) Van der Stoep's (2008) study indicated that the relationship between fertility and labour force participation is not the same in developing countries and it is in developed countries. Van der Stoep (2008) argues that in developing countries like South Africa, women are more likely to be employed when they have children. Thus, according to the author, when the relationship between fertility and employment is assessed among women in developing countries, it tends to either be inconclusive or positive (Van der Stoep, 2008). One possible reason for this, specifically in the case of South Africa, is the state of the economy and the high unemployment rate (Van der Stoep, 2008). Black mothers in South Africa often come from impoverished backgrounds and cannot afford to be financially dependent on their partners and Child Social grants as their source of income. Especially among mother who are single who do not have any other means sufficient financial support, and seeking employment is their only resolve (Van der Stoep, 2008). However, the findings of this study do not negate the negative effect of fertility on women's participation in the labour market that has been indicated by other researchers. At most, what Van der Stoep (2008) study shows is that the positive effect of children on labour force participation is more likely among women who are single than women who are married and are financially dependent on their husbands. This was indicated by Yakubu (2010), who's study found that female labour force participation decreased for women who were either married or cohabiting, but not for women who were single, widowed or never married.

Similar studies have been conducted that also support the arguments about the effect of gender related factors on women's ability to participate in the labour market (see Gedikli, 2013; Van Biljon, Von Fintel & Pasha, 2018; Yakubu, 2010; Contreras & Plaza, 2010). For instance, Van Biljon et al.'s (2018) study, explored the effect of women's autonomy and bargaining power (within their marriages) on their ability to participate in the labour market. Van Biljon et al.

(2018) argues that a lack of bargaining power (in the form of financial resources) at the woman's disposal has a negative impact on her ability to negotiate for participation in the labour market. Thus, Van Biljon et al. (2018) concluded that autonomy in the household has similar effects on women's labour force participation as does marital status and fertility. Unlike women, men's decision-making power is not dependent on financial inclusion and resources, as their bargaining power is already determined and upheld by the social norms they exist in. Therefore, not having financial resources and autonomy keeps married women subservient and dependent on their husbands, which restricts their ability to make decisions that are motivated by their own interests. Therefore, Van Biljon et al. (2018) argues that an increase in women's autonomy might cause a significant increase in their chance of participating in the labour force.

The social norms that women are married under the lobolo system find themselves in is one that gives men the decision-making power and encourages them to pursue careers and financial independence. Those married women who choose to participate in the labour market, either due to necessity or personal interests, must understand the need for balance between careers with their marital roles. With very little support from family, it is likely that these double roles might place great strain upon married women, especially those with children. Furthermore, Jansen van Rensburg et al. (2019) argues that since a woman's primary role is with her children and the home, her human capital is weighed up against that of her husband, to determine how it will impact the household income, along with the day to day running of the household if she leaves her duties to go work. If the woman's potential income through employment and its contribution to the household is seen as less significant, the decision of who works is likely to favour the husband (Jansen van Rensburg et al., 2019). For that reason, because women married under the lobolo system are believed to be more valuable in the home than in the labour market, it is likely that if their human capital does not make a significant contribution to the household as compared to her husband, she might be pressured to stay home. Though women married under lobolo do participate in the labour market, their labour force is expected to not affect their ability to fulfil their primary marital roles. Thus, gender roles expressed through lobolo have a great impact on black married women's career goals.

Similar, studies have been conducted internationally that look at cultural factors that might impact women's participation in the labour market. Among studies that have looked at marital status and fertility, other research that has been conducted internationally also focuses on how attitudes towards employment affect women's participation in the labour market. An example

of such research is that done by Antecol (2003), which investigated the impact of male attitudes on rates of women's participation in the labour market. The expected results were found, which indicated that women from countries where men have more favourable attitudes towards women's employment women were more likely to actively engage in the labour market (Antecol, 2003). In addition, a similar study was conducted by Boeckmann, Misra and Budig (2014), who analysed the influence of culture and institutional economic factors on the employment of mothers. Cultural factors were measured using an aggregated measure of people's attitudes towards working mothers at a country level (Boeckmann et al., 2014). The study showed that in countries with less attitudinal support of the employment of mothers, the employment probability and working hours of mothers are significantly lower than those of women without children (Boeckmann et al., 2014). However, the opposite was seen from countries with stronger attitudinal support towards the employment of mothers (Boeckmann et al., 2014). Furthermore, apart from male attitudes towards women's employment, Gedikli (2013) indicated that values and beliefs women hold about where their roles lie determines whether they will participate in the labour market or not. According to Gedikli (2013), women with more traditional values are less likely to be in formal work or pursue higher levels of education as compared to men. In addition, the results also indicated that the probability of a woman being unemployed increased when woman is more affected by social norms and cultural expectations. Social norms and cultural beliefs, remain very important to women regardless of their level of education and / or being married to a highly educated man (Gedilki, 2013). Through the payment of bride-price (lobolo) to the bride's family, the husband and his family are investing in her to use her labour force in domestic responsibilities (Gedilki, 2013). When we consider that majority of women married under the lobolo system exist under gendered attitudes that reinforce that women should focus on fulfilling their domestic roles, the practice and the values it perpetuates might to have a negative effect on women's employment. Women with more traditional gender views about lobolo are therefore more likely to choose to fulfil their marital obligations and duties and remain financially dependent on their husbands. As a consequence, all the above discussed factors can provide a potential understanding as to how cultural practices and beliefs have different impacts on African women's empowerment and lives.

# Research Objectives:

The primary objective of this thesis was to explore black South African women's perceptions of lobolo, through a Q-methodology analysis. The secondary objective of this thesis was to determine whether there is a link between these perceptions of the practice and women's participation in the labour force, from both women who have had lobolo paid for them (i.e. married) and those who have not (i.e. single / co-habiting / unmarried). The key findings of this study will be outlined and discussed, relating to both the primary objective and followed by the secondary objective.

# Chapter 3: Methods

## Research Methodology: What is Q-methodology?

Q-methodology has been widely used in sociology, psychology, social and political psychology and political science (Durning, 1999). It is a research methodology that empirically studies human subjectivity, by exploring people's individual perspectives, opinions or feelings about a particular subject (Durning, 1999; Newman & Ramlo, 2010). It fits into the framework of naturalistic research and maintains the relationship between themes (Newman & Ramlo, 2010). However, unlike typical qualitative research, it minimises the impact of the researcher's frame of reference through its use of correlation and factor analysis to analyse the participant's responses (Ellis, Barry & Robinson, 2007; Newman & Ramlo, 2010; Steelman & Maguire, 1998). It uses a by-person factor analysis of the correlations between people instead of the correlations between tests or variables based on the responses (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Their responses are collected through the sorting of items on a grid (see figure 1) (Newman & Ramlo, 2010; Watts & Stenner, 2012). This is done through sorting the state statements from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The grid distribution is a method used to measure the participant's subjective responses (Newman & Ramlo, 2010).

The items sorted by the participants are statements related to the topic under investigation (Newman & Ramlo, 2010). These sorts are then analysed using factor analysis and the views that are similar are grouped into specific factors (Newman & Ramlo, 2010; Steelman & Maguire, 1999). The manner in which the respondents sort the statements determines the factors and the factor groupings (Newman & Ramlo, 2010). The items used in the sorting are statements related to the topic on to the grid (Newman & Ramlo, 2010; Watts & Stenner, 2012). These sorts are then analysed using factor analysis and the views that are similar are grouped together into specific factors (Newman & Ramlo, 2010; Steelman & Maguire, 1999). Thus, the respondents are grouped and not the items, as a result there needs to be an adequate amount of statements (Newman & Ramlo, 2010). The methodology does not require a large number of respondents to gain valid results, but a sufficient amount of statements is necessary to help make sure that the differences between the respondents is clearly determined (Ellis et al., 2007; Newman & Ramlo, 2010). The amount of statements is essential in revealing the patterns that relate to the topic within and across traits (such as gender) (Ellis et al., 2007).

Q-methodology is an inversion of R-methodology tradition, because it considers the respondents as the variables and the traits, abilities, or tests are treated as the sample or population (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2008; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Spearman's R-methodology study's the relationship among objective variables, where traits and attributes are extracted from the individuals who possess them and the findings are generalised to explain and understand the characteristics of the population (Steelman & Maguire, 1998). Q-methodology is concerned with the patterns of subjective perspectives across people, by identifying how individuals with like views and individuals with different views see an issue (Steelman & Maguire, 1998). Unlike R-methodology which uses larger samples of respondents to explore variability and generalise the findings, Q-methodology does not use large samples, therefore it does not concern itself with the generalizability of the research findings (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2008; Watts & Stenner, 2012). The focus of this methodology is in determining what views exist among people around a particular topic.

The first step in a Q-methodology study is to collect the statements. These collected statements are referred to as the concourse. The statements represent the different ideas that surround the topic being studied. In the case of this research, the topic was lobolo, thus different statements were collected based on what is said about lobolo by different people (e.g. male, female, young and old) (see the concourse in Appendix A). The statements can be collected through direct interviews and focus groups or from magazines, newspapers, and articles. Then the next step in the process is to select the Q-sample. The Q-sample is selected through analysing the concourse and finding the themes (Newman & Ramlo, 2010). From the concourse, typically thirty to sixty statements can be selected that align with the themes (Newman & Ramlo, 2010). This Q-sample is then the set of items that the respondents will sort onto the grid distribution (Newman & Ramlo, 2010). The sorting process is very subjective, as it is based on the participant's judgement of each item in the Q-sample (Newman & Ramlo, 2010). For example, in this study, the respondents had to sort the items relating to their personal views on lobolo. The items are printed on individual cards, that fit onto each individual space on the grid. After the sorts have been completed, the next step is the analysis process. The last step is the analysis. The analysis involves correlation, factor analysis and the calculation of the different factors (Newman & Ramlo, 2010). For the purpose of this study, the PQ Method for factor analysis was used. PQ Method offers two factor extraction components, which are Centroid and Principal component (Newman & Ramlo, 2010). However, for most Q-methodology studies, Centroid is the extraction method of choice (Newman & Ramlo, 2010). The Q-methodology

software allows the researcher to choose between two factor rotations, namely, varimax and hand rotation (Newman & Ramlo, 2010).

## Reliability and Validity of Q-methodology

Q-methodology studies have been criticized for their lack of generalisability and reliability, due to its use of small samples when investigating the subjectivity of individuals along with the sorting of statements that are of unknown reliability (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2008; Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005).

