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Exploring notions of femininity amongst a group of black women.

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Submitted to the faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology by Coursework and Research Report

Johannesburg, 2010

Declaration

I, Makongoza Ndangano Banyana, declare that this research report is my own and unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology by Research report and Coursework at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

_____

(Makongoza Ndangano Banyana)

_____day of_____, 2010

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CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

Women are defined in different ways and this may be due to their careers, physical appearances, how they present themselves and how they express themselves verbally and this is different from how women and womanhood were defined in other centuries. According to Kiguwa, (2001) “the notion of ‘womanhood’ is a somewhat contentious one, evoking now widely discarded essentialist frameworks for theorizing social categories and identity”. Women’s lives are shaped as well as influenced by the cultural distinction of ‘womanhood’, each culture or society has its own identity of ‘ideal’ ‘womanhood’ and this has an influence in how women perceive themselves and how they shape their lives. This study explores various aspects that women face each day of their lives and how they define themselves as women in relation to these experiences. According to Deegon & Hill, (1987p4), each person “is taught the meaning of gendered behaviour and in turn that person passes the lesson to others”. “Being a man or a woman is a social definition that is learned by individuals throughout their lives” (Deegon & Hill, 1987p4). Most women identify themselves through their cultural orientations while some identify themselves through their career proving that there are different ways that women identify themselves.

1.1 THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The principal objective of this study was to explore the notions of femininity among a group of black women. Three primary research questions were explored:

1. How do women define their womanhood?

2. What are the perceptions and expressions about being women and what are the values that are placed on those perceptions?

3. How to perceive the cultural role, how it identifies what a woman is and how those identification affects how women look at themselves?

1.2 RATIONALE

Self identity is an aspect of how an individual identifies himself or herself. This study focuses on how women identify themselves in relation to their roles and the duties that they perform at home, in their communities, at the work place. This research focuses on the different categories of women such as married women versus single women, rural women versus urban women, career women versus housewives, “woman” versus “women”. Culturally there is a way in which a “woman” is identified or perceived as a symbol while in the outside world “women” are perceived in a manner that makes each woman different from the other and they are respected according to how they conduct themselves as women.

Womanists and black feminism have inter-relation discourse referring to race, class and gender and those were defined as what shapes the individual’s experiences. Black women were denied the right to voice out and speak. “The act of speaking is deemed empowering and silence is seen as undesirable” Motsemme (2003) cited in Duncan & Ratele (2003p218).The silence that they experience becomes a sign of self protection and also a defence mechanism.

1.3 DEMARCATION OF STUDY AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The participants selected for this study comprises of twelve(12) black South African women within a specific context of geographical location varying from ages 23-40 residing at Tshitavha which falls under ward thirty-one(31) at Vhulaudzi Village, Makhado Municipality, Limpopo Province. The criteria used during the selection of participants were voluntary with exception that they had to be, from that specific location/ village and a black South African woman and between ages 23-40 years. The researcher chose the location as it was easily accessible for her and also there were no language barriers involved as all the participants were Tshivenda speaking. The specific age criteria used was based on the fact that the researcher wanted participants that are of a particular age group as the the researcher believed that that age group will be able to provide information needed.

Focus group interviews were conducted with six (6) participants; the interview sessions took a maximum of ninety (90) minutes, whilst one-on-one interviews were conducted with the other six (6) participants. The methods used for interviewing one-on-one participants were the semi-structured interviews, using open-ended questions, and unstructured interviews, using one-to-one encounters. These sessions took a maximum of thirty (30) minutes each. The researcher had to ask permission to conduct the interviews at the Perinatal HIV Research Unit with three (3) members of staff as per agreement between the researcher and her supervisor. The reason behind this was that the information collected was no sufficient enough and thus needed to be complimented. The same process was used in conducting the focus group interviews and this session lasted a maximum of ninety (90) minutes. Interviews took place at Vhulaudzi Lutheran Church premises which was convenient for the participants. After conducting both the focus groups and individual interviews the researcher

transcribed and translated, where necessary, the tape-recorded interviews and embarked on data analysis. The discussions of the focus groups and the one-on-one interviews focused on the main objectives of the study.

1.4 DIVISION OF THE REPORT

This research report comprises of six main chapters and is organized as follows:

Chapter one forms an introduction to the whole report, providing the reader with background information regarding women and how women define themselves. This chapter outlines the objectives of the study as well as the research questions, the rationale and demarcation of the study and method of investigation.

Chapter two is a review of literature in relation to issues of women, womanhood and the self as well as identity specific to the aims and objectives of the study. The social constructionist approach is incorporated as part of the theoretical framework of the literature review. This chapter further includes different concepts that will be focused on like femininity, gender, the self and culture.

Chapter three discusses the methodology used in this research report to answer the research questions. It focuses on the types of research design utilized and gives detailed descriptive information of the sample that was used. It further provides a discussion on the procedures through which the data was collected and measures used to collect and analyze data. Ethical considerations are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four looks at the research results with the focus on data analysis and the interpretations of the transcripts from the focus groups interviews and the one-on-one interviews that were conducted with participants. Major themes that emerged in the interviews are identified and presented, supported by the quotations to illustrate from the findings.

Chapter five forms a discussion / conclusion, integration of the research results / findings and limitations of the study.

Chapter six is the appendix section.

CHAPTER TWO

2 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the overview of literature in relation to issues of women, womanhood, the self, gender as well as gender identity. It explores the approaches that are more pertinent in providing an understanding of women and how women's voices were silenced, how women look and perceive themselves and how culture is a factor on self identity. The chapter further presents the social constructionist approach as part of the theoretical framework.

Historically, many black women were neglected and / or marginalised in so far as their own accounts of their lives and they had to negotiate voicing both their social and psychological well being and existence. Their voices were "silenced and distorted" Motsemme (2003) cited in Duncan & Ratele (2003p215).Some scholars have identified the importance of women and how important it was for them to voice their experiences as opposed to them being silent. These scholars have consistently shown that a sense of powerlessness in patriarchal and racist regimes was brought about by the denial of space for black women as well as for those that were considered to be too poor to [re]present themselves and their experiences meaningfully, Motsemme (2003) cited in Duncan & Ratele, (2003p215).

According to Ramphele (2000) cited in Duncan & Ratele (2003), in several countries there has been tension between men and women based on the fact that black women are advancing economically which is said to be at the expense of black men, and these women, depending on which role or position they occupy, are given names or labelled like "menacing witches, cigarette-smoking whores or frustrated lesbians" Ramphele (2000) cited in Duncan & Ratele (2003p219). In Apartheid South Africa white women were not in full power but had power in other spheres like domestic sphere were there is a 'white madam'

and her ‘black maid(s)’, commercial and academic sphere. In the post-1994 period, the figure of the ‘madam’ or ‘missus’ and labouring black woman ‘maids’ continues to be partially represented in the popular Madam and Eve comic strip in the Mail & Guardian newspaper and on TV. This comic strip simultaneously reinforces and subverts the power relationship between white women and black women in the context of the domestic sphere and how the maids, in most cases black women, were treated, Ramphele (2000) cited in Duncan & Ratele (2003).

According to Carby (1987) cited in Duncan & Ratele (2003p222) the “cult of womanhood” was made up of four cardinal values: piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Black womanhood was then polarised against white womanhood and defined in terms of ‘lack’-absence of male protector, beauty, morality, home and family. These were basically all the conditions considered necessary for ‘true’ womanhood to flourish. Within these assumptions of domestic ideals and white feminine beauty, the black female being became associated with all that was against truthful and civilised (i.e. white) womanhood” Carby (1987) cited in Duncan & Ratele (2003p222). A black female’s body was projected differently from that of a white female‘s body referring the “true” womanhood and sexuality and these became a social complexity when it comes to race and the racial hierarchy. The symbolic and actual dismemberment portrait of Saartjie Baartman’s body parts, namely the genitals and buttocks, were excessive and hyper-sexualised images which reduced a black female’s body in a “negative bodily truth” Carby (1987) cited in Duncan & Ratele (2003).

During the time of the transition to democracy the individual identity and selfhood emerged while political and social identifications became remoulded and realigned, Thornton (1996) cited in Duncan & Ratele (2003).Women in South Africa started perceiving things in a different manner and also perceiving race in a new way. Women then started identifying themselves and understanding that they do connect to others and to a community which composes of a rooted past. Women experienced many contradictions which were based on the “the present

is clearly not a straightforward extension of the past" which clearly illustrates the changes that many women in the black community are encountering now as compared to what was happening in the past, Thornton (1996) cited in Duncan & Ratele (2003p228).

Grosz (1994p102) uses the concept of "becoming-woman" because other authors use the concept "woman" as "a sexed body that defines a female subject" and Deleuze and Guattari (1987p100) define "woman" as "she is a woman by her form, endowed with organs and functions and assigned as a subject". Women in an African context represent many aspects which are culturally based. Men are given greater powers and privileges both in the employment sites and even in family sites. According to Ramphele (2000) cited by Louw & Edwards (1998p773), at work, women are paid less and are given fewer opportunities while at home they have to stress about raising children. Patriarchy is a term used interchangeably with the term sexism and serves the subordination of women, and describes the social control of women by men (Coward, 1983p3).

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social constructionism is the model the researcher adopts as the theoretical framework. It illustrates the implication of how people understand a person and the social changes. In relation to this study, it is used in the assumption that it might assist in the understanding of women, black women and also how they perceive themselves as women as well as how they perceive themselves based on the cultural up bringing.

2.1.1 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST PRINCIPLES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Some of the principles of this framework are as follows: **A critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge** (Social constructionism critically analyses 'how' we take -for-granted the understanding of the world and also the understanding about ourselves). "It invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objectives, unbiased observation of the world" (Burr,1995p3). It further identifies how we assume about the world through observation, "and that what exist is what we perceive to exist" (Burr, 1995p3). Social constructionism allows us to have that room to question 'what' is of existence in the world through observation and that it might not necessarily be what is in the world. Looking at gender as an example our observations through the world we were made to believe that there are two categories in so far as gender is concerned, i.e., man and woman. "Social constructionism would bid us to question seriously whether even this category is simply a reflection of naturally occurring distinct types of human beings" (Burr, 1995p3).Women were observed culturally as the ones that belong to the kitchen, take care of the family, abide by their husband's rules and bear children; and this perception is how women where brought up to think and to view themselves and

as they grew they had that notion that suggest that that is all that they are worth in life.

Historical and cultural specificity (There are different ways that we use to understand the world, the concepts we use and the categories that exist, all this is through historical and cultural specificity. According to Dickens as cited in (Burr,1995p3-4), “all this means that all the ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative and are dependent on particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in that culture at that time. We should not assume that our ways of understanding are necessarily any better than other ways” (Burr, 1995p3-4), the mentality that was ‘installed’ in women’s minds as from a young age had an impact on how they should think and do things like how they should behave, conduct themselves speak and dress, and all that was based on how she should treat her husband, children and the community. Women historically were more exposed to that kind of life which for them they did not have knowledge of any other life because the knowledge was passed no from one generation to the other.

Knowledge is sustained by social processes (The social constructionists ask this question “if our knowledge of the world, our common ways of understanding it, is not derived from the nature of the world as it really is where it comes from?” (Burr, 1995p4). They believe that our construct of what we believe is due to our daily interactions that takes place in our social life and these make our “knowledge to be fabricated” (Burr, 1995p4). What we may believe is the truth or is not true “is a product not of objectives observation of the world but of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other” (Burr, 1995p4), during the apartheid era, some women then became exposed to different ways of living where they fought their ways from being housewives to working women which not all women went into that field, some did remain housewives by choice and some not by choice but by the situation. Due

to what was happening in the outside world, some women then started getting educated by going to school which this then meant that another source of how they can perceive themselves was then introduced. The daily interactions with other women and also with the outside world made women to perceive things in a whole new view. **And Knowledge and social action go together** (We all have different understandings which consist of different forms and we can talk about the possibilities of social constructing the world but “each different construction brings about a different kind of action from human beings” (Burr, 1995p5).

Anti-essentialism (people misunderstand the concept of the social constructionists based on culturally and historically specified and, instead, they see it as a way of taking the ‘nurture’ instead of ‘nature’. “But social constructionism is not just saying that one’s cultural surroundings have an impact upon one’s psychology, or even that the nature is a product of environmental rather than biological factors. Both of these views are essentialist in that they see a person as having some definable and discoverable nature” (Burr,1995p5), **Historical and cultural specificity of knowledge** (“if all forms of knowledge are historically and culturally specific, then this must include the knowledge generated by the social sciences. The theories and explanations of psychology become time-and-culture-bound and cannot be taken as once-and-for-all descriptions of human nature” (Burr, 1995p6).

A focus on interaction and social practices (“social constructionism is regarded as the proper focus of our enquiry into the social practices engaged in by people, and their interactions with each other. Explanations are to be found neither in the individual psyche nor in social structures but in the interactive processes that take place routinely between people” ”(Burr, 1995p7), **and A focus on processes** (The explanations that are used by the social constructionists are more dynamics of the social interaction. Their emphasis is on the process than the structures. The aim is on “how certain phenomenon or forms of knowledge are achieved by people in interaction. Knowledge is not

perceived as something that a person has or does not have but as something that people do together" (Burr, 1995p8). Social constructionism as discussed is part of the theoretical framework of this study which assist in the understanding the study and also assist in introducing the relevant literature which is discussed in the literature review.

2.1.2 GENDER

According to Segal (1999p38) "gender would explain the social construction of femininity. Gender was the name for all the acquired, culturally diverse and hence mutable ways of becoming a woman". Beauvior (1949) cited in Segal (1999p39) contends that gender consists of the initial purpose which "is to display the role of biology in determining 'masculinity' and 'femininity', it is refereed to as a stable difference between men and women". Most feminists are said to link gender and power.

Since the 1960's, sex has been distinguished as biological while gender as a social or cultural category. The understanding of gender was that it is a social construction while sex is considered as an essence which became stable and natural and these concepts were rejected by the poststructuralist theories of sex and gender (Moi, 1999).During the middle ages, women's anatomy was not perceived as different from that of men, the only difference that was seen was the way they were arranged "all parts that are in men are in women" (Moi, 1999p12).

Being feminist counters "the desire to understand how it is that women as a sex are subordinate and the desire to challenge the very idea of natural sex roles. The problem is that of understanding the position of women as a sex without presuming that being a sex entails forms of natural behaviour and position. Women have been treated as a sex and have been talked about as a sex and as distinct from men (Coward, 1983p3)". Furthermore, understandings and

definitions of womanhood are often rife with deeper underlying existential theoretical and ontological positions that are related to broader feminist theoretical standpoints. In this sense, therefore, it is often impossible to posit an exact approach or standpoint about womanhood, and instead, the tradition has been to adopt multiple understandings of the concept and notion.

2.1.2.1 Gender construction

The theory of gender and culture

> "Culture is too often described as that which must be maintained and upheld in order to keep 'us civilized', the assumption being the culture practises are somehow innate ans god-given, and to challenge would be the worst possible crime…… Culture is a political issue that both challenges and defines nationhood, belonging, subjectivity……"
> (Loots, 2001p97).

Culture constitute of the language spoken, activities involved ,the beliefs and the traditions in place of a particular society, their norms, values and behaviour, regardless of its invisibility and the daily interactions culture is stated to have life of its own. Culture according to Matsumoto (2004p24) is regarded as "dynamic system of rules, explicit and implicit, established by groups", which culture also influence the behaviour of individuals dominantly associated with being male or female.

A biosocial model is an interaction model which explains the motivation and control of social behaviour which is built from ones' culture and religion. This is a theory of gender and is constructed in two ways the macro and micro levels. Micro-level shows how sex differences in hormone experience from gestation to adulthood shape gendered behavior meaning the behavior that differs by sex and while macro level model illustrates how socialisation and environment shape the

gendered behavior and again demonstrate how hormone experiences can facilitate the effects of socialization and environment on those behaviors (Udry,2000).

There are theorists who believe in essentialist approach towards understanding issues of gender roles and masculinity and femininity basing all this under their theory in assumption that human behaviour is natural and biologically based/ rooted. Underlying the essentialists' perspectives is the theory of "gender-role" which specifies that the roles that males and females have are virtually innate and accordingly reinforced throughout childhood. Emerging from the assumption that human behaviour is innate is an understanding of sexuality as something that is static and never changing (Potgieter, 2003). Within this framework of understanding masculinity and femininity, it is supposed that behaviours that are deemed feminine and masculine are not learned and acquired, rather that such behaviours will exist even in the absence of a learning process because they are unconsciously enacted. Sexuality is then assumed to be similar in form and invariable across time, culture and societies (Kimmel, 1997).

