



**Stories from the Heart in a Time of COVID-19: A Critical Study of the Discourse of Entrepreneurship and Its Lived Realities for Women Entrepreneurs in Gauteng.**

*Master of Arts in the field of Diversity Studies*

**Wits Centre for Critical Diversity Studies**

**A MASTERS RESEARCH REPORT BY:**

**Full names: Sarah-Jane Boden**

**Student no: 2272627**

**Supervisor: Dr William Mpofu**

**Date of submission: 30 April 2021**

**Word count: 38250**

## PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg Centre for Critical Diversity Studies

I, Sarah-Jane Boden, (Student number: 2272627) am a student registered for a Masters in Critical Diversity Studies in the year 2021.

I hereby declare the following:

- I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong.
- I confirm that ALL the work submitted for assessment for the above course is my own unaided work except where I have explicitly indicated otherwise.
- I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others. I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 30 April 2021 \_\_\_\_\_

## **ABSTRACT**

This research report questions the mainstream discourse of entrepreneurship in South Africa, by examining the covers of a popular entrepreneurship magazine over a calendar year. The findings are compared to data gathered from interviews conducted with ten women entrepreneurs in Gauteng, South Africa. The research aims to interrogate the mythologising of entrepreneurship with a particular lens on its raced and gendered construction. The research was conducted using the tools of Critical Discourse and Narrative Analysis within a Critical Diversity Lens framework. The study aims to privilege the voices of Black women entrepreneurs, by creating a space for the centering of their ‘stories from the heart’ in a narrative format. The research was conducted against the backdrop of the global COVID-19 pandemic which required flexibility in the data gathering process. In conclusion, the research presents a range of suggestions for entrepreneurship to be reimagined in transformative ways.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research project is more than just an academic endeavour, it is an ode from me to all the women entrepreneurs who come before - and importantly for those who hope to come next. I hope that my findings may bring answers or at least some comfort.

Thank you to the ten brave and talented women who graciously opened their hearts to me, sharing their intimate stories of the joys and pain of their entrepreneurial journeys.

I will be forever grateful to WICDS for empowering me with the depth and breadth of knowledge that I have gained, thank you so much to Prof Melissa Steyn, Prof Peace Kiguwa and Dr Haley McEwan.

A special thank you goes out to my parents Warren and Penny, my life partner Adrien and our son Oscar, as well as my brothers Chris and Nick and my brothers and sisters-in-law and family and close friends around the world who have supported me throughout my entrepreneurial journey, during my masters and throughout this epic research project. Merci beaucoup.

A warm thank you to everyone else who supported me during this time, especially against this strange backdrop of COVID-19. Notably I must thank all of my clients, friends and family who believed in my entrepreneurial ability, often more than I did.

Lastly, a thank you to my supervisor Prof William Mpofu for your time, your warmth and wisdom, I have so enjoyed being under your guidance. I hope that my research into and passion for the topics herein, may go on to contribute to a decolonising and reimagining of a more transformative model of entrepreneurship, so we may build a more just and fair society for all.

# CONTENTS

<b>PLAGIARISM DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1. Problem Statement .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.2. Research Objectives.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.3. Research Questions.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.4. Chapter Outline .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Literature Review .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.1. The Historical Construction of Gender .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.1.1. The Neolithic Transition .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.1.2. The Enduring Myth of Man the Hunter .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1.3. Intergender Competition as a Notion during The Neolithic Transition .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.2. The Construction of Gender in Entrepreneurship .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.2.1. The Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship: An Etymology .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.2.2. Entrepreneurship and Masculinity .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.2.3. The Hunter, the Coloniser and the Entrepreneur .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.2.4. Entrepreneurship Research in South Africa.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.3. Gender Explored.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.3.1. The Performance of Gender .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.3.2. Sexual Reproduction, Gender and Work .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.3.3. Menstruation, Education and Work .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.3.4. Naturalisation and Normalisation of the Male Entrepreneur Archetype ..</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.3.5. Women Entrepreneurs and Gender Neutrality .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.4. The Origins of Racial Construction in South Africa .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.4.1. Socio-Economic Inequality along Racial Lines.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.4.2. Hegemonic Masculinities in South Africa.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.4.3. Black Masculinities in South Africa.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.5. Neoliberalism and Entrepreneurship.....</b>	<b>21</b>

2.5.1. The Global Rise of Neoliberalism.....	21
2.5.2. The Rise of the Neoliberal Individual .....	22
2.5.3. Entrepreneurs as Social Icons.....	23
2.5.4. Neoliberalism in the State of South Africa .....	24
2.5.5. Neoliberalism and Women Entrepreneurs.....	28
2.5.6. Women Entrepreneurs as Flawed Heroines.....	30
2.6. Entrepreneurship, Work, Race and Gender in South Africa.....	31
2.6.1. Colonialism, Entrepreneurship, Race and Gender.....	31
2.6.2. Black Women in Traditional Roles in Colonial South Africa .....	33
2.6.3. Colonial Era: White Women’s Rights to Work .....	34
2.6.4. Khoi, San and Women Slaves in Colonial South Africa .....	35
2.6.5. A Racialised History of Inequality .....	36
2.6.6. Inequality in Contemporary South Africa .....	37
2.7. Theoretical Framework.....	38
2.7.1. Critical Diversity Literacy .....	38
<b>CHAPTER THREE .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>3. Methodology .....</b>	<b>42</b>
3.1. Rationale of Methodology .....	43
3.2. Data Collection .....	43
3.2.1. Participant Recruitment and Demographics.....	43
3.2.2. Analysis of the Magazine Covers.....	46
3.3. Conducting and Transcribing the Semi-Structured Interviews.....	47
3.4. Analysis of Interview Data .....	47
3.5. Ethical Considerations .....	49
3.5.1. Confidentiality, Ethical Clearance and Informed consent.....	49
3.6. Limitations.....	50
3.7. Self-Reflexivity .....	51
3.8. Conclusion .....	52
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>4. Discussion, Interpretation and Analysis .....</b>	<b>53</b>
4.1. The Objects of Analysis .....	54
4.2. The Makings of an Entrepreneur.....	55