### reliability.

Test-retest reliability is often used to determine the reliability of Q-methodology studies (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2008; Valenta & Wigger, 1997). Test-retest reliability of Q-methodology studies can be determined by investigating whether - "will the same condition of instruction lead to factors that are schematically reliable (i.e. represent similar viewpoints on the topic) across similarly structured but different Q-samples when administered to different sets of persons?" (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2008, pg. 70). For example, if we consider this study, if the study was replicated and a different yet similar Q-sample was used (such as one that contains perspective about lobolo, but are not exact to the one used in this study), will the same factors be found? According to Valenta and Wigger (1997) studies have been conducted to determine the test-retest reliability of this methodology's Q-sample. Consistent results were found when the same Q-sample was administered to different samples of people, and when the same research topic was perused, but using similar - yet not identical - Q-samples using different samples of people (Valenta & Wigger, 1997). Thus, replicability is considered the most important form of reliability for Q methodology (Valenta & Wigger, 1997). The test-retest reliability of Q-samples has been found to have correlations coefficients of 0.80 and higher. (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2008; Valenta & Wigger, 1997).

### generalisability.

Q-methodology studies do not use random sample design, because of the exploratory and qualitative nature (Valenta & Wigger, 1997). As a result, generalisability is not based on the numerical distribution of the study’s respondents and it is limited to the sample of respondents in the study (Valenta & Wigger, 1997). The value of this methodology is that it allows the

researcher to uncover authentic clusters of opinions, drawing conclusions and building theory (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2008; Valenta & Wigger, 1997). That being so, determining whether these opinion clusters and theories exist in the larger population can be achieved through the use of group surveys and standard variance analytical methods (Valenta & Wigger, 1997).

### validity.

Due to the qualitative nature of Q-methodology, the validity of the items used is assessed differently to that of quantitative studies (Valenta & Wigger, 1997). There are no set criteria that can be used to assess a people's viewpoint due to the fact that their views are entirely subjective (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2008; Valenta & Wigger, 1997). Therefore, the order in which each person ranks the statements onto the grid is considered their valid perspective (Valenta & Wigger, 1997). Therefore, in Q-methodology research, item validity does not apply (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2008). The content validity of the items in the Q-sample is assessed through consulting with experts on the topic under study and also through reviewing literature relating to the topic under study (Valenta & Wigger, 1997).

## Q-sample Design and Content

The first step taken in this study's process was to develop the concourse. The concourse was derived in a naturalistic manner using multiple sources. The sources used included interviewing people and asking for their opinion regarding lobolo, and reviewing different literature such as journal articles, magazines, online articles, and social media platform. The search phrases or words used on online platforms and were lobolo, lobola, bride-wealth and bride price in South Africa. Thus, the statements in the concourse represented people's perceptions, beliefs and opinions about lobolo. Statements that were determined as useful were scrutinized and then added to the concourse. The collection of statements ended when saturation was reached and no new perspectives emerged. The concourse was then made up of 150 statements. The items were then grouped based on the themes that emerged. Eight themes emerged, and items that did not tap into these themes, or were repetitive, were removed. This narrowed the concourse down to 58 statements (see Appendix A). The concourse (consisting of 58 statements) was then reviewed by an expert on the subject of lobolo from the department of Social Work at the University of Witwatersrand to determine the validity of the statements and give recommendations. From the review, no major changes were recommended. Then the next step

in the research process was to develop the Q-sample. The concourse was further narrowed down into 48 statements by identify the exact statements that aligned with the themes, which formed the Q-sample (Newman & Ramlo, 2010; Watts & Stenner, 2012). The resulting Q-sample consisted of 48 statements (See Appendix B). These statements were used in the Q-sorts.

## P-set (Sample of Respondents) and Sampling

P-set (sample of respondents) that was involved in the study consisted of 42 women, 23 were students or employees at the University of the Witwatersrand. Majority of the P-set (86%) was from the Gauteng province and the rest was from the Mpumalanga province. The sample consisted of 71.4% (30) employed women, 28.6 % (12) unemployed women. Based on their education levels, 10 had a Grade 12 level, 8 had only enrolled in tertiary, but had not completed, 4 had obtained a diploma, 6 had obtained a degree, and 14 had reached postgraduate level. All the women who were students at the time of study were at a postgraduate level and on a clear career trajectory, though they all identified as unemployed. Majority of the women who were employed fell under pink collar and blue-collar employment. Out of the 42 respondents, 20 of them were single and had no lobolo paid for them, 21 of the women were married or engaged and had had lobolo paid for them, and 1 woman was cohabiting and had not had lobolo paid for her. When it comes to the cultural or ethnic groups they came from, 6 were Pedi, 4 were Ndebele, 8 were Swati, 9 were Zulu, 4 were Tswana, 4 were Tsonga, 4 were Xhosa, and none were Venda. The age of the respondents ranged from 23 to 60, with a mean age of 35.19, a standard deviation of 9.8, and a median of 33. The sample for this study was a non-probability convenience sample of volunteers. The sampling strategy used was a purposeful sampling strategy, where specific respondents with particular attributes necessary for the purpose of the study were asked to participate (Valenta & Wigger, 1997). Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select information-rich respondents for the study, which are respondents in which one can obtain a great deal of information about the subject the study is focused on (Patton, 1990). The sampling strategy also involved a snowball sampling strategy. This strategy to use to help find information-rich respondents, or respondents with the necessary attributes, by asking people who have already participated in the study to recommended people they might know who have those particular characteristics that the researcher can contact and request their participation (Patton, 1990).

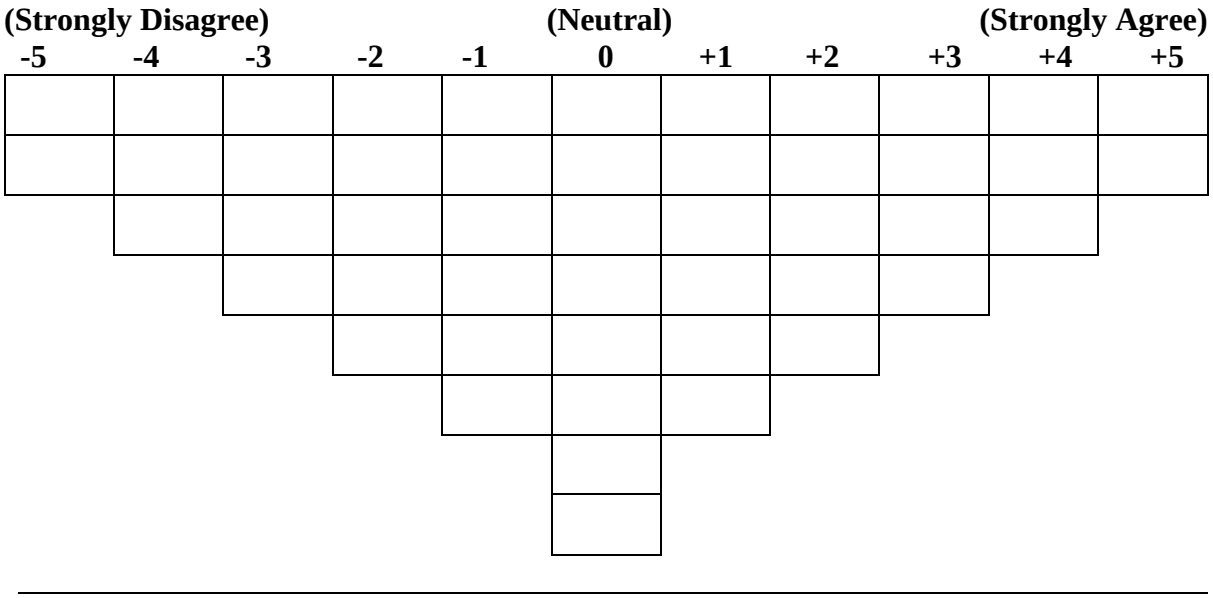
## Procedure (Administering the Q-sort) and Ethical Considerations

Before the study was performed, ethical clearance was requested from the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee. Permission was then obtained to conduct the study at the Human and Community development building's research laboratory. The data was collected at the participant's convenience. Some of the data was collected at participants' homes, workplaces, or in the Department of Human and Community development tutorial rooms or the Psychology Department postgraduate student research laboratory. It was the researcher's responsibility to ensure that written informed consent was obtained by providing the respondents with an information sheet and a consent form that they had to read and sign before participating in the study. Before obtaining written informed consent, the purpose and aims of the study was explained to the respondents, and then they were given the participant information sheet to read and the consent form to sign if they agreed to participate in the study. They then were given the demographic questionnaire to fill in. Once that was completed, the Q-sort grid distribution was laid on a table and they were given the 48 statements that were printed on square cards. The respondents were instructed to read all the statements and group them into three piles (according to the statements they agreed with, the statements they disagreed with, and the statements they were neutral on). Then from those grouped statements, they were instructed to pick two statements that they strongly agreed with and then choose two that they strongly disagreed with and place them on the appropriate place on the Q-sort grid distribution (+5 and -5). They were then instructed to sort the statements onto the Q-sort grid distribution based on whether they agreed, disagreed, or were neutral about a statement. The statements were ranked on the Q-sort grid distribution from strongly agree (+5) to strongly disagree (-5). It was expressed to the respondents they must give respond according to their own personal opinion and that there were no right or wrong answers. Respondents were informed that there was no time limit and that sorting normally takes 10 to 20 minutes depending on each respondent. They were informed that they could ask questions relating to the Q-sort task and participation, but if they had any questions (or views) about the statements, they were more than welcome to ask (or share them) after they had completed the sorting task. Five respondents withdrew from the study before completion. During each respondent's sorting, I sat at a far distance to allow the respondents to complete the task comfortably and without feeling judged, and to avoid affecting their responses through my presence. The full

completion of the Q-sort was an indication that the respondents gave their consent to have their responses used for analysis and reporting. No identifying information was requested from the respondents. Therefore, their identities were kept confidential in the final report. Once the respondents were finished sorting, the cards on the grid were turned over and the numbers on each card were recorded on a smaller replica Q-sort distribution drawn on a note book. Once the statements were collected, they were then entered into the PQ Method software for analysis.

Figure 1

*Q-sort grid distribution*




## Statistical Analysis

The PQ method Software version 2.33 compatible with Windows, Schmolck (2012), was downloaded from the Q methodology website and used to analyse the data. The analysis began by manually entering all 48 statements into the programme, and then followed by manually entering all 42 Q-sorts into the programme for analysis.