Culture also plays a significant role in portraying an individual and also assists in one's definition of the self and the environment. According to Millett (1970p81) "The cultural images of femininity, masculinity and female-male relationships have an enduring quality, it portrays men as powerful while women are portrayed as powerless and constantly trying to entertain, please, gratify, satisfy and flatter men with their sexuality" (Millett,1970p81) and this has historically been popular within different cultures. Most literature identifies women in perceptions that are based on their marital, motherhood and career status not on their own personal appearance, emotions and own personal identity. However Mama (1995) conducted a study in exploring the gender identities of black British women with a focus on the social factors of race geographical location and class. The movie *Neria* portrays the framework of gender, identity and culture. How gender oppression was shown when Neria 's husband passed away and the

brother ‘was entitled’ to his dead brother’s wife, tradition played a role as ‘ones’ death was another ones’ gain’. The oppression that is instilled or was instilled in women at times was taken advantage of by culture. There are different novels such as Tsitsi Dangaremba’s *Nervous conditions*, Bessie Head’s *Maru* that illustrated an understanding of the lives of African women and their identities within their socio-cultural contexts with relation to shaping culture with role and identity development, Kiguwa (2001).

> “People learn when they are quite young a few of the things that they are expected to be, and continue slowly to accumulate a belief in who they are and ought to be through the rest of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Sexual conduct is learnt in the same ways and through the same processes; it is acquired and assembled in human interaction, judged and assembled in human interaction, judged and performed in specific cultural and historical worlds.” (Kimmel, 2004p566)

2.1.3 FEMININITY

Feminism can be defined according to Finchilescu (1995) as a concrete attempt to bridge societal inequalities that historically faced many women, these inequalities ranged from discrimination and unequal treatment in the home and workplace. Women were discriminated feminism encapsulates the aspiration for equality. Originally feminist and femininity was constructed as an answer to the gender and societal imbalances. Gender defines roles of sex that one is born with and it is part of how one identifies himself or herself. At the workplace gender roles as mentioned previously black women were discriminated because of their sexual parts which is not so in this era. The term gender or sex roles usually refer to the social construction of inherent sexual differences between men and women (Shefer, 2004) while Gender then can be regarded as socially imposed division of the sexes or division of the sexes as gender regimes (Connell ,2000).

With regards to the South African context, it was the rise of Women's Studies in Southern Africa which paradoxically resulted in new questions being asked about and renewed attention being focused on men (Morrell, 1998). It can be said then that the inclusion of women in research, subsequently helped form and launch the platform from which masculinity could be properly researched. This resulted in research that not only focused on women but on gender as a whole. In South Africa research and history were initially only concerned with inserting women into history. But this gradually gave way to an expansion of the conceptual scope of research to encompass gender (Morrell, 1998). Gender can be viewed as social, cultural and psychological differences between men and women (Hook, 2004) and those roles were understood as patterns of social expectation norms for the behaviour of men and women, which were transmitted to youth in a process of socialization.

Feminism consists of different schools namely the **Liberal feminism** ("there is no fundamental difference between men and women" meaning there is equal opportunities for both women and man), the **Marxist feminism** ("challenges sexism within structures, forms and relations and attribute women's oppression to the private property system"), **Black feminism** ("addresses the racial discourse of knowledge-production as well as emphasising the relevance of categories such as black women. It provides the basis for consciousness-raising amongst black women"), and **Womanism** ("originally womanism lay in black woman's dissatisfaction with the white feminist movement. A woman is never simply a woman: she has a racial and class identity which also influences and determines the way she will experience herself as a woman".) Kiguwa (2004) cited in Hook (2004 p280-285). Women were always categorized in two different groups, where there were white women and black women. Liberal feminism talks about both men and women getting equal opportunities which always has been an issue taken into consideration. The racial issues are even today still of importance to women and to everyone and due to the fact that black women experienced

racism, it is hard for them to pass that fact. Womanists and black feminism have inter-relation discourse referring to race, class and gender and those were defined as what shapes the individual's experiences. Black women were denied the right to voice out and speak. "The act of speaking is deemed empowering and silence is seen as undesirable" Motsemme (2003) cited in Duncan & Ratele, (2003 p218).The silence that they experience it becomes a sign of self protection and also a defence mechanism. Women identified themselves in terms of their colour and how they were told to look at themselves. The question still remains how a woman identifies herself through her own perception of herself and what she is to herself.

> "Psychoanalysis is accepted as a theory of how women are psychically 'induced' into femininity by a patriarchal culture, and is then accused of perpetuating that process, either though a practice assumed to be prescriptive about women's role (that is what should do), or because the very effective of the account as a description (that is what is demanded of women, what they are excepted to do) leaves no possibility of change" (Rose, 1983p8)

2.1.3.1 Constructions of Masculinity vs Femininity

Freud declares femininity as a 'riddle'. Smith (1988) cited in Leahy (1994), argues that femininity is constructed through discourse and looked at femininity from two perspectives. Firstly she looks at the fact that femininity is a public text which women do not produce or organise. She emphasises that in most parts women are controlled and defined by men. The second aspect is that femininity is the way in which "women's skills and work enter actively into textual mediated relations" while Connell (1987p38) states that a patriarchal culture of femininity is emphasised and theorises it as "an ideal of conduct and set of related practises by which women comply with men's power. Freud portrays femininity as

“culturally represented, and thus to some degree psychologically stable, for a woman especially a feminist, the battle is somewhat different from a man: to escape from both cultural and psychic investments in notions of castrated or passive womanhood” Connell (1987p38).

> “The presence of femininity in the first of life ,which is related to the emergence of early gender identity, the importance of the father to that little girl’s development and the relative thrust of learning, cognitive functions and language compared with penis envy, in the emergence of femininity”(Blum,1977p5).

Edley and Whetherell (1995) posit that definitions of masculinity are constructed in relation to definitions of femininity. Forms of masculinity are historically linked with power and privileges as such it is important for men to not appear feminine. Central to the understanding of the concept of masculinity is the social construction of heterosexuality. Heterosexuality highlights the inequitable nature of gender relations in such a way that masculinity is produced and reproduced in association with those traits that imply authority; and femininity is continuously associated with those traits that imply subordination and passivity (Shefer, 2003).

Hollway (1989) discusses concepts that distinguish between the male sexual drive discourses, the have/hold discourse and the permissive discourse. This sexual drive discourse portrays men as biologically driven to have sex and that their sexual desire is almost insatiable while women are supposed to assume a position as subjects and objects of male sexual desire. The have/hold discourse centres on the idea of monogamy, partnership and family life. Women in this discourse are afforded a position as subjects. This discourse can be used to discuss the ideal potential wife as a woman who is sexually pure and respectable. This portrayal of women serves to highlight the different social standards for men and women as well as reflecting the ways in which men and women are positioned within different discourses. These different positions within

various sexual discourses reflect the power differentials between men and women. The notions that men hold about their sexuality and their constructions of femininity will influence the dominating positions that they assume in relationships and how they interact with their female partners (Hollway, 1989). Through out the interviews, other participants did discuss the how they were treated as women by the men in their lives.

According to Elliot (1992), psychoanalytic theory can be "read" or interpreted using any one of these four discourses which Lacan claims they are fundamental or predominant forms of social interaction. These discourses are **mastery** – this discourse is rejected by all the feminist psychoanalytic theorists**, bureaucracy** - Elliot describes how Dinnerstein and Chodorow employed this discourse in their psychoanalytic theories of gender. In their views, psychoanalytic theory is used to show how 'indisputable' aspects of child rearing give rise to inevitable outcomes like gender identity. Through all that Dinnerstein and Chodorow discussed Elliot criticizes this because according to her it does not question the often conflictual process of becoming a gendered subject but takes this process as given and inevitable. This view provided a theory of conformity to gender roles**, hysteria**- This is a discourse which Freud used and believed that it can reveal the logic of the unconscious and this discouse is represented by Irigaray. Elliot argues that the goal of the Irigaray is to "privilege and celebrate the hysteric to gain insight into the essence of femininity, which presumably has its own logic and libidinal economy" (Elliot & Williams, 1992p729) **and analysis**- this discourse is descried as Elliot's favorite discourse and "the psychoanalytic theory is used to enable the subject who is an individual woman to articulate, clarify, and understand her desires. This understanding is "emancipatory" because it permits us to see the ongoing damage done to the female who attempts to conform to femininity" (Elliot & Williams, 1992p729). At this level she uses Lacan's typology of discourse to distinguish, compare, and evaluate the theories of other theorists. In this reading, psychoanalytic theory is understood as a prescription of how women ought to behave and as a mandate for conformity to masculine and feminine roles and

personalities which is why it was not considered as popular to the sociologists of gender.

2.1.4 THE SELF

Hamacheck (1992) had an interest in the self as the component of our consciousness that gives us sense of personal existence, further explaining the self as the total sum of ‘me’ and our base system of beliefs, attitudes and values while Rogers (1973) talks about the two parts of self which are the ideal self, that aspect of the person that represents how the person would like to act and to be, while the self-concept is how the person views himself and herself. There are other theories that deal with the self like the Gestalt theory, the Existential theory and the Sullivan’s interpersonal theory. Maslow (1970) discusses the self in a form of the needs that have to be satisfied in order for the self to reach the “self-actualization” stage. He points out that there are hierarchies of needs that have to be gratified in order for the person to develop. If this is not attained, Maslow believes that the self’s active to grow and realize his or her potential will not exist.

Franchi and Swart (2004) cited in Shefer, Boonzaier & Kiguwa (2006p13) “provides a useful overview of perspectives on the self and identity spanning some of the major approaches in social science research, in particular the psychoanalytic, phenomenological, social psychology and cognitive perspectives. These varied approaches locate a self that may be both spatially and temporarily bounded, a position from which we both see and perform activities. This self incorporates our thoughts, attitudes and social and cultural experiences, which consequently make us unique in the ways that we chose to identify and relate to others in our immediate world. Narrative constructions of the self provide such apposition from which the individual may locate the self and others.Chodorow (1978) and Gilligan (1982) cited in Burr (1995p109-110), “write within the psychoanalytic framework about the differences between women’s and men’s sense of self, suggest that the predominant western notion of the highly

individuated, self-sufficient, separate person describes primarily the experience of men. They argue that women's sense of self is that of the 'self-in-relationship' that women's identity is so closely bound up in their relations with others that for them the dividing line between self and other is less clear than for men." Thus how a person relates to others lies in the person's identity not from the person's inside.

2.2.4.1 The theoretical assumptions focusing on the Psychological optimal functioning and self development:

Psychological optimal functioning is defined as a constant internal growth in order to fully express human potentialities. A person displaying the functioning is someone who is conscious of his strengths and weakness and who is living for the here and now moments. This person is capable of the unconditional love for her self and those around here (Schultz, 1977 and Pienaar, 2001). These can be described in terms of its characteristics. The Intra-personal characteristics and the interpersonal characteristics. These characteristics comprises of the cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and physical characteristics. The interpersonal characteristics constitute the relationships and the social contact with different people in society.

Self-development and typical problems encountered in self-development in individuals, self development is defined as "generally growth of self, movement toward emotional and cognitive maturity" and in Maslow's model defines the self development "as progress towards self -actualization" (Maslow, 1968 & Pienaar, 2001). Self development is divided into dimensions which the first dimension underline the meaning of self-development associated with the concept of development, the progressive change leading to higher levels of differentiation and organisation. The connotation is one progress, increasing in effectiveness of function, maturity, sophistication, richness and complexity (Pienaar, 2001). The

second dimension deals with the whole person and suggest that the development is meaningful to the individual when personality significant goals are being pursued. The self development takes place when a person finds significance and personal meaning based on the events or experiences resulting to the environment.

According to Hamacheck (1992), the self is a growing, expanding and dynamic phenomenon; he further continues distinguishing that the personal growth and movement towards higher levels of achievement and self expression seem more scary than exciting. There are obstacles that were discussed for one to have personal change and development, there are individuals that have **fear of maturity** were individuals avoid finding more about them selves with the fear of moving away from their comfort zone. Most people have an initial inclination to resist personal change anyway, but this resistance is even stronger for those who refuse to insert new or changed behaviour into their current concept of self. While other individuals are reluctant to find out more about themselves because of that threat of having to become more personally mature. At this point maturity implies the degrees of independence and autonomy, capacity for self discipline, goals, values and motivation toward some level of personal achievement (Hamacheck, 1992).**Fear of success,** one possible reason is that success is followed by mire responsibilities, standard way of living and maintaining the level which all these may be frightening to individuals who have basic doubts about their abilities to sustain the level of performance. Some people are fearful of success, achievement and doubt their abilities towards themselves. Another obstacle is **fear of ones' best and fear of knowledge,** knowledge is fear to other people and which this is due to low self-esteem and lack of personal competent which this is a risk for an individual not to have an ability to achieve and acknowledge ones' best abilities.

“For every text that places well-domesticated womanhood on a religious pedestal, another one announces that if uncontrolled, women are roof of all evil”, Hawley et.al (1994p27). The attribution of women’s character and behaviour to all natural and spiritual things is another aspect in cultural symbols of womanhood and those symbols are normally embedded by the constructions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ all depending on the refusal to comply with prescribed constructions . Mama (1995) stated that a woman in particular a black woman may express her commitment to sisterhood while simultaneously undermining another black woman’s position in the discourse , this notion may also be derived from the dualistic structuralist and Marxist traditions of social theory.

CHAPTER THREE

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research methods and procedures for data collection. It begins by describing the nature of the research design used and a detailed description of the sample and how it was acquired. Followed by a brief description of the instrument used for data collection. A brief discussion on content analysis and its history as a qualitative method of data analysis leading to a detailed discussion on Thematic Content Analysis and the process involved in executing this form of method. The researcher will discuss her experience of the process of the research and how this might have influenced the results and the interpretation thereof. This chapter will conclude by a delineation of the ethical considerations relevant to the study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative approach is the chosen method used by the researcher, which is aimed at "describing and understanding actions and events in greater details from the point of views of the research participants" (Babbie & Mouton, 2004p. 270).According to McRoy (1995p20) qualitative methods "stems from an antipositivistic, interpretative approach, is idiographic and holistic in nature and aims mainly to understand social life and meaning that people attach to everyday life". The researcher was more concerned about the naturalistic observation, understanding, and subjective exploration of the reality from the participants' personal perspective and direct transcription of the particicipants' own spoken or written words. According to Greenstein, Roberts & Sitas (2003), this design is considered to be more suitable to used rather than measuring people's external

characteristics, qualitative research approaches seek to describe and interpret people's experiences of events and their ways of thinking about these events.

3.3 PARTICIPANTS

The population target of this study consisted of twelve (12) black women between the ages of 23-40 years residing in South Africa. The participants were drawn from the Limpopo province, Makhado Municipality, Tshitavha which falls under ward thirty-one (31) at Vhulaudzi Village. This group was selected primarily because the study will be exploring the experiences of a group of women within a specific context of geographical location and it was convenient for the researcher with regards to access. From the twelve(12) selected participants, six(6) were on the focus group interviews which the aim was to help generate data in the form of group interaction while the other six(6) participants were interviewed using both the semi-structured interviews, using open-ended questions, and unstructured interviews, using one-to-one encounters. This particular age group 23-40 was selected for the reason being that participants would be characterized by diversity in life experiences. Both the interviews took place at Vhulaudzi Lutheran church premises which was convenient for the participants.

The researcher conducted second round of focus group discussions with a group of professional women at Perinatal HIV Research Unit .The researcher had to ask permission to conduct the interviews at Perinatal HIV research unit with some members of the staff. The same process was used in conduction the focus group interviews. After conducting both the focus groups and individual interviews the researcher transcribed and translated were necessary the tape-recorded interviews and embarked on data analysis.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

For the purpose of data collection for this study, the qualitative method or approach was adopted. In data analysis using a qualitative method, the researcher wants to bring meaning and order to the qualitative raw data gathered from the interviews (Greenstein et.al, 2003). An interview is a predominant way of collecting information or a form of a test of gathering information from an individual in order to describe or make prediction of that person; this can be conducted as a group form or an individual form (De Vos, 2005). Individual and focus group interviews were used to collect data and both the interviews separately helped to accumulate more information from the participants. A code using fake names was used. The researcher is only dealing with fake names. This was clearly explained to the participants before they participate. For this particular study, qualitative content analysis in particular thematic content analysis was used to analyze the data.

