

The Experiences of Young, Black, Middle-Class Women with Black Male Patriarchy

MA (in the Field of Critical Diversity Studies)

A MASTERS RESEARCH REPORT BY:

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SENATE PLAGIARISM POLICY

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

“Racism is patriarchal. Patriarchy is racist. We will not destroy one institution without destroying the other” (Roberts, 1992 p. 3).

In South Africa more than 1 000 women are killed through intimate partner femicide each year. (‘Women killed Every 8 Hours in SA’, 2016). Of those women killed through intimate partner violence, the rate is 2.8 per 100 000 for white women and 8.8 per 100 000 for Black women (Abrahams et al, 2013, p.4). Intimate partner femicide is the killing of a woman by an intimate partner and intimate partner violence is violence suffered at the hands of an intimate partner (Mathews, Jewkes & Abrahams, 2015). Intimate partner violence is an element of the operation of gender based violence. The May 2017 disappearance and murder of Karabo Mokoena brought attention to the high rate of intimate partner violence within South Africa’s Black community with the resulting #menaretrash social media movement encouraging debate around the malevolence and misogyny targeted towards Black women (Sipuye, 2017). Karabo Mokoena was found burned and buried in a shallow grave. Her boyfriend was charged with her murder and sentenced to 32 years in prison (Shange, 2018). Karabo Mokoena is a symptom of a greater problem that can only be solved by assessing the complex social conditions prevalent within South Africa (Gouws, 2017). Researchers can assist in solving the epidemic of gender-based violence by critically investigating the operation of patriarchy, racism and power within South African society.

My research will focus on young, Black, middle-class women and their experiences with intraracial patriarchy. I focus on this area in part because of the murder of Karabo Mokoena, a young, Black, middle-class woman and in part because I am a young, Black, middle-class woman who struggles with the Black male patriarchy I encounter. I am frustrated with my interactions with Black men who at times irritate me, sometimes scare me and often leave me questioning my self-worth. My studies in critical diversity literacy help me to understand the structural basis of my interactions with Black men, but do not make me feel any safer or more self-assured. My status as a middle-class woman at times mitigates the negative effects of my interactions with Black men; my English accent and class status can help me gain respect. However, there are times my class status seems to intensify the potential consequences of

patriarchal power. For example, an occasion when I was pulled over by a Black male police officer and angered him by questioning the basis of his interrogation in English. I believe the experience of Black, middle-class women, like myself and Karabo Mokoena, are a particular case worth deeper inquiry.

Another focus of this research is an attempt to ensure that theorising around women and their experiences continues to include a focus on different types of women, particularly the different experiences of Black women. Feminism has reached a mainstream status that exceeds the first, second and third waves of feminism (Groetzingwe, 2016). Contemporary awareness around feminism is attributed to the rise of internet journalism, a greater focus on identity politics and the demand for content that speaks to niche interests (Groetzingwe, 2016). The current mainstream nature of feminism is evidenced in content outlets such as Cosmopolitan, the New York Times and Teen Vogue employing feminist leaning editors and writers to remain relevant (Groetzingwe, 2016). However, the ‘mainstream’ is biased to epitomise viewpoints most relevant to those who are dominant in society. The word ‘mainstream’ can be substituted with ‘conventional’ or ‘normal’; such words imply common understanding of the way things should inherently be, often referred to by post structuralist theorists as ‘common sense’(Hall, 2002, p. 48). Critical theorists have long questioned the notion of ‘common sense’, with Gramsci, Foucault, Hall and other poststructuralist theorists conceiving ‘common sense’ to be an active discourse through which hegemonic forces construct and maintain power relations between society’s dominant and oppressed (Hall, 2002, p. 52). The contemporary mainstream feminism we see reflected in movements such as #metoo and SlutWalk is reflective of our dominant hegemony; these movements deal predominantly with the experiences of white cisgender heterosexual, able-bodied women. The growing visibility of feminism, although empowering to some, in many instances ignores the nuances of the different experiences of women from oppressed groups. Feminist theorists such as bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Pumla Dineo Gqola, Judith Butler and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson have conducted important work on the experiences of Black, African, queer, disabled and transgendered (trans) women that helped develop feminist theory into an inclusive praxis that is conscious of those who hold an oppressed and marginalised position within society. As feminism becomes more mainstream, researchers such as I must continue the work of these theorists to ensure that women on the margins are represented. In this vein, the research contained here focuses on a particular experience of Black womanhood, that

being young, middle-class Black womanhood, to contribute to the diversity of understanding of all female experiences.

What follows is the discussion of a research project that privileges the experiences of five young, Black, middle-class, able-bodied, cisgender, women in Johannesburg with Black male patriarchy. There is a focus on the way in which class impacts these experiences and the way each woman makes sense of the operation of patriarchy within their lives. Using critical diversity literacy and a lens shaped by the concepts and theories of intersectionality, decoloniality, and African gender theory, this research project aims to provide tools in the struggle against intraracial Black gender-based violence in South Africa and contribute to the canon of work that explores the different experiences of Black women.

1.1 Problem Statement

The levels of violence and death amongst women at the hands of men in South Africa is high. Between 40% to 50% of South African women have suffered intimate partner violence (Snodgrass, 2015). It is estimated that three South African women are killed by intimate partner violence every day and one in four South African men admit to raping a woman (Snodgrass, 2015). The estimated global rate of femicide in 2015 was 2.4 per 100,000 women; comparatively South Africa's rate for 2015 was 9.6 per 100,000 women (Makou, 2017). These statistics largely relate to Black women in intimate relationships with Black men (Snodgrass, 2015). Due to South Africa not having an accurate government database, the statistics are mostly estimated and widely believed to be under-representative of the scale of the problem (Snodgrass, 2015). The lack of accuracy also makes it difficult to stratify statistics to get a picture of intimate partner violence and femicide by class, profession, race, location and sexual identity. However, imperfect statistics have not stopped South African civil society, activists and academics from studying and attempting to tackle gender-based violence. The efforts of organisations such as Sonke Gender Justice, Amnesty International, the Women's Legal Centre as well as grassroots activists and movements such as 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children go towards routing out and challenging the danger posed to women by men. In the face of inefficiency of South African government departments, evidenced in their lack of record keeping, it is important that academia and activism continue to study and devise strategies that achieve gains in the face of limited government efforts.

Karabo Mokoena was a young Black woman who reportedly came from a middle-class family and advocated for women's rights (Sipuye, 2017). The murder of Karabo Mokoena points to an interesting dynamic of class, education, gender and race. Should we expect young, educated, middle-class, Black women such as Karabo Mokoena, to recognise and not fall victim to patriarchal violence? Does class privilege insulate young, Black middle-class women from patriarchal violence? How, in fact, does class status affect young, Black, middle-class women's experiences with patriarchy? This research project contributes to the activism and academic research into South African gender-based violence by studying a subsection of South African women and their experiences with Black male patriarchy.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

- To understand and critically engage with the experiences of young, Black, middle-class women with Black male patriarchy
- To provide knowledge that helps to devise solutions to gender-based violence in South Africa's Black community
- To contribute to the canon of knowledge around the diverse experiences of Black women.

1.3 Research Questions

The question and sub-questions guiding this study are:

What are the experiences of five young, Black, middle-class women with Black male patriarchy?

- How do young, Black, middle-class women experience Black male patriarchy in the home environment, workplace and socially?
- Which experiences do young, Black, middle-class women feel typifies their experiences with Black male patriarchy?
- How have young, Black, middle-class women been personally affected by their experiences with Black male patriarchy?
- How do young, Black, middle-class women think class impacts on their experience with Black male patriarchy?

- How have young Black, middle-class women tried to resist Black male patriarchy? Did they succeed in resisting Black male patriarchy?
- How do young Black, middle-class women feel about their experiences with Black male patriarchy?

1.4 Chapter Outline

Chapter Two: Literature Review provides an overview of the concepts and existing studies that have informed the theoretical approach of this research report. The chapter begins with the definition of key terms used throughout this research report, before moving on to a critique of the one-world world approach of past feminist theory. A discussion of contributions by African American, African and third world feminists follows, alongside an examination of decoloniality and a discussion of internalised oppression. Lastly, existing studies are examined to reveal gaps in academic research around young, Black middle-class women and their experiences with Black male patriarchy.

Chapter Three: Methodology gives detail of the data collection and data analysis techniques utilised in this research report. The chapter begins with a description of the recruitment of participants and the rationale of the critical narrative approach to semi structured interviews. A discussion into the way in which a critical narrative analysis and critical diversity literacy was applied to the data collection then follows. This chapter ends with an overview of ethical considerations, limitations to the study and a discussion around my reflexive approach to this research.

Chapter Four: Discussion and Analysis focuses on the narratives that arose during data collection and the meaning revealed through the application of critical narrative analysis and critical diversity literacy. The chapter is separated into three themes: 1) the role of emotion, 2) managing consequences and 3) resisting patriarchy. The third theme consists of three sub-themes: i) the implications of class, ii) matriarchal enforcement of patriarchy and iii) disengagement.

Chapter Five: Conclusion is the final chapter of the research report. This chapter brings together the main understandings that resulted from analysis of the data collected, proposals for tackling Black patriarchal violence and suggestions for further areas of investigation..

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

The research contained here is informed by a theoretical perspective grounded in intersectionality, African gender scholarship and third world feminism. An analysis of the gaps in existing research also informed the focus and approach of this research report. This chapter discusses important theoretical understandings and conclusions from the analysis of existing research.

2.1 Defining Terms

“If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive” (Lorde, 1984, p. 137).

This research report refers to a range of important, sometimes taken for granted terms whose meanings are of significance when it comes to matters of oppression, power, hegemony and identity. Discourse utilises language and its associated taken for granted connotations to construct, circulate and maintain relations of power (McHoul & Grace, 1998, p. 14). Therefore unpacking and defining the meaning of language is part of the project of transforming societal power relations (Gordon, 2015, p. 25). Below are the definitions of key terms in recognition of the implications of their meaning for the reading of this research report.

2.1.1 Women

“One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (de Beauvoir, 1949 p. 267).

When referring to women in this work, the reference is explicit to cisgendered women. This is not to say that trans women are not women; it is an acknowledgement that this research focuses on a particular section of womanhood in terms of gender identity and that any conclusions I come to should note my limitation to cisgendered women. Chapter three gives reasoning for this limitation.

The de Beauvoir quote above speaks to the inherent contradiction of defining categories. Many categories such as that of women, and Black for that matter, are not natural, they are borne out of social conditions that encourage identity formulation in line with what is deemed

normal. Again, the notion of common sense makes 'women' a taken for granted category. When people think of women, they often do not think of women with a disability or a woman who identifies as a lesbian; they think of a cisgendered, heterosexual, able-bodied woman. In defining women I am both noting a decisive limitation of this study and the taken for granted tendency of defining terms in line with hegemonic common sense understandings that help to perpetuate societal relations of power.

2.1.2 Black

Race is a social construct, and black is a socially constructed identity. The social construction of blackness is defined by markers such as skin colour, hair texture, and ancestry, creating a constructed identity with tangible effects (Onwuachi-Willig, 2016). Much of what is understood to be black is a white construction. The white construction of black is dehumanising, pathological to the extent that black collapses into blacks, an epistemic closure meaning that further knowledge or humanising of black people is not attempted (Gordon, 2015). Frantz Fanon's (2008) *Black Skin White Masks* famously deals with black people's failure to transcend their imposed construction and resulting inhumanity by an anti-black world which results in their residence within another zone below that of white people, the zone of non-being (Gordon, 2015). The white construction of black people, and their residence in the zone of non-being, leads to their unequal social location within world hegemony (Steyn, 2015). This research report acknowledges the oppressed hegemonic positionality of black people and the way in which it impacts on their lived experiences.

In defining 'Black' for this research report, I was tempted to solely utilise the definition of South African thinker, activist and struggle hero Steve Bantu Biko's definition. Biko defines Black as follows:

“We have... defined blacks as those who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group in the South African society and identifying themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realisation of their aspirations” (Biko, 1978, p. 48).

Biko's definition is salient to the context of both South Africa and any discussion of oppression in South Africa, given his position as a canonical Black Consciousness thinker, the Movement which speaks to the important sentient element of 'Black' as opposed to 'black'. However, in order to cement the specificity of this research, there was a recognition that solely relying on Biko's definition would be inadequate. Due to the political nature of the

term 'Black', some individuals in South Africa who can be described or considered C/coloured or Indian identify as 'Black'. To solidify the definition of 'Black', the following definition of African taken from the African National Congress (ANC), supplements the definition. The ANC define African as being:

“The indigenous inhabitants of the country principally composed of the Zulu, Xhosa, Pedi, Sotho, Tswana, Tsonga, Swazi, Venda, Ndebele, Khoi and San” (2007 Strategy and Tactics Document of the ANC as cited in Manyi, Hermann, 2016).

This research report uses Black in ways that capture insights from Steve Biko's and the ANC's respective definitions of 'Black' and African. This combined understanding is sometimes defined as Black African. The reason Black African is not used here is because the women interviewed, as well as many of my other Black peers, and myself, do not describe ourselves as Black African. The term 'Black' is understood to capture both the Biko Black nature and the ANC African nature of the term. In a nod to authenticity and the deciphering of the transcript excerpts contained here, it is important to reflect the metonymical nature of understandings of 'Black', by using Black rather than Black African. Similar to my definition of women, the use of the term 'Black' in this research report refers to an explicit section of individuals who may be considered or consider themselves Black.

2.1.3 Middle-Class

There are various disputed ways to describe those with middle-class status. One of the most frequent methods is by income, with the Bureau of Market Research describing the monthly income of the South African middle-class ranging from R19 501 to R65 250 ('This is what it means to be middle class in South Africa', 2016). However, wealth, consumption, aspiration and demographics such as age are also viewed as useful indicators (Luhby, n.d). When discussing South Africa's Black middle-class, the work of Roger Southall is instructive. Southall argues that due to the massive expansion of the middle classes in postcolonial societies, which challenges the classical Marxist notion of two antagonistic classes (Southall, 2004, p. 521), defining the middle-class in countries like South Africa is contentious. He does, however, settle on a definition that characterises the middle-class as drawing its primary income from non-manual employment, as white-collar employees, managers, self-

employed business persons, or professionals (Southall, 2004, p. 522). Southall argues that in defining South Africa's Black middle class, we must also draw on theorisations of the continental African middle-class due to the Apartheid regimes restriction on Black class mobility (Southall, 2004, p. 522). The origins of the African middle-class are mission-educated elites who were equipped to fit into European society by virtue of their education, Christianity and economic assimilation (Southall, 2004, p.523). More recently, Southall has come to describe Black middle-class status in South Africa as revolving around the extent and consequences of Black upward social mobility (Southall, 2014, p. 649) and reliance on the African National Congress for social position (Southall, 2016).