4.3. Formal versus Informal Sector.....	57
4.3.1. Formal/Informal ----> Centres/Margins ----> Human/Not human.....	58
4.3.2. A Re-inscription of Segregational Philosophies.....	60
4.4. Growth as a Masculine Marker of Success .....	61
4.4.1. The Entrepreneur-as-Source.....	62
4.4.2. Entrepreneurs Gone to War.....	65
4.4.3 The Shame of Failure, The Power of Social Status .....	67
4.4.4. Growth as a Marker of Success.....	72
4.4.5. The Secret Club of Entrepreneurs .....	76
4.5. The Dominance of Whiteness .....	77
4.5.1. The Erasure of Women and People of Colour in the Texts.....	80
4.5.2. White Privilege, Whiteholds and Manholds.....	81
4.5.3. The Visual Representation of Women in the Domestic Sphere.....	84
4.6. Millions and Millions and Billions.....	86
4.6.1. Competitiveness as a Masculine Trait .....	87
4.6.2. Competing Against One’s Heritage .....	88
4.6.3 Growth as Expansion .....	89
4.7. Socio-Semiotic Analysis.....	91
4.7.1. Getting Suited Up and Badging.....	92
4.7.2. The Magazine Business Model .....	94
4.7.3. Entrepreneurship-in-Motion .....	95
4.7.4. A Miraculous Journey of Ascendancy .....	96
4.8. Motherhood, Relationships and Entrepreneurship.....	99
4.9. Entrepreneurship, Affect and COVID-19 .....	101
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>5. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>Appendix A: Participants Information Sheet.....</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>Appendix B: Interview Consent Form.....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Questions.....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>Appendix D: Entrepreneur Magazine Covers .....</b>	<b>129</b>



# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. Introduction

Over the last two decades in South Africa, the notion of entrepreneurship has become popularised, with the government and the private sector driving its uptake through various programmes, interventions and campaigns. In recent years there has been a profusion of entrepreneurial messaging, much of which has been targeted at women, who have been charged with fixing and rebuilding our ailing economy by establishing successful, income-generating ventures. Within this discourse, entrepreneurship has been presented by both traditional and digital media as a viable, wealth-generating solution to an individual's economic and social needs. I believe that a closer consideration of the notion of entrepreneurship is necessary, in order to better understand its construction. This research therefore examined “the implicit power dynamics, strengths, limitations and biases involved in the construction, valorisation, circulation, and contestation of this popular narrative” (Ndzwayiba, Ukpere, & Steyn, 2018).

In addition, the contradictions in how entrepreneurship is experienced by those on the margins requires exploring, in order to demystify some of the fictionalised narratives portrayed by the media, that cater largely to the status quo. In order to reveal the raced and gendered hegemonies that have shaped the narrative, there is a need to critique the common-sense (Maistry & David, 2017; Steyn, 2015) discourses that have historically foregrounded white male entrepreneurs as the dominant social actors within the domain.

A socio-historical approach is proffered in order to understand the subordination of women within the realm of work, and by extension, entrepreneurship, with an emphasis on understanding how the positionality of women has been impacted over the course of modernity, through to post-apartheid South Africa. This approach also demands a revisiting of the colonial era in order to discern when and how the seeds of inequality, that plague our current day society in South Africa, were planted along various intersections, in particular, gender, race and class. A review of the contemporary socio-economic policy of neoliberalism is also important, in order to establish its role in the promotion of the mythical figure of the hero entrepreneur.

### **1.1. Problem Statement**

If the entrepreneurial discourse as portrayed by the media reflected the actual lived experience of those who venture into the field, it would tell a different story. Instead, there exists a gap between the way the grand narrative of entrepreneurship is sold, told and promoted, and how it manifests in the lives of those who try to take up its challenges. In addition, the realm of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship research calls for critical inquiry - specifically, there is a need to further qualitative research that focuses on women entrepreneurs, and that privileges Black and other women entrepreneurs of colour in the business world in South Africa against our raced and gendered history.

### **1.2. Research Objectives**

The key objective of this study is to contrast the manufactured discourse promoted on the covers of a popular entrepreneurship magazine, *Entrepreneur*, with the lived realities of women entrepreneurs who run their own small and medium enterprises (SMMEs), within the formal economy in Gauteng, South Africa. This study aims to deconstruct the language and rhetoric of these mainstream entrepreneurial narratives and to amplify the rarely heard testimonies of women entrepreneurs, 'from the heart'. I hope to provide a critical take on the abstract yet popularised domain of entrepreneurship and thereby, to reveal its exclusionary, raced, gendered and classed constitution. I hope for my research to contribute to the qualitative knowledge being produced in this contested subject area from a Critical Diversity standpoint, and to bring more diverse voices and ideas from the Global South to the fore.