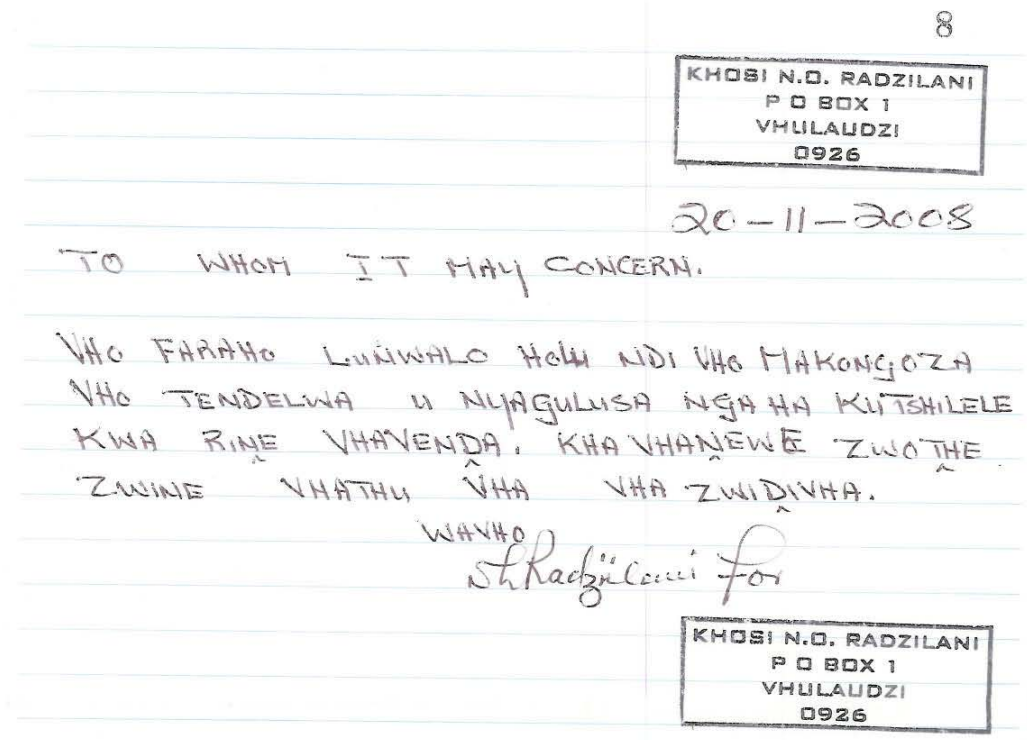
3.4.1 SAMPLING

Sampling in a qualitative study is less structured and this is due to the methods of data collection that are adapted. According to Kerlinger (1986p156) this means taking any portion of a population or universe as representative of that population or universe.A non-probability sampling was adapted for this study to select the participants. Purposive sampling was chosen where the parameter of the population was critically assessed and then the particular case is chosen (Silverman, 2000 cited in De Vos, 2005p328).Random sampling was one of the sampling methods which was adopted when collecting data. According to Kerlinger (1986p110) “random sampling is that method of drawing a portion or sample of a population so that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected” Kerlinger (1986p110). It will be used from the beginning of data collection when moving around the community by entering in each household within the whole community.Snowball sampling was another

method which will be used when selecting the participants for the individual interview. According to Babbie (2001) cited in De Vos,2005p330) “In snowball sampling the researcher collects data on the few members of the population he can locate, then seeks information from those individuals that enables him to locate other members of that population hence the term snowball sampling”,

3.4.1.1 The procedure followed in sampling the participants

From the beginning of data collection the researcher used random sampling to the particular village, and then followed the channels by going to the Makhado municipality offices to attain permission to work at the village and again to know who the headman is of the village. The next step that the researcher had to follow was going to the village and speak to the headman, after receiving written permission to work with the Tshitavha site which falls under ward thirty-one(31) at Vhulaudzi village then the researcher stared her work by moving around the community entering each household within the whole community which this assisted in identifying the number of people residing in the household, then the number of females in that particular household , the number of females that are between the ages 23-40 and then the total number of females between the age of 23-40 was divided by the number of participants(twelve-12) that will make the sample.



8

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20-11-2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

VHO FARAHO LUNIWALO HOLM NDI VHO MAKONGOZA VHO TENDELWA U NYAGULUSA NGA HA KUTSHILELE KWA RINE VHAVENDA. KHA VHANWENE ZWOTHE ZWINE VHATHU VHA VHA ZWIDIVHA.

WAVHO
Sh Radzilani for

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Table 1.-Letter of approval to conduct interviews

The researcher had to identify someone from the population/community who did not make the sample to select or draw a piece of paper from a basket which had alphabets written on them which those alphabets represented all the participants that were selected to be involved in the focus group and the individual interviews, then the first six (6) alphabets that were drawn from the basket were for the focus group and the last six (6) participants were for the individual interviews. The same person who drew the first six (6) alphabets was again expected to draw the first alphabet for which was the first for the individual / one-on-one interviews. After each interview that participant was asked to draw another piece of paper which identified who was interviewed next and this was done throughout the interviews. The data collection process and participants were selected from the Limpopo Province, Makhado Municipality, Tshitavha which falls under ward thirty-one (31) at Vhulaudzi Village. Both the interviews took place at Vhulaudzi Lutheran church premises which was convenient for the participants.

The researcher had to conduct second round of focus group discussions with three (3) professional women at Perinatal HIV Research Unit due to insufficient information from the previous group. The researcher had to ask permission to conduct the interviews at Perinatal HIV research unit with some members of the staff. The same process was used in conduction the focus group interviews.

3.4.2 FOCUS GROUP

Morgan (1997p6) cited in De Vos (2005p300) describes focus groups as “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher”. The focus group interview is an interview which is a group interview and participants are selected because they have similar characteristics which relate to the topic being researched. In this type of interview, the researcher has to create an environment which the group will meet and will be able to feel comfortable enough for them to share their point of views,

experiences, wishes and concerns (Krueger & Casey, 2000p4, Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999p4-5 cited in De Vos, 2005p299).This was done in order to identify issues that women experience and lasted for 1 Hour 30 minutes and it comprised of 11 questions.

Permission from the all participants was sought for a tape recorder to be used to gather information. Both the participants from the two (2) focus groups interviews were informed that the tapes used will be destroyed thereafter. This was conducted with the involvement of six (6) participants from the first (1st) focus group interviews and three (3) from the second (2nd) focus group interviews, all of who were well informed about the project. The strengths of the focus group are that more information were gathered from all the participants, it is not time consuming because all the participants are at the same place and at the same time. The weakness of this type of interview is that not all the participants were feeling free to say their views because there were other people around; the discussion may deviate from the topic which is being discussed and furthermore some participants may dominate the discussions (Morgan, 1998).The participants from the first (1st) focus group were participating in the discussions even though some did not want to open up and some wanted others to talk first (1st) before they can express themselves while with the second (2nd) focus group, the participants were all participating and everyone was confident and able to express themselves.

3.4.3 ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

The one-on-one interviews took place after the focus group interviews. Six (6) people will be participants in the one-on-one interviews. Semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions and unstructured interview using individual /one -on-one interview will be adopted. The semi-structured interviews was used to gain more detailed information about the topic being researched, this type of interview is guided by the schedule where the questions were written prior

the interview which in this case it was three (3) questions and the participants answered what was being asked and were allowed to add where the researcher did not ask while unstructured interviews, also referred to as in-depth interview, questions were not prepared and were incited by the participant's responses.

Depending on the way the participants replied or responded, different questions were asked on different participants and the sequence of the questioning did differ. The interview was unrestricted and non-directive and the responses may have taken the interview in any direction (De Vos, 2005).The interviews took about forty-five (45) minutes to an hour per participant. The strength of this type of interview was that more information gathered in depth and some things that were not said in the focus group interviews the participant felt free to discuss in the interviews. Questions and follow-up questions were used. The weakness of this type of interview was that it is believed to be unreliable and invalid due to the fact that the participants may give out information that was not true and may hide certain information which they felt it is provoking or too personal (Seidman,1998 cited in De Vos, 2005p299). Permission from the participants was asked for the interviews (focus group interview and one-on-one interviews) to be tape recorded with the understanding that the tapes used will be destroyed thereafter.

3.4.4 PROCEDURE USED TO GATHER INFORMATION

A vignette illustrating the construct of womanhood from the Sowetan Newspaper (the mini-skirt incident at Noord Street, Johannesburg) which was made headlines due what the lady was wearing and people justifying their actions on culture and how a women should dress according to African culture as well as different pictures representing women from various social, economic and other categories was used because it relates to the different women that are my participants and this helped to trigger the responses from the participants in relation to the ways women are treated and perceived.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a process of bringing together collected information and making it meaningful after collected data is structured and interpreted. Patton (2002) cited in De Vos (2005p334), believes that “analysts have an obligation to monitor and report their procedures” while Creswell (1998) cited in De Vos (2005p334) believes that “the process of data analysis and interpretation can best be represented by a spinal image, a data analysis spinal”. Content analysis is a technique used for analysing and gathering the context from the text. According to Pool (1959) cited in Kiguwa (2001p38) “Content analysis as a qualitative research methodology involves determining the process of specific concepts or themes within a particular text and analyzed these concepts or themes for the purpose of developing meaning about a particular issue or research topic. Doing a content analysis of text involves either coding the text or breaking down into categories on different levels, that is, word, phrases, word sense, sentence or theme”.

The steps used for making inferences and analyses are summarized as follow:

Step 1. Read the text through several times, until a strong sense of what is being said is grasped.

Step 2. Go through the text again, slowly, underlining or highlighting words, phrases or sentences, which are relevant to the research question.

Step 3. Write these units (words, phrases, or sentences) out, assigning a number to each.

Step 4. Give a name, which is appropriate to the contents of each theme.

Step 5. Look at the relationships between the themes. Do some themes contradict others? Does one theme lead to the next one? Can the story of the text be retold through discussing the themes?

Step 6. Write a discussion in which the story is retold, using the themes to show how the research question has been answered through the data.

3.6 CONTENT ANALYSIS

3.6.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Content analysis can be defined in many ways while as a qualitative research technique, it can be defined as a research method of data analysis involving systematic identification of themes and patterns that appear in the manifest content of text data and this is in order to develop meaning about a particular research topic (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) while Travers (1969) define content analysis as" a multipurpose research method developed specifically for investigating a broad spectrum of problems in which the content of communication serves as a basis of interference ".

Content analysis is a popular technique for data analysis which can be used in both qualitative and quantitative research studies. In the 1920s and 1930s this technique emerged as a quantitative method of data analysis used to analyse communication content in mass media (Krippendorf, 1980). Then during the 1940s, Berelson (1952) reported the increased interest in content analysis amongst researchers from different fields of study. Weber (1990) pointed out the essential limiting of text to numbers content analysis which somewhat could not be satisfactorily used particularly in research areas that were depending on qualitative approach. As a qualitative research method, content analysis was developed to determine the process of themes and for analysing those themes processing the content analysis (Pool, 1959).

Content analysis allows for the process of analysing of text data at two levels Analysis on the manifest content data is the initial phase involving an analysis at the surface level, meaning the researcher looks at what the participants actually said without making any assumptions while analysis at the level of latent content focuses on the underlying meanings embedded in the physical messages which

forms the basis of interpretations of the text. Content analysis can be done in so many ways depending on the research question that is investigated.

According to Holsti (1968), the purpose of content analysis has been identified as follows:

1. To describe communication trends in the content

2. To audit communication content against standard

3. To relate known characteristics of sources to messages they produce

4. To analyse technique of persuasion

5. To analyse style

6. To relate known attributes of the audience to massages produced for them

7. To describe patterns of communication

3.6.2 THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS

Thematic Content Analysis is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data which themes and categories are identified for the purpose interpretations of research data (Marshall & Rossman, 1998). A qualitative data may take the form of interview transcripts collected from research selected participants that reflect experientially on the topic of study.

3.6.2.1 Seven key characteristics

Manen (1990) cited in Kiguwa (2003, p41-42) identifies seven key characteristics of themes that the researcher must look for in a data text:

***Theme 1 - is the experience of meaning*:** The researcher's central concern is the understanding of the meaning and the point that the text intends to communicate.

Themes 2 -are not an object one encounters at a certain point or moments in a text: meaning that themes serve as dominant meanings or recur throughout the text to spread out an understanding about a phenomenon one seeks to understand.

Theme 3- is a way of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand: themes are used to capture information which the researcher understands or get from the participants and this process assist the researcher to know which phenomenon are coming up. It is not possible to fully grasp the meaning of a phenomenon.

Theme 4- is the means to get at the notion: "identifying and selecting themes from a text forms part of attempt to get the meaning of gender identity among women. The theme becomes a tool or instrument through which such meaning can be explored and interpret" (Kiguwa, 2001p42).

Themes 5- give shape to the shapeless*:* the data that the participants provide to the researcher may at first seem to be meaningless as after grouping the themes, one is able to achieve a more focused meaning specific to the research topic.

Theme 6-describes the content of the notion: The data on its own may be perceived as meaningless while after categorizing and grouping themes together the content of the study may be attained in more in-depth in relation to the research question.

Theme 7- is always a reduction of a notion: it is impossible to provide a full description of events through people's lived-experiences, People may illustrate their life experience in a multiple manner or meaning and some of the information mentioned may be irrelevant from what the researcher is researching about, themes being reduced assist the researcher to focus on specific aspects of the phenomenon.

3.6.2.2 Thematic content analysis process

Manen (1990) illustrate that there are three approaches to carry out thematic analysis:

1. Holistic reading approach, the researcher may formulate a sentence which the meaning may be captured in relation to the question that the researcher is trying to answer.
2. Detailed, line-by-line reading approach, the researcher must read each sentence with understanding and incorporate it with the research question.
3. Selective reading approach, this requires the researcher to read the statement several times which this had be incorporated / adopted in this study.

The process of thematic analysis generally involves the following steps:

Step 1: Arranging the data before analysis could begin.
The researcher had to transcribe the information and where necessary translated the transcript in to English version.

Step 2: Selecting the unit of analysis.
A unit can be a theme, a single word, sentence, paragraph or whole text carrying information. These units can be used in combination within one particular study. The process of selecting units of analysis enables the researcher to code the messages as represented in the themes. According to Babbie & Mouton (2003),

in a qualitative content analysis a theme is used when the researcher is looking for expressions and ideas which can be expressed in phrases, sentences, single words, paragraphs and in the entire document. “It is usually realistic and close to the original content” when using the coding system (Kerlinger, 1964p549). For this study code were used as well as themes. It is time-consuming to code a theme.

Step 3: Coding schemes.

For a research study coding the information or themes extracted from the data is a way organising the data. After units of analysis have been identified, ideas or meanings explicated by each sentence, paragraph and theme should be carefully assessed by giving it a code that seem related to the data at present (Charmaz, 2003 and De Vos & Van Zyl, 2003).

Step 4: Discovering categories.

Once the researcher has stipulated the codes or the themes that are appropriate for the particular study, the researcher needs to develop a rationale to guide by grouping similar or meaning that are the same together(De Vos & Van Zyl,1998). This process assist the researcher to be able to analyses themes that are grouped and this process can be guided by inductive and deductive approaches. With an ‘inductive’ approach codes for analysis are derived directly from the data while with ‘deductive’ approach allow for the development of codes to be guided by already existing conceptual framework, theories or other research findings related to the topic and these approaches can be used in a thematic content analysis (Charmaz, 2003).

Step 5: Drawing conclusions.

At this stage the researcher has grouped the themes according to their relevant categories and is now in the process of interpretation of the data. The process involves identifying relationships and making comparisons between themes including uncovering patterns in the process of analysis (Poggenpoel, 1998).

3.7 PROCEDURE

After the approval of the research proposal by internal ethics committee of the University of the Witwatersrand, the researcher began the recruiting process by going to the Limpopo provice, Makhado municipality to ask for permission to go to the Vhulaudzi village, Tshitavha to recruit participants. The process of recruiting started after the headman of Vhulaudzi village, Tshitavha site written permission allowing the researcher to proceed with recruiting 23-40 years old black women in that community to participate. Data collection for the study was carried out during the last term of the study year just prior final year examinations, 2008. The dates, times and venues for conducting interviews were arranged with each participant prior the researcher going there. Both the interviews took place at Vhulaudzi Lutheran church premises which was convenient for the participants. The researcher carried with a formal letter with all the relevant information regarding the researcher and the research project were provided to each participant along with a consent form to sign on agreement to part in the research. The researcher explicitly informed the participants both in writing (in the subject information letter) and verbally before the interview that participation in the study was voluntary and the consent forms were explained to them by the researcher before the interviews commenced .The participants were assured that they have the right to leave the research process at any point if and when they want to. The individual interviews lasted for forty-five (45) to and hour while the focus group interviews lasted for one (1) hour thirty (30) minutes. At the end the participants were thanked for their contribution and time.