The use of 'middle-class' is a case of entrapment by language. This research report is looking at the particular life experiences of a particular type of woman in South Africa. I have an idea of whom this woman is based on the shared experiences of myself and my peers. However, this research is an attempt to understand that experience better. Considering existing literature, 'middle-class' felt like the best way to define this woman in South Africa. Drawing on the work of Roger Southall, 'middle-class' in this research report is defined as an individual with a university education who has a professional job.

Particularly relevant to this research report's concern with alleviating Black intraracial patriarchal oppression in South Africa, Southall questions whether a class which is increasingly consumerist will consistently support progressive causes, given their recent entry into the middle-class (Southall, 2014, p. 648). The suggestion here is that the Black middle-class may rather preserve their class status than fight to alleviate other areas of oppression for Black people located in lower classes. He goes on to argue that no social justice movement can afford to make itself dependent on the middle-class (Southall, 2014, p. 648). Mattes supports this view finding that:

“..there is little evidence that the Black middle class is anymore supporting of democracy than other Black South Africans, although there are signs that they are more likely to want the government to deliver 'higher-order' goods, such as free speech and a government that is accountable, rather than basic survival goods, such as food, water or shelter. They are less likely to identify with the governing ANC. And they are also more likely to 'exit' the democratic system rather than 'voice' their concerns by voting, contacting officials or joining with others to achieve political outcomes, whether through conventional or unconventional forms of collective action.” (Mattes, 2015, p. 665).

Southall and Mattes' enquiries into the Black middle-class' inclination to tackle progressive causes leads to a consideration of the extent to which the Black middle-class women I questioned were concerned with tackling intraracial oppression on any level and the extent they are concerned solely with how Black male patriarchy affects their middle-class lives versus how it affects all Black women, such as those in lower classes. Additionally, it leads to interrogations into the degree to which these women may act, either collectively or as an individual to alleviate the operation of Black male patriarchy. Again, given that a stated objective of this work is tackling Black gender-based violence in South Africa, these considerations led to particular attention to the way in which the women interviewed thought about and comprehended the experiences of Black women outside of their class.

2.1.4 Patriarchy

bell hooks' writing about patriarchy, Black men and Black women has informed much of the understanding of gender-based and racial oppression contained in this research report. She gives the following definition of patriarchy:

“Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence” (hooks, 2013, p. 1).

hooks' acknowledgements of the “psychological terrorism and violence” and male domination over “everyone deemed weak”, is important to the understanding of patriarchy contained in this research report. With regards to hooks' former acknowledgement, this research project privileges an understanding of patriarchy as a discourse that operates at a psychic level amongst both men and women. This is important to the exploration of internalisation, feeling and emotion contained here. The latter of hooks' acknowledgements speaks to this research report's understanding that patriarchy is a smokescreen for dominance and subordination within society through its imposition of normative scripts of masculinity and femininity that negatively impact constructions of selfhood on both women and men (Schalkwyk, 2018). In this sense, the operation of patriarchy assists all systems of oppression within society, of particular interest to this research report is the way in which patriarchy assists the operation of racism. Patriarchy and racism are two interrelated, mutually supporting systems of domination (Roberts, 1992, p. 3) and their relationship to one another

is key to understanding the subordination of both Black women and men. On the link between racism and patriarchy, Audre Lorde commented:

“I wish to raise a Black man who will not be destroyed by, nor settle for, those corruptions called power by the white fathers who mean his destruction as surely as they mean mine. I wish to raise a Black man who will recognize that the legitimate objects of his hostility are not women, but the particulars of a structure that programs him to fear and despise women as well as his own Black self” (Lorde as cited in Roberts, 1992, p. 36).

In feminist scholarship, one often comes across an either/or approach when it comes to the issues of racism and patriarchy. As a Black woman, I have been accused of betraying my race on the one hand by challenging Black patriarchal violence, while on the other hand accused of a dedication to patriarchy due to my attempts to tackle anti-black racism. Such viewpoints are reductive due to their inability to understand the nuanced way in which racism and patriarchy uphold one another. Hegemonic domination operates at various levels; focusing on eradicating one form of oppression is useless in the fight for an equal society. This research report, therefore, understands patriarchy as an oppression that supports other forms of domination, namely anti-black racism.

The validity of patriarchy within the African context has long been debated. The position of African gender theorists can be split broadly into two main camps: (1) those that view patriarchy as a Western invention and irrelevant to Africa, and (2) those who view patriarchy as an applicable existent phenomenon occurring in Africa. Oyewumi (2004), places patriarchy in the realm of European invention inherited during the colonial process and not a natural phenomenon in Africa. Oyewumi’s position is based on her research into Yoruba familial structures that are non-gendered, with this research leading her to conclude that gender distinctions based on the hierarchy within families are not useful for explaining African women’s subordination (Oyewumi, 2004). Supporting this viewpoint, Kisiang’ani (2004) points to matrilineal examples of the Mukaa of Tanzania and Kikuyu community of Kenya to argue that African traditional culture is not inherently oppressive of women and that such viewpoints are Western stereotypes born out of the racist construction of African life (Kisiang’ani, 2004). Kisiang’ani goes on to state that it is, in fact, Western forms of gender that are rigidly patriarchal having been imposed on the African consciousness by Christian and Muslim religious texts during the colonial process (Kisiang’ani, 2004). Such arguments are rooted in the decolonial nature of African gender scholarship. Decoloniality is a critical analysis that focuses on knowledge and subjectivity as sites for questioning the imperial

rationality of world systems (Mignolo, 2008, p.14). African gender scholarship's intention to root out Western forms of gender analysis links directly to decoloniality's focus on denouncing the colonial matrix of power and reinscribing the subjectivity and knowledge of those who have been declared racially inferior (Mignolo, 2008, p. 17). However, whether inherited via colonialism or not, African patriarchy persists and does not cease to persist by uncovering historical examples of matrilineal African traditions. Bakare-Yusuf (2004) highlights the limitations of African gender analysis that dismisses African patriarchy based on traditional non-gendered forms of seniority. Seniority, she argues, although not explicitly gendered in African contexts, due to its basis on age or position, masks other interwoven forms of power relations (Bakare-Yusuf, 2004, p. 69). Similar to Roberts' (1992) understanding of the collaboration between racism and patriarchy, Bakare-Yusuf explains that power is never monolithic, seniority works hand in hand with other forms of power, including gender, to cause African women's domination (Bakare-Yusuf, 2004, p. 69). On the issue of the European nature of patriarchy, Bakare-Yusuf explains:

“We must reject any attempt to assign a particular conceptual category as belonging only to the ‘West’ and therefore inapplicable to the African situation. For millennia, Africa has been part of Europe just as Europe has been part of Africa. Out of this relation, a whole series of borrowed traditions from both sides have been and continue to be, brewed and fermented. To deny this inter-cultural exchange and reject all theoretical imports from Europe is to violate the order of knowledge. It also simultaneously disregards the contributions of various Africans to European cultural and intellectual history and vice-versa” (Bakare-Yusuf, 2004, p. 79).

Rather than rejecting the applicability of patriarchy altogether, researchers concerned with Africa and gender should acknowledge Bakare-Yusuf's concept of the brewing and fermentation that has occurred, during both colonial and post-colonial times, and work to reformulate an understanding of patriarchy that is relevant to the continent. Decoloniality involves calling out and interrogating oppressions, such as patriarchy, that are inherited from the colonial process. Acknowledging African patriarchy's colonial routes is the praxis of modern critical decolonised African thought. Patriarchy should not be dismissed as colonial, instead its colonial routes should be considered in an overall analysis of contemporary experiences of patriarchy (Mignolo, 2008).

Maria Lugones (2008) provides a valuable analysis of the proliferation of patriarchy as a practical component of colonial domination. Lugones draws on Oyewumi to explain that in pre-colonial times women regularly held positions of power, however they were purposely

targeted as inferior as part of the process of undermining communal relations of the colonised. On this phenomenon Lugones explains:

“Understanding the place of gender in pre-colonial societies is pivotal to understanding the nature and scope of changes in the social structure that the processes constituting colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism imposed. Those changes were introduced through slow, discontinuous, and heterogenous processes that violently inferiorized colonized women. The gender system introduced was one thoroughly informed through the coloniality of power. Understanding the place of gender in pre-colonial societies is also pivotal in understanding the extent and importance of the gender system in disintegrating communal relations, egalitarian relations, ritual thinking, collective decision making, collective authority, and economies. And thus in understanding the extent to which the imposition of this gender system was as constitutive of the coloniality of power as the coloniality of power was constitutive of it” (Lugones, 2008, p. 12).

Describing the collaboration between colonisers and colonised men in the undermining of women Lugones writes:

“It is important for us to think about these collaborations as we think of the question of indifference to the struggles of women in racialized communities against multiple forms of violence against them and the communities. The white colonizer constructed a powerful inside force as colonized men were coopted into patriarchal roles.” (Lugones, 2008, p. 10).

Lugones’ important observation concerning the way in which colonised men were co-opted into patriarchy to re enforce colonial domination once again speaks to the collaboration between patriarchy and racism. The enforcement of patriarchy was tied with the enforcing of racial hierarchies to cement the dominance of white colonialists. Black men’s complicity in Black women’s oppression serves hegemonic hierarchies of power. Lugones’ work is an example of decolonial thought acknowledging colonial influences and their effect on contemporary relations of power within postcolonial societies.

2.2 Theoretical Perspective

2.2.1 Feminist Theory: False Universalism

Feminist theory has suffered from a false universalism that assumes and constructs the experiences of white people from the Global North as normative and the experiences of those not located there as other (Mohanty, 1984). The normative representation of knowledge created in the Global North is a form of universalism that is sometimes referred to the one-world world, a belief in a single reality rather than multiple realities, prefaced on the assumption that western sources of knowledge are the preeminent authority when it comes to

ontological enquiry (Law, 2011; Blaney & Tickner, 2017). Not only does a one-world world view cast alternative viewpoints as irrelevant others, but in its most extreme it casts them as non-existent. In propping up the one-world world view, feminist theory has helped secure a universalism that excluded the experiences of oppressed groups, such as Black, disabled, queer, working class and trans women. Third world feminism, black feminism, postcolonial feminism and transnational feminism have criticised the monolithic view of feminism prefaced on the experiences of white, western women. African gender theorists such as Oyeronke Oyewumi and Patricia McFadden have challenged the “unwarranted universalisms of feminist gender discourses” (Oyewumi, 2004) by locating their research firmly within an African context. Feminist theorists who have focused on the experiences of marginalised women reveal Foucault’s concept of subjugated knowledge. Deciphering subjugated knowledge is an important part of the process of understanding how common sense knowledge works as a normalising discourse, regulating the way in which subjects think and act (McHoul & Grace, 1998, p. 16). Revealing subjugated knowledge, such as theories developed in Africa, are therefore an important part of the critical praxis of deciphering techniques of power. Foucault argued that in the process of deciphering subjugated knowledge we access a discourse against power (McHoul & Grace, 1998, p. 19). This research project’s focus on a subsection of Black women in South Africa is the exploration of a form of subjugated knowledge in an effort to question western hegemonic knowledge’s position at the top of ontological hierarchies of thought and ensure feminism continues to follow a trajectory that acknowledges and addresses the varied experiences of diverse women.

2.2.2 African American Feminist Tools

African American feminist scholars of the 1980s and 1990s recognised the failure of feminist theory to understand the experiences of Black women. Their focus on the particular circumstances of African American women, who face both racial and gender-based oppression led to the development of intersectionality. Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1989) foundational text *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics* explored the theory of intersectionality in which Crenshaw argued due attention was not paid to the interplay of race and gender, and therefore African American women who suffer from both forms of oppression are not correctly analysed when we apply either gender or race whilst

theorising their lived experiences of oppression. Intersectionality has expanded passed an exploration of just the interplay of gender and race with those oppressed by various other axes of oppression, such as religion, disability, and sexual orientation, also making use of the concept. In fact, serious academic discord has erupted over the correct use and attribution of intersectionality (McCall, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Blige, 2013). Disagreements aside, intersectionality is a useful theoretical tool in helping to understand the experiences of individuals who face varied types of oppression.

A contemporary incarnation of Black feminist theory's use of intersectional analysis is the concept of *misogynoir*. Misogynoir is a concept coined by African American feminist scholar Moya Bailey to describe the way in which Black women are impacted by misogyny and racism (Solis, 2016). Misogynoir is more than intersectional analysis by another name or a novel lexicographical idiom. Originally coined by Moya Bailey to describe the particular brand of hatred directed at African-American women in American visual & popular culture (Bristol, 2014), the term is a useful concept when applied to the intense form of misogyny that African American women face within American society. For them, misogyny is laced with the historical tropes of hypersexualisation, docility, sassiness, stupidity and ugliness, characteristics that are not inherently associated with the misogyny that white women face (Trudy, 2013). Misogynoir, when applied to the misogyny African American women face at the hands of African American men, is useful in highlighting the particularity of African American women's subordination. The operation of male privilege within the African American community sees the oppression of African American men given more attention and sympathy than that of African American women. African American men largely accept misogynistic views about African American women and patriarchal views about male dominance leading African American women to face intense intraracial sexism (Trudy, 2013). Kelly Marcus, through her exploration of misogynoir, has highlighted the way in which African American women are marginalised due to their status as the keepers of Black life (Marcus, 2015). African American women are forced to forego their own complete emancipation to ensure that African American men feel liberated within the African American community, the African American man's sanctuary from the domination experienced within the white world. As keepers of this sanctuary, African American women ensure their own continued societal subordination. Although developed in the context of America, misogynoir and the way in which it has been used to analyse relationships between men and women within the African American community is useful for the discussion of

patriarchal experiences within the Black South African context. That said, intersectionality and misogynoir are predominantly Northern in their focus. Third world feminism, African gender theory and Womanism have been particularly useful in its theorising about women located in the Global South.