The research takes place against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic that has swept across the world since late 2019 and will be situated against the resulting complexities and constraints.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The goal of my proposed research is to answer the following questions:

- When, how and why did the discourse of entrepreneurship become popularised and naturalised in the public imaginary in South Africa?
- What ideologies does it serve?
- How is power reproduced through its discursive realm?
- What are the dominant identities that benefit through its exclusionary influence?

These key questions will be supported by the following sub-questions:

- What are the embedded notions of domination and inequality within the common-sense entrepreneurial narrative and how can we trace their origins?
- How has our socio-economic history enabled the imbalance of power within the entrepreneurial domain, specifically across race and gender?
- How have marginalised women experienced entrepreneurship within the patriarchal and raced paradigm, and how does intersectionality come into play to mitigate or increase the impact?
- Do the lived experiences of the women entrepreneurs align with the discourse engendered and promoted by the *Entrepreneur* magazine covers, and what story do these contrasts tell us?

## 1.4. Chapter Outline

### Chapter Two – Literature Review

This chapter begins by outlining the origins of patriarchy, and the earliest point that marks the division of labour and the separation of public and domestic space, in order to present a historical view of the construction of gender. The concept of entrepreneurship is then introduced, with an analysis of its masculine constitution, and an initial comparison of the identities of hunters, colonials and entrepreneurs is undertaken. In order to drill down into an intersectional approach, we explore the literature on gender performance, sexual reproduction and work, with a review of how the male gender has been naturalised within entrepreneurial discourse. In addition, this chapter presents an overview of our racialised history in South Africa with a gendered lens that traces the history of work and entrepreneurship from the earliest colonial contact, bringing us forward to today. An analysis of the rise of neoliberalism in post-apartheid is presented, with a discussion of how it has set the scene for

the fictionalising of the entrepreneurial domain. Lastly, we lay out the theory of Critical Diversity Literacy which is the framework within which our discussion and analysis comes to life.

### **Chapter Three – Methodology**

In this chapter we break down our research methodology in detail, sharing our approach and rationale for tackling both sets of text: a) The twelve magazine covers and, b) The ten immersive interviews with the women entrepreneur participants. I present an overview of the Critical Discourse Analysis multi-modal method as well as of narrative analysis, laying out the number of steps followed in each research process. Being a practising entrepreneur, I go on to explain my self-reflexive approach and to also talk to the ethical considerations of confidentiality and informed consent, providing my ethical clearance information.

### **Chapter Four – Discussion and Analysis**

In this chapter a thorough assessment and interpretation of the texts is provided, beginning with an overview of the magazine covers interwoven with the narrative testimonials of the women participants. The discussion spans a range of topics including an inquiry into the notion of the formal and informal economy, and a deep dive into the idea of *growth* as a masculine marker of success. This chapter critically explores the concept of whiteness with an analysis into how it dominates and undergirds entrepreneurial discourse, driven by colonial and neoliberal concepts of competition, expansion and individualisation. In the socio-semiotic analysis we look at the origins of the Suit and its colonial heritage; the chapter also closely combs through the language used on the covers to show how it paints a mythological version of the lived reality. Incorporated into all these topics is the rich and varied feedback from the ten participants, whose emotive stories from the heart complete the analysis. This chapter is wrapped up with a review of the affect and emotions of entrepreneurship as well as a brief look at the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of the women entrepreneurs and their SMMEs.

## **Chapter Five – Conclusion**

The concluding chapter summarises the research process, describing the overall findings and connecting them back to the research objectives, questions and the Critical Diversity framework. In addition, a number of considerations for how entrepreneurship may be reimagined are offered up, starting with a proposal for change at a policy level. The chapter concludes with additional suggestions for how the process of reconfiguring entrepreneurship may be tackled, in a way that encourages an inclusive and restorative approach, towards a more emancipatory version of entrepreneurship that is rooted in social justice.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. Literature Review

In tracing the link between entrepreneurship and the subordination of women, I thought it necessary to begin by reviewing the social development of humanity, work, trade and gender from our earliest times, to understand how, when and why the subordination of women first came into existence. This approach allows for an excavation of some of the socio-historical and economic conditions that played a role in entrenching gender and racial inequities in today's working and business world, that are accepted by many as common sense. This chapter will go on to analyse the notion of entrepreneurship and its masculinised embodiment, as well as show how gender has been constructed in our recent history. I then discuss the rise of neoliberalism as an ideology and its effects on current socio-economic realities - and finally, the literature around race, gender and entrepreneurship in South Africa will be examined.

#### 2.1. The Historical Construction of Gender

##### 2.1.1. *The Neolithic Transition*

In Gerda Lerner's seminal book, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (1986), she takes us on a journey back in time to try to answer the question: "How, when and why did female subordination come into existence?" (Lerner, 1986, p. 17). Many of us may think that the universal setting aside of women as the subaltern gender occurred in the last five hundred years of modernity and colonialism, or perhaps further back in ancient Greece and Rome (Katz, 2000; Llewellyn-Jones, 2003; Marcusson, 2019), but according to Lerner and other historical authors, it appears we would be thousands of years off the date.

The literature shows that women's long subordination to men dates from the beginning of our story as modern humans, at the end of the Neolithic era, during the Neolithic transition (p. 2) circa 12 000 years ago. This marks the moment when our ancestors began to settle down - moving from a hand-to-mouth, polygynous, nomadic lifestyle (Chikhi & Rasteiro, 2013, p. 6)

to a monogamous, sedentary, hunter-gatherer existence (Leacock, 1978 in Bolger, 2010, p. 506).