### factor extraction.

Once all the Q-sorts were entered, a Centroid factor analysis was performed by choosing the third option on the program. The method described by Brown (1980) for Centroid factor analysis was chosen over the Horst 5.5. Centroid factor analysis, which has iterative solutions

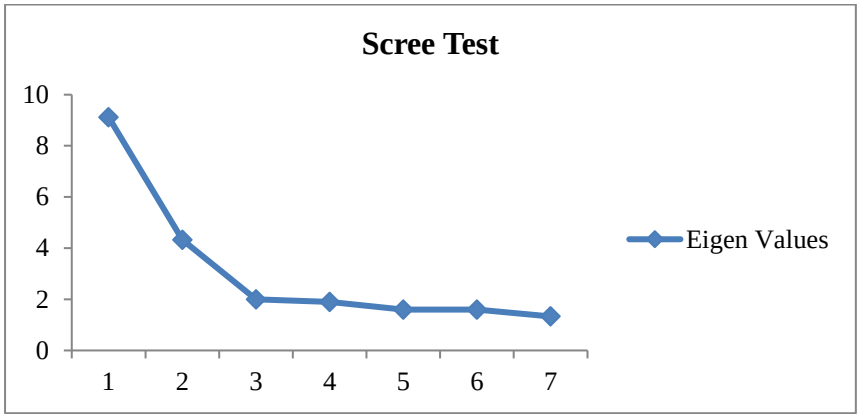
for commonalities, as recommended by the program. Initially, seven factors were chosen for extraction. Centroid factor analysis is the oldest form of factor extraction and was designed before the creating of computers; it is believed to be simpler and easier to use compared to the other factor analysis techniques that have come after it (Watts, & Stenner, 2012). Though there are other factor analysis such as Principal component factor analysis that are considered more accurate in a statistical sense, Centroid factor analysis allows permissiveness in relation to data exploration and it is highly recommended by Q-methodologists (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The process of extraction involves the identification of distinct patterns of similarity in the Q-sorts that have been entered into the program (Watts, & Stenner, 2012). The first factor extracted often accounts for most of the variance found in the Q-sorts, and the next factors often follow accounting for less variance compared to the previous factor.

## determining how many factors to keep.

In determining how many factors to keep, Eigen values are the most commonly used criterion. Eigen values are said to be the best indicators of a factor's explanatory power and statistical strength (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Eigen values of less than 1.00 are often chosen as the cut-off point for extraction and retaining a factor, which means factors that have Eigenvalues greater than one are often retained. All the seven factors in this study were above one, hence a further analysis (i.e. a scree plot test) was used to confirm how many factors to keep, though all the Eigen values are above 1.00. A scree plot test involves plotting the Eigen values on a line graph. Figure 2 below is a scree plot of the Eigen values. As seen on the graph the slope of the graph changes on the third factor, hence this indicated that only three factors should be extracted from the data (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Figure 2

*Scree test of the data showing seven components*




## factor rotation.

Once the Centroid factor analysis was conducted, the factors were then rotated using the Varimax rotation of factors option on the programme and the flagging option was chosen to automatically flag. Then a final Q-analysis was performed by the programme and the results were saved. Varimax rotation tries to ensure that each Q-sort has a high factor loading in relation to one of the factors in the study and that the overall solution obtained maximises the amount of variance explained by each factor (Watts & Stenner, 2013). Varimax rotation is able to reveal the subject matter from the viewpoints that everyone recognises and considers to be significant (Watts & Stenner, 2013).

# Chapter 4: Results

This section presents the results were obtained from the analysis conducted and it also discusses the interpretations of each factor. The first step in interpreting these factors was to group the statements based on their highest rankings of +5 and their lowest ranking of -5 (see Crib Sheet on Appendix E). This was done for each factor individually (see Appendix E). The rest of the statements were grouped based on whether they were ranked higher on the one factor than on the other, and ranked lower on one factor than on the other. These values are written in bold below under the factor interpretation section. Example:

*Statement 5- The bride's mother should also be involved in the Lobolo negotiations* ***+3***

*0 0 or*

*Statement 4 - The bride should also be allowed to be involved in the Lobolo +1* ***-5*** *+3*

Once the statements in each factor were grouped based on their rankings, they were then interpreted to determine the interpretation of how the respondents ranked each statement. The overall final interpretation uses a holistic approach to factor interpretation which is based on the gestalt approach to data interpretation (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Additionally, the demographic characteristics relative to each factor were also used to assist in interpreting the factors (see Table 3). Three factors emerged from the analysis, and each factor was named through an analysis of the relevant literature in conjunction with the meanings that emerged through analysing the statements in each factor.

## Factor Summary

All 48 items loaded significantly on at least three of the factors. The composite reliabilities of each factor are 0.987, 0.970 and 0.966 for each factor respectively, which were above 0.95. A reliability coefficient above 0.95 is accepted as a good reliability for factors (Brown, 1993).

Factor 1 explained 22% of the variance in the study, Factor 2 explained 10% of the variance and Factor 3 explained 5% of the variance. The cumulative variance explained by all the factors was found to be 37%.

Table 1

*Statistical characteristic of the factors*

| Factor | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Defining Variables | 19 | 8 | 7 |
| S. E. of Factor Z-Scores | 0.114 | 0.174 | 0.186 |
| Eigen values | 9.1370 | 4.3217 | 1.9853 |
| % Explained Variance | 22 | 10 | 5 |
| Cumulative % explained variance | 22 | 32 | 37 |
| Composite reliability | 0.987 | 0.970 | 0.966 |

# Factor Correlations

The factor correlations (See table 2) shows the extent to which each of the factor arrays inter-correlate. Factor 1 and 2 have a small effect size based on Cohen's effect size criteria for correlations and they correlate negatively (-0.2185) with each other. Factors 1 and 3 have a moderate to large effect size based on Cohen's effect size criteria and they correlated positively (0.4333) with each other. Factor 2 and 3 also had a moderate to large effect size based on Cohen's effect size criteria for correlations, and they correlated negatively (-0.4464) with each other.

Table 2

*Correlations between factors and the effect size*

| Factors | 1 and 2 | 1 and 3 | 2 and 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Correlation | -0.2185 | 0.4333 | -0.4464 |
| Cohens effect size criteria | Small | Moderate to large | Moderate to large |

**demographic information.**

Table 3

*Distinguishing sorts for factors 1*

| Sort No. | Level of Education | Employment Status | Marital Status | Lobolo Paid? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Degree Obtained | Employed | Single | No |
| 5 | Postgraduate Level | Employed | Single | No |
| 9 | Postgraduate Level | Unemployed | Married | Yes |
| 11 | Degree Obtained | Unemployed | Married | Yes |
| 13 | Postgraduate Level | Unemployed | Married | Yes |
| 15 | Matriculated | Employed | Married | Yes |
| 17 | Tertiary Level | Employed | Married | Yes |
| 23 | Degree Obtained | Unemployed | Married | Yes |
| 27 | Matriculated | Employed | Married | Yes |
| 28 | Tertiary Level | Employed | Married | Yes |
| 30 | Tertiary Level | Employed | Single | No |
| 31 | Degree Obtained | Employed | Single | No |
| 34 | Postgraduate Level | Employed | Married | Yes |
| 35 | Matriculated | Unemployed | Married | Yes |
| 38 | Tertiary Level | Employed | Single | No |
| 39 | Matriculated | Employed | Single | No |
| 40 | Postgraduate Level | Unemployed | Married | Yes |
| 41 | Degree Obtained | Unemployed | Co-habiting | No |
| 42 | Degree Obtained | Employed | Married | Yes |

Table 4

*Distinguishing sorts for factor 2*

| Sort No. | Level of Education | Employment Status | Marital Status | Lobolo Paid? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Matriculated | Employed | Married | Yes |
| 3 | Postgraduate | Employed | Married | Yes |
| 6 | Tertiary Level | Employed | Single | Yes |
| 8 | Tertiary Level | Employed | Married | Yes |
| 12 | Matriculated | Employed | Single | No |
| 16 | Postgraduate | Unemployed | Single | No |
| 32 | Degree Obtained | Employed | Married | Yes |
| 36 | Married | Employed | Single | No |

Table 5

*Distinguishing sorts for factor 3*

| Sort No. | Level of Education | Employment Status | Marital Status | Lobolo Paid? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Degree Obtained | Unemployed | Engaged | Yes |
| 7 | Postgraduate Level | Unemployed | Single | No |
| 20 | Postgraduate Level | Employed | Single | No |
| 24 | Tertiary Level | Unemployed | Married | Yes |
| 25 | Postgraduate Level | Unemployed | Single | No |
| 33 | Postgraduate Level | Employed | Single | No |
| 37 | Matriculated | Employed | Single | No |

## Factor Interpretations

Two approaches were taken when deciding which statements to include in the interpretation for each factor. Firstly, each factor was named and interpreted using the themes that emerged through analysing each statement in the specific factor. These statements that reflected the uniqueness of each factor are called distinguishing statements (Akhtar-Danesh et al., 2008). Distinguishing statements are those that distinguish each factor from another (Newman & Ramlo, 2010; Akhtar-Danesh et al., 2008; Watts & Stenner, 2012). For example, a particular distinguishing statement might rank highest in one factor than in all the others (Watts &

Stenner, 2012). Secondly, the next step was to choose which factors to include in the interpretation. This was done by considering the z-scores of each statement. Statements that had z-scores that were over 1.5 and below -1.5 were where included in the interpretation, along with statements that had high rankings of above +2 and below -2 (Shemmings, 2008). Thus, statements that were rather closer to zero were left out of the interpretation unless they had significantly high (e.g. +5 or +4) or significantly low (e.g. -5 or -4) rankings (Shemmings, 2008). However, for the purpose of Factor 3, as only a few statements were indicated by the factor as distinguishing, the above approach (in deciding which statements to include in the interpretations) was not employed. In this case only the distinguishing statements were used as part of the interpretations for this factor (see Appendix E).