2.2.3 Third World Feminism

Grappling with the false universalism of feminism, third world feminists such as Chandra Mohanty sought to give an identity to and highlight the experiences of women in the third world. In *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, a foundational text within third world feminist scholarship, Mohanty (1984), criticises the way in which western feminists conflate diverse third world women into a general category that gives little regard to the specificity of the different types of third world women that exist and their different relationships to gender. Mohanty goes on to explain how the image of third world women, as constructed by western feminist analysis, allows western femininity to construct itself as the normative representation of the educated modern woman (Mohanty, 1984). This “ethnocentric universality” (Mohanty, 1984, p. 53) leads Mohanty to comment that western feminist descriptions of third world women are another means by which the West asserts its power over world hegemony (Mohanty, 1984, p. 54). Third world feminism is useful for highlighting the importance of questioning western representations of third world women due to the way these constructions assist in upholding western power over knowledge, culture and what is deemed to be normal.

Third world feminism highlights the importance of theorising and interpreting “within specific societies, in order both to understand it better and to effectively organise to change it” (Mohanty, 1984, p.58). Strategies based on theories steeped in problematic descriptive generalisations that assume universal applicability across the entire, diverse, third world, or Global South, have limited ability to tackle the different gender-based problems that exist across the Global South. Third world feminists, advocate for “context-specific differentiated analysis” that in turn allows for “effective political strategies” (Mohanty, 1984, p. 67) to tackle issues such as gender-based violence. Taking on Mohanty’s words, this research report’s focus on the experiences of Black male patriarchy, within a very particular group within South African society – young, Black, middle-class women - will aid in challenging monolithic representations of Black women and their experiences, and produce context specific analysis.

2.2.4 African Gender Scholarship

African gender theorists have developed their own iterations of feminism that speaks to the African woman's experience. Womanism takes route in the writing of Alice Walker, who developed the concept in an attempt to differentiate Black feminism (Maxwell, 2017, p. 9210) from universalist feminism by embracing a culturally, and spiritual Afrocentric approach to the experiences of Black women (Maxwell, 2017, p. 9211). African gender theorists differentiate African womanism from Walker's original term through a focus on the postcolonial reality of African women and men by probing African cultures and values, as well as investigating matriarchal pressure, religious fundamentalism and extreme poverty (Maxwell, 2017). Africana Womanism is another branch of Womanism which has a particular focus on ethnicity and cultural identity (Maxwell, 2017). Nego-feminism calls for a multi-pronged approach, stressing the need for negotiation in order to enhance the meaningful partnership between women and men, snail-sense feminism also focuses on negotiation and tolerance, motherism conceptualises female power at the intersections of motherhood, nature and nurture and stiwanism focuses on women's agency in the fight for social and political transformation of Africa (Nkealah, 2016, p. 7364). These different branches of African feminism speak to African gender scholar's history of problematising the universalism of feminist theory and the tendency of the Global North to ignore the lived realities of women in the Global South. These scholars have questioned the imposition of European and African American theory on African women, describing these efforts as alien and unsuccessful due to a lack of a strong African element in the problem-solving process (Kisiang'ani, 2004, p. 17). Again, this is an example of the decolonial aspect of African gender scholarship via a focus on promoting knowledge from the perspective of the historical colonial participant and questioning the ontological authority of the Global North. Summing up the interrelatedness between African gender scholarship and decolonisation theory, Kisiang'ani (2004) states that "gender research in Africa entails an attempt to highlight the effects of biased Western gender confabulations on Africa and how European prejudices about Africans could be changed" (Kisiang'ani, 2004, p. 10). African gender scholarship brings a localisation to feminist theory that goes beyond the tools developed by African American feminists. African gender scholarship is cognisant of "the articulation of race, imperialism and gender" (Kisiang'ani, 2004, p. 39) that leaves Black African women unserved by theories prefaced on Western experiences. An important take away from African gender scholarship is that steeped African research and knowledge is key to the full

understanding of African women's lives and experiences. In recognition of this important lesson this research report focuses on the life experiences of five Black women who are based in Africa via a narrative method.

African gender theorists have problematised the intellectual dislocation and geographical location of those who theorise the experiences of African women. The geographical location of African gender theorists located in the diaspora, oftentimes strongholds of universalist feminism, is argued to adversely affect the relevance of their research (Nkealah, 2016). The socio-economic and intellectual positionality of African gender theorists also compounds claims around the geographical dislocation of those theorising about African women. Arguably, scholars who have benefitted from an elite education and live a lifestyle far removed from the women they write about cannot adequately theorise approaches to African women and gender-based oppression, and inevitably patronise the women they seek to understand (Nkealah, 2016). A concentration on oral narratives, and allowing African women to tell their own stories, has been cited as an approach that confronts the problem of negotiating insider and outsider positionality in African gender scholarship (Nkealah, 2016). African women should be given protagonist status, with theorists humbling themselves to the knowledge that these women have experienced, learned and had passed down to them. Although the women interviewed for this research project consisted of my peers, given my positionality as researcher and a foreigner with a British accent, the debate around elitism and dislocation in African gender scholarship influenced the methodological approach of this research project, with a critical narrative method being employed to ensure the centrality of the research subject. This approach is further discussed in Chapter Three, of this research report.

2.2.5 Subjection and Internal Oppression

Fanon calls on the colonised to violently exorcise the experience of colonialism from their system (Fanon, 2001); Foucault encourages us to acknowledge how power controls us at a personal level (Phelan, 1990) and Friere calls on us to deal with the problem of the oppressed consciousness (Friere, 2005). To ensure Black women do not suffer psychosocial injury, knowledge that is used to inform the policies and strategies that affect their lives cannot be informed by the hegemonic whiteness implicit in universalist feminism. As explained above, this research report understands hegemonic constructions of Black people to be purposely dehumanising with epistemic closure around the extent of Black humanity (Gordon, 2015).

Given this understanding, the use of universalist feminism in analysing the experiences of Black women is not only limiting but also a covert form of oppression, given the problematic nature of hegemonic assumptions of Black people contained in universalist theorisations. African feminist research and knowledge is required to inform theories that speak to the experiences of Black, African women and in doing so free them from both their internal and external domination. In writing about the internal oppression those subordinate in society suffer at the hands of their oppressors Friere (2005) argues that the experiences of the oppressed and their emancipation from both internal and external oppression is key to freeing both the oppressed and the oppressor from the power relations that regulate their respective existences (Friere, 2005, p. 42). The focus on the experiences of young, Black, middle-class women and the oppression they suffer is purposely centred on their experience, rather than the reasoning and views of their oppressors, as their experiences are more useful to the aim of ending African patriarchal oppression. An associated aim of this research project is to engender a form of emancipation that leads each research participant to expel the internal oppression they face through the process of recalling and identifying the patriarchal oppression they have suffered.

2.3 Existing Studies

In conducting a literature review of existing studies to inform this research report, relevant existing studies are grouped into the experiences of women in the workplace, experiences of women with gender-based violence and the identity construction of Black women.

2.3.1 Women in the Workplace

Studies into the experiences of women in the workplace have been undertaken in South Africa by a diverse mix of researchers including business, sociology and occupational psychologist scholars. Mayer, Rudolph and Surtee (2017) focus their research on the emotional intelligence of female leaders in higher education via narrative analysis and organisational development theory. Their study's focus on emotional intelligence, defined as the understanding of one's own and others' emotions and the management of such, speaks to this research report's focus on the extent to which young, Black, middle-class women internalise their experiences with Black male patriarchal violence. In their study, Mayer et al. (2017) explain that women found "that self-regard lays an important foundation for their leadership, which provides them with an understanding and acceptance of their strengths and

weaknesses” (Mayer et al., 2017, para. 84). Self-regard, in the case of Mayer et al’s (2017) study is a deep understanding and belief in who you are. In Mayer et al’s research, participants explained that a high level of self-regard assisted them to complete their duties to a good standard. The importance of self-regard to women in leadership points to the potential negative effects of the internalisation of patriarchal experiences on the self-regard of young, Black, middle-class women. Mayer et al. did not limit their participants regarding age, race or socioeconomic status and their discussion of self-regard did not take a critical approach. This research report takes cognisance of Mayer et al’s useful exploration of self-regard, but unlike their study utilises critical diversity literacy and critical narrative analysis to fully explore the way in which internalisation of patriarchal experiences affects self.

The above example is typical of the way in which studies of women in the workplace do not limit their focus regarding the background of the women they choose to study. Often the context of the study is given more emphasis than the participants who find themselves in these contexts, for example, *The experience of women in male-dominated occupations: A constructivist grounded theory inquiry* (Martin & Barnard, 2013). Here, the context of male dominated occupations is the focus. This points to the earlier discussion of false universalism and the lack of acknowledgement of the way in which different types of women experience the world contained in this literature review. *Career and Life balance of professional women: A South African Study* (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003) involved 24 respondents – eleven white women, five Black women, and eight coloured women - and confidently concludes that “life-balance is therefore not ‘one, single ultimate experience’ but a series of individual experiences unfolding over time” (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003, p. 77), although the article involves no discussion of how the race or socioeconomic background of participants may influence their experience of career and life balance. Given a conclusion pointing to “individual experiences”, it would seem pertinent to discuss the differences between the individuals in question. The trend of universalising respondents within studies of the experiences of women in the workplace limits their usefulness.

2.3.2 Identity Construction of Women

The identity construction of Black women has been the focus of significant sociological research. In *Identity constructions of black South African female students* (2013), Mophoso highlights the interaction between participant position, socio-historical context and identity (Mophoso, 2013), finding that young black women at South African universities feel the need

to be representative of their entire demographic and thus take on the burden of proving the worth of all young black women. Mophoso's research highlights the effect of projection on Black women and how it affects their sense of self. This work, and others that tackle the issue of identity construction amongst Black women are helpful in emphasising the need to consider internalisation and identity, even when the research seems to deal with a group's outward experience within a particular context.

2.3.3 Women and Gender-Based Violence

As described in the introduction to this research report, gender-based violence pervades South African society; this has resulted in studies explicitly exploring this problem. *Marriage, Cohabitation and Domestic Violence in Mpumalanga* (Seabi, 2009) focuses on a small group of women living in KwaMhlanga, Mpumalanga and explores the historical basis of domestic violence within rural contexts, linking the phenomenon to a South African Black patriarchal tradition. Respondents describe how formal attempts to curb gender-based harm are viewed with suspicion by their communities with many feeling such attempts are an attack on traditional cultural beliefs (Seabi, 2009). Similarly, *Experiences of sexual relationships of young black women in an atmosphere of coercion* (2013), discusses how South African society is regulated by hegemonic masculinity resulting in sexual relations between men and women serving as a site of power disparity (Clüver, Elkonin & Young, 2013). Studies such as these point towards patriarchy and the way in which it is manifested in society as the reason for the gender-based violence suffered by South African Black women. This research report has a similar premise in that patriarchy is identified as a significant factor in the lives of Black African women. Unlike existing research, however, this research report does not focus on women living in poverty or rural areas. The murder of Karabo Mokoena, a young, Black, middle-class woman, and my own experiences, have led this research report to focus on young, Black, middle-class women. The focus on women with lower socioeconomic status when it comes to explorations of gender-based violence, arguably, plays into stereotypically held beliefs around tribalism and African backwardness. As the earlier discussion around third world feminism surfaced, there is more than one type of third world woman, and thus there is more than one type of South African woman that suffers adversely from patriarchal violence.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Methodology

The methodology of this research report is inspired by the narrative imperative of African gender scholarship and the storytelling tradition of critical race theory. Barnes in Ladson-Billings (1998) explains the use of experiential knowledge in critical race theory when she states:

“critical race theorists...integrate their *experiential knowledge* (author’s emphasis), drawn from a shared history as ‘other’ with their ongoing struggles to transform a world deteriorating under the albatross of racial hegemony.” (Barnes as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11).

Ladson-Billings goes on to argue:

“Thus the experiences of oppressions such as racism and sexism has important aspects for developing a CRT analytical standpoint” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p.11).

In recognition of the use of storytelling as an analytical standpoint in critical race theory and a means of countering the positionality of researcher in African gender research, this research project obtained narratives through semi-structured interviews in an attempt to analyse the experiences of five young, Black, middle-class women with Black male patriarchy in the home, work and social environment. A critical narrative method in collaboration with a critical diversity literacy analytical lens was used to decipher their experiences. There was a focus on how each participant was affected at a psychic level in order to explore: 1) the way each participant’s class status impacted these experiences; 2) to gain an understanding of attempts or strategies to resist patriarchal experiences; and 3) to gain an understanding of the cause of Black male patriarchy from the participant’s point of view.

3.1 Data Collection

This research project gathered the viewpoints and experiences of five young, Black, middle-class women, a section of women I deemed worth privileging in my aim to tackle gender-based violence and contribute to Black feminist theory. Each woman was South African,

Black, aged between 28 and 33¹, employed within a professional career and possessed an undergraduate degree. Each participant was found through my networks.

Critical narrative inquiry was used to engage with each woman who was interviewed twice over a period of two weeks using a semi-structured model. The interviews were captured via audio recording which were later transcribed by me. A critical narrative method was selected to centre the women's experience of patriarchy within their lived experience. The narrative method helped capture that experience in the context of each woman's day to day life as well as allowing each woman to reflect on her own participativity in her relationship with the discourse of patriarchy (Chase, 2005, p. 655). Given this research report's interest in internalised oppression, the critical narrative method was useful in terms of analysing the way in which each woman constructed and communicated their feelings of self-identity (Chase, 2005, p. 657). Although each participant was constrained by language and the hegemonic codes that regulate their existence, the interviews that took place provided a window to the taken for granted lived reality of women and their encounters with patriarchy (Chase, 2005, p.659). Critical narrative analysis was useful due to its acknowledgement that the story the participant gives is an interpretation of events rather than a simple reproduction (Riessman, 2005, p.6). Each woman not only recounted stories of their interaction with Black male patriarchy, but also forged connections between their personal biographical experiences and their interpretation of the structural nature of societal patriarchy (Riessman, 2005, p.6). Each woman was interviewed twice within two weeks to allow for a period of reflection that could potentially induce more related narratives that could be relayed.