Research also shows that up until that point, these roaming Neolithic clans, globally and in Southern Africa, had been “relatively egalitarian” (Lerner, 1986, p. 29), meaning that there was an equal division of labour between women and men. As these groups gave up the nomadic existence to settle in fertile, post-ice-age landscapes, the positionality of women began to shift. In order to produce and keep alive as many offspring as possible for the advancement of their kinship communities, women were increasingly relegated to their now semi-permanent shelters. Hunting was no longer part of the daily routine; instead, it was undertaken as an “auxiliary pursuit” (Lerner, 1986, p. 17). Carrying babies along on planned hunting expeditions became unnecessary, so mothers reduced their participation in hunts.

Instead, women spent their time at the expanding homesteads, occupied with nursing and nurturing children, hunting smaller prey, experimenting with home crafts and, undertaking the first attempts at subsistence farming (Lerner, 1986, p. 43; Hansen, Jensen, & Skovsgaardz, 2015, p. 4; Macintosh, Pinhasi, & Stock, 2017, p. 7). Notably, during this transition into an agricultural society, women’s work and contributions went on to produce excess product, which importantly, became some of the first items to be traded in our economic and entrepreneurial history (Bolger, 2010, p. 506).

As these kinship communities settled and expanded, and trade between communities increased, inter-kinship relationships and troubles began to flare up (Lerner, 1986, p. 55). Needing to bolster the populace, mothers’ reproductive and nurturing roles became critical for the kinship’s continued expansion, survival and advancement. This meant that women’s time spent within their homesteads increased significantly, contributing to a shift in their positionality and to the “initial division of labour by which women do the mothering” while men continued to do the hunting, as “no alternative was available” (Lerner, 1986, p. 40; Bolger, 2010, p. 507).

Closer to home, Draper, as cited in Hansen, Jensen, & Skovsgaardz (2015), describes the !Kung people of the Kalahari and other hunter-gatherer communities in Africa as ancient societies initially forged on “sexual egalitarianism” (p. 12). The authors trace how equality between women and men within the nascent communities changed when animal husbandry and crop planting were introduced and the !Kung and other sub-Saharan societies settled into

their newly sedentary lifestyles. They also describe how these early subsistence practices as well as the later influence of contact with other more patriarchal societies, gave birth to the origin “of patriarchy in African agriculture” (Hansen, Jensen, & Skovsgaardz, 2015, p. 14). While this research focuses exclusively on South Africa, an in-depth socio-historical exploration in future research that centres gendered conceptions of entrepreneurship and trade in pre- and post-colonial Africa would be of value.

### ***2.1.2. The Enduring Myth of Man the Hunter***

The research confirms that women’s biological ability to nurse babies during the Neolithic period, rather than their differences in ability, strength or endurance (Lerner, 1986, p. 42) is what gave rise to the sexual division of labour. This meant that women remained in the domestic spaces at the homesteads nurturing their offspring, while the men went off in pursuit of ‘manly activities’. This is the point at which the myth of “man the hunter” has its genesis through the establishment of the narrative that describes men going off to fend for the family on ‘big hunts’ while the women are occupied with ‘less important work’ at home (Lerner, 1986, p. 17; Bolger, 2010, p. 506). This is a deeply gendered concept that continues to manifest in our lives over 12 millennia later, as we shall observe when conducting our discourse analysis of the contemporary entrepreneurial texts.

### ***2.1.3. Intergender Competition as a Notion during The Neolithic Transition***

During these early stages of economic cooperation between kinships, competition between human beings “is ritualised in singing or athletics but is not encouraged in daily living” (Lerner, 1986, p. 29). History does, however, indicate that men were wary of women’s ability to bear children, perhaps envious of their life-giving force. Hence, in awe of their inherent abilities, women were eulogised as the first conceptualisations of deities. Women were worshipped as “fertility goddesses” (p. 31), “mother-goddesses” (p. 39) and as “life-giving mother(s)” (p. 40), whose ability to produce life and to bond with and sustain their offspring despite extreme environments, won the reverence of humanity (Lerner, 1986).

Throughout modernity, an increase in ‘social status’ has become a highly valued marker of success. Research in social psychology has shown how, over time, perceptions of community or kinship members achieving an elevated social status evokes feelings of envy (Crusius & Lange, 2015; Bolló, HÁger, Galvan, & Orosz, 2020). It is possible, thereby, to infer that these

perceived early ‘contrasts’ in biological ability between women and men may have provided optimal conditions for the birth of gender rivalry. Consequently, by confining women to the domestic sphere, possible envy-induced intergender competition was rendered less consequential – out of sight, out of mind. Thus, over time, one can postulate how the notion of women’s equal competency in pursuing kinship activities outside of the shelter side-by-side with men, has faded, replaced with the narrative of women being best suited to and required in the domestic sphere (Lerner, 1986; Bolger, 2010).

## **2.2. The Construction of Gender in Entrepreneurship**

### ***2.2.1. The Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship: An Etymology***

A universally shared understanding of what an ‘entrepreneur’ is, includes the notion of an enterprising individual “who establishes a new firm, usually with considerable initiative and risk” (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015, p. 836), “in the face of uncertainty” (Ogbor, 2000, p. 615). They are typically considered to be a “self-made man” (Knowles & Phillips, 2012, p. 418) and “tenacious, strong characters” (Haupt & Ndimande, 2019, p. 5), who explore the “carrying out of new combinations we call ‘enterprise’”... that “challenge the accepted ways of doing things” (Schumpeter as cited in Ogbor, 2000, p 615).