Table 6

*Factor Arrays*

| Factor Q-sort for each statement | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Paying lobolo shows that the man is responsible. | 0 | 3 | -4 |
| 2. Lobolo makes it hard for couples to get married when the man cannot afford it. | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 3. Only the male elders from both the groom and the bride's side of the family should be part of the negotiations. | -5 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. The bride should also be allowed to be involved in the lobolo negotiations. | 1 | -5 | 3 |
| 5. The bride's mother should also be involved in the lobolo negotiations. | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 6. The groom should also be involved in the lobolo negotiations. | 2 | -3 | -3 |
| 7. It is not right that women are only involved in the lobolo negotiations when there are no men. | 1 | -5 | 2 |
| 8. Lobolo is practiced despite the religion people follow. | -1 | 1 | -1 |
| 9. Lobolo is a cultural practice that keeps the community together. | -2 | 2 | -1 |
| 10. Lobolo shows that the marriage is accepted within the community. | -1 | 3 | 0 |
| 11. Lobolo splits communities by introducing economic divisions. | -4 | -3 | -1 |
| 12. Lobolo brings the husband and wife's families together. | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| 13. Lobolo has become so expensive that couples cannot get married. | -1 | 0 | 1 |
| 14. Lobolo means that the husband and wife's families see each other in monetary terms. | -3 | -2 | 2 |
| 15. Paying lobolo gives the man the right to have his wife and children take his surname | 0 | 1 | -5 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16. Lobolo should not give the man reproductive and sexual power over the woman. | 4 | -2 | 3 |
| 17. Lobolo makes the marriage legal and legitimate. | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| 18. Lobolo should not give the man the right to marry more than one wife. | 5 | -2 | 2 |
| 19. Lobolo creates shared respect and dignity between the two families. | 1 | 4 | -3 |
| 20. Lobolo should not mean that the woman no longer belongs to her maiden family. | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| 21. It is not right that when lobolo has been paid, the husband's family dictates the domestic roles the woman must play. | 1 | -2 | 1 |
| 22. It is not right that the payment of lobolo gives the groom's family the right to reprimand or correct the wife's behaviour. | 3 | -1 | 2 |
| 23. Lobolo prevents couples from getting divorced. | -5 | 0 | 0 |
| 24. Lobolo should not lead to believing that they own their wives. | 4 | -2 | 5 |
| 25. Lobolo shows that the man is able to provide for the woman and that he is the head of the home. | -1 | 2 | -2 |
| 26. Men should not use the high price of lobolo as an excuse | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 27. Lobolo should not make women inferior / lesser to the man. | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| 28. Lobolo shows that the man values his wife. | 1 | 5 | -3 |
| 29. Lobolo plays a role in domestic violence. | -1 | -3 | 1 |
| 30. Lobolo gives women status in the community. | -2 | 1 | -2 |
| 31. Lobolo should not reduce women to commodities / objects. | 3 | -1 | 0 |
| 32. Lobolo shows that the husband respects the wife. | 1 | 4 | -5 |
| 33. Lobolo is a very important part of African culture and African history. | 0 | -1 | 3 |
| 34. Feminism threatens the practice of lobolo. | -4 | 3 | -1 |
| 35. Lobolo is so expensive that it leads to couples cohabiting. | -3 | -1 | 3 |
| 36. Couples start their marriage in debt because of the high price of lobolo. | -3 | -1 | -1 |
| 37. Lobolo should not be used to maintain male dominance over women. | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 38. Lobolo should not be used to force women to obey men. | 5 | 0 | 4 |
| 39. Lobolo prevents women from getting help from their families when they are being abused by their husbands. | -2 | -4 | 0 |
| 40. Lobolo makes it hard for women to leave their marriage if they are being abused. | -1 | -3 | -2 |
| 41. Lobolo is rooted in patriarchy. | 2 | -4 | 1 |
| 42. Lobolo gives the woman an identity and respect from her community. | -2 | 1 | -2 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 43. Lobolo is a form of appreciation to the bride's family. | 2 | 4 | -2 |
| 44. Lobolo means that the husband has the right to dictate the role that the woman plays in the household. | -4 | -1 | -3 |
| 45. Lobolo determines what roles the husband and wife play in marriage. | -2 | 2 | -4 |
| 46. Lobolo also compensates the bride's family for all the money they have spent on her. | -3 | 2 | -1 |
| 47. Lobolo is an important part of our culture, so it must be maintained. | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 48. Lobolo has lost its significance in modern society. | 0 | -4 | -4 |

## factor 1: African feminist.

The participants in this factor expressed African feministic perspectives towards lobolo. Their views indicated that they believed in maintaining the practice and that they believe that the practice still plays a significant role in the lives of South African black people. However, their responses also indicated that they disagreed with the gendered aspects of the practice, such as not allowing women to participate in the negotiations, and the use of lobolo to justify polygamy. In South Africa specifically, lobolo has been traditionally practiced in such a way that the man is encouraged to marry more than one wife for the purpose of increasing his linage. Their response indicated that they strongly disagree that only the male elders of each family should be the only ones involved in the negotiations. Furthermore, their responses indicated that they agree that the bride's mother should be involved in the negotiations, along with the groom. These views were indicated by the high ranking of the following statements:

18 Lobolo should not give the man the right to marry more than one wife. **+5** -2 +2

3 Only the male elders from both the groom and the bride's sides of the family should participate in the negotiations. **-5** +2 +1

5 The bride's mother should also be involved in the lobolo negotiations. **+3** 0 0

6 The groom should also be involved in the lobolo negotiations. **+2** -3 -3

They responses also indicated that they disagreed with using the payment of lobolo as an excuse for men to force women to obey men. They also disagreed that lobolo should not be used as a tool to obtain reproductive power over the woman. Gaining the woman's reproductive capacity is one of the functions of lobolo, along with gaining guardianship. They also disagreed with the practice being used to allow men to determine which roles women should play in the household. This was all indicated by the very high rankings on the Q-sort of the following statements:

38 Lobolo should not be used to force women to obey men. **+5** 0 +4

16 Lobolo should not give the man reproductive and sexual power over the woman. **+4** -2 +3

44 Lobolo means that the husband has the right to dictate the roles the woman plays in the household. **-4** -1 -3

The women in this factor also rejected statements that spoke to the monetary perceptions about the practice. They disagreed that the lobolo is meant to compensate the bride's family for all the money they spent raising her. They also disagreed with the statements that resonated notions that lobolo has become commodified and that the two families see each other in monetary terms. They further disagreed that lobolo leaves couples in debt and that lobolo is so expensive that couples are forced to cohabitate because they cannot afford to pay it. This was indicated by the high negative rankings they gave to the following statements on the Q-sort:

36 Couples start their marriage in debt because of the high price of lobolo. **-3** -1 -1

35 Lobolo is so expensive that it leads to couples cohabiting. **-3** -1 +3

46 Lobolo also compensates the bride's family for all the money they spent on her. **-3** +2 -1

11 Lobolo splits communities by introducing economic divisions. **-4** -3 -1

14 Lobolo means that the husband and wife's families see each other in monetary terms. **-3** -2 +2

Furthermore, they also disagree with the notions that lobolo assist in maintaining the union between the couple and that it keeps the couple from getting divorced. It is possible that they hold the view that there are other factors within a marriage that keep couples from getting divorced and not just the payment of lobolo. This was indicated by the very high (and negative) ranking of the following statement:

23 Lobolo prevents couples from getting divorced. **-5** 0 0

Lastly, they also strongly disagreed that lobolo is threatened by feminism. This view further supports the notion that the women under this sort might hold African feministic views about the practice. This was indicated by the strong negative ranking of the following statement:

34 Feminism threatens the practice of lobolo. **-4** +3 -1

Therefore, the above results indicate that these women still value the traditional purpose of lobolo, but are against the gendered aspects of the practice. They believe in maintaining their culture and traditional beliefs, but in a manner that is inclusive and does not exclude women from the process.

## factor 2: traditionalists.

The results under factor 2 indicate that the respondents held traditionalistic views about the practice. They disagreed with majority of the statements that were contradictory to the traditional beliefs about the practice and how the negotiations should be conducted.

They strongly disagreed with the idea of women being involved in the negotiations and that the bride should also be involved in the negotiations. However, they did not reject the statement that related to only involving women in the lobolo negotiations when there are no men in the family to represent the family. This has been the common practice in most families, where women will be part of the negotiation process when all the male elders of the family have passed on or are unavailable. This was indicated by the very strong negative rankings and neutral rankings of the following statements:

7 It is not right that women are only involved in the lobolo negotiations when there are no men. +1 **-5** +2

4 The bride should also be allowed to be involved in the lobolo negotiations. +1 **-5** +3

5 The bride's mother should also be involved in the lobolo negotiations. +3 **0** 0

They agreed with all the statements that spoke to the traditional function and purpose of the practice, such as lobolo's role in legitimizing the marriage, that it indicates that the marriage is accepted and that only the male elders from each family should be involved in the negotiations They also strongly agree with the notions that the paying of lobolo shows that the man values and respects his wife, and that by paying lobolo he is showing appreciation to the bride's family. These views were indicated by their high positive rankings of the following statements.

17 Lobolo makes the marriage legal and legitimate. 0 **+5** 0

3 Only the male elders from both the groom and the bride's side of the family should be part of the negotiations. -5 **+2** +1

28 Lobolo shows that the man values his wife. +1 **+5** -3

1 Paying lobolo shows that the man is responsible. 0 **+3** -4

43 Lobolo is a form of appreciation to the bride's family. +2 **+4** -2

Furthermore, they also agreed with the notion that (among its other functions) lobolo is intended to also compensate the bride's family for the money they spent raising and educating their daughter. Additionally, they agreed with that lobolo creates relational ties between the two families. These are among the main functions of the practice and this supports that these women have strong traditionalistic views of lobolo. This was all indicated by their high ranking of the following statements which were ranked positively:

10 Lobolo shows that the marriage is accepted within the community -1 **+3** 0

12 Lobolo brings the husband and wife's families together 0 **+3** 0

19 Lobolo creates shared respect and dignity between the two families +1 **+4** -3

32 Lobolo shows that the husband respects the wife +1 **+4** -5

Lastly, the women in this factor disagreed with the controversial debates and perceptions of the practice - that it is patriarchal, how it has been associated with gender-based violence and the oppression of women in marriages. They disagreed that lobolo prevents the bride's family from intervening in instances where she is being abused or mistreated by her husband and that the payment of lobolo makes it difficult for the woman to leave the marriage. These views were indicated by the strong negative ranking of the following statements:

40 Lobolo makes it hard for women to leave their marriage if they are being abused -1 **-3** -2

39 Lobolo prevents women from getting help from their families -2 **-4** 0

41 Lobolo is rooted in patriarchy +2 **-4** -2

## factor 3: western feminists.

The results found in factor 2 indicated that the respondents held feministic views about the They agreed with the statements that spoke to the controversial debates about the practice. They strongly agreed with the statements that spoke towards the arguments that lobolo is synonymous to the purchase of a wife, making it likely that the husband might believe that he owns her. They also strongly agreed with the statements that relate to the arguments that lobolo should not be used to make women subordinate to the man. They also agreed that with the associations that have been made between lobolo and gender-based violence in marriages.
These views were indicated by the high ranking of the following statements:

27 Lobolo should not make women inferior / lesser to the man +3 0 **+5**

24 Lobolo should not men lead to believing that they own their wives +4 -2 **+5**

15 Paying lobolo gives the man the right to have his wife and children take his name 0 +1 **-5**

29 Lobolo plays a role in domestic violence -1 -3 **+1**

Furthermore, they disagreed with the idea that lobolo is meant to show that the man values and respects his wife and that it is a form of appreciation towards the bride's family. They also disagreed that lobolo indicates that the husband is able to provide for his family.