During interviews I utilised an interactional approach to encourage a dialogic process between each woman and myself (Riessman, 2005, p4). I used an interactional approach in recognition that each woman was an acquaintance of mine and because we shared the positionality of Black, middle-class women. On occasion I commiserated with the women by explaining that I understood and retold a similar incident of my own. The interactional approach was particularly useful when gaining insights about the way in which each woman internalised their experiences with Black, male patriarchy. Three of the woman struggled to convey the extent to or the way they internalised their experiences. In such instances, I retold my own personal narrative around having more relationships with white men due to my frustration with Black men and how these relationships both helped fulfil my sense of self-

¹ When identifying participants I took 35 years as the upper age limit in line with South Africa's National Youth Policy (National Youth Development Agency, 2015) definition of young people being aged 14 to 35 years old

worth yet made me feel guilty for abandoning Black men. The women interviewed responded well to an interactional approach, going deeper into narratives and making their own connections between theory and their own experiences. Awareness around my positionality as researcher caused me to be mindful of how too much interaction may affect the narrative produced. Each first interview typically lasted for one hour and follow up interviews for approximately 20 minutes. On reflection, particularly with regard to one woman I interviewed whose responses were considerably shorter than the others, I believe this research would have benefitted from greater interaction between myself and the women interviewed. Co-construction of the storytelling process seemed to elicit more detail and self-analysis from the women I interviewed contributing to a richer narrative.

3.2 Data Analysis

Alongside a critical narrative analysis, I made use of Taylor, Gilligan and Sullivan's Feminist Listening Guide (Gilligan & Carol, 2006) that requires listening to each interview several times in order to assess the overall shape of the participants' story, the use of the participants' first-person story, and the voices that express psychological development (Chase, 2005, p. 664). This listening method was used to ensure due attention was given to the different levels of narrative – participative, interpretive and ambiguous – within each participant's story (Chase, 2005, p. 663). Steyn's (2015) critical diversity literacy analytical tool was applied to the data collected, with a focus on the way in which participants describe the oppression they face within the confines of learned hegemonic codes which regulate their existence (Steyn, 2015). The ten criteria for critical diversity literacy as per Steyn's (2015) chapter "Critical Diversity literacy: Essentials for the Twenty-First Century" in the *Routledge International Handbook of Diversity Studies* (pp 381-387) are as follows:

1. An understanding of the role of power in constructing differences that make a difference.
2. A recognition of the unequal symbolic and material value of different social locations. This includes acknowledging hegemonic positionalities and concomitant identities, such as whiteness, heterosexuality, masculinity, cisgender, ablebodiedness, middleclassness, etc. and how these dominant orders position those in non-hegemonic spaces.
3. Analytic skill at unpacking how these systems of oppression intersect, interlock, co-construct and constitute each other, and how they are reproduced, resisted and reframed.

4. A definition of oppressive systems such as racism as current social problems and (not only) a historical legacy.
5. An understanding that social identities are learned and are an outcome of social practices.
6. The possession of a diversity grammar and a vocabulary that facilitates a discussion of privilege and oppression.
7. The ability to translate (see through) and interpret coded hegemonic practices.
8. An analysis of the ways that diversity hierarchies and institutionalized oppressions are inflected through specific social contexts and material arrangements.
9. An understanding of the role of emotions, including our own emotional investment, in all of the criteria.
10. An engagement with issues of the transformation of these oppressive systems towards deepening social justice at all levels of social organisation.

3.2.1 Ethical considerations

Although the women I interviewed are not from exceptionally vulnerable groups, due to the reflective and personal nature of the enquiry proposed, each woman was given details of psychosocial assistance they may use should they feel in need of counselling or should they suffer any psychological distress during the interview process.

3.2.1.1 Confidentiality

The names of each participant have been kept confidential and the raw data collected is stored on a password protected external hard drive. Each transcript has been anonymised.

3.2.1.2 Informed Consent

Each participant was asked to complete a consent form permitting the use of their interview in this research report. The consent form explicitly permitted audio recording.

3.2.1.3 Ethics Clearance

A Non-Medical Ethics Application was submitted to the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies and approved. This research report's ethics protocol number is DIV171017.

3.3 Limitations

Undoubtedly this research report would benefit from a comparative exploration of different types of young, Black, middle-class women. Comparing the experiences of disabled, older, trans, lesbian, bisexual and asexual Black women would speak to the objective of contributing to knowledge around the experiences of different Black women. Additionally, given this research report's understanding of patriarchy as a form of domination that assists the operation of racism, it would have been useful to include a focus on the five Black women's experiences with men of races other than Black. Confines around dissertation length made widening the scope of enquiry not feasible.

These limitations are representative of the purposely focused nature of this research. As described above, study into the specific experiences of young, Black, middle-class South African women with Black male patriarchy are not forthcoming. Decoloniality, intersectionality and African gender theory discourage a broad brush approach to analysing the experiences of Black women. The specificity of this work and what it contributes to widening knowledge of the different experiences of diverse women ameliorates the limitations around the scope of this research report.

3.4 Reflexivity

I was born, raised and undertook my primary, secondary and undergraduate studies in the United Kingdom (UK). My parents are both Nigerian. Having met in the UK, where my father relocated to continue his medical studies and my mother her administrative studies, my parents married and had two children. My father is a doctor and my mother a civil servant, I was raised in a largely white middle-class neighbourhood and attended a selective grammar school. Growing up in the UK I felt my differentness; I was Black, African and from an immigrant family. Throughout my schooling, I was always one of a few Black children. I was never taught my parents' native tongue and visited Nigeria only once during my formative years.

I have lived in South Africa since 2011. I moved to South Africa because a close friend of mine is of South African origin and relocated to Johannesburg to complete her tertiary education. I visited her on several occasions and became persuaded that I wanted to move to South Africa due to what I viewed as a more cosmopolitan environment than the UK, a cheaper standard of living and good job opportunities.

Reflecting on my time in the UK, although I was different, the similarity I had to my peers was my class status. I was firmly middle-class, in fact in comparison to some of my white peers I was considered well off because my father held a prestigious professional career. My class was and continues to be a major source of privilege for me. In the UK I took the place of the token Black girl who was smart and well behaved. I benefitted from the fact that UK institutions and organisations must be seen to be representative and as a middle-class Black woman I was able to assimilate more easily into professional organisations. In this way, my minority status coupled with my class often gave me access to opportunities that were not available to others. My class status gave me further currency in South Africa, where the country's extreme gap between those living in poverty and those who do not means I occupy a space within South Africa's growing but limited Black middle-class. South Africa's Black middle-class benefit from an education and networks that gives access to economic opportunities not readily available to Black people living in poverty. In addition to my class status in South Africa, my English accent and European credentials (having been educated in the UK) has given me even greater privilege.

My status and particularly my privilege has bearing on the design and analysis contained in this research report. I am cognisant of the fact that as a Black, middle-class woman in South Africa I am exploring an element of patriarchy that inconveniences me the most – intraracial sexism. This realisation led me to consider Foucault's concept of a protagonist's ethical relationship to the power being discussed and opposed, and the way in which my historical sociological position will affect my analysis (McHoul & Grace, 1998). In reflecting on my privilege, my status as researcher and the area I have chosen to research I have found Boler and Zembylas' (2003) concept of pedagogy of discomfort helpful. A pedagogy of discomfort invites individuals to engage in critical inquiry regarding values and cherished beliefs and to examine constructed self-images about how one has learned to perceive others (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). Through engaging in a pedagogy of discomfort and free writing I have attempted to understand that while oppressed in some aspects I am in dominant in other areas which has shaped a misunderstanding of identities that I thought were given. Engaging in a pedagogy of discomfort helped me to acknowledge that I hold some oppressive misunderstandings and there are more that I will still come to uncover. Engaging in a pedagogy of discomfort was my way of taking bell hooks' advice to recognise one's own subjectivity and the limits of identity, which is necessary to disrupt the objectification that is so necessary for a culture of domination (hooks, 1994 p. 139). I have come to both

understand myself beyond my personal experience and reflect on how I can limit this impacting the research design and analysis contained in this report. I also came to acknowledge that by exploring an area of oppression which affects me personally and consciously utilising an interactional approach, while acknowledging my prejudices, I am more likely to uncover knowledge that assists the stated goals of this work: the goal of tackling Black gender-based violence and contributing to the canon of work exploring the different lived experiences of Black women.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Discussion and Analysis

This chapter examines the findings from semi-structured interviews undertaken with five young, Black, middle-class women. As per the discussion above a critical narrative, feminist listening guided and critical diversity literacy lens were applied during the interview and analysis process. Below is an exploration of three themes that emerged through the analysis process. The discussion of each theme elucidates insights that speak to the two stated aims of this research report: 1) to contribute analysis that assists in tackling gender based violence in South Africa, and 2) to contribute to the diversification of research about Black women.

4.1 The Role of Emotion

The five women interviewed all expressed exasperation with their experiences with Black male patriarchy. They described a mix of guilt, dread, frustration and fear that caused them to feel tired and suffer a general sense of mental anguish.

Kgosi, a government worker:

And this is the thing I feel like only women will get that you are trying, you are doing all of that at the same time, managing the ego, letting them down gently, all of that stuff umm and women recognising how tiring that is.

Thapelo, an arts administrator:

It's a job, a constant one. And it's tiring. It's tiring. It's tiring. I wish men could do it for themselves. It is a burden.

Mthokozisi, an academic:

I mean, you try and navigate, one day you do succumb. The next you fight and you get tired of fighting. Because you're the only one fighting.

Nothando, a financial accountant:

It is just so present, it's been present all the time. I feel like I always worry.

Ayanda, an attorney:

I think I reflect quite a lot. Because. Because you are so aware of how quickly Black male patriarchy can become toxic. You're also very careful. So I'm very careful wherever I am in my interactions. And in general but also because I interact with a lot of Black men.

Words such as ‘trying’, ‘navigate’, ‘worry’, ‘burden’ and ‘careful’ speak to the type of emotional work that each woman practised. Hochschild’s (1979) concept of emotion work applies to the degree of emotional management the women described. Hochschild explains:

“By ‘emotion work’ I refer to the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling. To ‘work on’ an emotion or feeling is, for our purposes, the same as ‘to manage’ an emotion or to do ‘deep acting.’ Note that ‘emotion work’ refers to the effort – the act of trying – and not to the outcome, which may or may not be successful” (Hochschild, 1979, p. 561).

The frustration, dread, guilt and fear the women experienced when dealing with Black male patriarchy causes them to do the work of navigating these emotions. On the concept of women experiencing emotion as work, Erickson offers the following:

“The time and energy required to provide emotional support to others must be reconceptualized as an important aspect of the work that takes place in families. These efforts have commonly been overlooked because they have tended to be characterized as reflections of interpersonal intimacy or love. Such a conceptualization parallels the once conventional view of housework and child care that existed prior to those tasks being reconceptualized as part of a work role rather than as components of a female role (e.g., Oakley, 1974). Continued neglect of emotion work within the family work literature risks perpetuating the view that being an emotional caretaker is something women are rather than something women do. Caregiving, in whatever form, does not just emanate from within, but must be managed, focused, and directed so as to have the intended effect on the care recipient” (Erickson, 2005, p. 349).

Experiencing Black male patriarchy is active, a job that required each woman to manage encounters and emotion. When understanding experiencing Black male patriarchy as emotion work and given the extent of emotion described by the women, it is no surprise that the feeling of tiredness was commonly expressed by each of them. The lack of recognition of the emotion work that the women endure compounds the frustration and tiredness they feel. As Erickson advocates above, an understanding of the tiredness Black women feel due to their experiences with Black male patriarchy is vital to changing expectations of what Black women should be expected to “do”. This tiredness and frustration should be explicitly understood as part of the violence of patriarchy. As the quotes above from the women reveal, these feelings weigh on them in a way that should be considered comparable to physical or verbal violence. The women’s descriptions of the emotion of fear is an example of emotion work as violence:

Kgosi:

Plus now you're having to navigate is this person going to respond aggressively because I'm bruising his ego and it's not my job. You know like you hit on me, you took the risk and I told you no I'm not interested. What happens after that is not my responsibility. Right. But then it becomes my responsibility because you now think you have the right to act aggressively by a virtue of ego. Now I have to be managing that as well.

Kgosi also went on to explain:

I still think that with everything that I know, with the feminism that I identify with. If I were to be sexually assaulted I would still blame it on myself somehow. Because I'm so preoccupied with making sure that you don't draw attention to yourself.

Mthokozisi:

And so the other day, I called out a taxi driver. Because he was looking at a high school young woman. And I realised that, my God, my lips, you could actually, you know, you could have...it's your mouth, babe. Gets you in so much trouble.

The above examples illustrate the way fear is not only a violent experience but is also a signal in the women's interactions with Black men. A signal that they become "conscious", "careful" or a moment of realisation that Mthokozisi experiences that mitigates their experience with the operation of Black male patriarchy. While reflecting on each woman's descriptions of the fear they have of Black men I noted that none of the women explained why they held such fear. I also noted that I as a researcher did not probe for narratives around where this fear of Black men originated. Indeed, I do in fact identify with each of the women's experience, and as a Black woman, I am also fearful of Black men. It was implicit that as a fellow Black woman in South Africa I mutually understood the fear that should be harboured for Black men. Here, Sara Ahmed's work around Affective Economies is useful. Ahmed explains how emotions circulate within Affective Economies:

"...emotions do things, and they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments. Rather than seeing emotions as psychological dispositions, we need to consider how they work, in concrete and particular ways, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective. In particular, I will show how emotions work by sticking figures together (adherence), a sticking that creates the very effect of a collective (coherence)...." (Ahmed, 2004, p. 119).

These women, and my own fear, is a result of our associated histories of encounters with Black men. These histories and associations cause fear to circulate amongst our mutual Affective Economies sticking to Black men as a collective and leading us readily and without

explanation to be fearful of them. It manifests as a natural emotion, which is why the women I interviewed did not feel the need to explain their feelings of fear or I to interrogate it. Through its circulation and sticking to Black men, the emotion of fear caused these women to be 'careful', 'conscious' or have moments of realisation. Fear acts as a warning to the women to exercise self-regulation in order to ease their experiences of Black male patriarchal violence.