In essence the entrepreneur is considered a ‘heroic’ character, who sets out on the hunt for an enterprising journey, which includes “putting together already existing elements into new combinations” (Ogbor, 2000, p. 615) and “identifying and exploiting opportunities to produce goods and deliver services, with the goal of making profit” (Shane and Venkataraman as cited in Fodor & Pinteá, 2017, p. 2).

In the social sciences field, ‘entrepreneurship’ is considered a ‘broad label under which a hodgepodge of entrepreneurship research is based’ (Shane & Venkataram, 2000, p. 217), equally, in the world of work and enterprise, it is used as an umbrella term generally employed to talk to economic activity performed by individual(s) looking to solve an array of societal, industrial, demand, supply, economic and other day-to-day issues. Considering the vast disparities in access to education, finance and social capital, due to the stark economic inequality of South Africa’s population (Francis & Webster, 2019), I argue that there is a

need to clarify the terminology and create more nuanced, socially and locally relevant interpretations of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in our South African context. These revisited interpretations could focus on more inclusive, localised and contextually relevant notions of entrepreneurship. This could, for example, include the segmentation and renaming of the broad concept of ‘informal entrepreneurs’, into a more nuanced and contextually rich grading across intersectionalities, thereby contributing to more decolonised and useful theories of entrepreneurship.

### ***2.2.2. Entrepreneurship and Masculinity***

Much of the extant entrepreneurial research of the twentieth century embodies and portrays the assumed masculine identity of the entrepreneurial archetype (Haupt & Ndimande, 2019; Roelofs, 2018; Lewis, 2006), as the “embodied man” (Dean & Ford, 2017, p. 179) and as “heroes with in-born attributes” (Ogbor, 2000, p. 618) supported by a range of traits associated with masculinity, such as: being smart, talented, confident, opinionated, ambitious, and daring (p. 81) as well as “unapologetically successful” (Keren, 2016, p. 82). An analysis of these ‘heroic masculine’ traits includes concepts such as the requirement to be ‘assertive’ and ‘self-confident’ (Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016), “strong-willed, determined, persistent, resolute, detached and self-centred” (Ahl, 2002, p. 54), “alone and rugged” (Holborow, 2015).

### ***2.2.3. The Hunter, the Coloniser and the Entrepreneur***

In Ogbor’s (2000) study of entrepreneurship as a masculine notion, the author links the idea of the entrepreneurial ‘hunter hero’ to a colonial adventurer, off to conquer “a wilderness that can be read as being ‘essentially feminine’” (p. 616). Ogbor’s colonial-entrepreneur archetype invokes apparitions of the ‘first’ white-male Europeans, who ‘discovered’ and ‘conquered’ the ‘land of opportunity’ in the United States, “symbolising the heroic representation of the positive American male model of aggressiveness, assertiveness and the conqueror of Mother Nature” (p. 617). Bruni et al (2004) also refer to an “aggressive, competitive, solitary hero who aspires to the conquest of new markets” (p. 426), surfacing the earlier conceptions of the male hunter persona, off in the wilderness, out on the hunt.

Over time we observe how the hunter-colonial-entrepreneurial persona has been constructed within these gendered and classed notions, associating “the sphere of activity and proactivity to the male, while it associates passivity, adaptation and flexibility with the female” (Bruni & Gherardi, 2004). I hope within my research to test out and interrogate these notions of the colonially produced male entrepreneur against a distinctly South African backdrop.

#### ***2.2.4. Entrepreneurship Research in South Africa***

My starting point in this study is to establish the point in history when the naturalisation of women’s “unpaid reproductive work” (p. 54) and “domestic chores” (Chitakunye, Derera, & O’Neill, 2014, p. 314) within the “domestic sphere” (Keren, 2016, p. 79) became synonymous with the “private sphere” (Ahl, 2002, p. 54): the home and hearth, while men’s labour became associated with the public space.

I have already described how some of the earliest most primitive notions of the separation of workplace and home were engendered and the concept of the public-private divide became entrenched (Ahl, 2002, p. 54). Inherent in these visualisations of the male hunter away from home, fending for his family on a hunt, lie many of the heroic traits of contemporary entrepreneurial discourse. I posit that the current concept of an entrepreneur is informed (and dogged) by this concept of hunter heroism, producing an intrepid settler persona that persists in contemporary notions of masculinity. As touched on above, there is an opportunity to embark on an examination of the dominant entrepreneurial discourse in South Africa against our colonial, raced, classed and gendered past, by exploring this notion of the ‘mythical settler entrepreneur’, who is often thought of as “Western, white, male heterosexual, of European or North American origin” (de Sá Mello da Costa & Saraiva, 2012, p. 589).

Readings on the popular topic of entrepreneurship and gender in South Africa reveal that while more traditional and historically gendered positionalities are embedded within the construction of the entrepreneurial subject, there are a number of studies (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015; Chitakunye, Derera, & O’Neill, 2014; Mannell, 2012; Nkomo, 1992; Aneke, Bomani, & Derera, 2017; Valla, 2001; Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016; Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Dhliwayo & Moyo, 2019; Akhalwaya & Havenga, 2012; Meyer, 2018; Nambiar, Scheepers, & Sutherland, 2019; Witbooi & Ukpere, 2011; Cronje & Mkubukeli, 2019) that are applying

a more critical theory approach to the topic, analysing where and how power is at play with a “humanist/interpretivist or even a radical humanist” lens (Meyer N. , 2018, p. 156).