The researcher had to ask permission to conduct the interviews at Perinatal HIV research unit with some members of the staff. The same process was used in conduction the focus group interviews. After conducting both the focus groups and individual interviews the researcher transcribed and translated were

necessary the tape-recorded interviews and embarked on data analysis. Participants were informed that the report will be made available at the Wits archives should they want to access it. They were also made aware that the report might be published in a journal.

3.7.1 TSHITAVHA VILLAGE

Vhulaudzi village consist of wards which is how they are able to control and know people staying there. Tshitavha village happens to be one of the wards, ward thirty-one (31) .The villages consist of approximately four hundred and twenty seven (427) households and each household consist of approximately six (6) people per household. Thus when the researcher visited the different households, she discovered that most of the household members do not stay in the village at all times. Some of the household members are either at schools away from home or are working in other towns and cities. The village comprises of older people and younger children. The researcher conducted her research after final year examinations, 2008 with the advantage of getting hold of the appropriate participants.

Vhulaudzi village consist of six (6) villages with six (6) headmen ‘called Induna- in traditional manner’ controlling the running of the villages. There are procedures that are used in order to attend to matters that affect the people in the village. The headmen uses ‘khoro’ (a place were the headman and people in the village meet to talk matters that arise in the villages). These villages are traditionally based and all the operations are done through traditional ways.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is important that ethical consideration to the study be adhered to, and participants respected. De Vos et.al (2005p57) states “ethics is a set of moral principles which is suggested by individual or group” De Vos et.al (2005p57).

Firstly, the participants were recruited on voluntary basis and had to sign a consent form to agree to participate in the study which the researcher ensured the participants of their rights to withdraw from the study at any point in time and not to answer to any questions that they did not feel comfortable to answer. Since the researcher wanted the both the focus groups interviews and the individual interviews on tape, participants' permission to record the interviews was provided for them to sign. The participant were given copies of the participation information sheet (for focus groups) for those who were participating in the focus groups interviews, consent forms as well as the recording form and for the individual interviews also were given copies of the participation information sheet (for one-on-one interviews) ,consent forms as well as the recording form.

Secondly, participants were also assured of their confidentiality and anonymity. All information provided by the participants was made available only to the researcher and her supervisor. Participants' names were not recorded on the interview schedules or anywhere in the research report. All the identifiable research data including the tape-recorded interviews will be secured and destroyed when no longer necessary for reference. Results of the study will be presented in a report form to be submitted to the department of Psychology, School of Community and Social Development. Possibly the study may be published in a journal or be presented at a case conference.

3.8.1 ETHICAL ASPECTS FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

These are aspects that the researcher followed under the ethical consideration such as:

Avoidance of harm

At all cost the researcher did make sure that no harm came to the participants either through the research or after the research and that the outcomes did not become harmful to the participants. This also applied to the one-on-one interviews.

Informed consent

The researcher informed and explained to the participants about their rights and responsibilities. This helped the participants to make their informed choices regarding participating in the study.

Briefing of participants

The researcher explained the project to the participants. After the research participants will be given feedback as well as the outcomes of the project and / or research.

Consent forms

The forms were issued to participants to request permission or allow recordings of the focus group interviews. Participants were assured that the tapes will be destroyed thereafter.

Right to withdraw

In both the focus group interviews and the individual interviews, participants were granted the opportunity to withdraw if and when they felt that they are uncomfortable or they were placed in compromising situations (De Vos et. al,, 2005).

3.8.2 ETHICAL ASPECTS FOR ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

Violation of privacy/anonymity and confidentiality

Sieber (1982p145) defines “privacy as that which normally is not intended for others to observe or analyse” Sieber (1982p145). This study ensured that all the information provided by participants remains protected, their identities remain anonymous and information is kept confidential and that both the interviewer and the interviewee have agreed on how the information collected is used.

Consent forms

The forms were issued to the participants to allow recordings of the focus group interviews and the one-on-one interviews. Tapes will be destroyed thereafter. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study if and when they so wish. De Vos, et.al (2005).

3.8.3 ISSUES OF REFLECTIVITY

In consideration of the researcher’s persona in a qualitative research process and the nature of the data collected. The researcher’s subjectivities and the participants are part of the research process. The focus groups interviews and the one-on-one interviews were conducted with the participants which is crucial that the researcher is aware of the influences she has on the analysis and discussion of the results. The shared information that even for the researcher

was of real interest was how each individual reflected on themselves as “me” a black woman.

As mentioned for me the research topic come about as a personal interests of understanding ones’ self and how one define ones’ self. As a woman and looking at all women either married, divorced, being mothers, being career women besides all those surrounding factors what makes one to say ‘ I am a woman’. Therefore in so many ways my subjectivity did influence the analysing of data.In accordance with a social constructionist perspective, the researcher acknowledges that the findings of this study are open to other potentially equal and valid findings. The researcher conducted the first focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews with curiosity and made it an effort to maintain an unbiased position although the interviews as known it is inevitable that the researcher’s own reality will always influence the process even though the researcher tried by all means not to. The researcher was aware of her inexperience as an interviewer; in both interview sessions, however she became more confident from one interview to another. Some interviews were richer in information than others; the focus group at first was not to standard, each interview and focus group contributed significantly in the analysis of the data and interpretation of the results. The second focus group interview as the researcher was experienced; the data collected is richer than that of the first focus group.

Ashworth (2003) argues that the researchers’ reflections on their actions and observations in the field, their impressions, irritations and feelings become data in their own right, forming part of the interpretation. The researcher wishes to make an advanced apology to the women who participated in this study if she misrepresented them, misunderstood them and their ideas in any way. Most of my participants were not familiar with the research process and may have had an influence in the ways the engaged with the questions based on what they thought the researcher was looking for given that they were also briefed about the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 ANAYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the results of this study. Several themes emerged during the analysis of data that elaborate more on what women, womanhood and self identity as well as how a woman define and identify herself. The following dominant themes emerged and are used to help further describe the broad theme:

4.1. Themes of identity and race
4.2. Themes of identity and gender
4.3. Themes of identity and culture
4.4. Themes of identity and class/education
4.5. Themes on the self: in relation to self acceptance and personal achievements

The selected texts are referred to as categories of expressions comprising of thematic units in relation to the topic presented (Eagle, 1998).The presented themes reflect on the aims of the study. The interpretation and analysis of the results are the researcher's subjective reading. Meaning the reading was of potentially multiple interpretations (Ashworth, 2003). The transcribed text were analysed for dominant themes around identity subjectivity as embodied in women particularly in black women. The implementation of sampling, recording and content were the domains of the analysis and this process started with the focus on the interview transcripts collected from the participants whereby specific questions were asked to the participants both in the one-on-one interviews and the two focus groups(Krippendorf,1980).

4.1 THEMES OF IDENTITY AND RACE

Ethnic diversification has given rice to intense anxieties within both majority and minority populations and conflicts between them in which the differences lie within the central parts which are identity and their race. Racism through definition is defined in different ways and in a more general sense is the construction of boundaries on the basis of the individual characteristics such as colour of their skin (Elliot, 1996). The utilization of what the participants have replied to was from the questions that were at hand for them to answer even though there were challenges that were expressed by the participants. They were directly asked several questions revolving around aspects about being 'a woman', 'a black woman' and 'how women identify themselves'. The construction of the term 'woman' and being 'black' was 'food for thought' to the participants as they are concepts that are not constantly in ones' mind.

> Thendo: "I am black and I think, no! no... [Laughing] I know I am beautiful."

> Tshimangadzo:"In this South Africa I can say that majority of people are us black people and the fact that we are part of black people I can say black is beautiful. I cannot talk of any other culture, black is beautiful."

This question proved to be interesting based on the responses provided. "The notions of 'race' and 'identity', these terms, which, for so long have been treated as 'given' biological or historical 'facts', are truly problematic and contestable concepts that need to be interrogated and explored. This concept is an attempt to do just this in a particularly South African context, as this is a nation that has an inherent preoccupation with categorising people into groups such as 'black', 'white', 'coloured,' and so on"(Franzidis,2004p68). Ones' skin colour used to be of out most importance during apartheid era which contributed strongly towards how one perceived herself more especially from a woman's perspective. The construction of the skin 'black' was described as follows:

Thendo: “As a black woman it was not that good because black was always associated with hatred.”

Livhuwani: “I attended with white children and they at all times made it a point that we as black people we know that we are black and that we do not forget it.”

Faith: “When I grew up things were very difficult and in those times being a black woman was not well accepted.”

During the 1970s and 1980s black women were marginalized and oppressed while “these immutable categories have long denied people their individuality and ignored the diversity that exists within them. In post-apartheid South Africa – the much-touted ‘Rainbow Nation” (Franzidis, 2004p68). Men and women were perceived at as group of black people because of the colour of their skin, after the apartheid era being black became of comfort to all and they were now perceived as individuals and not a group.

Livhuwani: “you know it is of advantage to be a black young woman especially because we are God gifted as far as our physical appearance is discussed.”

Ompha: “…….. we as black women we grew up with the impression that there are other careers that we are not suitable for and those are meant for white people ……..”

Livhuwani: “They at all times made it a point that we as black people we know that we are black and that we do not forget it. Do not get me wrong, not all white people were like that but some of them.” “I know now that I am a young black woman; I understand it and I accept it now. I used to

> hate it because of the connotation behind the word black as I was growing up."

In post-apartheid South Africa, being black had its own impact on individuals as well as within the black communities, our fathers and forefather had to fight during apartheid era and for women was oppression due to their colour and sex. This was also done between the black people themselves, were fathers oppressed wives and children. Ramphele (2000) cited in Duncan & Ratele (2003) pointed out the role of women which was in the kitchen and taking care of her family which this formulation did apply during the apartheid era.An individual's sexual parts were what determines the role that one has from the community and the society that one belongs to.

> Mashudu: "Well….I grew up it was different but not that difficult, like now things are easy. As we were growing up there were difficulties like well… especially with we black people we grew up with no care."

> Faith:"When I was growing up I stayed next to a white man's farm and they did not want us, even when we wanted water we used to steal water, when we see a white person we used to run away because back then white people did not want us around."

> Maanda: "…..me as a black woman the way I see myself I should not put myself down…"

Following the implication of this idea, traditionally it was assumed that a kitchen is a women's sphere and as a man being sent to a kitchen by another man may give a sense of being reduced into a woman and this made feel that they were being stripped off a man's masculine identity because of the implications of then feeling like they are taking over a woman's role by taking care of another man's physical need and thus assuming a submissive role (that of women).A historical

location of how black women were perceived was banished during 1994 after apartheid era were women were now recognised and black women began to open new challenges for themselves by moving away from the concepts of belonging to the kitchen to the concepts of belonging to the office yet bearing in mind that not all women moved away from their ‘comfort zone’.

4.2 THEMES OF IDENTITY AND GENDER

When South Africa gained its freedom in 1994, gender equality was activated and this was a shift for black people from apartheid era to being free which developed notice of identity of ‘underneath the black skin who am I’? (Labour Market Commission, 1996). The essentialization of gender difference is tied to the moralist of discourse on identity. Gender identity is a notion that is ‘naturally’ known to both men and women and is embodied with their sexuality. Thus according to Hook (2004), gender can be viewed along social, cultural and psychological differences between men and women and were understood as patterns of social expectation norms for the behaviour of men and women.

> P1: “they say um… a woman nee…there is a man we ‘women’ we are ‘man’ with the womb then what is not a woman does not have a womb”.

> P3: “Because the only difference between a man and a woman is this womb but we are all human beings and I guess we all have feelings being man and woman”.

Participants’ constructions of what it means to be a woman emerged even through the discussions that were held, the perceptions that women have about themselves may be constructed through how men perceive women. The sexuality of women in relation to that of men is different, women are preys to the male kind of ‘creatures’ and the paradox here is that men being subjects to both

female and male sexuality. Self perception and reflexion is of importance to women as self identity as a woman and as an individual is significant:

> P3: “um…. It’s a difficult one but…. (Laughing) it’s a difficult one but I guess I did not choose to be a woman that is how I was created. I was created a woman and I would say I love being a woman because um… I feel that I feel good for being a woman because I am a mother to my kids, I can say that and is the main one and that it is good to be a woman, a mother um… yes ya….. (Smiling)”

> Mpho: “Everyone depends on me so I can be called a woman because of that.”

> Ompha:“……a woman is a person, well… we have been given that chance to… we are the people who are responsible for bringing people into this world…….”

> Lerato: “Like when a child is sick I am the one who wakes up and take care of the child, yes the father can be there but at the end I am the one who take care of the baby alone.”

The notions of gender linking it to identity were central to the discussions while subjective understandings of what constituted ‘womanhood’ also held sway over traditional notions. The different roles associated with women clearly separate women from men and thereby successfully identifying that which is ‘feminine’ in relation to that which is ‘masculine’.

> P2: “I think for myself as a woman, I think that I am more in tone with the emotional and sensitive of me. I do not know if it happens with men but as a woman you are more aware of the things that you feel, the emotions…I mean even if you feel them you also decide to attend to them”.

P1: “so we get to be ‘WO’ because of the womb because we can carry but even though we grow up, we grow up not knowing that we have a womb, you know but society tells you that you are a woman because of the patterns because a woman has to clean and man goes outside and hunt, a woman raises children and a man….. you know, pinning down what is a woman (smiling) in a cycle of women is difficult because I might be ‘tomish’ “a tom-boy”, I might be brave and not sensitive but/and I am still a woman”.

According to Guillaumin (1995) cited in Kiguwa (2001p66), stated that there are operations of the natural discourses in relation to sexuality between males and females or men and women and further describes that they function in two-fold manner. “A discursive construction of women as completely tied to nature is counter-minded by an equally essentialist construction of men with nature” Guillaumin (1995) cited in Kiguwa (2001p66). As implicated women interpreted men as believing that they ought to have power over women and that is what makes them ‘men’.

4.3 THEMES OF IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Culture consists of traditional norms and values that abide the society and those norms have been found to encourage women not to discuss or talk about sexuality more especially with their partners (Jordaan, 2005). As culture may be viewed in all different perceptions it may also contribute in how women internalize these norms, thereby becoming easy to succumb to manipulations by men (Scalway, 2001). In addition, traditional cultural beliefs may also have a great influence on men’s sexual behaviour which this view may contribute to them acting out in an ‘inappropriate manner’ resulting in being polygamists. Polygamy as was practiced in the olden days by men and culture supported this construction. Having many wives was a representation of wealth and this was

practiced in a right manner which even adults in families had a say in the process and also gave guidance and support while this practice is still adopted by some young men today as a rationale for having multiple partners, however poor they may be (Scalway, 2001). Times are different from what used to be and the era and generations of individuals are different, it is not an easy ‘road’ today for one to practice polygamy looking at the financial and the health is implications that may occur.

> Tshililo: “I got married very early but at that time I did not see it because I was born, grew up, my parents prepared me for marriage and then I got married. After getting married I moved from home and came here. I went to Johannesburg with my husband and I saw a different world. I came to different as people there were going to school and I was married. [Sigh] Next Question please …”

> Maanda: “I used to wear “shedo” and there was nothing wrong with it. We used to wear it and it did not matter the size of your body it was our culture and that is how we knew it.”

In every culture there are practices that takes place and those practises are what bide that society and the people residing there. Within the Vha-Venda culture, there are traditional values and practices that one follows, there is a dressing code that is used during those practices, for women to attend Domba (initiation school for girls and women) they have to wear shedo and this type of wear was never ‘seen’ or ‘looked’ at as “this girls are not wearing clothes” it was seen as a traditional wear which one felt proud when wearing. Shedo is a type of clothing that when one is wearing when worn it only covers your private parts leaving other parts of your body exposed and this has not been an issue to boys or men as women or girls are not dressed.

During the interviews as well as the focus group, pictures were shown to the participants with an article of a mini-skirt incident that happened in Noort taxi rank (Appendix 1) and the participants expressed their feelings of disappointments at the taxi drivers about the way they acted as well as responded to the incident.

> Lerato: “As we were growing up we use to wear “shedo” and nothing like this ever happened.”
>
> Maanda: “I used to wear “shedo” and there was nothing wrong with it. We used to wear it and it did not matter the size of your body it was our culture and that is how we knew it.”
>
> Maanda: “the thing that us as woman we find difficulty as far as our culture is concern is our culture allows us to go to domba,”
>
> Mpho: “……culture teaches us that a woman has to be proud of their body, we wear traditional clothes and there was nothing wrong with that…….In an African culture we wear revealing clothes and that is our culture.”