Describing her experiences with Black men and fear, Kgosi recounted a solo trip she was planning:

So I think you know Wits Rural, so I'm going to Wits Rural next weekend, I'm going by myself. I'm going by myself. I'm ecstatic that I'm taking this trip. I want to go to be in the nature. I want to go because they have a pool and I love to swim you know I love to swim. And my biggest fear is when someone who either works there or another guest realises that I'm there by myself. I mean, if you, like, anywhere else, like when I was I have had the boldness and the courage to travel overseas by myself. Don't know what kind of hotel or what kind of setup I have not seen this city before but I know that I'm going to be fine. But I've been to this place. I've been with the group. I'm already in my mind I remember the proximity of the chalets to each other like if anything while I'm in the room no one will hear me. And like you should not live like that.

Kgosi's fear that "someone who either works there or another guest realises that I'm there by myself" causes her to worry about a trip she planned for herself due to her love of nature and swimming. She describes a fear of Black men that restricts the enjoyment of her life. Ahmed describes how the circulation of signs can restrict some bodies. In the following excerpt Ahmed recounts Frantz Fanon's, a Black man's, experience with a young white child who was frightened by Fanon on a train:

"The circulation of signs of fear does lead to containment for some, and movement for others. Here, fear gets contained in a body, which henceforth becomes an object of fear. Indeed, the white child's apparent fear does not lead to containment but an expansion; his embrace of the world is suggested by how he reestablishes himself as being-at-home (the embrace of the mother as a "return home"). It is the black subject, the one who fears the "impact" of the white child's fear, who is crushed by that fear, by being sealed into a body that takes up less space. In other words, fear works to restrict some bodies through the movement or expansion of others." Also "a sign sticks to a body by constituting it as the object of fear, a constitution taken on by the body, encircling it with a fear that becomes its own" (Ahmed, p. 127, 2004).

Ahmed's explanation of the way in which signs of fear impacts the oppressed via containment can be applied to Kgosi's fear of Black men affecting her enjoyment of her

planned trip. In the case of Kgosi, the reverse occurs. The object of fear, Black men, impacts Kgosi who comes to contain a fear that causes her being to take up less space within her body. Space in her body that could be taken up with a sense of enjoyment around her trip is replaced by a feeling of worry about her safety. Kgosi's fear of Black men restricts her enjoyment of life; it affects her very being.

The women relayed narratives about the emotion work around feelings of guilt and dread when they attempted to resist the operation of patriarchy:

Thapelo:

And and and because it happens so many times sometimes we feel so tired to raise it again and again and again. You considered an attention seeker in that place. It's challenging mentally. Because you can't always...you want to go have a good time and then somebody just ruined it for you and then to want to take it further is such a long process that is against you anyways. That you know is so discouraging because you know even when you go to the police station that men probably won't believe you. Because he himself does the same thing. He himself doesn't see it as something wrong. Sometimes I tell my partner, some things I'm like did you know that this happens. Did you know that even your friends make me feel like that. Or did you hear your friends say A, B, C and D. Did you know that that is wrong? Even educating him about that is a long process.

Nothando:

I think the thing I feel guilty about is picking fights with Black men all the time. I feel like I fought with white men in high school when they picked on my friend, but I wouldn't just argue with them, challenge them all the time, whenever. I feel like I challenge Black men a lot more and it doesn't always come from a place of defending myself but a place of antagonism.

Mthokozisi:

So I didn't go to my cousin's wedding by choice because I didn't want to deal with all of the things that are you know, the questions they are going to ask me and the book that I've written etc. Also I didn't want anyone to, because sometimes you feel like you're failing yourself as well, because you give in right, you give in to this patriarchal culture and you know that it's not only men that perpetuate it. So you don't need men for it to thrive. So you know that all your aunties blah blah blah are going to do that.

Feelings of guilt and dread in these examples caused the women to question or avoid challenging the operation of patriarchy. Emotion again causes these women to exercise self-regulation. Mthokozisi avoids encountering patriarchal familial expectations by purposely missing a wedding, Nothando's guilt leads her to question her continued challenging of Black

men and Thapelo experiences mental anguish in her attempts to address the operation of Black male patriarchy. On the difficulty African American women face in challenging intraracial patriarchy, Austin recounts:

“I know that I am not just flying off the handle, seeing imaginary insults and problems where there are none. I am not a witch solely by nature, but by circumstance and choice as well. I suspect that what my critics really want to say is that I am being too self-consciously black (brown, yellow, red) and/or female to suit their tastes and should ‘lighten up’ because I am making them feel very uncomfortable, and that is not nice . And I want them to think that I am nice, don't I?” (Austin, 1989, p. 540).

Austin describes the way Black women are dissuaded from challenging oppression due to the social norms that demand that others are not made to feel uncomfortable. The emotion work of overcoming guilt and dread as well as the desire not to come across as an “attention seeker” is symptomatic of the operation of hegemonic codes that govern relations of power. Hochschild explains the way in which people are governed to act in accordance with their surroundings:

“...rules seem to govern how people try or try not to feel in ways ‘appropriate to the situation’. Such a notion suggests how profoundly the individual is ‘social’ and ‘socialized’ to try to pay tribute to official definitions of situations, with no less their feelings” (Hochschild, 1979, p. 552).

Discussing the rights and duties that accompany the “feelings rules” of emotion in society Hochschild (1979) explains:

“Rights and duties set out the proprieties as to the extent (one can feel ‘too’ angry or ‘not angry enough’), the direction (when one can feel sad when one can feel happy), and the duration of a feeling, given the situation against which it is set. These rights and duties of feeling are a clue to the depth of social convention, to one final reach of social control” (Hochschild, 1979, p.564).

Hochschild goes on to explain:

“Feeling rules reflect patterns of social membership. Some rules may be nearly universal, such as the rule that one should not enjoy killing or witnessing the killing of a human being, including oneself. Other rules are a unique to particular social groups and can be used to distinguish among them as alternate governments or colonizers of individual internal events” (Hochschild, 1979 p. 566).

The emotions the women experience are a self-regulating force. They compel the women to modify their behaviour in line with the relations of power that keep Black women subordinate

to Black men. Reflecting on the reluctance of Black women to challenge relations with Black men, Robert argues:

“Some of us remain silent about sexism in our own communities or decline to align with white feminists because of the response of Black men. We fear we will be charged with betraying our common interests as a people. Audre Lorde explained that ‘the necessity for and history of shared battle have made us, Black women, particularly vulnerable to the false accusation that anti-sexist is antiBlack’” (Roberts, p. 35, 1993).

Roberts’ point is relevant to the operation of feeling rules and the self-regulation the women described. Given the “communal” struggle assigned to the common experiences of Black people, the social conventions regulating the “feeling rules” of emotions between Black women and Black men when it comes to patriarchy are such that Black women experience emotion in line with the communal understanding that Black women uphold and support Black men, and in doing so acknowledging the “communal” struggle of the Black community. The feeling rules and emotions that govern the women’s experiences with Black male patriarchy are analogous to Fanon’s concept of the zone of non-being. Attempts to negotiate with Black men at the level of human being are thwarted by internal emotions forcing these women back into their zone of non-being, a distinct zone that operates below that of Black men and an important part of distinguishing Black women’s oppressive subhuman status in comparison to Black men. Discussing the zone of non-being in relation to Black and white people, Grosfuguel (2016) argues that violence is not a trend in the zone of being that white people inhabit, it is an exception and typically occurs in exceptional circumstances, whereas in the zone of non-being that Black people reside in, conflicts are managed through perpetual violence (Grosfuguel, 2016, p. 13). Applying Fanon and Grosfuguel’s thinking to relationships in the Black community, Black men can be understood to operate in a zone of being and Black women in a zone of non-being. In this ordering, the emotional violence Black women experience when dealing with Black men is symptomatic of violent conflict management within their zone of non-being. Emotional violence is thus a management tool in the relations of power between Black men and Black women.

During follow up interviews, several of the women described how they were surprised at the level of emotion involved in their experiences and how this had made them reflect on how they will tackle Black male patriarchy going forward.

Kgosi:

I was surprised at how frustrated I was with...and I think with like patriarchy, it played out in my personal life and just generally in South Africa. And I think it reinforced that sense of helplessness. And I think. That even now when I'm like interacting with it like it's made me more annoyed you know because it's kind of like compounded that you should not be allowed to like sexually harass people on the street and that kind of thing and just and it gets like reinforced. And that is so. And I've been thinking like a lot about you know if you were to intervene like when are, it still something for me like what are the appropriate means of intervention.

Mthokozisi:

So I watched my brother and his friends displaying this public display of affection, touching, kissing leaning on each other, you know loving each other in that way and I was like this is strange for me as well because I'm still unlearning right. It's also strange for me as well to witness and not automatically go to "urgh my brother might be gay". It challenges so many things in me, it challenges the stereotypes I have about what gay looks like, you know so so I don't have a coherent way to phrase this but since our last conversation and just since my book and everything, you know the conversations that we've been having around that I've also been thinking about um love in that sense and alternate masculinities. Not that I want to labour, not that I am the one who wants to labour in it, not that I'm the one that wants to write about it. But also just thinking, what's that like?

Ayanda:

And also what I am finding helps me a lot is having these conversations with men and like flip it on its head, and be like if woman were doing this and then you again realise how ridiculous it is. So that's what I wanna do have those conversations and enact that equality that you wanna make sure they have and that respect.

In their discussion of pedagogy of discomfort, Boler and Zembylas (2003) explain how emotions help to unmask the oppression operating in plain sight. In the context of teaching educators and their ensuing discussions around oppression, race and gender, Boler and Zembylas describe how students often have an emotional reaction to the realisation that relations of power exist which affected agency. They go on to explain how emotional reactions and discomfort provides an opening for critical inquiry regarding values and the way in which we have learned to perceive others (Boler and Zembylas, 2003, p. 117).

Hochschild's (1979) concept of "feeling rules" also provides a window for subverting the experience of emotions into opportunities for critical enquiry:

“One can defy an ideological stance not simply by maintaining an alternative frame on a situation but by maintaining an alternative set of feeling rights and obligations. One can defy an ideological stance by inappropriate affect and by refusing to perform the emotion management necessary to feel what, according to the official frame, it would seem fitting to feel. Deep acting or emotion work, then, can be a form of obeisance to a given ideological stance, lax emotion management a clue to an ideology lapsed or rejected” (Hochschild, 1979, p.567).

The reflection described by the women I interviewed offers hope that the same emotions that work to aid their oppression by Black men may be the key to these women critically examining the operation of Black male patriarchy in their lives. Whether that be Kgosi’s challenge to defy her fear of Black men and challenge patriarchal behaviour, Mthokozisi’s questioning of her emotions towards social norms or Ayanda’s commitment to engage others on patriarchal contradictions.

4.2 Managing Consequences

The women spoke at length about the burden of patriarchal practices, a burden which they assumed on behalf of both themselves and Black men. This work was described as a mix of emotional work as discussed above, but also the management of potential and/or real consequences.

Kgosi:

I mean when you're young. A lot of us, well I don't know how many, like my puberty started around eight, nine. Yeah my boobies grew at like eight and like my mother like sweeping my boobies. So just this idea like, like preserving your sexuality. Like it's your responsibility to make sure that men don't find you attractive.....because you're nine and it should not be your responsibility to tell a man in their teens in their 20s and their 30s, in their 40s that you can't touch me just because I have breasts. Because it is the pervasive opinion that as soon as she starts puberty she's ready.

Thapelo:

You see the men impregnate other women and we hide it. The woman, the women literally do the work for the men. We hide it, we find the social workers, we we sit them down, but the man would never practically or actively facilitate that.

Mthokozisi:

So even if you are younger than the man, you're always raised in a way that you need to take care of everyone. The responsibility, everything is on you. When you watch your dad being cranky, there's an excuse. Either he's been--

if it's within the church, either he's been possessed by demons and it's the wife's responsibility to pray for him, complex shit like that. And so this is the type of context that I grew up around, even though my mom was progressive.

Ayanda:

Oh that's the one thing that I've seen a lot amongst young Black women in the workplace have had like incidents of sexual harassment don't really know what to do with it. It's not like someone comes in, is a creep like the first time they meet you. You know it isn't very much of like a weird grooming process. And for me luckily the person left just before it got like I was actually about to go and report it.....Like I was just about to like not report I was about to confront him and say that I think that this is weird in the way that you interact with me and then he left. But it also was very confusing because it is again this thing will be like aiding you is the person that becomes too familiar. It's not as obvious as anything.

Nothando:

So if I could say something to Black women it would be to stand up for themselves. That's my perspective when I think about how much work and labour Black women have to go through, to keep their families together, to keep their relationships together, their lives together. Black men will take advantage of that and we all need to stand up for ourselves.

These examples show how the women did the work to limit the effects of patriarchy on both Black men and Black women. Rather than Black men recognising it is inappropriate to harass Black women, Kgosisi's mother hides her growing breasts, and Ayanda has to confront her harasser. Black men do not deal with the consequences of unplanned pregnancy. Instead it is deemed the responsibility of Black women. These women take on an extra load both emotionally and in the form of altered behaviours and troubleshooting rather than the Black men that engender the consequences that necessitates such management. Through their attempts to shoulder the burden of Black male patriarchy, these women are inadvertently facilitating the operation of Black male patriarchy.

Mthokozisi's case in particular links the expectation of Black women to manage the consequences of Black male patriarchy to the earlier discussion around emotion work. Mthokozisi's mother must improve her husband's mood, rather than he takes it upon himself to lift himself from a bad mood. Reflecting on research into the emotion work women undertake in relationships, Reay explains:

“.... within families, women engage in emotional labour far more than most men, taking responsibility for maintaining the emotional aspects of family relationships, responding to others' emotional states and also acting to alleviate distress. As Nicky James (1989:27) asserts, managing the family's

emotional life requires ‘anticipation, planning, timetabling and trouble-shooting’. Bourdieu, in *Masculine Domination* (2001:77), writes that ‘it has often been observed that women fulfil a cathartic, quasi-therapeutic function in regulating men's emotional lives, calming their anger, helping them accept the injustices and difficulties of life’” (Reay, 2004, p. 57).

The discourse of patriarchy means that emotion work is coupled with an expectation that Black women anticipate, plan, timetable and trouble-shoot (Reay, 2004, p. 57) on behalf of Black men. This is evidenced in the narratives describing how the women take responsibility to configure their bodies or confront their harasser, when interacting with Black male patriarchy.