This was indicated by the low ranking of the following statements:

28 Lobolo shows that the man values his wife +1 +5 **-3**

43 Lobolo is a form of appreciation to the bride's family +2 +4 **-2**

25 Lobolo shows that the man is able to provide for the woman -1 +2 **-2**

32 Lobolo shows that the husband respects the wife +1 -4 **-5**

Lastly, they agreed that women should also take part in the negotiations, and they agreed with the notions that the practice has become commodified. This was indicated by the high ranking of the following statements:

7 It is not right that women are only involved in the Lobolo negotiations when there are no men +1 -5 **+2**

4 The bride should also be allowed to be involved in the lobolo +1 -5 **+3**

2 Lobolo makes it hard for couples to get married when the man cannot afford it 0 0 **+2**

13 Lobolo has become so expensive that couples cannot get marriage for a very long time -1 0 **+1**

Thus, these women disagreed with all the fundamental functions and implications of the practice, such as the expectations on which roles the woman and man are expected to play within the household through the payment of lobolo. They also disagreed with the practice creating relational ties between the two families, which is one of the most fundamental purposes of the practice, and that it is an indication of the husband's respect and consideration for his wife.

In summary, 3 factors were extracted by the factor analysis, which were named African Feminism (Factor 1), Traditionalists (Factor 2) and Feminists (Factor 3), based on literature

and the analysis of the distinguishing statements in each factor. The 3 factors that were extracted explained 37% of the variance. All three factors had a reliability co-efficient that was above 0.95.

# Chapter 5: Discussion:

This study sought to explore the perceptions held by black women in South Africa concerning lobolo. The secondary aim of the study was to understand whether particular perceptions regarding lobolo were related to women's employment status, based on the assumption that women with more traditionalistic views were likely to not be economically active. The Q analysis revealed three factors that reflected the different views of the women in the study about lobolo. The first factor (African Feminists) indicated that majority of the women in the factor were in support of lobolo. They supported the practice and its continuation, however they disagreed with the gender divides of the practice. Those in factor 2 (Traditionalists) had similar views to the women in factor 1 in that they both expressed positive regard towards the practice of lobolo as an African custom. Both factors 1 and 2 also indicated that the women disagreed with the arguments about lobolo how lobolo become commodified, and that it has a negative effect on the couple's financial stability. However, the views of the women in these two factors differed in terms of their perspectives on the gendered aspects of lobolo. The women in factor 1 disagreed with the gendered aspects of the practice, while those in factor 2 indicated they were not against the traditional gendered aspects of the practice towards marriage and women. Like the women in factor 1, the women in factor 3 (Western Feminists) were against the gendered aspects of the practice, such as how women are excluded from the lobolo negotiations, how some men use lobolo to place certain constraints upon women, and how lobolo is used to determine the husband and wife's roles in the marriage. However, there was disagreement between the two factors when it come to the continuation of lobolo and the role it plays in gender-based violence. Factor 1 indicated that these women disagreed with the arguments that lobolo plays a role in domestic violence and that it makes it difficult to leave the marriage is they are being abused, while those in factor 3 agreed. The women in factor 2's views are supported by Shope's (2006) study, that most black women disagree with the idea that lobolo plays a role in gender violence base, especially when taking into consideration that black women experience abuse even in relationships where the man has not paid lobolo. The women in the factor 3 disagreed with the maintaining of lobolo, while those that were under the factor 1 (as with those in factor 2) believed that it is an essential aspect of African heritage, and it must be maintained.

## Traditionalistic Views of Lobolo

Traditional African marriage is primarily based on conventional, heteronormative gender roles (Rudwick & Posel, 2014). The perspectives that are revealed by the second factor reflect an agreement with the traditional approach to African marriage and lobolo. These women agreed that the wife and the husband should conduct themselves in the marriage in accordance with the traditional gender roles that are expected through the payment of lobolo (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Harrison & Lynch, 2005). Their views indicate that they believe that women are better suited for the homemaker role, probably by virtue of childbearing. Their agreement with the traditional approach to how lobolo is practiced indicates that they agree with the gendered aspects of lobolo. The manner in which lobolo is practiced indicates how lobolo has been used to socialize women and men into specific gender roles in marriages (Harrison & Lynch, 2005; Nkosi, 2011; Vogel et al., 2003). Thus, the responses of the women in factor two indicate that they agreed with the role played by men in the marriage. They also indicated that they agree with men having reproductive power over women. This might suggest that they believe that through the transfer of lobolo, they give away reproductive and sexual autonomy over to their husbands. Socialist feminists argue that this lack of autonomy takes away women's power and alienates them from their bodies (Tong, 2008). Hence, these women subscribe to the domestic and reproductive roles expected of them through the payment of lobolo.

According to Heeren et al. (2012), most black women and men believe that the payment of lobolo strengthens the marriage. The women who fell into this factor also agreed with this view. Therefore, it is likely that they also believe that the non-payment of lobolo might result in adverse outcomes for the marriage. Furthermore, their strong agreement with the traditional perspectives of lobolo indicates that they agree that women are supposed to be submissive and subordinate to men. This was further indicated by how they disagreed with statements that deviate from the general belief about how lobolo should be practiced, such as allowing women to participate in the lobolo negotiations. According to the Social Role Theory, those who hold traditional views about gender roles within relationships often believe that certain activities must be fulfilled by the man, and others must be fulfilled by the woman (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

According to Rudwick and Posel (2015) traditionalistic women view the practice as a sign of respect; respect for the bride, the couple's parents, their culture, their extended family, and their community. As such, the responses of the women in factor two indicate that they believe that

paying lobolo this kind of respect. Furthermore, though much research has indicated that there is a link between the payment of lobolo and gender-based violence (Abramsky et al., 2011; Kaye et al., 2005), the women in factor 3, like those in factor 1, indicated that they do not agree with this, along with the perceptions that the practice makes it difficult for women to leave the marriage if they are being abused. Considering these women's views about gender roles and lobolo, it becomes questionable whether gender equality might be successfully achieved in South African black communities. It seems that continuing to perpetuate gender imbalances through cultural practices like lobolo succeeds in concealing to women the detrimental effects of rigid gender roles, even when the negative effects are apparent (Nkosi, 2011). These women's views also indicate the need to hold on to their African heritage and womanhood, which in the case of lobolo, means holding on to the cultural practices and ideologies they have been socialised into (Khomari, et al., 2011; Rudwick & Posel, 2014). However, in an effort to hold on to their cultural values, they might be placing themselves in vulnerable positions that maintain gender-based oppression.

However, it is also likely that some of these women's views might not be an indication that they agree with these adverse outcomes of the practice, but more of accepting the status quo. Disapproving with the practicing of lobolo is not as simple as some would wish. For majority of black South African families, lobolo is the one essential key to ensuring that the marriage is accepted by both the bride's parents and the groom's family. At the instance of proposing marriage at either side of the families, the first aspect that is considered is the payment of lobolo. Brides in all truth have little choice when it comes to following customs, especially if their aim is to ensure that their parents are pleased and that they are integrated well into the groom's family. When considering that the lobolo process is seen as more of an affair between the two families, the couple's power and preferences might be hindered as such (Bayi & Hawthorne, 2018; Khomari, et al., 2012). The lack of power in these decisions and processes, might force some women to accept things as they are, instead of making, what they might believe are, futile efforts to fight against a system that might hinder them from having peace and stability in their marriages.

## Gender Inequality and Lobolo

Both the women in the Western and Africanist feminist factors disagreed that lobolo determines the roles that men and women play in the marriage and that through the payment of lobolo the man can determine the role the woman plays. They also disagreed that paying lobolo is an indication that the man is able to provide for this wife and that he is the head of the family. The division of roles that is espoused through the practice makes it difficult to separate the roles from the gender group they are assigned to. Considering how many measures have been made in South Africa to get women into the labour market, the role of provider no longer needs to be expected from men, as women are now capable of providing. Women's adoption of the role of provider, is likely to set the pace for the need adopt gender equality in marriages and dissolve gender roles (Nkosi, 2011). Considering that this study was done among women who majority were students, this might suggest that the perceptions of where women and men's places are in the family are slowly shifting. It could further be an indication of the effectiveness of policies on gender equality and women's rights in South Africa. Thus, indicating that there has been progress in influencing young women's attitudes towards their place in marriages and in the world. They also agreed that through the payment of lobolo, men should not believe that they own their wives. They also disagreed that the payment of lobolo should be used to force the woman to obey her husband. The payment of lobolo creates a class struggle in marriages, where the husband is afforded decision making power by virtue of his financial contributions (Nkosi, 2011). As the wife is then expected to be dependent on her husband for resources, she is placed in a position where she has to obey her husband as she is dependent on him. Furthermore, they both did not agree that through the payment of lobolo, the man has the right to have his wife and children take his name.

Though the women under the African feminism factor disagreed with the statement that lobolo is related to domestic violence, it might not necessarily indicate that they deny the existence of gender-based violence in customary marriages, like in many other marriages. Their views might be an indication of a belief that there are many factors that cause gender-based violence. However, men might appropriate the payment of lobolo to justify abuse. In addition, the women in both the African feminism and Western feminism factors disagreed with how lobolo is used by men to control women and determine which roles they play in the home. Thus, their responses indicate that they might share similar beliefs in the need to liberate women from patriarchal norms that take away their autonomy over the significant aspects of their lives.

Thus, both groups of women's responses to statements about the gendered aspects lobolo indicated their shared feministic views about the practice. Thus, they agree that, on certain aspects, lobolo is patriarchal and oppressive. The main aim of all feminism, regardless of the perspective, is to ensure the liberation of all women from all forms of oppression (Bayu, 2019; Salo, 2001; Stone, 2010). Though African feminists disagree with socialist feminism and other forms of western feminism in regards to their harsh stance against motherhood and childbearing (Ezeilo, 2005; Lewis, 2001), like Western feminism, African feminism seeks to challenge gendered cultural practices, but without abolishing them (Salo, 2001). African feminists thus seek to stand against the patriarchal structures that exist in modern-day Africa, that constrain and hinder black women from reaching their full potential (Salo, 2001). Western feminists argue against gendered norms that are perpetuated through lobolo (Nkosi, 2011; Tang, 2008). They argue that such norms give men control over women and their bodies (Eisenstein, 1999; Tong, 2008). This control is executed through the control of which roles they fill in the home and when they have children, along with the amount (Eisenstein, 1999; Kaplan, 1992; Tong, 2008). Thus, western feminists argue against this control, as it alienates women from the results of their labour and the product of their bodies (Nkosi, 2011; Tong, 2008).