Moving away from research that approaches the analysis of entrepreneurship from a more positivist or functionalist paradigm is important. It is therefore critical to be explicit about gender, race and power in my analysis of the discourse of entrepreneurship “because it is not an immediately shared and self-evident social value” (Bruni & Gherardi, 2004, p. 408) within the existing literature.

## **2.3. Gender Explored**

### ***2.3.1. The Performance of Gender***

“The fact that women bear children is due to sex. That women nurture children is due to gender, a cultural construct. It is gender that has been chiefly responsible for fixing women’s place in society” (Lerner, 1986, p. 21). According to philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler, gender is indeed a cultural construct that we take on, that we learn to perform through our lives. In Lerner’s exploration of the origins of patriarchy, we get to understand how Neolithic women had to learn to stay behind in the newly-settled communal spaces rather than continue to hunt side-by-side with men, as they had while they were nomadic. Their changing social patterns meant that they had to take on the major responsibility of caring for the children, while the men were able to hold onto the more heroic gender identity of being hunters, out on the move.

While sex is indicative of our biological reproductive possibility, gender is learned, it is performed and “produced in social interaction” (Ahl, 2003). For Butler, gender is an “identity instituted through a stylised repetition of act” (Butler, 1988) – it is not “an individual characteristic, something essentially male or female that can be measured and used as an explanatory variable” (Hamilton E. , 2014, p. 704), rather, gender is performed.

For the purposes of my analysis, gender will be defined as a “discursively constructed phenomenon that is culturally, historically and locally specific” (Ahl, 2002, p. 28), and I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the growing body of research that focuses on women entrepreneurs and marginalised entrepreneurs, globally.

### ***2.3.2. Sexual Reproduction, Gender and Work***

We observe that while women biologically carry babies and give birth to them, childcare, nurturing and child supervision have historically been relegated to the mother/nurturer, within the delineations of the home space (Ngek, 2018; Valla, 2001; Meyer, 2018). Men have historically been assigned the gendered role of ‘heading out’ to earn a living for the family. In most contemporary cultures around the world that evolved under a patriarchal construction, the responsibility of caring for children falls onto the girls and women, of all ages, within the community (Draper & Haines, 2004). These girls and women must find a way to juggle their menstrual cycles, their pregnancies, their giving birth, and the raising of their children and grandchildren or other extended family members, with income-generating activities – and in privileged societies, with education, work and career development.

The literature told the story of how the Neolithic male subjects found themselves in awe of the female subjects’ ability to fall pregnant, carry a child to term, give birth and life to that child - yet we are all too familiar with how menstrual health, pregnancy and childcare as gendered concepts have limiting and restrictive effects on girl children and women in the workplace (Matotoka & Odeku, 2020), and by extension in entrepreneurship.

In the modern workplace women have been discriminated against with the idea that women’s productivity may be compromised through her falling pregnant and/or having children to care for (Matotoka & Odeku, 2020) – the first being a sexual reproductive issue and the second a gendered one. In both cases, childbearing and childcare are often viewed as disruptive to a women’s ability to be productive during traditional work hours, thereby reducing their labour, output and income-earning potential, and by association, their usefulness to the community (Ngek, 2018).

Paradoxically, motherhood is often cited as a reason for why women leave their jobs or careers to venture into entrepreneurship (Meyer, 2018; Matotoka & Odeku, 2020), with many hoping for more flexibility in how they balance their lives between their responsibilities at home and their careers. Yet entrepreneurs are said to “encounter a more daunting task in balancing their family and work life” (p. 327) due to the risk and precarity of entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs tend to struggle with constant family and work

conflict as they assume “multiple roles in the family” including reproductive labour “which is often associated with household chores and childcare responsibilities” (Ngek, 2018, p. 329).

### ***2.3.3. Menstruation, Education and Work***

History informs the silencing of the topic of menstruation – an organic female biological function that has been cloaked in an enduring discourse of secrecy, evoking “emotions of shame, embarrassment and disgust” (Duby, et al., 2020). Menstrual cycles can be experienced as not only painful and debilitating, but in addition they continue to prevent many a girl child from equitable education due to a combination of issues – traditional, economic, social and physiological – that lead to regular school absenteeism during a menstrual cycle. This places girl children at an early educational and economic disadvantage that young boys are not impacted by (Crankshaw, Gumede, & Strauss, 2020, p. 2).

This injustice extends into the workplace culture in the private sector and other workplaces, where monthly menstruation and its accompanying effects attract little regard or empathy. Indeed, even “maternity leave is mostly unpaid in South Africa” (p. 597) and only partially paid if registered with the Department of Labour (Matotoka & Odeku, 2020). While we are beginning to hear about progressive businesses providing menstrual leave within their policies, women’s menstrual struggles are generally disregarded in the workplace in South Africa<sup>1</sup>. Yet it is these monthly menstrual phenomena that affirm a woman’s biological reproductive potential to give life and bring forth children to the world.