According to Sered (1999), traditionally women have been identified in several ways as the ones that bear greater responsibility for the maintenance and upbringing of the family and children morally; as the moral guardians of the society and as that is were the ‘symbol of woman and women arise while at this time women are given opportunities to rise and redefine their existence in the community and in the world (Morrel, 2007). Sered (1999) future discussed that the construction symbolic of womanhood is perceived to be at risk if the woman attempt to redefine or reject the discursive constructions of womanhood and femininity. Sered (1999) furthermore described womanhood constructions as sacred and chaste and are intertwined with the ideal of endangerment.

4.4 THEMES OF IDENTITY AND CLASS/EDUCATION

Education has always played a significant role in most people's lives regardless of the culture where the individual is from as well as the traditional practices that were embedded to that individual. Being able to read and write for women turned out to be of privilege as education is a means of survival at this 'day and age' and at the workplace women are perceived as 'intelligent' n connection with their educational expertise. Hamber (2006) study highlighted that women were now being employed in sectors normally reserved for men. Since the formation of the labour laws and gender equality in 1994, women have more chances of contesting for the same position as that of men and stand a chance to be employed in posts that would in the apartheid era be obtained by men .The participants noted that education back in those days was not as important to women as it is today, some of the participants that were interviewed elaborated on how they perceived education while other were never given the opportunity to go to school because they were women(Labour Market Commission, 1996). Education was perceive as 'a thing' for men and women had their own identity that they were given which this view changed for them as they had to construct their lives in connection to the present time and experiences:

> Mashudu"Like with education especially us women we did not care that much about educational things like now and children of today."

> Thendo: "women were not considered as of importance, like going to school, we had to force to go to school and my parents especially my father did not approve of me going to school because he believed that I needed to get married at an early age"

> Tshimangadzo: "Me as a woman I was not deprived the chance to go to school I went to school and I choose what I wanted to do."

Regardless of lack of opportunities for most black women to be educated due to different influences, lack of knowledge and wrong perceptions contributed in how most of the participants that were interviewed to indicate that there were careers that they thought or were taught that they are meant for other racial groups but not for black women and also that that they also perceived other jobs as for men and not for women. With times changing and doors opening for women even in the black communities, the perceptions that was 'implanted' as they were growing up seem to have shifted to accommodate the present time:

> Ompha: "…….. we as black women we grew up with the impression that there are other careers that we are not suitable for and those are meant for white people ……."

> Tshililo: "our mothers used to teach us how to be women and the boys used to go farming with my father."

However, as time went by more women especially from the black communities realised that women have the potential to do things for themselves and also realising that there is no work that is meant for other racial groups or other sexes, every individual has the potential to do what she feels is best for her. Women's acceptance and inclusion in the workplace was constructed in a contradictory manner, in that women were on one hand respected and valued members in the workplace while on the other for most was a challenge to be in the kind of environment. The shifting and the acceptance to the time change affected also men both at home and at the work place. Male's acceptance of women at the workplace and that they were becoming independent was at first not a well welcomed gesture. Women being in power for men meant inability for male power, Hamber (2006) and Morrel (2007).

Mpho: “I understand that women can do any job that they want because there is no job which is said it is meant for men or for women.”

Maanda: “Looking at the other pictures, we as women can do any job that we want. Like if I want to build something I can do that without looking at the point that it is a job which men are the ones that will do that job.”

The acceptance from the society and the community as a whole that times have changed for both men and women meant an easy transition from the perceptions that were there about gender roles and responsibilities. Women and men are now more on par at the workplace and the different roles that they play while at the home front women still know and understand their role and responsibilities. The shift in life opportunities and the chances given to women turn to be of positive results as women are able to be breadwinners at home and are able to take care of their families.

4.5. THEMES ON THE SELF: IN RELATION TO SELF ACCEPTANCE AND PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The construction of the self have different meanings which relate to self acceptance as an individual and self acceptance in terms of the personal achievements that one has do throughout live spent. For most participants personal achievement meant everything that one worked hard to achieve irregardless of the weight of the achievement. Self acceptance is an important aspect which arises through the interviews and focus groups. The participants’ expressions of how they were brought up and their differences in back grounds was expressed through the challenges that the uncounted throughout their childhood to adulthood period. For some participants traditional influence and parental influence played a part in not achieving their goals and wishes.

Tshililo: “We did not go to school, in those days we did not know much about school and from where I grew up not so many people went to school and we did not see anything wrong with that.”

Faith: “As I am a woman, education on my side was not okay as I failed all the standards that I attended but I did not give up on education, I proceeded until standard 8.”

The construction of self acceptance became an important task for most of the participants by acknowledging themselves their achievements even through the hardship that they went through. Education became an aspect that lead to most of the achievements. Some of the participants through assistance were able to accept their current situations as well as understood the circumstances behind their not being successful in other areas.

Thendo: “At school I started passing my standards well which now children call it grades and my father started supporting me often as I went to high school and I went to college to study teaching.”

Tshimangadzo: “No, from educational side I went to school. I went to lower primary, I then went to high school until grade 12……. I chose for me, I did that myself ……”

Being a black woman and being born in a black skin was perceived as a ‘curse’ and a disadvantage for many black people. The black community was perceived as a community of ‘people of not importance’ and the women oppressed by men by occupying the social powers around women (Kiguwa, 2004). This aspect had a negative impact to some of the participants who were ‘labelled’ and that ‘label’ had an impact on how they perceived themselves as individuals as well as human beings and it affected their process of growth.

Thendo: “I only started appreciating myself when I have grown that it is not that bad to be black.”

Maanda: “We should not undermine ourselves, us as black women we should tell ourselves that yes we are black women and we can do what we want to do and we can open our own businesses and live for ourselves.”

The overplaying of the colour of one’s skin had an impact on an individual. Some accepted themselves as they grew up and started appreciating the beauty that they possessed as women, individuals and black women. Self acceptance for them meant appreciation of who they are, their bodies and being comfortable in their own skin.

Thendo: “I am beautiful and I just wish all of us black people could accept ourselves and be proud. Times are different now, as black woman we can strongly stand and be proud of being black women.”

Livhuwani: “I know now that I am a young black woman; I understand it and I accept it now. I used to hate it because of the connotation behind the word black as I was growing up.” “It means I should accept myself the way I am and be proud of the way I am. It means I am beautiful and I should not forget that. It means we all are beautiful in our own unique way.”

P2: “I think with that, as you are asking that how you define yourself, ah… I think comparing to other people as well ah...that’s when you see that you are different. Like she said the attributes if your attributes are more complimentary to what you see if they are different in a sense that it makes you become more positive then that is when you will discover that you’re an individual, you are definitely not the same as the other person and it makes it easier to even define yourself if you are aware of those differences”.

> P1: “well… I am my own self; there is no one like me. Yes, I am an individual because I have certain powers (laughter) I can say i have an influence that is for myself only that informs me when I make discussions and choices whether I go for that thing and that thing you know for me is that, it’s me…..ya….. ”

Realising the importance of beauty and self appreciation became a way of discover to most of the participants. The negative sphere that surrounded them as they were growing up did have negative impact on the perceptions of things and other people and this was noted through the interviews and focus groups. The change in opinions about themselves and accepting the faults of the past were a revelation to the participants and this opportunity allowed them to self reflect and self accept.

> “Women are bound in a common plight by virtue of being oppressed by men” (Kiguwa, 2004p7)**.**

CHAPTER FIVE

5 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The data was collected from fifteen (15) participants residing in South Africa, twelve (12) were from ward thirty-one (31) at Vhulaudzi Village and the three (3) were a group of professional women from Perinatal HIV Research Unit at Christ-Hani Baragwanath hospital. Five (5) broad interesting themes emerged as already presented in detail in the previous chapter. Various constructions and meanings that emerged within these five (5) themes appeared to support relevant literature on femininity. The participants' responses arise many interesting facts that were dealt with during the interviews.

According to Cleaver (2002),one of the 'good things' of being white or a white person is not having to think about race while to think about gender is one of the "patriarchal dividends" of gender inequality which affects all race irrespective of their skin colour. During the apartheid era black people were oppressed in such a way that they perceived life in a different manner and the women were submissive to their husbands as they were breadwinners of the family and when they were growing up that was the 'rule' that was embaded in them.Women were thought how to behave and what to think by their families and mostly by the society they belonged to, others were given a chance to experience life while others were 'stereotyped' to a particular way of living. Mama (1995) cited in Kiguwa (2004) discussed that African women's lives are structured not only by class divisions of the pre-capitalist society but also by the combined effects of race and gender oppression, Kiguwa (2004).

They further illustrate that there is triple oppression, oppression by gender, race and class that occurs to these women and this describes the situation in which many African women find themselves in. Mama (1995) as cited in Kiguwa (2004) further describes the idea of “triple oppression” as an attempt to theorise and respond to the multiply oppressive dynamics of exclusion and marginalisation, and to explain the poor economic and political status of African women. Gender equality and feminism in South Africa have seen a drastic shift since 1994 and it may seem that an unquestionably patriarchal system has given way to new ideals of equality between men and women, which are outlined in the constitution, were women were noticed to be somehow equal to men in many aspects (Reid & Walker, 2004). The aim of the transformation laws is to create a society where socio-economic between different communities are eradicated or at least somewhat at par with one another (Kok, 2008). The governing gender equality empowered women to opt for better employment opportunities for themselves, be able to make choices for themselves without pressure from the males and an overall sense of the emancipation of them. The Legislation has ensured that in law at least twenty (20) women are regarded as equal to men which this assisted women to gain more self confidence into standing for themselves and do things for themselves than to depend on men at all times. (Herbst, Coetzee & Visser, 2007).The adoption of the Constitution and gender equality laws assisted to address the gender inequalities that women faced in society/communities and at the workplace and these resulted in to women being empowered and in control of their own destiny.

In 1994 when South Africa gained its freedom, the labour relation equity act and gender equality was activated and this was a shift as well as a challenge for everyone especially for black people as it was a shift from apartheid era to being free and for women it was a different shift all together as they gained freedom which shifted everything that binded them as women. The transition for others was not difficult while for others it was a new focus on life and what it actually meant for them to be free. Opportunities rise for most black people while for

others poverty was becoming a ‘life style’. Being a person of black colour,the transition started being of advantage more especially at the work place. The government became committed to the transformation and this is seen by how they are providing (this is debatable) and has been largely informed by the past political as well as economic exclusions of African people. The government’s interventions through the transitions became evident through the limited job opportunities and educational advancement of African people during the time of apartheid whiles the current state there are opportunities arising (this is debatable). It was also due to the fact that the legacy of apartheid was structural and tended to be self-reinforcing in the absence of concerted policy interventions aimed at reversing this legacy in the form of employment equity (Labour Market Commission, 1996).

During and after 1994 the government through committing itself became determine to meet its democratic obligations by reducing income and wealth inequalities along racial lines (Edigheji, 2004) by providing equal opportunities to all regardless of the gender and skin colour of an individual. The number of laws were implemented thereafter such as the Employment Equity Act (EEA), the Labour Relations Act of 1995 and Affirmative Action (AA), the main aim was to achieve greater social justice, equality and redress past unfair discrimination and unearned privilege (Booysen, 2007) while in the past white people were there ones controlling the socio-economic situations in South Africa. Equal opportunities for women were accepted and allowed to be in high positions as compared to the past government ruling, women ‘s rights were amended and gave women an opportunity to rise and view their opinions without oppression (Jain, 2002).

Traditionally women were not involved at the workplace and they were not given an opportunity to raise their own opinions and this was converted by the commission on gender equality (CGE) in 1999. The rights of women empowered them to gain a sense of importance in their homes, society and at the work

environment. Responsibilities were shifted to rely on women at the workplace living room for exposure and sense of control for them. After the amendment of gender equality act the transformation of the workforce as well as the workplace has in recent years, after the introduction of the Labour Relations Act of (1995), taken centre stage. This is seen in how equality in the workplace has largely been championed by the creation of the Labour Relations Act of (1995). Empowerment of women in the workplace is reflected in the favourable employment prospects for women and the leagues that women formed to strengthen each other. This revealed from African women as they are regarded as the group that has greatly benefited from these policies yet there are still management positions that African women are not represented. Booysen (2007) found that whites and males, and specifically white males, still dominate top management, senior management and professional and middle management positions and as time goes on positions will change and more women will be placed in management position and the empowerment of women will be more activated throughout all the communities in South Africa.

Change during the apartheid era was 'scary' for black people as they were not 'sure' about what to expect in life and this change has shaped South Africa in a manner that the tensions is based at the characterisation of gender relations in cutting the barrier line that exist for women (Sideris, 2005). Therefore sensitivity is needed when trying to gain insight into the understanding of the nature of different women's experience of oppression and inequality. Most women may share fundamental experiences or commonalities but these experiences are also shaped by factors such as class and race.

5.2 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research was to answer questions that many people especially women do not think of in their daily living, to answer questions 'who I am' and/or

‘why I am a woman’, the results on the other hand provided different views. The sample utilized in this study was small thus attempting to generalise the finding to all Black women in South Africa was not be appropriate.The researcher has already acknowledged her subjectivity as possibly influencial during the process of data analysis .The questions asked were anwered but not to the expectations of the researcher and the research questions were not clearly answered.The researcher could have probed further to get more in-depth information especially through the focus groups and acknowledges this shortcoming. The extensive data gathered from the fiveteen (15) participants certainly reinforce the notion of this report and provided the basis for a larger qualitative inverstigation phenomena perhabs across other racial groups, furthermore perhabs quantitative investigation to examine quantitatively the notions of race, gender and identity amongst women will also be of value.

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CHAPTER SIX

A. APPENDIX SECTION

APPENDIX 1

A vignette illustrating the construct of womanhood from the Sowetan Newspaper (the mini-skirt incident at Noord Street, Johannesburg) and different pictures representing women from various social, economic and other categories:

‘They pulled, tore her skirt’

19 February 2008
Getrude Makhafola
One of the security guards who helped miniskirt-clad
Nwabisa Ngcukana on Sunday said it took them a while before they could rescue her.

Ngcukana was stripped and sexually molested by taximen at Noord taxi rank.

“When we arrived she was lying on the floor surrounded by taxi drivers who were pulling and tearing at her skirt.

“They were poking fun at her and would not let go. We had to carry her up to the control room,” said the security guard, who refused to identify himself for fear of victimisation.

He also said that a young man was also stripped on the same day after he was accused of snatching a cellphone.

Four women had been stripped on Saturday alone, three were wearing miniskirts, while the third wore tight short pants.

Another security guard, who has been posted at the taxi rank for five years, said it was not the first time this had happened.

“They have been doing this for the past three years. They had at one point ordered us not to allow women wearing miniskirts into the rank, which is impossible.

“We need help from the police to arrest these arrogant people,” said the security guard.

People working at a shopping centre near the rank said they had witnessed similar incidents over the years.

‘Attacked for miniskirt’

18 February 2008
Zinhle Mapumulo
Stripped and sexually abused

If you thought taxi drivers operating at Noord Taxi Rank had stopped stripping naked women who wear miniskirts, think again. The attacks are back.

This time they are not only publicly undressing women but sexually assaulting them as well.

Four women fell victim to this practise yesterday at this rank. They were allegedly stripped naked and one of them sexually assaulted by taxi drivers.

BRUTALITY: Nwabisa Ngcukana’s miniskirt and underwear were almost torn apart by a mob of Noord Taxi Rank taxi drivers who sexually assaulted her yesterday. PHOTO: PETER MOGAKI

Nwabisa Ngcukana, 25, had to parade but naked at the Noord Taxi Rank after a mob of taxi drivers stripped and tore her clothes. Her crime was wearing a short skirt.

“I have never been so traumatised in my life. I thought these taxi drivers were going to rape me,” Ngcukana said.

“As they stripped me they kept shouting that this is what I wanted. Some were sticking their finger in my vagina while others poured alcohol over my head and called me all sorts of names.”

Ngcukana was apparently not the first women they stripped yesterday, as she learnt from the security guards who rescued her.

“The funny thing about this is that I thought security guards would sympathise with me.

“Instead they mocked me and asked what was I thinking parading around in a miniskirt at a taxi rank. They further told me that three other women were stripped naked earlier for wearing a short skirt,” she said.

“When my friends came into my defence saying I had a right to wear whatever I liked they just laughed at me and said this is the kind of attitude that makes taxi drivers do these things.

“They even refused to call the police saying that they did it the last time and police did nothing.”

Scelo Mabaso, chairperson of the Top Six Taxi Association, condemned the assaults, calling them inhuman and immoral.

“We urge all women who were harassed and stripped naked to lay criminal charges,” said Mabaso.