## Transforming Lobolo

The women who fell under the African feminist agree with the need for the bride to be involved in the lobolo negotiations. They indicated that both the bride's mother and the groom should be involved in the lobolo negotiations. They also disagreed with the idea that only the male elders from both families should be involved in the negotiations. Thus, the perspectives held by the women in factor 1 relate to the transformation of the practice by making the practice gender-equal and gender-inclusive. Their notions support the perspectives of African feminists who call for the transformation of gendered African practices and doing away with the harmful and oppressive discourses about women and their role in African customs. African feminists argue that, instead of calling for the abolishment of gendered practices like lobolo, African beliefs like Ubuntu can be used to create new narratives about humanity and gender equality when advocating for the empowerment of black women in their cultures (Venganai, 2015). They argue that African customs do not need to be abolished, but rather the aim has to be to create empowering discourses about African culture that protect girls and women from gender-based oppression (Tamale, 2008; Vengani, 2015). Ezeilo (2005) argues that African women

cannot be expected to let go of their customs, as these customs are part of their African identity, and they fulfil their need for self-determination. Furthermore, the notions of transforming African culture to empower African women were also indicated by Wafula (2013). His research also indicated that initiatives are being put in place that are working towards changing the negative discourses that men hold that oppress African women (Wafula, 2013). He argues that negative masculinities have resulted in the adverse outcomes and the vulnerability African women face in their communities and homes (Wafula, 2013). Thus, awareness needs to be created among African men to ensure the development of a culture that respects and protects women (Wafula, 2013). Shope's (2006) study also indicated that there are women in rural areas who already share these perspectives - of needing to transform lobolo and make it more gender-inclusive. According to Shope (2006), these women seek to change the gendered expectations of lobolo, because the practice is part of their heritage as African women. They aim to empower each other so they can have more control and involvement in the lobolo process along with the negotiations. Thus, like the African feminist perspective, these women aim to empower each other from within cultures. Many studies have indicated that despite African women's awareness of the controversies of the practice, many African women still support the continuation of the practice (Ansel, 2001; Shope, 2006; Walker, 1992). These studies indicated that black African women are aware of the oppression that women have experienced in marriage and how it has been related to lobolo, along with how men have manipulated that practice to suit their interests (Shope, 2006). According to Shope (2006), these women argued that there are other factors that contribute to the oppression faced by women, and lobolo is not the sole reason, because some women are oppressed even in relationships where lobolo has not been paid. Thus, they believe that it is possible for there to be a lobolo that promotes gender equality (Shope, 2006). Hence, these studies support the views of the women in factor 1, as they agreed with the inherent positive nature of lobolo and maintaining it, but disagreed with how it has been used to keep women in the background of the issues that affect them and maintain gender inequality.

## Demographics

The secondary aim of this study was to observe whether there is a difference in opinion between women who are employed and unemployed when it comes to the practice of lobolo. Female labour force participation in South Africa has increased considerably, however there are still

many factors that hinder some women from pursuing careers. When considering how the values that are instilled in women through the practice of lobolo are that their role is in the home, it becomes interesting to observe whether women with strong views about the practice were in some kind of employment, especially if they were married. Thus, thus this was done through analysing the women's responses along with their demographic information.

Gedikli (2013) argues that women who have traditionalistic beliefs about gender roles, and gendered cultural practices are less likely to participate in formal work. However, the demographic information from the participants in the study in factor 2 (Traditionalists) (see Table 4) indicated that their traditionalistic views about lobolo do not have a bearing on their employment status. Almost all the women in this factor whose sorts were distinguishing were employed. According to Rudwick & Posel's (2015), women who strongly identified with lobolo believed that women's increased participation in the labour force was part of the reason they found it challenging to meet their domestic roles as wives. Some of the female participants in Rudwick and Posel's (2015) expressed that a married woman's place is at home with her children and her husband, and not in formal employment (Rudwick & Posel, 2015). They expressed that women would not find themselves in unfair positions of playing double roles if they only focused on their roles as wives and mothers (Rudwick & Posel, 2015). Additionally, other studies that have looked at the effect of cultural factors on women's employment, have also indicated that marital status has an effect on women's participation in the labour market (Jansen van Rensburg et al., 2019; Ntuli & Wittenberg, 2013). These studies argue that married women are less likely to participate in the labor market due to their domestic obligations. However, Rudwick & Posel's (2015) findings along with the findings of other research on the subject do not support the results of this study. Their views did not reflect whether their marital status related to their employment, especially when considering that majority of the women in the Traditionalist factor who were married and had lobolo paid for them also indicated that they were employed. Furthermore, when the demographic information from factor 1 is also considered based on marital status and employment, it indicates that for factor 1 the number of married women who were employed was almost equal to the number of women who are single and employed (see Table 3). The demographic information for factor 2 indicated that there were more married women who were employed than there were women who were single and employed (see Table 4). The demographic information in these two factors did not show any patterns that can support the research that has been conducted on employment status and

cultural factors such as marriage (Mackett, 2016). In addition, the demographic information for factor 3 indicated that there were more women who were single and employed than there were who were married and employed (see table 5). The patterns seen in factor 3 in terms of employment and marital status do not provide any information that could support the arguments about feministic views about the practice their employment status, as most of the married women with western feministic beliefs were unemployed.

Research has also indicated that black women's decision to participate in the labour market is also influenced by their age, their educational background, the number of children they have (Ntuli & Wittenberg, 2013). According to Ntuli & Wittenberg (2013), education has a positive effect on women's participation in the labour market. However, the education background of the women with distinguishing sorts did not align with the findings from such studies (see Table 3, 4, and 5). The most probable explanation for the above results might be due to the high unemployment rate in South Africa and its impact on the lives of many black women. Ntuli & Wittenburg (2013) argue that married women often choose to focus on their domestic roles because they find financial security in their husbands. However, among the black working class in South Africa, women cannot solely depend on their partners or spouses for financial support as it is often likely that their income might not be sufficient or they might be unemployed. According to Van der Stoep (2008), although the relationship between labour force participation and childbearing in developing countries has been indicated by studies to be negative, this relationship is either inconsistent or positive among women from developing countries such as South Africa (Van der Stoep, 2008). According to the study, women in South Africa are more likely to be employed, even when they are married or have children (Van der Stoep, 2008). Thus, considering the methodology used in the study, and how it is only designed to uncover authentic cluster of opinions to draw conclusions and build theory (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2008; Valenta & Wigger, 1997), it is likely that the result found in the study do not adequately reflect the role of the practice on women's employment. However, they do warrant further investigation into the question of whether cultural factors have a bearing on women's participation in the labour force in South Africa.

## Limitations

Since the responses on the Q-sort were self-report, one of the limitations of the study was that, through self-report, the participant might have constructed their viewpoints to suit what they believe is acceptable to the researcher. Considering that lobolo is such a controversial topic, it is likely that the researcher's age, gender, and race might have influenced how the respondents responded during the Q-sort. In terms of the researcher's race, some of the participants might have avoided responding negatively about the practice because it is practiced by black people; hence this might have affected how they responded. When considering the researcher's gender and the topic in question, some of the women might have assumed that the researcher has particular views towards the practice and thus attempted to respond in line with those views. It is possible then that some respondents might have given different responses if the researcher was male, as compared to a female researcher.

All the respondents' home languages were not English and were most likely second or third language English speakers, and when considering their educational background, it varied from Matric to Postgraduate level. As such, their proficiency in English varied. Therefore, language and comprehension of the statements (which were presented in English) might have had a negative impact on how they completed the Q-sort and, in turn, the results of the study.

They might not have understood some of the statements adequately. Some respondents did ask for clarity on some statements, but the majority of the respondents did not. Some respondents misunderstood that the items represented general views about the practice and were not definitions of the practice. Thus, some of the respondents expressed irritation and were offended by statements such as "lobolo should not mean that the woman no longer belongs to her maiden family". This led to some respondents withdrawing from the study.

Efforts were made as much as possible, to have the sample as diverse as possible in terms of the cultural backgrounds that form part of South Africa's African cultures. However, considering that certain respondents dropped out of the study and the difficulty of finding respondents who are willing to share their views, the sample ended up having more women who were from Swati and Zulu background as compared to the rest, and majority were from the Gauteng province. The study also did not collect demographic information related to the number of children each participant had. This data could have provided useful insights into

why the results regarding women's labour force participation and cultural views did not support the findings of previous research that has been done in this area.

The sample in the study was also problematic, as it was not an accurate representation of black women in South Africa based on race, age, economic background, educational background, marital status and ethnic or cultural background. The sample size was very small for it to represent the population of black women in the country accurately. About 86% of the sample was from Gauteng, which is not representative of the whole South African population. However, a conscious effort was made by the researcher to find a sample that is adequate for the methodology. Q-methodology aims to establish or discover the existence of particular viewpoints. Thus, the results that are generated in this study can only be used to determine if there are contradictions or preconceptions about lobolo among black women in South Africa (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The results can in no way be used to generalize to a larger population, considering the sample size and the issues with sampling and generalisability. Though the sample in the study was convenient and non-representative, it still met the requirements of a Q-methodology study, as Q-methodology studies do not attempt to generalize to the rest of the population.

## Recommendations

In light of the fact that the concept being explored in the study affects black South African women from all areas of South Africa, rural and urban, it would be helpful to consider samples from the rural regions of South Africa and other provinces in South Africa. Other samples will assist in gaining a better understanding of black South African women's perceptions of lobolo.

It would also provide a deeper understanding of black South African women's perceptions of lobolo and its possible effects on their labour force participation, and through directly exploring this area from a Q-methodological approach and other scientific approaches. The study's secondary aims might have been achieved through the inclusion of "the number of children each participant had," which could have been used and assisted in the analysis of how the women's perceptions towards lobolo might reflect their labour force behaviour. However, future research is recommended that directly explores the relationship between practice and black women's economic activities.

In conclusion, this study sought to use Q-methodology to understand black women's perceptions of lobolo in South Africa. Different perceptions of lobolo emerge from the data, indicating the wide views held by black women about the practice. The methodology used allowed for in-depth analysis and comparison of the participant's opinions about the practice, which assisted in understanding were South African women stand in regards to the practice. The study also sparked the question of whether these women's perceptions of the practice influence their economic activity. Though the study could not conclusively determine this, this is an area that could benefit from further investigations.