### ***2.3.4. Naturalisation and Normalisation of the Male Entrepreneur Archetype***

Entrepreneurial activity has been portrayed as a form of masculinity through the proliferation of entrepreneurial research practices (Hamilton, 2013, p. 90). Within the existing narrative of entrepreneurship, women have been produced by the entrepreneurial system as “the other” (Roelofs, 2018), while the male gender has been constituted as “the norm” (Ahl, 2002, p. 132; Roelofs, 2018, p. 3; Hamilton, 2013; Lewis, 2006, p. 456; Bruni & Gherardi, 2004, p. 315). This dominant discourse has become invisibilised (Lewis, 2006, p. 455) and neutralised into an unquestioned masculine hegemony that hangs heavily over what is a far more diverse entrepreneurial landscape, from the earliest of times.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.all4women.co.za/2085533/health-and-wellness/menstrual-leave-why-not-everyone-wants-it>

This pervasive discourse of the masculine status quo positions entrepreneurship as “exclusionary and selective” (Hamilton E. , 2014, p. 705), a space that is not necessarily accessible to subjects who do not fit the norm. This is confirmed by the low number of qualitative studies (Ahl, 2006; Akhalwaya & Havenga, 2012) on women entrepreneurs, particularly those in the Global South and in South Africa. Much of the literature that exists is quantitative and does not include studies of the lived experiences of women entrepreneurs.

It must be noted that entrepreneurship by women on a global scale has slowed since the early 2000s (p. 309), indicating the pervasiveness of this oppressive and exclusionary notion of entrepreneurship over time and place – even within “highly developed economies with advanced technological infrastructures” (Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2019, p. 309). I hope that my research will contribute to the idea that while these oppressive “social hierarchies” may currently “reflect the natural order” (Segar & White, 1989, p. 97), that there is hope of rectifying these historical imbalances towards reimagining a more inclusive, representative and decolonised construction of the entrepreneurial domain.

### ***2.3.5. Women Entrepreneurs and Gender Neutrality***

When considering these implicit gender issues within entrepreneurship, the literature shows variance and a potential “politics of difference” (Sawicki, 1986, p. 23) along the spectrum of women entrepreneurs interviewed. Destabilising discourse normativities requires that the essentialising of women’s subjectivity is avoided – even if this means highlighting the paradoxes. One way of deconstructing an over-essentialising approach is to explore “alternative constructions of power” (p. 6) in which women have “the ability to observe the system without becoming fully engaged in it” (Kinnear & Orllepp, 2016). For example, via some of the responses of “gender neutrality” that emerge as counter-narratives from women participants who may be perceived to downplay, deny or dismiss conversations that accentuate gender inequality (Haupt & Ndimande, 2019, p. 13).

Within my research, all ten of the women interviewed attested to the negative impact of gender on their entrepreneurial experiences and generally across their working careers, however, there are women who, when asked to consider the role of gender in their perceived entrepreneurial or career failures or successes, may tend to deny the impact of gender on their lived experience. Understanding the positionality of women who perform this kind of “gender blindness” (p. 453), reveal how some women may “actively collude in concealing its

gendered nature”, perhaps “believing that the problem of gender disadvantage has been ‘solved’ and is therefore no longer an issue” (Lewis, 2006 , p. 453). Another consideration is that some women may resist identifying with other women’s gender struggles for fear of losing their hard-won gains, and as a strategy for dealing with “risk aversion” or “fear of failure” (Nambiar, Scheepers, & Sutherland, 2019, p. 82) – rather than get involved in social justice conversations that question or debunking the discourse, they choose to protect their jobs and already unstable job and income security by remaining silent.

Considering that “not only are we socialised into certain gender roles, we also usually actively participate in reinforcing them” (Segar & White, 1989, p. 96), choosing to take on a ‘gender neutral’ position rather than “sweeping aside the forces of tradition” (Ogbor, 2000, p. 616) can also be argued as counter-intuitive, as women can then be seen to play into hegemonic masculinity rather than resisting it. It is important, however, to ask how and why this counter-positionality takes root.

One of the privileges “associated with being a man is the ability not to think about gender at all, not to take any notice whatsoever of its role in daily life” (Lewis, 2006 , p. 454). This “strategy of gender-blindness” adopted by some women, potentially renders hegemonic masculinity ‘invisible’, thereby contributing to it remaining unchallenged (Roelofs, 2018, p. 38). Some of the women entrepreneurs who prefer to co-opt this gender-neutral narrative through “adopting a masculine gender act” (Roelofs, 2018, p. 7), rather than confronting their othered position, may struggle with the possibility of being pegged as confrontational, aggressive or outspoken. As observers, we bear witness to a discursive manoeuvre hidden in plain sight, as some of these descriptors, such as aggressive or confident, are considered admirable masculine entrepreneurial traits (as we shall show in our discourse analysis of the magazine covers), and celebrated within more authoritarian and patriarchal models of leadership (Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016, p. 2). Yet, when used to describe women in a similar entrepreneurial position or leadership role, these same behaviours are considered pejoratives, negative innate character traits not appropriate for their gender.

Foucault’s concept of disciplinary power (Sawicki, 1986, p. 23) is relevant here: as we remember how power circulates silently in the background through “the techniques, objects, and modes of power that articulate themselves on subject/objects” (Dilts, 2011, p. 2), driving discourses that reproduce and bolster the oppressor’s position. When applying a gendered interpretation to the descriptive language such as assertiveness, confidence, aggression and

strength, and where women who portray these traits are negatively judged and critiqued, sometimes even by women colleagues or associates, there is a doubling down on their othering and exclusion.

A final consideration when rationalising gender neutrality, is that some women entrepreneurs may not find value in fighting the prescribed subordinate gender position because it does not impede them as they benefit from other privileges, for example, racial or class advantages. In any case, “a critical understanding of women’s models of power may highlight unconscious processes contributing to this as well as emerging models that can facilitate change” (Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016; Sawicki, 1986).