“If the perpetrators are caught they will be brought to book,” said Mabaso. “We cannot allow such inhumanity in our ranks. Taxi ranks are supposed to be the safest places for the public.”

In 2002 similar incidents were reported at the Noord Taxi Rank. Police again said they were not aware of such practise.




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APPENDIX 2

What makes you Black?

Is it the colour of your skin?

Is it the way you look?

Is it where you live?

Is it you hair?

Or is it…….Your soul?

Metro FM: It's where you're at cited by Kiguwa, 2001

APPENDIX 3

Participant's profile

One-on-one interviews

Code names	Age	Education	Occupation	Family
THENDO[1]	37	College of education	Teacher	Wife and mother of two children
LIVHUWANI	25	University	Student	Parents and a brother
TSHILILO	40	Grade 12	Unemployed	Parents (father with 3 wives) and

				11 children
MASHUDU	**38**	**Diploma in computer and went to a sewing school**	**Self-employed**	**Parents and her two children**
TSHIMANGADZO	**28**	**College of Education**	**Teacher**	**Parents and 1 child**
FAITH	**33**	**Ended up in Standard 8**	**Unemployed**	**Married with two children**

[1]Subjects' names have been changed

APPENDIX 4

Participant's profile

Focus group one

Code names	Age	Education	Occupation	Family
MPHO[1]	**27**	**College**	**Employed**	**married**
MAANDA	**24**	**University student**	**Student**	**Mothers, brothers and sisters**
TSHIFHIWA	**25**	**Ended up in**	**Unemployed**	**Parents and**

		Grade 12		**a sister**
HOPE	**30**	**Diploma**	**Unemployed**	**Staying with a boyfriend**
OMPHA	**39**	**Ended up in Standard 10**	**Unemployed**	**Married and a child**
LERATO	**23**	**Ended up in grade 12**	**Self-employed**	**single**

[1]Subjects' names have been changed

APPENDIX 5

Participant's profile

Focus group two

Code names	Age	Education	Occupation	Family
P1	24	University	Recruiter	Parent, sister and brother
P2	27	University	Recruiter	Parents and a brother
P3	40	University	Counselor	Husband

				and two children

[1]Subjects' names have been changed

APPENDIX 6

Transcripts:

Individual / one-on-one interviews:

Out of the 12 Participants, 6 women were selected for the individual interviews which the sessions took a maximum of 30 minutes each.

Interview one:

Thendo[1]

Ndangano: How was it like growing up as a young black woman?

Thendo: [Smiling] when I grew up it was an apartheid era were even at home women were not considered as of importance, like going to school, we had to force to go to school and my parents especially my father did not approve of me

going to school because he believed that I needed to get married at a early age but things changed when my mother spoke to him.

Ndangano: okay

Thendo: I went to school but things were still not good because I had to walk a long distance to go to school and during winter it was the some. As a black woman it was not that good because black was always associated with hatred. As I went to school and getting educated things became easier both out side and at home.

Ndangano: What do you mean?

Thendo: At school I started passing my standards well which now children call it grades and my father started supporting me often as I went to high school and I went to college to study teaching. From the out side from home I started to understand the world from the side of what is written in the books and I started to understand the situation from different people's opinions. In the beginning as a young black woman things were not easy and now children have TV's and other things to know the outside world

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[1]Subjects' names have been changed

Ndangano: What does the statement "black is beautiful" mean to you?

Thendo: Black is beautiful?

Ndangano: Yes

Thendo: [sigh] well… yes, black is beautiful because I am black and I think, no! no... [Laughing] I know I am beautiful. That statement is very strong and which I do wish most of us black people would look at ourselves and believe it. The problem that I see with us is as we were growing we could only see dolls in the shops which were white and always wished to be white. I only started appreciating my self when I have grown that it is not that bad to be black. [Laughing].It is a strong statement as I have already said and I strongly agree with it. I am beautiful and I just wish all of us black people could accept ourselves and be proud. Times are different now, as black woman we can strongly stand and be proud of being black women. Yes black is beautiful [smiling].

Ndangano: What are your positive and negative experiences of being a woman?

Thendo: Which one should I start with? Can I start with the positive?

Ndangano: Yes, you may

Thendo: Being a woman is a beautiful thing, being a black woman. Things started being positive in my life when I started going to school as I told you before that my father did not approve of me going to school, or let me say of women going to school but like I said he soon accepted that when he saw that I have passed and I was doing well at school. I passed and went and did teaching and I got a work as a teacher. Being a working woman is good because I do not depend so much on people. Again when I got married to my husband, I was proud as a woman that day because most of the girls where I grew up had children before they were married. I got married when I was working and did not have children. It was not good that I got married at my early 30's and did not have a child at that age. Right now I [smiling] feel proud that I did not let pressure of my age get me to do something that I did not want to do.

Ndangano: okay

Thendo : It was a negative experience that I reached 30 staying in my father's house , I did in my mind loose hope of ever getting married but my parents were supportive of me and telling me that all will work well I should not give up. At the end things worked out the right way.[sad] after I was married I couldn't conceive in that first year and it was a painful experience for me as me and my husband wanted to start a family and my in-laws were being impatient. They even suggested to my husband to marry another wife since I could not have children. That was the most painful experience ,I prayed and God answered my prayer and now I am a mother of two children.[smiling]things then changed at home and my in-laws started accepting me and now I am a proud woman and a proud mother.

Ndangano: How did your husband feel about the fact that you both want children and that was not happening and again that his side of the family wanted him to get a second wife?

Thendo: He was supportive even though I could see that he was not happy about what was happening, the issue about a second wife he did not say anything about it and even today he has not say anything about it, what I know is every night he used to tell me not to worry all will be fine and that I should not listen to what his family is saying. Me and my husband we go to church and we both believe in God so that did help with this issue. It did not break us and what we had, he was good to me and he still is good to me even now and our children

Ndangano: Thank you

<u>Interview two:</u>

Livhuwani [1]

Ndangano: Hello Livhuwani, my first question is: how was it like growing up as a young black woman?

Livhuwani: Growing up as a young black woman has never been an issue to me as I grew up in loving family [Paused].

Ndangano: What do you mean? If you don't mind can you explain further?

Livhuwani: I was born in a family with both parents and I had everything I wanted, [Smiling] well almost everything. Both my parents were and are still working well and they were able to provide for us. Ya…

Ndangano: Outside your home how was it like growing up as a young black woman?

Livhuwani: It was different as I went to a private school and it was not fun at all. I attended with white children and they at all times made it a point that we as black people we know that we are black and that we do not forget it. Do not get me wrong, not all white people were like that but some of them. [Sad] at times I did not like that I was black, but there was nothing I could do about it. It was hard outside home especially at school. But as I grew and things changed, as more white students left the school then we started enjoying school and time with my friends. Then I grew and now I am at university.

Ndangano: At this stage that you are in how do you look at your self looking back at your experience at school?

Livhuwani: Well, me? I know now that I am a young black woman; I understand it and I accept it now. I used to hate it because of the connotation behind the word black as I was growing up.

Ndangano: What was the connotation behind the word black?

Livhuwani: [looking through the window] I really don't like talking about it, it was not good. I do not want to talk about it

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[1]Subjects' names have been changed

Ndangano: its ok, is there anything that you want to add on what you have already said before I ask you the second question?

Livhuwani: No….Ya…, I do love being a black young woman, I am proud of it.

Ndangano: Okay, the second question

Ndangano: What does the statement "black is beautiful" mean to you?

Livhuwani: [laughing and nodding] I am a proud black woman and I strongly agree with that statement

Ndangano: What does it mean to you?

Livhuwani: It means I should accept my self the way I am and be proud of the way I am. It means I am beautiful and I should not forget that. It means we all are beautiful in our own unique way. I am not like my sister and yet we are both beautiful meaning that I should be proud and accept myself the way I am.Ya…[nodding].[a laughter] you know it is of advantage to be a black young

woman especially because we are God gifted as far as our physical appearance is discussed

Ndangano: [laughing] explain that please?

Livhuwani: An African woman is seen by her physical appearance, oh yes, we are different and we should be proud [laughing].Um…Ya. Another question please…

Ndangano: What are your positive and negative experiences of being a woman?

Livhuwani: Well… my negative experience is the one that I have told you in the beginning and again I have been in relationships with boys/[smiling]men and I have had break ups and it has been painful. I do not like being in and out of relationships but I guess I am learning. Well I haven't had that much of negative experiences in my life I am still young.

Ndangano: What about positive experiences?

Livhuwani: I was born in a good family and my parents love me. I went to school even though in the beginning it was not pleasant to be at that school but it all changed as time went on. I am now at the university and I am doing well in my studies and all my siblings are okay and they are also doing well at school. I don't have a child even though most of my friends have children. I am proud that I am at school, all is working well and I am a proud black young woman.

Ndangano: Thank you for your time

[1]Subjects' names have been chang

Interview three:

Tshililo[1]

Ndangano: Hi how was your day?

Tshililo: My day so far is okay [smiling]

Ndangano: Okay. How was it like growing up as a young black woman?

Tshililo: [Smile] how do I answer this? Life was well… ok for me. I grew up in a big family and it was nice at home. My father had 3 wives and many children. I am the 5th child from my mother out of 6 children and from my father I am the 9th child. It was nice to grow up there. We used to play and enjoy

Ndangano: How about school? Did you go to school?

Tshililo: We did not go to school, in those days we did not know much about school and from where I grew up not so many people went to school and we did

not see anything wrong with that. Well… our mothers used to teach us how to be women and the boys used to go farming with my father. We grew up learning how to be women and how to treat people and in time we were prepared for marriage. It was good the way I grew up I only realized that going to school was important as I grew up people started going to school and they used to pass by my house wearing school uniforms and by then I was about to get married. It was good growing up as a black young woman.

Ndangano: At what age did you 'grow' up? I mean get married?

Tshililo: I was 15 years old when I got married, back then we did not know better

Ndangano: What do you mean?

Tshililo: I got married very early but at that time I did not see it because I was born, grew up, my parents prepared me for marriage and then I got married. After getting married I moved from home and came here. I went to Johannesburg with my husband and I saw a different world. I came to stay here as my husband was working in Johannesburg. Things became different as people there were going to school and I was married. [Sigh] Next Question please …

Ndangano: What does the statement "black is beautiful" mean to you?

Tshililo: A black person is a beautiful person. People these days, black people are developing and are being educated. They are buying cars, going to school, building big houses and everything is going well for them. I agree with that statement.

Ndangano: What are your positive and negative experiences of being a woman?

Tshililo: I got married which was a good thing for me and now I am still married, me and my husband have 3 children who are working except the last born who is at school. I am happy in my family and everything is okay. Well….the negative thing was I did wish that I had gone to school as I started seeing other children going there but I could not as I was married. I guess there are things that I can not change in my life. I lost a child my second born when he was born, that was the saddest time in my life [sad looking down]. The pain of loosing a child is so painful and you never get over it. I was young and I still feel the pain [sad]. I then had another child but he does not take that pain away. The family helped me so

much and [smiling] it is now okay to talk about him. I am happy and I am a woman who is black and I am proud of that. Black people are good people and they help each other. Thank you.

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[1]Subjects' names have been changed

Interview four:

Mashudu[1]

Ndangano: How was it like growing up as a young black woman?

Mashudu: Well….I grew up it was different but not that difficult, like now things are easy. As we were growing up there were difficulties like well… especially with us black people we grew up with no care. Like with education especially us women we did not care that much about educational things like now and children of today. Children of today take things seriously especially education.

Ndangano: The fact that education was not taken into consideration was it from you or from your parent?

Mashudu: Some were from the parents and some were from me that I did not have a vision for the future, as we are living we did not have a vision for the future and what it holds. Some was from the parents, looking at that parents used

to say “a woman is not suppose to be educated” “a woman does not need to be educated”, “it is much better for a woman to get married”, this was done as I was growing up and these days things are going according to how they want it. It is not like I didn’t go to school we just didn’t have a vision.

Ndangano: What other difficulties did you experience as you were growing up as a black woman?

Mashudu: Looking at what? Educational side or any other side?

Ndangano: Any other side

Mashudu: The difficulties especially living in the village, it was not that difficult, maybe there were difficulties for others but for me things were not that difficult. I grew up in a good condition and I was not abused or anything like that, I grew up well. I am talking about me and how I grew up

Ndangano: What does the statement “black is beautiful” mean to you?

Mashudu: Yes, a black person is beautiful that is true, it is well…what can I say [paused] the statement speaks, yes…that a black person is beautiful because of her humour. That the way she is she should accept her self the way she is, that she is a black woman or man. I am not saying much but the way black people live, that a black person, black is beautiful.

Ndangano: Most people used to say a white person is beautiful regardless of other things, when I say black is beautiful is it fine or there is something wrong with that statement?

Mashudu: Yes that statement is right because, it is not like being black is wrong or you are ugly, it is beautiful, we should not wish to be white we are beautiful the way we are

Ndangano: What are your positive and negative experiences of being a woman? May we start with the positive experiences?

Mashudu: [long pause], positive experiences from which side?

Ndangano: From all sides of your life as a woman

Mashudu: Positive experience?

Ndangano: Yes

Mashudu: From a side of my own personal life?

Ndangano: Yes, isn't that as a woman u experienced good and bad things in your life, I would like to know those experiences

Mashudu: Okay, my negative experience is when I had a child when I am still at home; I become a mother at home as we call it "an accident that I fell pregnant". It became a sore wound to me that I was still at home. [Smiling] as I was growing up you know we used to say "I want to get married, stay with my husband and the have children". Well…. it did not happen like that to me. It was a sore wound. I did not plan to have a child at home. As a Christian child I wanted to have children after marriage. Not that my parents mistreated me no, they accepted me and my child as I am still at home [smiling] and now I have two children. It was not well with me, I accepted that and there is a saying in Venda language which says "Mikovhe ya tshilidzi yo fhambana" "We are all blessed/ given differently". I had one child and again I had another child at home which that still was not nice for me it was like a wound. When you are living in life and you told yourself that you are going to do things in this way and it does not work out like that it is painful, isn't it? It was not nice.

Ndangano: Yeah

Mashudu: Another negative experience was that I went to school and I passed grade 12 I then went to a computer school which back then it was not that much. I came home and did not find a job and that to me was not so nice to me. My parents then said to me "go to a sewing school". Which I did go to [smiling] and now I am working for my self. I am able to take care of my family and I am able to do things for my children. I do ask for my parents to help but I am dependent on me. I am not married but I am still with the father of my children. It is painful that the situation is like that but I am ok. I did not give up on life and gave my self to the world, no I am fine I am working, I have two children and yes I had negative experiences but did not give up on myself. I am happy and life is good.

[1]Subjects' names have been changed

Interview five:

Tshimangodzo[1]

Ndangano: Hello. How was it like growing up as a young black woman?

Tshimangadzo: I grew up in a rural area but what I can say we used to enjoy especially the games that we used to play as boys and girls. We didn't wish to stay in town because back then we used to be comfortable with the life that we had. Most of the things that we used to do we were okay about it. We as children knew how things were done and that is how we used to do them. I did not wish to go and stay anywhere because all my friends and family were there with me. I used to know that when I wake up I will take a bath, eat breakfast and go and play with my friends. We used to play different games and that was what makes me say we did not wish to live anywhere else. The way I grew up it was good even though we were from the rural area

Ndangano: From educational side, was it allowed for you to go to school or you were told that a woman does not go to school?

Tshimangadzo: No, from educational side I went to school. I went to lower primary school; I then went to high school until grade 12.I chose what I wanted to do depending on my results that got and what I want to do. No body chose for me, I did that myself. I chose to go where ever, was not prevented from going to school. I went to school with out a problem

Ndangano: What does the statement “black is beautiful” mean to you?

Tshimangadzo: I think…ah…according to my understanding, it is beautiful to be black because you can do what ever you want. People can understand that a black person is not that beautiful. We as we are, I know we are beautiful even in our hearts. As a black person you can do so many things

Ndangano: Like why?

Tshimangadzo: In this South Africa I can say that majority of people are us black people and the fact that we are part of black people I can say black is beautiful. I cannot talk of any other culture, black is beautiful. For example when we say with clothes “black is beautiful we can wear it with anything”. According to colours yes it is beautiful and the way we are as black people and the way we treat each other as people. All I can say is yes black is beautiful

Ndangano: What are your positive and negative experiences of being a woman? May we start with the positive experiences?

Tshimangadzo: Me as a woman I was not deprived the chance to go to school I went to school and I choose what I wanted to do. I am an educator by profession I can go and work any where I want to go and work at a job I want. I got a chance that even though I had a child out of wedlock, even though it happened without me planning it. I had a child and I love my child I can do anything for her and my parents then understood that I had a child and were able to help me with that. They didn’t take me as an outcast, I still went to school and my friends were supportive to me through this

Ndangano: And negative experience?