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# Appendix A: Concourse

| Theme | Positive | Negative / Alternative |
|---|---|---|
| **Culture** | - Lobola is part of our culture so must be retained. | - Lobola is part of our culture that has no place in the modern world. |
| | - It is wise that only the male elders from both the groom and bride's side of the family take part in the negotiations. | - It is not right that the bride is not involved in the negotiations.<br>- It is not right that the bride's mother is not involved in the negotiations.<br>- It is not right that the groom should be involved in the negotiations.<br>- It is not right that women are only involved in the Lobola process if there are no men available to do so. |
| | - Lobola is practiced despite the religion (Christianity, Catholic, Muslim, etc.) people follow. | |
| **Community** | - Lobola is a practice that keeps the community together.<br>- Lobola shows that the marriage is accepted within the community. | - Lobola splits communities by introducing economic divisions. |
| **Family relations** | - Lobola brings the husband and wife's families together.<br>- Lobola is a form of appreciation to the bride's family. | - Lobola means that the husband and wife's families see each other in monetary terms. |
| | - Lobola gives the man the privilege to have the woman and his children take his name. | - Lobola should not give the man reproductive and sexual rights over the woman, and reduce her freedom. |
| | - Lobola makes the marriage legal and legitimate, even without the signing of a contract. | - Lobola should not give the men the right to marry more than one wife. |
| | - Lobola creates mutual respect and dignity between the two families. | - Lobola should not mean that the woman no longer belongs to her maiden family. |
| | | - It is not right that when Lobola has been paid, the groom's family dictates the domestic role the woman must play. |
| | | - It is not right that the payment of Lobola gives the groom's family the right to reprimand or correct the woman's behavior. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Relations between husband and wife** | - Lobola prevents arguments about the responsibilities of the husband and the wife in the marriage. | - Lobola should not lead husbands to believing that they own their wives. |
| | - Lobola shows that the man is able to provide for the woman and that he is the head of the home. | - Lobola should not give the man domestic rights over the woman.<br>- Lobola should not make women subordinate to the man. |
| | - Lobola shows that the man values his wife. | - Lobola plays a role in domestic violence. |
| **Attitudes to women** | - Lobola gives women status in the marriage. | - Lobola should not reduce women to commodities. |
| | - Lobola shows that the man respects the woman. | - Lobola should not give men the right to marry more than one wife.<br>- Lobola should not be used force women to obey the men. |
| **Ideological issues** | - Lobola cements a woman's identity as a member of her community. | - Lobola entrenched in patriarchy.<br>- Lobola should not perpetuate male dominance over women. |
| | - Lobola shows that the man is responsible. | - Lobola discourages couples from settling down because the man cannot afford to pay it.<br>- Men should not use the high price of lobola as an excuse to avoid responsibility. |
| **Practical issues** | - Lobola prevents couples from splitting up. | - Lobola has become so expensive that couples cannot get married for many years.<br>- Lobola prevents women from getting help from their families when they are being abused by the husbands.<br>- Lobola makes it hard for women to leave if they are being abused. |
| | - Lobola compensates the woman's family for all the money they have spent on her (especially if she is highly educated). | - Couples start their marriage in debt because of the high price of lobola.<br>- Because lobola is so expensive it leads to couples just living together and not getting married. |
| **Modernity issues** | - Lobola is a sacred part of African culture and marriage and it is still relevant today. | - Lobola has lost its significance in modern society.<br>- Feminism threatens the practice of Lobola. |

# Appendix B: Final Q-Sample

1 Paying lobolo shows that the man is responsible
2 Lobolo makes it hard for couples to get married when the man cannot afford it
3 Only the male elders from both the groom and the bride's side of the family should be involved in the negotiations
4 The bride should also be allowed to be involved in the lobolo negotiations
5 The bride's mother should also be involved in the lobolo negotiations
6 The groom should also be involved in the lobolo negotiations
7 It is not right that women are only involved in the lolobo negotiations when there are no men
8 Lobolo is practiced despite the religion people follow
9 Lobolo is a cultural practice that keeps the community
10 Lobolo shows that the marriage is accepted within the
11 Lobolo splits communities by introducing economic divi
12 Lobolo brings the husband and wife's families together
13 Lobolo has become so expensive that couples cannot get
14 Lobolo means that the husband and wife's families see
15 Paying lobolo gives the man the right to have his wife
16 Lobolo should not give the man reproductive and sexual
17 Lobolo makes the marriage legal and legitimate
18 Lobolo should not give the man the right to marry more
19 Lobolo creates shared respect and dignity between the
20 Lobolo should not mean that the woman no longer belong
21 It is not right that when lobolo has been paid, the hu
22 It is not right that the payment of lobolo gives the g
23 Lobolo prevents couples from getting divorced
24 Lobolo should not lead to believing that they own their wives
25 Lobolo shows that the man is able to provide for the w
26 Men should not use the high price of lobolo as an excuse not to pay lobolo
27 Lobolo should not make women inferior / lesser to the
28 Lobolo shows that the man values his wife
29 Lobolo plays a role in domestic violence

30 Lobolo gives women status in the community
31 Lobolo should not reduce women to commodities / object
32 Lobolo shows that the husband respects the wife
33 Lobolo is a very important part of African culture and must be maintained
34 Feminism threatens the practice of lobolo
35 Lobolo is so expensive that it leads to couples cohabiting
36 Couples start their marriage in debt because of the hi
37 Lobolo should not be used to maintain male dominance
38 Lobolo should not be used to force women to obey men
39 Lobolo prevents women from getting help from their fam
40 Lobolo makes it hard for women to leave their marriage
41 Lobolo is rooted in patriarchy
42 Lobolo gives the woman an identity and respect from her
43 Lobolo is a form of appreciation to the bride's family
44 Lobolo means that the husband has the right to dictate
45 Lobolo determines what roles the husband and wife play
46 Lobolo also compensates the bride's family for all the
47 Lobolo is an important part of our culture, so it must
48 Lobolo has lost its significance in modern society

# Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
**University of the Witwatersrand**
Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050
Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 011 717 4559

Good day

My name is Cornelia Masuku and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Master's Degree in Organisational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of this degree I am required to complete this research and present a thesis on the information obtained.

My research aims to explore black South African women's perceptions of Lobola. I would like to invite you to be a participant in my research, as your responses will provide me with valuable insight into understanding black South African women's perceptions of the African marital practice of Lobola.

Participation in the study requires you to rank a range of statements that relate to Lobola on a grid, which might take you approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participation in the study is entirely voluntarily.

Your responses will only be accessed by my supervisor and me, thus confidentiality is guaranteed. Due to the fact that the ranking task will take place on a face to face basis, anonymity of each participant cannot be established.

The data will also be securely stored in a password locked computer, so there will be no risk of access by unauthorized persons and confidentiality will further be maintained. Fully completing the ranking task will indicate that you have provided permission for your data to be used for analysis, reporting. No identifying information will be requested, therefor your identity will be kept confidential in the final report.

Should you have any questions or concerns or wish to receive the results of the study, my contact details along with those of my supervisor have also been provided below.

King regards

Cornelia Masuku
078 995 7989
Email:
cornelia.masuku@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisor: Prof. Gillian Finchilescu
011 7174534
Email: gillian.finchilescu@wits.ac.za

# Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
**University of the Witwatersrand**
Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050
Tel: 011 717 4503
Fax: 011 717 4559

---

Good day

I consent to participate in the research study exploring women's perceptions of Lobola conducted by Cornelia Masuku and supervised by Prof Gillian Finchilescu

I am aware that:

- Participation in this study is voluntary
- I may withdraw from participating in this study at any time before submitting my responses
- My responses will be kept confidential
- I shall not be harmed or injured during the assessment
- There are no risks or benefits associated with the study
- None of my identifiable information will be included in the research report and no results can be traced back to me
- I am aware that the results of the study will be reported in the form of a research report for the partial completion of the degree, Masters in Industrial Psychology
- The research may also be presented at a local/international conference and published in a journal and/or book chapter
- I may request feedback from the study

| | **Participant** | **Researcher/Supervisor** |
|---|---|---|
| Signature: | _____ | _____ |
| Date: | _____ | _____ |

Cornelia Masuku
078 995 7989
Email: cornelia.masuku@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisor: Prof. Gillian Finchilescu
011 7174534
Email: gillian.finchilescu@wits.ac.za

# Appendix E: Demographic Questionnaire

1. **Age:**

   _____

2. **Cultural Background:**(Please circle/cross/tick the correct response)

| Zulu | Swati | Xhosa | Ndebele | Pedi | Tswana | Sotho | Venda | Tsonga |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

3. **Educational Level:**(Please circle/cross/tick your response)

| High School Level | Matriculated | Tertiary Level | Diploma Obtained | Degree Obtained | Postgraduate Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

4. **Employment status:**(Please circle/cross/tick your response)

| Employed | Unemployed | Self-employed |
|---|---|---|

5. **Type of work that you do:**

   _____

6. **Marital Status:** (Please circle/cross/tick your response)

| Single | Cohabiting | Engaged | Married | Separated | Divorced | Widowed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

7. **Have you had lobola paid for you?** (If you were or are currently married)

| Yes | No |
|---|---|

# Appendix F: Crib Sheet

## Factor 1:

**Items ranked at +5:**

18 Lobolo should not give the man the right to marry more than one wife **+5**
38 Lobolo should not be used to force women to obey men **+5**

**Items ranked higher by factor 1 than by any other factor:**

5 The bride's mother should also be involved in the Lobolo negotiations **+3**
6 The groom should also be involved in the Lobolo negotiations **+2**
16 Lobolo should not give the man reproductive and sexual power **+4**
22 It is not right that the payment of Lobolo gives the groom's **+3**
31 Lobolo should not reduce women to commodities / objects **+3**
40 Lobolo makes it hard for women to leave their marriage if they are being abused **-1**
41 Lobolo is rooted in patriarchy **+2**
48 Lobolo has lost its significance in modern society **0**

**Items ranked lower by factor 1 than any other factor:**

9 Lobolo is a cultural practice that keeps the community together **-2**
10 Lobolo shows that the marriage is accepted within the community **-1**
11 Lobolo splits communities by introducing economic divisions **-4**
46 Lobolo also compensates the bride's family for all the money **-3**
47 Lobolo is an important part of our culture, so it must be maintained **0**
13 Lobolo has become so expensive that couples cannot get marriage **-1**
14 Lobolo means that the husband and wife's families see each other in monetary terms **-3**
34 Feminism threatens the practice of Lobolo **-4**
35 Lobolo is so expensive that it leads to couples cohabiting **-3**
36 Couples start their marriage in debt because of the high price of lobolo **-3**
44 Lobolo means that the husband has the right to dictate the roles the woman plays **-4**

**Items ranked at -5:**

3 Only the male elders from both the groom and the bride's sides of the family should participate in the negotiations **-5**
23 Lobolo prevents couples from getting divorced **-5**