The point made by Nothando above explicitly highlights the unjustness of Black women solely managing the consequences of Black male patriarchy on behalf of Black men. Black women work to keep families, relationships and lives together despite the patriarchy that blights both Black women and Black men’s lives. Mthokozisi, Kgosi and Thapelo also reflected on this unjustness, recognising how it affected their sense of self.

Mthokozisi:

It teaches you to disregard yourself. Because you're not human. So you can't think about the fact that you've been hurt by apartheid and the men. But you're not going around hurting people. And people are not using it as a justification. And women have to account for everything. Whereas, Black men, they've been hurt by apartheid. And so that's why they're violent. And that's why they're dangerous. And the only way that they're going to happily take us, is if we love them and understand, navigate ourselves through them and change ourselves and stop wearing short skirts so that, you know?

Kgosi:

The men because they take no responsibility for the way that, the way that they cannot understand themselves then they project that shit onto society and we must deal with that. Which is why we have to manage the ego. Which is why we have to take it when they are being aggressive because we don't think that they have the capability to understand when you tell them I don't want you to do this to me because it makes me uncomfortable.

Thapelo:

Sad is not the word. I think it upsets me. More than anything that it upsets me about how much we're doing and how vocal we are about these issues because I feel like we end up just taking on the culture and just keep it quiet because of a salary or just because you don't have the time or the energy or we don't think we'll ever win. Right. So it upsets me that we've given we give up quite easily and quite quickly. It upsets me that also. Again we are woke, we are conscious we know that it's wrong, but we allow it.

The women feel as though they disregard themselves due to the operation of Black male patriarchy in their lives. In Mthokozisi's case she feels Black men are not adept at dealing with the hurt of apartheid, Kgosi thinks Black men cannot understand themselves and Thapelo believes Black women simply will not win in attempts to vocalise issues with patriarchy to Black men. The experiences of managing consequences described by each woman are examples of self-sacrifice. Reflecting on Njabulo Ndebele's (2003) novel *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, a story focused on four women who are separated from their husbands, due to decisions made exclusively by each husband as opposed to by or in consultation with the women themselves, Bamidele and Abuh explain:

“Cultural subjugation in the form of traditional beliefs and myths ensures that the woman is placed in a secondary position, blocked from having any say, even in issues that affect her own life. The sole aim of a woman's existence, according to this belief, is to satisfy the man; woman has no worth or dignity outside marriage because only a husband can crown her life. Critical and pathetic is Ndebele's women's experience, married as they are to phantoms yet expected to maintain the highest level of purity and self-sacrifice to these absent ghosts.

All four women go through one emotional trauma or another. The first descendant becomes a wanderer in an attempt to find her missing husband. The second is betrayed by infidelity, and becomes pregnant by another man, resulting in divorce when her husband returns after fourteen years. Mannelto Mollete, the third descendant, finds it difficult to bear the loss, and knowing the fact that her husband is married to a white comrade makes her suffer a series of 'nervous breakdowns'; she concluded the chapter by saying, 'I'm fine, but insane,' insanity to her being 'not the absence of inhibition caused by mental breakdown but, an intense consciousness of one's own mental and emotional anguish'. The fourth descendant, from the very beginning, abandons her husband when he becomes increasingly promiscuous and corrupt, after which he dies as a 'washout, totally bereft of dignity'. These women consider themselves 'a gathering of women in mourning' because they have variously experienced 'departure, waiting and return,' which happen to be the 'three pillars of a South African woman's life'" (Bamidele & Abuh, 2017, p.194).

In describing the women of Ndebele's novel as "phantoms yet expected to maintain the highest level of purity and self-sacrifice to these absent ghosts", Bamidele and Abuh reflect on the sacrifice that Black women suffer through their experiences with Black male patriarchy. The women in Ndebele's novel live a partial phantom life due to the emotional trauma of bearing their husband's decisions to leave. Their lives are irrevocably changed by their husband's decisions and their respective duty to bear the burden of those decisions. The

following point from Mthokozisi's narrative poignantly touches on this sacrifice and phantom life:

It teaches you to disregard yourself. Because you're not human.

Like the women in Ndebele's novel, the women I spoke with describe aspects of a "phantom life" due to the demands of shouldering the burdens of patriarchal violence with Black men. This idea of a phantom life is again analogous to Fanon's zone of non-being. Black women do not experience a humanity that is comparable to Black men due to their residence within a zone of non-being beneath that of Black men. A phantom life is the result of Black women's status as a non-being. Mbembe's (2001) concept of the violence experienced by the colonised as a proxy for the violence that did not occur in the imperialist city is also relevant (Mbembe, 2001). Black women experience the consequences of Black patriarchy on behalf of Black men, in the same way, the colonised experience violence on behalf of the imperialists. The value of Black women is in their usefulness to Black men in a similar sense that Black people's value is their use to white people (Fanon, 2008; Gordon, 2015). The recreation of the operation of racism in the patriarchal experiences of Black women with Black men, speaks to the understanding of patriarchy as a system of oppression that is linked to racism. Steyn's conceptualisation of CDL explains that as well as systems of oppression intersecting, interlocking, co-constructing and constituting each other they are also reproduced, resisted and reframed (Steyn, 2015, p. 383). The way in which the relations of both colonialism and racism are re-enacted in Black women's patriarchal relationships with Black men speaks to the way in which systems of oppression are interlinked. This points to the importance of an intersectional approach to tackling all forms of domination as simply focusing on one will not negate the fact that domination is reproduced in another area.

Interestingly, each of the women expressed a recognition that by letting male patriarchy operate within their communities, Black men have suffered in the form of a lack of development.

Ayanda:

But, like I said her father was about whoever is the first born is the first born. So he was very set on teaching my mother as the first born everything to do with his businesses. And so as a result she went quite easily into that world. And I think her sister as well in terms of journalism as well encouraged to be their own person. But then their father died when my uncle was 21 or 23. And then he had a lot more influence from his mother who held those patriarchal views and coddled him. And gave him anything he's had everything, he's had

three cars, he's had...and here's another thing, it's him and another uncle that is older, they're the ones who have maybe inherited flats for free and houses for free and really ended up the worst.

Kgosi:

My grandfather has nine children, two sons, absolutely no expectation of any kind of patriarchal responsibility that they should uphold. So like providing in the home they don't have that but the patriarchal privilege they most certainly have. They are the head when it comes to like any kind of representation they get the big piece of chicken. But there's absolutely no responsibility that they have to the family in terms of the things we expect them to do and if they don't do it then that's fine. But there is still this like very in my opinion fake thing of you have to buy this for your uncle you have to do this for your uncle. And I never understand like there's kind of like. It's almost like courting like egos and my uncles are now currently unemployed. They've been unemployed for some time but even when they were working they weren't making that much money. I mean it's ok for my uncle to ask me for money you know but I can't like just because I provide I don't get those privileges and that kind of thing and they do.

Thapelo:

Only my uncle had access to my dad being weak. Right, and I mean later he had his leg amputated, which meant that he couldn't do the things he used to. He couldn't do the things that made him feel like a man. So he couldn't provide the way that he could and that killed him. I remember him coming back from the hospital and like his ego was bruised. His entire life he was like I'm used to going to work and driving my car, making money, providing for my family, going to the pub with my friends, literally my independence and now that I don't have that it feels like... So I saw the hero kind of crumble in front of us because the thing that gave him the most confidence was taken away from him. And I think it took him three or four months and he was dead. Whereas I've seen my aunt who has diabetes, she's had four amputations on the same leg, her toe, her foot, part of her leg, just above the knee and she survived.

Nothando:

But I also remember when I was younger thinking women were inherently in charge of everything but then I was like they're not, and I was so angry. So now when I reflect on it, it kinda makes me angry because I see it reflecting in my peers, they don't actually involve themselves as much in what their families are going through and it's like, it's very personal, I think about my father who at some point became estranged from the family and then tried to reconnect but by then I was already a teenager, he had all this time and now I don't know my dad's family.

Each of these narratives gives an example of how patriarchy limited the potentiality of Black men in these women's lives. They illustrate how in managing patriarchy Black women are contributing to the degradation of Black men. This speaks to the work of African American

theorists who have linked the emancipation from racial supremacy with the end of patriarchal oppression. Reflecting on the link, Roberts explains:

“The relationship between racism and patriarchy, then, also holds a challenge for Black women. It calls Black feminists to inform our communities that patriarchy contributes to Black men's oppression and that feminism is essential to the struggle for the liberation of all Black people” (Roberts, p. 35, 1993).

The women's narratives around managing the consequences of Black male patriarchy points to the further emotional burden and inconvenience placed on women and the way in which Black men also suffer developmentally. These narratives, again, powerfully illustrate the way in which patriarchal oppression works with racial oppression to facilitate the oppression of all Black people.

4.3 Resisting Patriarchy

4.3.1 The Implications of Class

The women identified moments of resistance in their experiences with Black male patriarchy. In doing so, they touched on the way in which their middle-class status impacted their approach to and experience of Black male patriarchy.

Mthokozisi:

Actually funnily enough this weekend I went to a gala event and my dad and I drink together, I explained this to you. So there was wine and these Zulu men were sitting around the table and then I went with my glass and I asked for wine and they looked at my Dad first to see if it was okay and here I am 33 years old right, they looked at him first and they realised and I said guys can I please have wine and they said “Hauw! Your father allows you to drink?” and I was like “Hello I'm 33?!”, the word allowed doesn't even exist in my vocabulary you know when it comes to my relationship with him and they reluctantly you know poured some wine for me because they saw that he was okay, but it was until they saw that he was okay. And so it was the men here and the woman there and I was there chilling with them and one man kept on saying “the women are sitting there” you know. And I was like I wanna sit here, I went there I didn't like the conversation, I like the conversation here and the fact that my Dad didn't have a problem. It was madness. And then one guy really got offended and he got up and he said something and I was like “aah bhuti” and he's like, “am I your age mate for you to call me bhuti?” And I'm like but you're not even my Dad's age, you're like literally my age, and he's like “no, you don't call me Bhuti, I'm a Zulu man”. He took his drink, he stormed, and he left, he literally left. And the next day he didn't talk to me. So that was also quite interesting to

experience because sometimes being in Jo'burg as a middle-class woman you are really shielded from, yes we still experience the violence and the toxic masculinity. But also we have a choice right, I have a choice right, whereas if I go into the villages those women don't have the choice and this is the men that deal with on a daily basis.

Thapelo:

So me being able to participate in certain spaces, allows me, gives me a different vocabulary so I'm able to identify the wrong and then speak back, speak against that because I know that it's wrong, where somebody who doesn't have that access, you know is just a participant and they are ok with being raped they are okay being told what to do with their bodies, well not even okay, but they don't see, they don't know that it's wrong.

Ayanda:

So I definitely think they are more willing to listen. So I definitely have a louder voice. In as much as I'm being policed, if I raise my voice they will be like "ha ha" but they'll hear it. It's like oh wait she's speaking now. It's ok guys give her a chance. You know and I do know that that is really because of my middle-class background because I found that other people who may not be able to articulate themselves as well they don't recognise those in the same spaces as them, they don't even give them that chance.

Mthokozisi, Thapelo and Ayanda recognised that middle-class privilege gave them additional ammunition as well as protection when resisting Black male patriarchy. Here, Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital and habitus become relevant. Describing the way in which cultural capital privileges the middle-class, Lawler explains:

"It is only when cultural capital is sufficiently legitimated that it can be converted into symbolic capital - the prestige or recognition which various capitals acquire by virtue of being recognized and 'known' as legitimate. For Bourdieu, it is only the cultural capital of the middle classes which is legitimated in this way: their tastes and dispositions are coded as inherently 'right', inherently 'tasteful'" (Lawler, 1999, p. 6).

Lovell explains habitus:

"By habitus Bourdieu understands ways of doing and being which social subjects acquire during their socialization. Their habitus is not a matter of conscious learning, or of ideological imposition, but is acquired through practice. Bourdieu's sociology rests on an account of lived 'practice', and what he terms 'the practical sense' – the ability to function effectively within a given social field, an ability which cannot necessarily be articulated as conscious knowledge: 'knowing how' rather than 'knowing that'" (Lovell, 2000, p.2).

Mthokozisi, Thapelo, and Ayanda's narratives demonstrate the way in which the cultural capital of being a middle-class Black woman is recognised during their engagements with

Black male patriarchy and aids in resisting it. The women themselves recognise that they hold cultural capital. In this sense class is configured into their subjectivity of these women (Lawler, 1999, p. 6) helping them to negotiate experiences with Black male patriarchy. Mthokozisi's narrative demonstrates how cultural capital allows her to transgress with authority (Lovell, 2000, p. 15). Her habitus endows her with the confidence to infiltrate a gathering of Black men with sufficient clout.

In comparison, Nothando described a negative experience with her middle-class status when resisting Black male patriarchy:

I went to a middle-class school, it was mostly white, there were some Black children who were not middle-class, I don't know how they got into that school maybe they had sponsorship or were in the feeder area, whatever the case maybe and they all hated me and I didn't realise when I was younger maybe it was because of that, but now I think it's because of that. Teachers liked me, and I had a good English accent. But I don't think that they, so there was the layer of class difference, which I privileged from, that made them pick on me but then there was another layer of them being boys and I used to pick fights with them as well, it was always tension and animosity.

Nothando's example shows how her class status left her more susceptible to attacks. Her experience indicates that the successful performance of habitus and use of cultural capital depends on the context in which it is utilised. Nothando's narrative takes place in a particular social field in which different social actors and institutional practices are intersecting and negotiating (Lovell, 2003, p. 9). She is one of only a few Black children in a predominantly white School, and of those Black children, she is one of a few who is middle-class. In this context, we can assume that discourses of gender, race and class are also jostling with those of white privilege, adaptability (her reference to accent) and Western notions of education. In this situation, Nothando's habitus as a middle-class Black women is constituted with oppressive discourses that pose a threat to the Black men with whom she interacts. Nothando's narrative demonstrates that gender, race and class are combinatory social categories that infiltrate and influence other categories as well as one another (Adkins, 2004, p. 6) and this articulation is dependent on the social field in which they operate.