Tshimangadzo: I had a child and I accepted that and now my child has grown, the negative thing that I do not like as a woman I can advice many girls that they should not have children when they are young and before marriage

Ndangano: Why?

Tshimangadzo: To have a child before marriage is difficult because the question come to “what is going to happen to the father of the child? Is he going to love me even after the child is born?’ or is it the ending of the relationship? Having a child out of wedlock deprives you from many things; it is difficult to find the right person who will marry you. Why do I say that? Because a man can have a child with you and leave you then have a child with someone else. What I can advice girls is that, a person can promise you so many thing that he will marry you, please do not have a child before he marries you. I am saying this because I am more than 30 years and I have a child who her father does not want to marry me, then who will marry me and that person will he be willing to take care of my child too? Even thought you have grown and you don’t have a child your time will come because you will have a child and the father is not there. The child will like to call “dad” but the person is not there. That situation deprives a child. Thank you.

Interview six:

Faith[1]

Ndangano: Hello Faith. How was it like growing up as a young black woman?

Faith: When I grew up things were very difficult and in those times being a black woman was not well accepted

Ndangano: What do you mean women were not well accepted?

Faith: When I was growing up I stayed next to a white man’s farm and they did not want us, even when we wanted water we used to steal water, when we see a white person we used to run away because back then white people did not want us around

Ndangano: How did you feel about that situation?

Faith: We used to be scared of white people even when we saw their children we used to run like we have seen a ghost. We used to steal water from them when ever they were not at the farm or we can not see where they are because they used to refuse us to collect water from them. It was upsetting for me because we

used to be treated like animals [sad, looking down] and each time we see them we knew that we had to run fast, [sad] its painful think of those events.

Ndangano: When it came to education as a woman how was it like?

Faith: As I am as a woman, education on my side was not okay as I failed all the standards that I attended but I did not give up on education, I proceeded until standard 8

Ndangano: As you were going up, in some families you find that you already had a family that you are going to be married to, was that the case with you?

Faith: No in my family we were not chosen husbands or family to be married to

Ndangano: What does the statement “black is beautiful” mean to you?

Faith: I take that statement as a good statement as yes black is beautiful more than other people

Ndangano: May you explain more?

Faith: Because of the way we live our lives I see that it is nice and the way we are [paused].

Ndangano: What are your positive and negative experiences of being a woman? May we start with the positive experiences?

Faith: The positive experience that I have experienced as a woman, I am a married woman I have to be faithful to my husband and live a good life. I have to be an example to my family and everything will be okay. I got married to my husband things are fine at home we have 3 children, we talk and when there are things that we need to talk about that is what we do.

Ndangano: okay

Faith: The negative experience is when you are married and you’re not being faithful to your family, where you go outside and have an affair. That to me is a negative experience. I had that experience where my husband did go outside, as a woman it was not a good thing but we did sit and talked about it and he asked for forgiveness. Even though it was painful I had to forgive him because I wanted things to be okay at home and for peace in the family. The key is to talk and now things are fine at home. We do no have anything.

Ndangano: Did your children and other family members know about the affair your husband had

Faith: People knew what he did and then my children were still young to understand what was happening, you know the shame that you feel when your partner goes out of the marriage and people outside found out, it is not good. I had to learn to forgive him and learn to understand that people knew that he did what he did and forget about the outside word and focus on my family. My children we young and I did not want them to grow up without their father there. As a woman sometimes you have to make sacrifices for you and your family. Now things are fine and we have passed that place, and my husband is faithful to me and he is open to me.

Ndangano: Thank you

APPENDIX 7

Focus group interviews one:

Out of the 12 Participants, 6 women were selected for the focus group interviews which the sessions took a maximum of 1hour 30 minutes.

Text material: A vignette illustrating the construct of womanhood from the Sowetan Newspaper (the mini-skirt incident at Noord Street, Johannesburg) and different pictures representing women from various social, economic and other categories.

Text material: What is your understanding of this picture? What is your understanding of the story that you have just read?

Mpho[1]: Okay, looking at all those pictures including the mini-skirt incident, I understand that women can do any job that they want because there is no job which is said it is meant for men or for women. This meaning that you can choose any career that you want, it does not matter if you are a man or a woman. With the mini –skirt, it is meant to be worn by us woman, it all comes down to you as a person when you wear that mini-skirt what are you thinking of.

Maanda: Yes, I agree with you on that because we all have different reasons for wearing what we want to wear. Because I can wear a mini-skirt because I am used to wearing it and that does not mean my life is not okay, like with me I do wear mini-skirts at home and every one knows that I wear them

Ndangano: Amongst all of us here is there anyone who wears a mini-skirt when you are going out of your home?

Maanda: I do not feel there is something wrong with wearing that but for me I don't wear it outside my home, [smiling] well… that is just me…

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[1]Subjects' names have been changed

Mpho: As I was saying, I can wear a mini-skirt when I am cleaning and yes some people feel good about going out wearing that mini-skirt. To me those people [with a hash voice] are not real man. If they were real men they would have never caused this incident.

Tshifhiwa: Well… to me it was wrong for them to do what they did because we are women and we can wear what we want to wear. It is the same as them 'men' walking around wearing shorts and no top; we do not do anything to them. That means these men when they see a woman wearing something they think of other things. Well… that is wrong and that was so wrong

Hope: You know…when I am at home I wear what I want and as long as I do not have a problem with the clothes I chose. who [angry] do they think they are? [Paused]

Ndangano: What do you mean Hope?

Hope: They had no right to judge here by the way she was wearing, if I want to wear something it is my choice to do so, isn't it?

Lerato: Yes it is your choice, but I think… [Smiling] me as a woman the way I dress is how people look at me. I believe that I have to dress presentably

Ompha: [interrupts] what if wearing a mini-skirt and to me is presentable? Does that mean I have to wear clothes based on people? No…no… Ya I can wear what I want

Lerato: Me as a woman there are certain clothes that I can not wear as a woman and yes some can wear those clothes

Mpho: I think that you should not worry about what other people wear as long as they are fine with what they are wearing. Most people when you are wearing a mini-skirt they think you are a prostitute and that is a bad label to have. As a woman you should wear nicely. If a person is comfortable with what they are wearing lets leave that person like that I will also wear what I feel comfortable in

Maanda: looking at the other pictures, we as women can do any job that we want. Like if I want to build something I can do that without looking at the point that it is a job which men are the ones that will do that job. Back again on the mini-skirt, I think that there is nothing wrong wearing that mini-skirt you just have to look at where you are going and the people around you. For example you can wear it when you are going to church some can say it is not appropriate while some might not see it like that.

Ndangano: When it come to our culture or culture in general, is appropriate for a woman to wear a mini-skirt?

Hope: In our culture we have what we call "Shedo" "our cultural wear for women" it is different from a mini-skirt in a way that with a mini skirt people can not see your buttocks but with "Shedo" only you can see that. With the mini-skirt a person is well dressed but with "shedo" you can see even the thighs.

Lerato: As we were growing up we use to wear "shedo" and nothing like this ever happened. We used to dress like this and going to collect water and we used to pass men and boys and there was never an incident that happened because of what we were wearing. We used to wear and our breast outside. I

have a child when I asked her to wear “shedo” she does not want, we used to wear it and that was our culture. There is a nothing wrong with wearing a mini-skirt.

Maanda: I used to wear “shedo” and there was nothing wrong with it. We used to wear it and it did not matter the size of your body it was our culture and that is how we knew it. These men who did this to those ladies should not use culture as an excuse for their wrong behaviour. A mini skirt is much better than “shedo” because with “shedo” we can easily see between the thighs and nothing else was covering that.

Tshifhiwa: I only know one culture which can not allow women to show flesh, the Indian culture. Their women are not allowed to show flesh, they have to cover everything and in our culture it is different because we used to walk with our breasts out even our mothers and the generations before us they used to wear like that. The mini-skirt is not that revealing like what we used to wear. As a woman you have to be proud of your body and our culture used to express that.

Ompha: Different careers that we can chose as women, we as black women we grew up with the impression that there are other careers that we are not suitable for and those are meant for white people and the others are meant for us, now we can choose any career we want.

Mpho: Like at home there was my grandmother’s funeral, we were wearing “shedo” and it was beautiful. Culture and our culture is beautiful

Ndangano: As you read the article they are talking about the fact that the lady was wearing a short skirt and that they have feelings as men and she should not have worn that very short skirt…

Maanda: like it is said “real men don’t rape” you can as a men look at what she was wearing and just ignore it. Those men if they looked at that lady and not let their mind going else were and look at her like any other lady; they would not have done anything. But because they saw her and they see her as something else, they thought of how she is wearing and to me that is committing sin in your mind before you do it in action. When they saw her they thought of something else and that is why they violated here. As person if you look at something or

someone and you tell your self that you do not want to entertain what your mind is telling you. She was not naked she was wearing a mini-skirt.

Text material: The taxi-drivers use culture as their excuse for what they did, do you agree with this statement?

Mpho: That is not true, culture teaches us that a woman has to be proud of their body, we wear traditional clothes and there was nothing wrong with that. Let's look at the Zulu culture, they wear their traditional clothes and dance in front of a crowd full of men, why don't they rip their clothes off. In an African culture we wear revealing clothes and that is our culture.

Hope: Culture is not an excuse those taxi drivers are not real men. They should have not done what they did. It had nothing to do with culture; it was due to own selfish reasons. They were totally wrong.

Text material: How do you define yourself as a woman?

Ompha: [laughing] according to my understanding, [long pause] a woman is a person, well… we have been given that chance to… we are the people who are responsible for bringing people into this world, we can say that and another person say it is because of two people but the very person who plays an important role is a woman or a mother. I say that because I am the one who carries the baby for nine months, and taking care and protecting that person even before they come to this world. I am the one who knows what is best for my child. I know I do not have to drink alcohol as it will hurt my child. I am the one who take care of the family. Even those men that say women are not good people they should remember that they were brought up by women and they were born by a woman. There are cases were I can fall pregnant and I don't tell the father or I do tell him but I will take care of that child because it is my responsibility.

Maanda: [nodding]

Mpho: Ya…

Text material: How do you define yourself as a black woman?

Mpho: I am the one responsible for other people, like in my culture everyone is part of the family we help each other I have to see to it that everything is fine at home and that everyone has eaten and well taken care of. I am married so I have to see to it my husband has what he wants. Everyone depends on me so I can be called a woman because of that.

Lerato: Like when a child is sick I am the one who wakes up and take care of the child, yes the father can be there but at the end I am the one who take care of the baby alone. That to me is being a black woman or a woman.

Hope: Well... I agree with that its me I know I have responsibilities as a woman to take care of others, if you are a mother a child comes to you for things, yes there are those other children who goes to the father first but it is rear to find that, they all come to the mother first, a mother or a woman then become a mediator between the father and the children or between family members. All this shows the importance of a woman and that a role of a woman is very important.

Ndangano: Okay, when you look at yourself besides the fact that you are married which some of you are and that you are mothers, how do you define yourself as a black woman or as a woman?

Mpho: [laughing] that is a little bit difficult to answer

Hope: I think….if I am not looking at what was said I understand that …I can say about myself…is it the way I am created? Ya… when God created us what is it that He was trying to show through his creation...and again I can say when you are a woman, how do you think? Is my thinking the same as that of a man? With this question I really don't know how to answer it, do you understand?

Maanda: Okay, concerning a black woman, me as a black woman the way I see my self I should not put myself down…what ever chance that comes my way I have to grab it in both hands. Looking from a job side if I got an opportunity to work I should not say I can not do it I have to grab it. I can tell my self that I can

do it and that will motivate me to do it. Say I ca not do it I have to grab it. I can tell my self that I can do it and that will motivate me to do it. Yes I can do what I want. We should not use the expression 'the woman's place is in the kitchen' we are able to do what we want to do and we should do it as long as we are able to. We can do things like we can go and chop wood, yes we have electricity but we can still do that, like collecting water, using a cow's dung to beautify the place that is what we can do. A person can say I cannot do that but when you stay at a place where you have to do that you will have to do it. That how we grow up and that is how and what we were taught. We can do things for ourselves us as black women we should tell ourselves that we can do things for ourselves. The days were we become maids to white people are over lets stand and do things for ourselves. We should now be employers not employees

Lerato: We should not undermine ourselves, us as black women we should tell ourselves that yes we are black women and we can do what we want to do and we can open our own businesses and live for ourselves. I should not wait for a white woman to do what I can, I should do it myself. Our problem as black women we undermine ourselves and our potential.

Ompha: There are so many things that as a black woman I can do. Our grandparents used to go to the field and plough and that was work because they did not wait for anyone to do work for them. I can have my own place were I plough things that a business were I am my own boss. Yes there are things that we can do for ourselves as a black woman.

Text material: What are some of the difficulties about being a woman in your culture?

Maanda: Ok… it can happen that as a woman after being married, she is now a married woman and you find that she is a professional woman, lets say she is a doctor she is 'Dr Mukwevho' and when you enter your new family they tell you that in this house a woman does not go anywhere , when you go out you only go out with your husband alone ,when we go we only go to family relatives and that

as a woman that deprives me of a chance to go and work and then they can see how if they let me go what will I come with. The elders might say that if they let her go to work she will find other and they forget that it all comes from the heart. That deprives us as women the chance to do things for themselves. The elders have this thing when a woman is married all you are there for is to give birth. Look at this if a woman is married young buy the time she reaches 40 you should have 4 children which they determine how many children they want for you and when they should be born. They even go as far as saying “in this family we need more children” they do not even might what the couple themselves want. That means you are there for serving them and not you and your husband. They should allow women to spread their wings and do what they want.

Hope: I went to school with this lady, she said she passed grade 12 and then got married and the husband’s family then refused for her to go to school, they told her that in this house she is a woman and she is not a child and her husband’s sisters used to mock her that “were does she think she will get a huge uniform” she was a well build African woman, the she says she went to her mother at home that she wants to go to school and her mother told her to speak where she is staying and she explained that they do not want her to go to school and even her husband agreed with the family. Her mother then told her that it is not a problem since the books are given to students what she will do she will pay fees for her. Her mother yes paid the fees for her and she even bought her clothes to sew so she can have money for herself, because she was determined to do this she passed and after they saw that she can do it they started supporting her. This story was to agree with what Maanda said. She went back to her mother and told her that it looks like next year they will pay for her fees. This shows that we as black women we need to be given a chance so that we can use our potential. Right now as I am talking she is working well and her marriage is fine and now she a mother. This shows that we can do it; it’s a matter of telling our selves and getting that support.

Ompha: I also uncounted the same problem that since I was married I asked to go back to school and they refused it took them a while before they agreed that I go to school but now they have agreed that I go to school.

Ndangano: What do you want to do at school?

Ompha: I want to do social work, I now do have the money to do it and at least that they have agreed to support me

Lerato: With me so far I didn't encounter any thing bad about culture I did go to school and now I'm working for my self. I didn't have any difficulty the only thing was laziness to do things for myself. If I want there are people that are writing from home but laziness is what I have [laughter]

Maanda: Oh I forgot, the thing that us as woman we find difficulty as far as our culture is concern is our culture allows us to go to domba, I never wanted to go but I got forced to go I would cry and they said even if I cry I will go and another

thing is this headman are the problem because they force use to go and if you don't go you pay a certain amount, in a way they end up making business with that. If the parents do not have you are forced to go there and that is a problem with our culture. I do not disagree that as women we do need guidance but not forced. Either way we you go or you don't you pay its just that you have different amounts that you pay.

Text material: What are some of the difficulties about being a black woman in society?

Maanda: when you're a black woman in society there are things that people say that will discourage a person like she work for her self as she sew clothes and she does it at home because she does not go house to house to sell what they would say is "she thinks she is good she does not show people what she does" and I might work a job that require me to walk from one house to the other and they will say "she does not sit at home what is she selling now" [everyone laughs]

or may be my work requires me to wake up every morning to work, mostly this is said to us by other black women not men.

Lerato: Yes especially those that are not working, they always have something to say and which is negative towards their fellow black women. Yes we all did not get a chance to do what we wanted but we should be happy for the others that they are doing well for themselves. We seem not to be happy for others

Ompha: We should do things for our selves and yes the community always have something to say but that should not be a stopping for us as women to work for ourselves. The way I grew up is not the way you grew up and I want the best for me and my family what about you. We should support each other as black women and the society as a whole should support us and be proud of us as black women and mostly we should be proud of ourselves that we are black women and we are proud

Hope: In our community there are things that happen which I do not like when you are a black woman and you are working you are labelled as “you undermine people” which to me it is not true. It seems to be hard for people to accept that we have to move on and women black women have to do things for themselves and we should support each other.