## Factor 2

**Items ranked at +5:**

17 Lobolo makes the marriage legal and legitimate **+5**
28 Lobolo shows that the man values his wife **+5**

**Items ranked higher by factor 2 than by any other factor:**

1 Paying Lobolo shows that the man is responsible **+3**
3 Only the male elders from both the groom and the bride's side of the family should be part of the negotiations **+2**
8 Lobolo is practiced despite the religion people follow **+1**
9 Lobolo is a cultural practice that keeps the community together **+2**
10 Lobolo shows that the marriage is accepted within the community **+3**
12 Lobolo brings the husband and wife's families together **+3**
15 Paying Lobolo gives the man the right to have his wife and children take his surname **+1**
19 Lobolo creates shared respect and dignity between the two families **+4**

25 Lobolo shows that the man is able to provide for the woman **+2**
30 Lobolo gives women status in the community **+1**
32 Lobolo shows that the husband respects the wife **+4**
34 Feminism threatens the practice of Lobolo **+3**
42 Lobolo gives the woman an identity and respect from her community **+1**
43 Lobolo is a form of appreciation to the bride's family **+4**
44 Lobolo means that the husband has the right to dictate the roles the woman plays **-1**
45 Lobolo determines what roles the husband and wife play in the household **+2**
46 Lobolo also compensates the bride's family for all the money **+2**

**Items ranked lower by factor 2 than any other factor:**

16 Lobolo should not give the man reproductive and sexual power **-2**
18 Lobolo should not give the man the right to marry more than **-2**
20 Lobolo should not mean that the woman no longer belongs to h **0**
21 It is not right that when Lobolo has been paid, the husband' **-2**
22 It is not right that the payment of Lobolo gives the groom's family the right to dictate the roles the woman plays **-1**
24 Lobolo should not lead to believing that they own their wives **-2**
27 Lobolo should not make women inferior / lesser to the man **0**
29 Lobolo plays a role in domestic violence **-3**
31 Lobolo should not reduce women to commodities / objects **-1**
33 Lobolo is a very important part of African culture and African **-1**
37 Lobolo should not be used to maintain male dominance over women **0**
38 Lobolo should not be used to force women to obey men **0**
39 Lobolo prevents women from getting help from their families **-4**
40 Lobolo makes it hard for women to leave their marriage if they are being abused **-3**
41 Lobolo is rooted in patriarchy **-4**

**Items ranked at -5:**

4 The bride should also be allowed to be involved in the Lobolo **-5**
7 It is not right that women are only involved in the Lobolo negotiations when there are no men **-5**

## Factor 3:

**Items ranked at +5:**

24 Lobolo should not lead to believing that they own their wives **+5**
27 Lobolo should not make women inferior / lesser to the man **+5**

**Items ranked higher by factor 3 than by any other factor:**

2 Lobolo makes it hard for couples to get married when the man cannot afford it **+2**
4 The bride should also be allowed to be involved in the Lobolo **+3**
7 It is not right that women are only involved in the Lobolo negotiations when there are no men **+2**
11 Lobolo splits communities by introducing economic divisions **-1**
13 Lobolo has become so expensive that couples cannot get marriage for a very long time **+1**
14 Lobolo means that the husband and wife's families see each other in monetary terms **+2**
20 Lobolo should not mean that the woman no longer belongs to her maiden family **+4**
29 Lobolo plays a role in domestic violence **+1**

**Items ranked lower by factor 3 than any other factor:**

1 Paying Lobolo shows that the man is responsible **-4**
45 Lobolo determines what roles the husband and wife play in the home **-4**
19 Lobolo creates shared respect and dignity between the two families **-3**

25 Lobolo shows that the man is able to provide for the woman **-2**
26 Men should not use the high price of Lobolo as an excuse not to get married **0**
28 Lobolo shows that the man values his wife **-3**
43 Lobolo is a form of appreciation to the bride's family **-2**

**Items ranked at -5:**

15 Paying Lobolo gives the man the right to have his wife and children take his name **-5**
32 Lobolo shows that the husband respects the wife **-5**

# Appendix G: Distinguishing Statements in Each Factor

## Factor 1: African Feminists

| | Statements | Z-Scores | Distinguishing |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | Lobolo should not give the man the right to marry more than one wife **(+5)** | 1.82* | Yes |
| 38 | Lobolo should not be used to force women to obey men **(+5)** | 1.77 | No |
| 5 | The bride's mother should also be involved in the Lobolo negotiations **(+3)** | 1.14* | Yes |
| 6 | The groom should also be involved in the Lobolo negotiations **(+2)** | 1.01* | Yes |
| 16 | Lobolo should not give the man reproductive and sexual power **(+4)** | 1.52 | Yes |
| 22 | It is not right that the payment of Lobolo gives the groom's **(+3)** | 1.24 | Yes |
| 31 | Lobolo should not reduce women to commodities / objects **(+3)** | 1.28* | Yes |
| 9 | Lobolo is a cultural practice that keeps the community together **(-2)** | -0.99* | Yes |
| 11 | Lobolo splits communities by introducing economic divisions **(-4)** | -1.15 | No |
| 46 | Lobolo also compensates the bride's family for all the money **(-3)** | -1.00 | Yes |
| 14 | Lobolo means that the husband and wife's families see each other in monetary terms **(-3)** | -1.05 | No |
| 34 | Feminism threatens the practice of Lobolo **(-4)** | -1.43* | Yes |
| 35 | Lobolo is so expensive that it leads to couples cohabiting **(-3)** | -1.03 | Yes |
| 36 | Couples start their marriage in debt because of the high price of lobolo **(-3)** | -1.03 | No |
| 44 | Lobolo means that the husband has the right to dictate the roles the woman plays **(-4)** | -1.66 | No |
| 3 | Only the male elders from both the groom and the bride's sides of the family should participate in the negotiations **(-5)** | -1.64* | Yes |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | Lobolo prevents couples from getting divorced **(-5)** | -1.67* | Yes |

**Indicates Significance at P< 0.01*

## Factor 2: Traditionalists

| | Statements | Z-Scores | Distinguishing |
|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | Lobolo makes the marriage legal and legitimate **(+5)** | 1.77* | Yes |
| 28 | Lobolo shows that the man values his wife **(+5)** | 1.81* | Yes |
| 1 | Paying Lobolo shows that the man is responsible **(+3)** | 1.28* | Yes |
| 3 | Only the male elders from both the groom and the bride's side of the family should be part of the negotiations **(+2)** | 0.726 | No |
| 10 | Lobolo shows that the marriage is accepted within the community **(+3)** | 1.21* | Yes |
| 12 | Lobolo brings the husband and wife's families together **(+3)** | 1.32* | Yes |
| 19 | Lobolo creates shared respect and dignity between the two families **(+4)** | 1.61* | Yes |
| 32 | Lobolo shows that the husband respects the wife **(+4)** | 1.65* | Yes |
| 34 | Feminism threatens the practice of Lobolo **(+3)** | 1.43* | Yes |
| 43 | Lobolo is a form of appreciation to the bride's family **(+4)** | 1.57* | Yes |
| 46 | Lobolo also compensates the bride's family for all the money **(+2)** | 1.08* | Yes |
| 39 | Lobolo prevents women from getting help from their families **(-4)** | -1.350 | No |
| 40 | Lobolo makes it hard for women to leave their marriage if they are being abused **(-3)** | -1.121 | No |
| 41 | Lobolo is rooted in patriarchy **(-4)** | -1.34* | Yes |
| 4 | The bride should also be allowed to be involved in the Lobolo **(-5)** | -1.67* | Yes |
| 7 | It is not right that women are only involved in the Lobolo negotiations when there are no men **(-5)** | -1.39 | Yes |

**Indicates Significance at P< 0.01*

## Factor 3: Western Feminists

| | Statements | Z-Scores | Distinguishing |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | Lobolo should not lead men to believing that they own their wives **(+5)** | +2.083 | Yes |
| 27 | Lobolo should not make women inferior / lesser to the man **(+5)** | +1.773 | No |
| 2 | Lobolo makes it hard for couples to get married when the man cannot afford it **(+2)** | +0.841* | Yes |
| 4 | The bride should also be allowed to be involved in the lobolo **(+3)** | +0.918 | No |
| 7 | It is not right that women are only involved in the Lobolo negotiations when there are no men **(+2)** | +0.913 | Yes |
| 11 | Lobolo splits communities by introducing economic divisions **(-1)** | -0.365 | Yes |
| 13 | Lobolo has become so expensive that couples cannot get marriage for a very long time **(+1)** | +0.665* | Yes |
| 14 | Lobolo means that the husband and wife's families see each other in monetary terms **(+2)** | +0.906* | Yes |
| 20 | Lobolo should not mean that the woman no longer belongs to her maiden family **(+4)** | +1.355 | No |
| 29 | Lobolo plays a role in domestic violence **(+1)** | +0.487* | Yes |
| 1 | Paying Lobolo shows that the man is responsible **(-4)** | -1.308* | Yes |
| 45 | Lobolo determines what roles the husband and wife play in the home **(-4)** | -1.562* | Yes |
| 19 | Lobolo creates shared respect and dignity between the two families **(-3)** | -1.147* | Yes |
| 25 | Lobolo shows that the man is able to provide for the woman **(-2)** | -0.782 | No |
| 26 | Men should not use the high price of lobolo as an excuse not to get married **(0)** | -0.112 | No |
| 28 | Lobolo shows that the man values his wife **(-3)** | -0.187 | Yes |
| 43 | Lobolo is a form of appreciation to the bride's family **(-2)** | -0.783* | Yes |
| 15 | Paying lobolo gives the man the right to have his wife and | -1.670* | Yes |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | children take his name **(-5)** | | |
| 32 | Lobolo shows that the husband respects the wife **(-5)** | -1.623* | Yes |

**Indicates Significance at P< 0.01*

**Surname:** Masuku

**First name/s:** Cornelia Nokuthula

**Student no.:** 598643

**Supervisor:** Prof. Gillian Finchilescu

**Title:** Women's Perceptions of Lobola: A Q-methodological Approach

**Total Word Count:** 27260 (excl. Reference List, appendices, etc.)

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- The word count (excluding the Reference List, etc) given above is correct.

**Signed:** __  _____

**Date:** __15 October 2020_____

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG**

**HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

| | |
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| **CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE** | **PROTOCOL NUMBER: MORG/18/011 IH** |
| **PROJECT TITLE:** | Women's perceptions of labels: a Q-methodological approach |
| **INVESTIGATORS** | Mienke Cornelia |
| **DEPARTMENT** | Psychology |
| **DATE CONSIDERED** | 28/06/18 |
| **DECISION OF COMMITTEE*** | Approved |

**This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application**

**DATE: 28 June 2018**

**CHAIRPERSON**
**(Dr Colleen Bernstein)**

cc Supervisor: Prof. Gillian Finchilescu
Psychology

---

**DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)**

To be completed in duplicate and one copy returned to the Secretary, Room 10001S, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

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

**This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2020**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

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