In each of Mthokozisi, Thapelo and Ayanda's narratives they refer to other women who do not have the "vocabulary", cannot "articulate" as well or are in the "village" as a comparison to their middle-class experiences with resisting Black male patriarchy. This was one of several times that the women gave narratives comparing their experience to that of a Black woman in a rural area or a working-class Black woman. Each reference made to other

(rural/working class) women included an assumption that these women either have a worse experience with patriarchy or did not manage patriarchy correctly. An example being Thapelo's comment that "they are ok with being raped they are okay being told what to do with their bodies, well not even okay, but they don't see, they don't know that it's wrong". I suspect the women made reference to these other women to highlight their appreciation of the privilege they hold as middle-class Black women, however, it betrays the necessity of each woman to constitute her social standing in a class hierarchy (Lawler, 1999). In their comparisons to these other women, their narratives pathologise the other women to which they refer into a monolithic group, in which these middle-class Black women could define themselves as managing Black male patriarchy more appropriately.

Kgosi gave a narrative which was indicative of this normative approach to working class and rural Black women:

And when I'm in my car I don't have to deal with like just every day micro aggressions every day, but when I walk all men of fucking walks of life will take a chance I had I've had situations where I could have taken an Uber and I was like no I'm gonna wait for the Gautrain bus and then it's gonna take me to the station.... And I'm waiting outside like this big office park, but no one actually uses this bus stop, no one uses it unless they are coming to work so I'm using it at around 11am so no one is actually using it. And this Mercedes-Benz white was driving passed me and stops and does a u-turn. And I was like where were you going before, that's the first thing. Did you not have a plan? Did you not have plans? But also I think that like this person would not have approached me in this way if I were in my car, not that I drive a Mercedes-Benz but there's a particular way you get approached when you're driving in a car, that people are like oh no she's like this girl, but when I walk that's where the level of just respect really I feel like this is why people want to get out of public transport and into private cars because not only are you more accessible but there is just a thing of public transport is for poor people, that the quality is subpar and that kind of thing you have no option so you are much more like desperate and vulnerable as a woman because you're much more willing to like you know just say yes to any man just because they in a car. Yes to any man just because they look flashy and that kind of thing.

Kgosi assumes that women who use public transport and walk are more likely to be interpellated into the operation of Black male patriarchy by talking to the man who beckons her from his car. Kgosi, in comparison to the mythic other woman, is annoyed by the man in the car. Lawler (1999) discusses the way in which working-class women are often positioned as disappointing obstacles to revolutionary struggles (Lawler, 1999, p. 12). Their experiences are essentialised for them to "become objects in a plot in which the only position for them to occupy is one of pathology" (Lawler, 1999, p. 12). In speaking of these other women as not

knowing better or more likely to cooperate with the operation of Black male patriarchy, the women relegate other women's experiences to the normative operation of women living in poverty. This normative approach suggests that these other women's experiences are not worth exploring.

Additionally, a monolithic view of working class/rural other Black women serves the interests of middle-class Black women. Relegating these women to those who do not know better is a use of the rhetoric of modernity that used notions of tradition and the primitive to rationalise the suppression of colonial subjects (Mignolo, 2008 p.16). In pathologising other Black women, middle-class Black women can justify a focus on solely improving their position within the capitalist hegemony. The desire for the Black middle-class to maintain their social position takes route in the racial history of South Africa. Posel explains that individual modes of consumption are integral to the middle-class' senses of self and sociality and a critical site for the exercise of power (Posel, 2010, p. 162). On the South African context, Posel goes on to argue that, "throughout South Africa's history of colonial rule and white supremacy, regimes of race have co-produced regimes of consumption" (Posel, 2010, p. 172) going on to explain that, "consumption has long been saturated with racial meaning, there are strong and dense historical reasons why the performance of racial identity in the present could be so closely connected to practices of acquisition" (Posel, 2010, p.173). Posel's assessment of the relationship between race and consumption in South Africa demonstrates the "emancipatory significance of black acquisition" (Posel, 2010, p. 173), a factor that must be considered when analysing the Black middle-class' propensity to protect and/or solidify their class position. This supports Southall's suggestion, explored in Chapter Two of this research report, that the Black middle-class may be more inclined to protect their class position rather than pursue competing social justice movements. This suggests that the reduction of the plight of working class and rural Black women to normative others serves both the capitalist and emancipatory aspirations of Black middle-class women. This is an important point to consider for those of us who investigate issues of gender, race and class from a middle-class positionality. We must both be careful about essentialising the experiences of others as a tool to clarify the boundary around our own experiences, and examine our own class bias/ambitions when describing working class/rural women. If attention is not paid to the lived experiences of rural and working class women, we risk leaving these women out when we fight to redraw the boundaries of inclusion and freedom from oppression for all Black women (Lawler, 1999).

4.3.2 Matriarchal Enforcement of Patriarchy

In describing their attempts to resist instances of Black male patriarchy, the women explained how they encountered women, particularly matriarchal figures, promoting its operation:

Ayanda:

I think there's these other pockets of my family where there is always that huge patriarchy I think maybe my grandmother and I think the way that she was raised she has that thing about like boys are revered and taken care of.

Kgosi:

In my extended family it's the women who uphold it the most.

Thapelo:

Your grandmother will say to you "you don't do that, you do what he says". When a woman gets married that night, before she goes to the husband's house she sat down in a private room with just women telling him, they're telling her the truth about male behaviour. But none of it is about okay now you can change or you can question that or challenge them in fact they are told rather keep your mouth shut and do what he says you must do. Make him happy.

Mthokozisi:

And it's always the women who tell you that women don't do this, women do that. And it's just the ways that within the house, within the home, the way that you are treated versus the way your brother is treated. So I heard an interesting thing that I think it was Michelle Obama, and I never quote Michelle Obama. She said that mothers love their sons but raise their daughters.

Reflecting on Black matriarchal women's role in upholding patriarchy, bell hooks states:

"Patriarchal thinking shapes the values of our culture. We are socialized into this system, females as well as males. Most of us learned patriarchal attitudes in our family of origin, and they were usually taught to us by our mothers" (hooks, 2013, p. 2).

CDL elucidates the way in which social identities are learned via social practices (Steyn, 2015, p. 385). The examples of matriarchs promoting patriarchy provided by the women interviewed speaks to the extent that Black women internalise and define themselves in relation to the oppressive identity that is imposed on them. Thapelo's description of matriarchal advice on a Black woman's wedding night speaks to the way in which Black

matriarchs take pride and institutionalise the operation of Black male patriarchy, which contributes to the way in which relations of power become hidden in plain sight.

The women reflected on the fact that matriarchs promoted patriarchal relationships, even though these same relationships had failed the matriarchs in question:

Kgosi:

I think for the older generation, one its disappointment when I talk about like my mom and my aunts. And two, especially is empathy, like a lot of them in my family, are like at least I have children, at least I got to experience a relationship. But there is no kind of like. I don't even think they have the capability to expect that. And the thing is that like my aunts grew up with a father you know a present father in the home. Yet every single one of them accepted like subpar relationships with men.

Mthokozisi:

And it makes me sad. It makes me sad. Because first of all, I look at what my mom has had to give up simply to fit in or to uphold the structure of a patriarchy.... So it makes me sad to think of who she was and how she gave up herself to fit in these structures and how her husband abused her and literally stopped her from being, I mean, it's a story of many, many Black women.

Thapelo:

Men have cheated on our moms are our uncles on our aunts. And they still stay.

It seems absurd that matriarchs who have suffered from infidelity, non-present fathers and given up on their dreams would instruct the following generation to uphold the patriarchy that has blighted their own lives. bell hooks is again useful offering this:

“Yet many female-headed households endorse and promote patriarchal thinking with far greater passion than two-parent households. Because they do not have an experiential reality to challenge false fantasies of gender roles, women in such households are far more likely to idealize the patriarchal male role and patriarchal men than are women who live with patriarchal men every day.” (hooks, 2013, p. 2).

hooks suggests that matriarchs promote patriarchy, particularly in a household where men are not present, due to fantasies of ideal family life. This viewpoint is complicated by the examples of the women interviewed that show that not only when men are not present, but when they have been present and had a negative impact on matriarchs' family lives, patriarchal relationships continue to be endorsed by matriarchs. An explanation for this can be found in a critical analysis of the institutions of motherhood and patriarchy that have been

formulated in the African American context. African American feminist scholars have argued that the operation of racism places a particularly brutal burden on African American women. Roberts explains:

“Most white mothers do not know the pain of raising Black children in a racist society. It is impossible to explain the depth of sorrow felt at the moment a mother realizes she birthed her precious brown baby into a society that regards her child as just another unwanted Black charge. Black mothers must bear the incredible task of guarding their children's identity against innumerable messages that brand them as less than human” (Roberts, 1993, p. 4).

The suggestion here is that Black mothers, having an awareness of the oppression of racism, take on a particular emotional toll in safeguarding their children. Perhaps the narratives of the tendency of matriarchs to promote patriarchy take route in a misguided belief that Black women are the Black man's only solace in an anti-Black world. Encouraging younger Black women to treat their Black partners (the matriarch's Black son) with relative ease is arguably symbolic of the lingering maternal despair Black women hold regarding birthing a Black child into a racist world. A Black man's wife takes on the role of a matriarch in insulating Black men from their constructed inhumanity.

Another argument may be the colonial interruption of the Black family unit in South Africa. As evidenced in the examples included in Njabulo Ndebele's (2003) novel *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* above, Black patriarchs were often separated from their families during apartheid. The South African example of patriarchal absence is indicative of the historical, sociological manipulation of Black people for the economic and social prosperity of whites. Black women, for example, were assigned the domestic tasks of white women in addition to their own to allow white, middle-class women entry to the male public sphere (Roberts, p. 22, 1993; hooks, p. 6, 1981). These historical threats to Black family life are arguably another factor that may encourage matriarchs to impose patriarchal norms on younger Black women. A present Black father has overcome the structural factors that are designed to keep him away from the Black family, a recognition of this by Black matriarchs is a convincing reason for not only accepting Black male patriarchy but also for perpetuating it.

Black women's entry into the male public sphere has been delayed by their assumption of white women's domestic role in addition to their own, thus contributing to patriarchy flourishing in the Black community. Black women are the mother of all races due to their

exploitation and are therefore identified with motherhood and domesticity. On the link between motherhood and patriarchy, Roberts explains:

“Martha Fineman calls motherhood “[a] colonized [concept] ... an event physically practiced and experienced by women, but occupied and defined, given content and value, by the core concepts of patriarchal ideology.” This is patriarchy's meaning of motherhood, one designed to serve the interests of men.” (Roberts, 1993, p. 6).

It is also useful to repeat Bamidele & Abuh’s analysis contained in the discussion of managing consequences above:

“Cultural subjugation in the form of traditional beliefs and myths ensures that the woman is placed in a secondary position, blocked from having any say, even in issues that affect her own life. The sole aim of a woman’s existence, according to this belief, is to satisfy the man; woman has no worth or dignity outside marriage because only a husband can crown her life. (Bamidele & Abuh, 2017, p.194).

If a woman’s identity is constructed through family life and “only a husband can crown her life”, it is no wonder that Black matriarchs perpetuate patriarchy as it is a necessary component of motherhood, family life and womanhood. In order to birth a child and become a mother and be a true woman, a man is required to sire a child, therefore making men, and therefore patriarchy inextricably linked to motherhood. Due to patriarchy’s link to motherhood, resisting patriarchy is comparable to denying Black women womanhood itself (Roberts, 1993, p.11). The women’s narratives around matriarchs promoting patriarchy speaks to the unique identity of Black women with relation to motherhood and family life. An identity impacted by colonial disruption of family life and Black women’s domestic exploitation in order to facilitate white middle-class female inclusion in the public sphere.

Roberts goes on to explain the way in which motherhood is constructed as a reward to women:

“Historically, the sanctity of motherhood not only encouraged women to become mothers, but also relieved some of the pain women experienced from their exploitation under patriarchy. Women's labor in the home was compensated by the ideological rewards of motherhood, rather than by economic remuneration or the opportunity for self-determination” (Roberts, 1993, p.10).

Taking Roberts’ explanation of motherhood as a reward for women’s exploitation, patriarchy becomes a perverse oppressor and necessity. The reward for women’s oppression from patriarchy is motherhood, which due to the normative necessity of a man to sire a child and the operations of power that come with interacting with men, can only be realised by

cooperating with patriarchal oppression. The matriarchal endorsement of patriarchy is a symptom of the hegemonic codes that regulate Black women's existence. True womanhood, which women are conditioned to desire, is only achievable through motherhood that in turn is understood to be achievable through a patriarchal relationship. Due to the socio-economic histories of the Black family, achieving this womanhood is more difficult for Black women, resulting in toleration of the violence of patriarchal relationships and its endorsement by Black matriarchs.

4.3.3 Disengaging

Some of the women described how they try to avoid engaging with Black men because of the toll of managing the outcomes of their behaviour and their exasperation around trying to educate Black men around the negativity of Black male patriarchy:

Mthokozisi:

You know there was a time where I really, really loved educating, even within, you know, the struggle where you-- where you can take your male comrades and educate them or clash with them. And then there comes a time where it exhausts you. And you start thinking of Toni Morrison's words of how oppression acts as a distraction and how these mother fuckers distract you.

Mthokozisi went on to explain:

So it's easier with white people. Because I can avoid white people as much as possible and only interact with them because life needs me to. It's very difficult with Black men. Because they're your dad, your brothers, your cousins. So you have to interact with them knowing the fact that you have to sleep with them is a problem. Because you need one that's constantly there. And so I always say, I really, really wish that women-- because I'm tired. So I don't believe that Black women and Black men must work side by side to dismantle patriarchy. I'm over, way over that. I think Black men must try and find their way. And I'm not there to offer any advice on what must happen. But they must do something. And the stuff that they do, I'll roll my eyes. Because we've seen them before. So when Black men call conferences and say such things like, us Black men need to be accountable. I'll roll my eyes. Because I've heard it before. And I don't think that it's coming from a sincere place.

Kgosi:

I transitioned out I'm in very pessimistic you know feeling like if this is what relationships look like I don't want to be in one.