Mpho: [laughing] you have all said a mouth full….

Text material: What are some of the strengths of being a woman?

Mpho: What I can say is there are people that say they can cook very well and while to other people they do not think the same way, well… you can’t really say that I am good at this, it all up to people how they comment after what you have done. I am good with children I can advice them and as a woman I am proud of that. We all have different strengths and it’s all from you what you are good at

Ndangano: Tshifhiwa, you have been quite for a while now wouldn’t you like to say something?

Tshifhiwa: Well ...I am good with children too I can help them all that I can and also I am good when it comes to cooking. Well… I know that people love my cooking… [Smiling]

[Silence in the room]

Maanda: Another question please

Text material: What are some of the strengths of being a black woman?

Maanda: I can do a lot of things, I am good with people and that I can take care of adults, as I was growing up I used to take care of my grand mother and where I am staying now I do have older people that I am taking care of

Lerato: I am a black woman and I am good with what I do and I am proud of that

Ompha: Well… I am good in helping people with advice and other talks and I am able to assist them with what I can. I can take care of children too. And I do not spoil them but I can help them to understand that we can not get what we want but we can work for what want

Hope: I can pray and I believe in God and that I am good at, as a black woman we can do all that we want to some things we can get easy but some we have to work for them and we have to be willing to work hard for what I want. Those days where we work for a white lady is gone its time we stand for each other and work for ourselves

Text material: How do you negotiate these difficulties?

Ndangano: Like the fact that you were not allowed to go to school how did you negotiate that?

Ompha: As a woman to get out of a bad situation you have to plead for what you need because with other people when you just say things they do not listen to you. All that as women we can do is to plead and try to make them understand that it is what you want, it is good to be given the chance and do what he wants.

Mpho: there are jobs which may cause a woman to go away from home which is away for a while and this always makes a woman not to do what she wants since the man or the in-laws will not allow her to do what she wants. At times it is good to spread your wings

Tshifhiwa: Pleading helps when you need something and even good communication helps to negotiate

Text material: How do you experience the strength?

Maanda: I can not say I am satisfied with what I have achieved I still want to do more I have my own goals and I am working towards that. Like I want to further my studies and be well educated

Lerato: There are so many things that I want to do and I am going to do them

Ompha: I have wished and I will go where I want to go, that's it, I am going to rich there

Tshifhiwa: I want to start a project and be my own boss and there are more where that comes from

Text material: Do you agree that African culture constructs women in a negative ways?

Maanda: When we look these days thing have changed, things were different and difficult back then but now our culture can accommodate anyone

Ndangano: May you explain that?

Maanda: like now a woman can go abroad living her husband and children and that is okay now it is between a man and his wife while back then the enter family will make the choose of what is good for the woman.

Mpho: Like now everyone goes to school but back then depending on where you grew up girls were not allowed to go to school, now education is for everyone and people all over are aware that education is the key to you future

Ompha: These days we are privileged that the world is open and we are able to know things and we are aware of what is happening all over the country. May be yes in the olden days African culture constructs women in a negative ways because people only knew what they had around them while now we are able to see and experience other things and how other people live their lives.

Lerato: I agree with all that is being said and yes now we can do what we want as black women and it is all up to us on how we live our lives. We are no longer tied up in one thing we have to make choices for ourselves

Hope: I agree with what you are saying but lets not forget that our culture is what grounds us and we might have the power to do what we can do and more opportunity but our culture is what grounded us, and even though we were restricted but we had more to learn in our culture and I still believe we should not overlook it. Ya… Thank you

Ndangano: Thank you

Focus group interviews two:

3 women were selected for the focus group interviews which the sessions took a maximum of 1hour 30 minutes

Ndangano: Basically what I am trying to find out from you guys is that when a woman says' I am a woman', what makes me say 'I am a woman'?
P1[1], P2, P3: a long pause
Ndangano: isn't that people have different ways of saying ok 'I am a woman' because of a whole other aspects, but you as an individual how do you say 'you're a woman?' Maybe we should start with the question of 'what is an individual?'
P2: an individual?
Ndangano: yes, when you say 'I am an individual', how do you define you being an individual?
P1: Individual?

Ndangano: when you say your **p1,** what makes you say your **p1** and 'I am an individual'?

P1: well… I am my own self; there is no one like me. Yes, I am an individual because I have certain powers (laughter) I can say i have an influence that is for myself only that informs me when I make discussions and choices whether I go for that thing and that thing you know for me is that, it's me…..ya…..

Ndangano: Okay, then how do you define yourself?

P3: unique (laughing)

P1: p1 is a….(long pause and laughter) is a Sotho ,yes single ya….maybe calm a bit, shy that's the attribute that I have but me I am just …ya. I cannot clearly define myself but I am me with all my attributes (laughing)

Ndangano: okay

P1: that's me with all my attributes

P2: I think with that, as you are asking that how you define yourself, ah… I think comparing to other people as well ah...that's when you see that you are different. Like she said the attributes if your attributes are more complimentary to what you see if they are different in a sense that it makes you become more positive then that is when you will discover that you're an individual, you are definitely not the same as the other person and it makes it easier to even define yourself if you are aware of those differences

P3: I guess also I would say I…. ah… define myself as a woman…..and I believe that I am unique um….. um ….but the question that 'what makes me to be a woman, to think that I am a woman to say that I am a woman' um…. It's a difficult one but…. (Laughing) it's a difficult one but I guess I did not choose to be a woman that is how I was created. I was created a woman and I would say I love being a woman because um… I feel that I feel good for being a woman because I am a mother to my kids, I can say that and is the main one and that it is good to be a woman, a mother um… yes ya….. (Smiling)

Ndangano: Okay, but then besides you being a mother, how do you the define you? Okay, it's different from you're a mother and I am not a mother……

P3: but we both women

Ndangano: Yes, we both women, then how do you define you without looking at you're a mother but then you as an individual?

P3: Um….

Ndangano: Isn't that we are different, you're a mother I am not, some one can say "I am gay" and I am not .We all have different ways of saying 'this is me' but what is that difference?

P1: I can say it's a contrast of someone else, that is the difference and were it lies, someone might like apples I may not like apples ,it goes back to what she said it indifference when you realize that I like this and the other one likes something else. That is way I say it goes to attributes, character personality and choices we make ya.....

Ndangano: okay, what is womanhood? (The participants smiling), isn't that we have been talking about a woman being a woman?

P1, **P2, P3:** Yes

Ndangano: and so far it sound like we are not sure or that much clear of how we are going to define ourselves as women, so let's try to find ways of trying to go back to the same question but via other issues

P2: I think for myself as a woman, I think that I am more in tone with the emotional and sensitive of me. I do not know if it happens with men but as a woman you are more aware of the things that you feel, the emotions…I mean even if you feel them you also decide to attend to them. So I think being a woman is phenomenal but it is very hard to say female do this. But being a woman has to do with embracing those emotions but ah… with ah… awareness that okay I might be soft and sensitive but I am also able to be strong. Ya… it's a discovery (laughter from everyone) I do not have an answer for that….

P3: It's difficult to explain it….. You know what, it is but how to put it down…it's I do not know I can not tell…..

Ndangano: Okay, can I ask it in this way, um… how should I say it, isn't that my question was 'what is a woman?' let's take it as in 'what is not a woman?'

P1: they say um… a woman nee…there is a man we 'women' we are 'man' with the womb then what is not a woman does not have a womb

P3: yes

Ndangano: okay

P1: so we get to be 'WO' because of the womb because we can carry but even though we grow up, we grow up not knowing that we have a womb, you know but society tells you that you are a woman because of the patterns because a woman has to clean and man goes outside and hunt, a woman raises children and a man….. you know, pining down what is a woman (smiling) in a cycle of women is difficult because I might be 'tomish' "a tom-boy", I might be brave and not sensitive but/and I am still a woman

P3: a woman

P1: and what makes a woman? What is a woman? It's difficult

Ndangano: Okay

P3: Because the only difference between a man and a woman is this womb but we are all human beings and I guess we all have feelings being man and woman. We are created in different ways like as you said when you grow up you turn to adopt what to do like a woman needs to clean the house; a woman has to do this and that….. and nobody tells a boy not to do this and that and this is done by a woman, you just know automatically really I can not tell in a human body to say no this is not for you

Ndangano: going back to my question, what is womanhood? Or when somebody says a statement like womanhood, what comes into your mind?

P1: for me it's a picture of a woman with a baby on her back, just knowing that that's womanhood, it has always been womanhood being able to bear being able to be a mother

P3: but you know ….um….what about those women…they are women but they do not have kids, how do we deal with that one? Because there are cases you know women who do not have kids and yet we are all women

Ndangano: yes, this is still my question of 'what is a woman?'

P2: I am thinking you know there is a female and we are all females

P1: Ya….

P2: and I am associating womanhood with maturity

Ndangano: Okay

P2 : and ah….the center of responsibility….it….ones you become a woman I do not know if you grow into a certain character from being female from being just a class of being female to woman who understand her role into society. I think womanhood has to do with a role what ever that makes you whether you are a mother or an independent single person or it's got this glorified thing about being a woman because I do not think young kids will define themselves as women

P3: Ya…..

P2: so it's that maturity, it is a certain level after your mid-twenties to your twenties that's when you start settling that you are and accept the womanhood

P1: I think it goes back to saying because like when you are female you are still… you are getting to a stage where you are learning, in a stage like when you

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[1]Subjects' names have been changed

are 16(sixteen) or 14-20 years were you are able to develop your breasts you know because you are female and it's part of you and they have to be there, there is menstruation what ever you know you are getting to know them and appreciate the and when you get to those 20 years when you say 'I am a woman now'

P3: that's when you accept

P1: ya…that's when you really accept and appreciate and you have passed all the confusion of you might have feelings of being tomish or lesbian or, now you are assertive and you are embracing this body with all it's capabilities

P3: like she has mentioned that there is a period which you reach 20 and you find out that you are in this body and that is when they then identify themselves, the mostly change around those ages when they now see themselves, they then start seeing if they are in a right or wrong body

P2: and the fact that they start doubting the way they are they do not embrace because they hate what they have, they hate breast and some they cut the breasts so that they do not be in a 'she body' unfortunately even the

menstruation cycle they would want to stop that but that one can not stop it, meaning they hate it and they wont embrace it

Ndangano: so when that happens do they still regard themselves as women or how do they define themselves?

P3: you know what, what I have learned about gay people you know because I have never been exposed to lesbians that much, gays feel very appreciated and happy if you call them “she” if you call them that they feel good and that they are defined

P2 : I was about to say as well the fact that you are a woman you get to embrace that so for when they start deciding and when they realize that I actually do not fit being feminine that is when they realize as well that they do not want to have anything to do with this

P3: they hate it

P2: that is when they deny being a woman; they completely disregard that like they try to fit themselves in categories. Like she said when we refer to some gay people as she’s they are happy with them because they have already defined themselves like that I think as well with lesbians I think they always know that she is not female, that there is something different about her and that stage when they start deciding between I think it starts at a very young age its just that they are not sure and then they get to decide when they are at the age of 18 and above and by the time they reach their early twenties womanhood does not exist to them

Ndangano: okay, at what age does one say I am a woman? Or does it differ from one person to the other?

P2: I think it goes with maturity

P3: I guess also once you start um…. that one I cant tell because this days they start menstruating at an early age during those days when you start getting your menstruation that is when you understood what was happening and that meant that I am a woman and also developing breasts you know your girls always rush asking when are my breasts going to develop that is what will make them feel that she is a woman so…….

P1: I think you know in the olden days it was more certain if a young girl says I am a woman because culture was involved and there were able to be groomed and be proud of that and even when you go on your periods they will do the dance which almost all the culture have and that will be done and usually it was around 16 years of age but now menstruation comes early for some, culture is degenerating you know we are so modern its more of you're an individual and you have to discover it by your self that is why it is not difficult that is why people this days start defining themselves late in their ages than before

Ndangano: um……. as you are talking I have a question of is there any difference between a 'woman' and 'womanhood'? this question is based on what you just said that as she start to menstruate she is a woman and then what is womanhood and as they are at that age are they entering womanhood?

P3: No not really

P1: I'm just saying that our culture was more grooming in terms of making you conscious and matured enough that you are entering a stage of your womanhood you will be very conscious you would not think otherwise am I a woman or have any question culture was there as a strong instrument but now it's difficult because there is nothing anymore you have to discover it yourself whether your menstruation comes late or early for some is after they have grown right now you have to discover it yourself

P3: tell me **P1,** I am a bit concerned abut this one you said um…very important about culture and that gives me a question of seeing that 'nower' days we have a lot of people that are lesbians so that might also contribute that culture is no longer there to guide them so they turn to take wrong decisions is not that a person is in a wrong body but that the person take her own decision without being guided by the elders and also with the culture you know…..so….

Ndangano: Okay, then what is culture?

P1: it's the same as saying what is us?

P3: who you are?

P1: the norms and values, beliefs that your own ethnic group or your own society has about between a man and a woman and about other social things

P2 : I think in our culture its because of globalization it becomes undefined we are intertwine with different races so it's difficult right now to define culture I guess it's this everyday norms and rules and things we adapt to like you were talking about the lesbian issue. I think also society as a whole as we are mixed from different cultures and race will all this confusions it's difficult to say our culture is this at this present moment ,so that is why the media also play a significant role in saying womanhood. You get there when you are 28 whilst in our culture says once you discover the things that makes you feminine, once you discover staring to get your periods that is when you start becoming a woman after circumcision or female that is when you become a woman because you go through all this rituals that makes you become woman so culture will be all these rules guided by the standards of the whole world

P1: and people now questioning that culture, trying to find out and questioning it is no longer the same because people come up with their own conceptions you know like in Venda woman would bow for their man and people will say oppression (laughing).

Ndangano: the participants that I had previously most of them are from cultural grounded to be coming what they are today and also some of them had you know growing up and not going to school and they are groomed to becoming wives and mothers, my question is for you if that situation was done now would you really accept that situation of how our mothers grew up?

P2: me personally I wouldn't I think I am a liberal feminine (smiling) and I strongly believe in woman empowerment and I actually believe I would have probably died, I question everything you know for me. I think culture was created by man all this norms ,rules and values favours man so it is difficult to say culture grounded me may be it made me rebel more than anything okay (laughing). I was in the wrong era

P1: I would personally love it

Ndangano: okay, why do you say that?

P1: because I am not a feminine, I appreciate how women were respected in the society. I do not believe that men were hash women were always respected and

they had their own place it's the some with religion you cant run away man are in power .Some how it is like but not be oppressed I like it in so much sense that I wouldn't work so hard to prove my self and because I believe that God made us special in a sense that we can be able to put ourselves down because ones they are in power we are also in power but I would hate it in terms of academic, I really love my education and I know that most men would not like an upper woman who is high in education

P2: to add on that, I really think I believe in giving women to have choices I am against oppression. My problem is that with culture women are suppose to be treated with respect and men do not do that and it turn to be oppression in a way that women are not respected the way they are supposed to. If only our culture would give women that freedom because the head can not function without the

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neck and the same with the neck, a real woman would submit to her woman but there should be enough respect. I used to hate Venda culture but I love that is so rigid if you are a Venda person unlike most cultures if you go anywhere they still embrace their culture. If you have a strong base in your culture you will never forget and that will be what ground you to your root and who you are. Respect will play an important role

P3: the upbringing if you are raised being taught that you should respect and as a woman you are taught that and to behave and also we copy what we see from our parents if your mother was submissive you wouldn't see anything wrong with that kind of living

P1: yes we are saying this entire thing, yet I am thinking about the main question, why do I say I am a woman?

Ndangano: Yes **P1,** how do you answer that?

P1: (laughing)….

P2: for me it is a difficult question and I can only define myself through all that has been said, I can not define myself as an individual

P3: I agree, this is an interesting topic and one which we constantly do not think about. It is always 'I am a woman 'because…….

Ndangano: in conclusion from all of you

P3: I am a woman and that I know yet why I say I am a woman is something that I still have to look at myself and find out but thank you for this topic it makes one think hard about myself

P1: I love the fact that I got to learn from this group and it was worth my time, the question is trick but worth looking into. I can't even answer the question (laughing) myself

Ndangano: and **P2**?

P2: well, I don't have an answer, what I know is I am a woman and why I don't know and I don't want to lie that I know. Thank you for this I have learned a lot from this topic

Ndangano: Thank you all for your time and effort.