Ayanda:

In general I regard Black man as sort of a little bit weaker. It's just like they just generally don't rise to their own full potential. Nevermind anyone else's expectations. And I just look at them and I look even now like currently in 2017 there is a wave of Black women. I mean even this just like I can say and it's a normal thing that I'm going to meet my friend to talk about her thesis. Almost every Black woman I know is studying and doing that thesis and has a job and it's functional and has a plan for the lives that even have kids they're great mother. And you cannot say the same for our counterparts which is crazy and sad for them because then we seem to be creating this like gap that like Black women are graduating in droves and they're moving up in droves and they're having to hide their salaries because they're earning better in droves. And then these Black men are getting frustrated and women are not even disappointed anymore they're like oh that's kind of sad but that's OK.

Ayanda and Kgosi's comments point to an active sense of avoidance and leaving Black men behind. The type of avoidance described in their narratives is something I have typically heard when Black people describe their relationship and desire to avoid interacting with white people. Reflecting on a growing annoyance with Black women's oppressive experiences with Black men, in a viral blog post, *Straight Black Men are the White People of Black People*, writer Damon Young explains:

“When speaking about race and racism, we want our concerns and our worries and our fears to be acknowledged. We want white people to at least make an effort to understand that our reality is different from theirs and that white supremacy is a vital and inextricable part of America's foundation, and we grow frustrated when they refuse to acknowledge their role—historically and presently—in propagating it” (Young, para 4, 2017).

Young goes on to describe,

“...but when black women share that we pose the same existential and literal danger to them that whiteness does to us; and when black women ask us to give them the benefit of the doubt about street harassment and sexual assault and other forms of harassment and violence we might not personally witness; and when black women tell us that allowing our cousins and brothers and co-workers and niggas to use misogynistic language propagates that culture of danger; and when black women admit how scary it can be to get followed and approached by a man while waiting for a bus or walking home from work; and when black women articulate how hurtful it is for our reactions to domestic abuse and their rapes and murders to be “what women need to do differently to prevent this from happening to them” instead of “what we (men) need to do differently to prevent us from doing this to them,” their words are met with resistance and outright pushback. After demanding from white people that we're listened to and believed and that our livelihoods are considered, our ears shut off and hearts shut down when black women are pleading with us” (Young, para 8, 2017).

The frustration that Young describes and the reluctance of the women I spoke with to engage with Black men may be the fuelling of a revolutionary discourse in Black female empowerment centred on disengagement. The political force of non-engagement is evidenced in many important social justice movements – the American Civil Rights Movement’s bus boycotts, to the Apartheid Struggle’s beer hall boycotts, and Gandhi’s use of passive nonviolence in India’s fight for independence. Perhaps the increased non-engagement by Black women with Black men is the political force required in Black women’s fight for emancipation against Black patriarchal oppression. On the potentiality for women’s movements to define a new inclusionary group formation for women, Adkins reflects on Lovell and explains:

“Lovell suggests further vis-à-vis women that a process of group formation has occurred whenever women’s movements as social and political movements have arisen. In short, her claim is that women’s movements do the work of creating recognized representatives who in turn create a system of recognition and authorization, which allows ‘women’ as a group to come into being. In this formulation ‘women’ do not (and cannot) exist as a class ‘in itself’ (as has so often been posited within certain modes of feminist theorizing) but will only become a practical group through a process of authorization. ‘Women’ in other words become a socio-political category. What is so interesting about this formulation for feminism is that, rather than an external ‘out there’ phenomenon which is left more or less unaccounted for, Lovell’s analysis brings feminism as a political movement right into the heart of feminist social theory” (Adkins, 2004, p. 7).

The various reflections of the women regarding disengaging with Black men points to the potentiality of a political movement that leads to Black women reclaiming what it means to be a Black woman and the way in which this new formation articulates with discourses of oppression such as patriarchy.

4.4 Summary

Analysis of the narratives obtained during semi-structured interviews with each participants surfaced three themes: 1) the work of emotion, 2) managing consequences, and 3) resisting patriarchy. This third theme consisted of three sub-themes: i) the implications of class, ii) matriarchal enforcement of patriarchy and iii) disengagement. These themes point to the despair, labour and violence of experiencing Black male patriarchy. A desire to actively tackle the negative impact of Black male patriarchy in each woman’s life was also an active thread amongst these themes. These findings will be discussed further in the final chapter of this research report.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion

This research report aimed to investigate the experiences of young, Black, middle-class women with Black male patriarchy through semi structured interviews. The greater intent of this report was to contribute analysis that assists in tackling gender based violence in South Africa and to contribute to the diversification of research about Black women. A critical narrative analysis together with Gilligan and Sullivan's Feminist Listening Guide was applied to the data collected during interviews. The data was then read with a critical diversity literacy lens to understand the way in which participants describe the oppression they face within the confines of the learned hegemonic codes which regulate their existence.

Three themes arose from data analysis: 1) the work of emotion, 2) managing consequences, and 3) resisting patriarchy. This third theme consisted of three sub-themes: i) the implications of class, ii) matriarchal enforcement of patriarchy and iii) disengagement. The first theme surfaced the considerable emotional work enmeshed in experiencing Black male patriarchy. This emotional work was characterised as a form of violence that the women had to bear, a consequence of residing in a differentiated zone of non-being beneath that of Black men. However, this emotional work suggested a potential opening for tackling patriarchy, evidenced in the women's realisation of the toll of this emotion work and voicing a desire to actively challenge the operation of Black male patriarchy in their lives. Emotion is a powerful tool in the face of hegemonic forces that seek to conceal the existence of power relations (Boler & Zembylas, 2003, p. 120). Emotional responses are the cracks through which we can identify, dissect and hopefully challenge inequality (Boler & Zembylas, 200, p. 120).

The emotion work undertaken by the women was coupled with the toll of managing the consequences of Black male patriarchy, the second theme of analysis. This management was undertaken solely by women despite these consequences affecting both Black men and Black women. The management of Black male patriarchy resulted in a sense of depletion within the women and a feeling that Black men were underdeveloped. The management of patriarchy was indicative of the relationship between different forms of oppression in the general scheme of subjugation, with the patriarchal burden experienced by the women, similar to the racial burden experienced by Black people. This spoke to an understanding that all oppressions are interlinked and cannot be tackled independently of one another.

The third and final theme, resisting patriarchy, unearthed the way in which class status on occasion lent authority to the women during confrontations with Black male patriarchy. However, the value of class in resisting patriarchy was context dependent with middle-class status also described as a hindrance in tackling patriarchy due to the interplay of other social categories in particular settings. In critically examining attempts to resist patriarchy, a concerning tendency for the women to construct themselves in relation to a pathologised version of a monolithic rural or working-class woman was unearthed. This emphasised the diligence needed when theorising around Black women, race and class to ensure that the complexities of rural and working class women are not overlooked due to binary notions of identity construction. In particular, it pointed to the way in which the middle-class' privileged position within a capitalist hierarchy may influence their attempts to advocate for social justice for those lower in the class hierarchy. This is a particular concern for middle-class Black people in South Africa who may find compromising their class position in order to advocate for others a challenge due to the apartheid legacy of freedom being connected to the ability to consume. Matriarchal endorsement of patriarchy highlighted the way in which the dominated come to co-opt the oppression that is imposed on them. Matriarchs who had themselves experienced the negative effects of Black male patriarchy were described as promoting the very same to the women interviewed. This phenomenon was linked to the unique construction of true womanhood as linked to motherhood, and the way in which this was harder to achieve for Black women due to the colonial disruption of the Black familial unit. Analysis of attempts to resist patriarchy drew attention to desires to disengage with Black men to lessen the toll of experiencing Black male patriarchy. This disengagement underscored another potential opening to challenge Black male patriarchy via an active movement of mass disengagement with Black men.

The stated objectives of this research were 1) to understand and critically engage with experiences of Black, middle-class women with Black male patriarchy, 2) to provide knowledge that helps provide solutions to gender based violence and femicide and 3) to contribute to the canon of knowledge around the diverse experiences of Black women. Objective (1) was met through the understanding of the violence involved in the emotion work of experiencing patriarchy. Participants described the way in which their self-worth was negatively affected through the continued self-sacrifice of managing the consequences of patriarchy on behalf of Black men. The violence of emotion work was linked to the residence of Black women within a zone of non-being beneath that of Black men. It was argued that

any attempt to disrupt this location is met with the enforcement of emotional violence and contextual feeling rules. In addition, objective (1) was satisfied through a continuing analysis that firmly linked the operation of patriarchy with that of racism. Patriarchy, through its ability to regulate Black women and limit the development of Black men, due to Black women's burden of managing the consequences of intraracial patriarchy, aids in keeping Black people subordinate within racial notions of hegemonic superiority. Objective (2) was met through the suggestion that emotional reactions to patriarchy be used to critically engage relationships with Black men and the proposal that the desire to disengage with Black men voiced during interviews becomes a political disengagement embraced by Black women as a means to dismantle Black male patriarchy.

Objective (3) was satisfied through the analysis and conclusions contained in this report and my intention to make this research report public. The concerns surfaced around the boundary maintenance exercised by Black middle-class women in defining themselves in relation to pathologised versions of rural and working class Black women are particularly salient to the activism and social justice initiatives around gender based violence in South Africa. Many of the initiatives are led by or include Black middle-class women. This makes it important that they understand the potentiality of their class bias for undermining the prospects of rural and working class Black women. Furthermore, it is important that they ensure efforts are made to understand rural and working class Black women's experiences so that these women are included in the equality and inclusivity that all Black South African women finally achieve.

In order to fully realise objective (3), however, areas of further related research are required. Given this research report's desire to focus on a specific dimension of Black womanhood and to not conflate the diverse experiences of Black women, the following suggestions did not fall into the scope of this work. Suggested areas of further research include an exploration of matriarchal experiences with Black male patriarchy and how this has shaped matriarchal positionalities to patriarchy within the Black familial unit. More questioning of Black middle-class women's understanding of the lived experiences of rural and working class Black women is needed alongside a greater exploration of Black middle-class women's relationship to consumption and social status. This line of questioning will speak to Southall and Posel's arguments and concerns around the Black middle-class' potentiality to commit to social justice initiatives on behalf of Black South Africans of all classes. Lastly, an important area of further research would be comparing the experiences of Black trans, Black lesbian, Black gender non-conforming, Black rural, older Black and Black working class women with Black

male patriarchy in order to unearth further discoveries that ameliorate these women's encounters with Black male patriarchal oppression. As stated at the beginning of this research report, racism is patriarchal and patriarchy is racist (Roberts, 1992 p. 3). To truly challenge oppression, we must understand oppressions as co constituting, and therefore it is important to understand the way in which patriarchy works with other forms of domination such as poverty, homophobia and transphobia in order to stop all forms of unequal power relations.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Information sheet sent to research participants

Participant Information Sheet

Dear Madam,

RE: Invitation to participate in M.A. research project

Title of research project: **The Experiences of Young, Black, Middle-Class Women with Black Male Patriarchy**

Supervisor: **Professor Melissa Steyn**

Researcher: **Adanma Yisa**

Phone Number: **083 719 0424**

Email Address: Adanma.Yisa@gmail.com

I am a registered student at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and am currently completing a Master's degree in Critical Diversity Studies. As part of my degree programme I am currently undertaking research towards a Master's thesis entitled *The Experiences of Young, Black, Middle-Class Women with Black Male Patriarchy*.

I am inviting you to take participate in my research by letting me interview on two occasions. The first interview will last approximately one hour and the second interview will take place approximately two weeks later and will also last approximately one hour. In total I will be interviewing six participants. With your consent, the interview will be recorded audibly. The interview will take place in a location of your choosing.

If you accept my invitation to participate I will not share the content of your interviews with any third party in any manner that would result in you being identified. The information you provide will be part of a research report that will be publicly available, however a pseudonym will be used when referring to any response you give that is included in the report.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any further questions.

Ms Adanma Yisa

M.A. (Critical Diversity Studies) Student
Wits Centre for Diversity Studies
School of Social Sciences
Faculty of Humanities
University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Appendix B: Consent Form

Interview Consent Form

I, _____(name), agree that I am participating willingly in a semi structured interview with Adanma Oyiza Ijoma Yisa on _____(date) at _____(place).

I understand that these interviews form part of a research project on *The Experiences of Young, Black, Middle-Class Women with Black Male Patriarchy* at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

I understand that the rationale and nature of the research and I understand the costs and benefit of my participation for myself.

I understand that I will participate in two one hour interviews within the space of approximately two weeks.

I understand that I will be given a pseudonym and that my identity will remain anonymous, as far as this is possible.

I understand that the interview will be recorded so that the researcher may more accurately reflect my views in the report.

I understand that should I wish so the researcher will share the findings with me.

Signature (Participant) _____ Date _____

Signature (Researcher) _____ Date _____

Appendix C: Semi Structured Interview Schedule

Interview One

How have you experienced black male patriarchy in the home environment, work place and socially?

- What are your experiences with black male patriarchy within your family?
 - How did this experience make you feel?
- What are your experiences with black male patriarchy within social environments?
 - How did this experience make you feel?
- What are your experiences with black male patriarchy in the work place?
 - How did this experience make you feel?

Which experiences do you feel typifies your experiences with black male patriarchy?

- Why do you believe this/these experiences typify your experiences with black male patriarchy?
- How do you think being middle class impacts your experience with black male patriarchy?
- Do you think these experiences are typical for other young, black, middle class women?

How have you been personally affected by your experiences with black male patriarchy?

- To what extent do you reflect on your experiences with black male patriarchy?
- Do you feel sad, despondent or guilty about your experiences with black male patriarchy?
- How have your experiences with black male patriarchy influenced your views of black men?
- How have your experiences with black male patriarchy influenced your views of black women?

How have they tried to resist black male patriarchy? Did they succeed in resisting black male patriarchy?

- Have you ever changed your behaviour to avoid/mitigate experiences with black male patriarchy?
 - Were you successful in avoiding/mitigating your experience with black male patriarchy?
- Do you feel burdened to avoid/mitigate experiences with black male patriarchy?
- Have you ever been offered guidance on how to handle black male patriarchy? If so, by who?
- Who do you feel is to blame for your experiences with black male patriarchy?

Interview Two

Have you reflected on our previous discussion at all? What have your reflections revealed?

Since our initial discussion have you had any experiences with black male patriarchy that stand out?

How do you think you may have internalised your experiences with black male patriarchy?