#### **2.4. The Origins of Racial Construction in South Africa**

Stuart Hall (1980) reminds us that: “Race relations are directly linked with economic processes, historically with the epochs of conquest, colonisation, and mercantilist domination, and currently with the unequal exchanges that characterise the economic relations between developed metropolitical and underdeveloped satellite economic regions of the world economy” (p. 208). From early in the colonial history of South Africa, we observe how racial ideology was employed as a proxy for social othering and hierarchical contouring. Race as a signifier was cleaved out of otherwise benign human attributes as a divisive tool to distinguish in-group and out-group belonging. Whiteness and its generic physical features were privileged over darker skin colour and features - these superficial power constructs of race and ethnicity were fictionalised to determine and control economic and social access and activated through inequitable trade exchanges that had devastating effects for people of colour and indigenous populations in the Global South, that endure through to today.

Modern-day South African society has been forged along these socially constructed racial hierarchies, where “human difference” was employed “for hierarchisation and domination” (Steyn, 2018, p. 7). Different ‘races’ were stratified into these unstable groupings of Black, white, Coloured and Asian/Indian and later ratified through legislation. Dependent on the shade of their skin and their physical appearance, subjects were essentialised into a racial subset. White became right and valuable - and Black or any ethnicity that did not present as

white or close to whiteness, was constructed and construed as being of lesser value and worth.

These binaries amassed all people in Southern Africa into these imagined racialised categorisations, while the laws and institutional frameworks enforced them in both public and private life. Power, privilege and humanity was assigned to those with a proximity to whiteness; and oppression, difference and othering was meted out on those outside of its influence. As we will observe in our analysis of the colonial period, race, gender, class and economic access became intricately linked, with racial and other essentialising categorisations determining the economic and social impact and outcomes for an individual.

#### ***2.4.1. Socio-Economic Inequality along Racial Lines***

After attending a meeting about how to solve unemployment in London, the infamous British businessman and politician, Cecil John Rhodes is said to have come up with the idea that he and his fellow “colonial statesmen” should acquire “new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines” (Cecil John Rhodes, 1875). Rhodes went on to become an ardent champion of British Imperialism with an unyielding entrepreneurial spirit that found him moving to the Cape Colony where he founded De Beers diamonds and other mining companies, eventually becoming a member of parliament. Rhodes is said to have been a ruthless coloniser who cared little for the indigenous people or their rights to land, but was more interested in the success of the Anglo-Saxon race and what he believed were the superior abilities of the Englishman and the white race<sup>2</sup>.

Within these developing racial hierarchies during the colonial period, European male immigrants achieved full personhood, while gender, culture and class intersected with the racial entitlement of all men of colour and white women, displacing them to the positionality of secondary and lower-class citizens, depending on their social status and background. All Black, slave, Khoi, San or other women of colour were banished to the lower echelons of the racially carved out society, designed along the constructed concept of racial and thereby social and economic inequality.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/cecil-john-rhodes>

As the colonial project unfolded and “new lands untouched by the capitalist mode of production were drawn into the web of capitalist relations through colonisation” (Narsiah, 2002, p. 4), the colonial expansion extended and the need to control labour, production and land became more salient - and thus the discrimination, violence and brutality along racial lines increased, fomenting the social and economic domination of the colonial settlers.

This system became increasingly dependent on the notion of “Black as poor” which “renders ‘natural’ the material deprivation of Black people” (van der Westhuizen, 2017, p. 37). Black, slave and other women of colour were thrust even further down the power hierarchies, to the bottom rungs of humanity where their gender, ethnicity, class, ability, age and sexuality intersected to multiply the disadvantages faced within numerous systems of inequality (Ferber, 1997).

White people inhabited a ‘zone of being’ while people of colour were enslaved to a ‘zone of non-being’ where they would be perpetually “deceived and crushed by the power of the zone of being” (Ndlovu, 2011, p. 153). All indigenous citizens: Black Africans, San and Khoi people (as well as other people of colour who came to South Africa as slaves or who came from mixed-race couplings), were destined to be economically poor, landless and dependent on adapting to Western designs of societal structures through the colonial system of dispossession.

#### ***2.4.2. Hegemonic Masculinities in South Africa***

In Morrell’s (1998) analysis on masculinity, gender and hegemonic masculinity, we are reminded that “though a number of masculinities coexist, a particular version of masculinity holds sway, bestowing power and privilege on men who espouse it and claim it as their own” (p. 608). White colonial men in South Africa, in particular those of English-speaking descent, “created a tight knit, racially exclusive community with a hegemonic masculinity that borrowed heavily from metropolitan representations of manliness”... “this settler masculinity became hegemonic, binding white men to a set of gender values which were class and race specific” (p. 618).

Afrikaans masculinities were heavily influenced by nationalism, Christian National Education, sports, war, the army and later the racist policies of the apartheid government who positioned Afrikaner men in reserved jobs with powerful positions (Morrell, 1998, p. 617).

White men from other European ethnicities arrived later in South Africa, assimilating into the privilege of whiteness and taking on its advantages. While this research does not allow for a more nuanced and broader study of the cultural diversity of white males, an analysis of the performance of the generic white male-gendered dress code, language, as well as the “bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds” (Butler, 1988, p. 519) and how they have evolved from the colonial period to constitute ‘being an entrepreneur’ in a current day South African context, would prove novel. We will apply a critical diversity lens towards some of these discursive elements of materialised whiteness, as captured on the Entrepreneur magazine covers, in Chapter four’s analysis.

#### ***2.4.3. Black Masculinities in South Africa***

According to Jewkes, Lindegger and Morrell (2012) in their study of hegemonic masculinities in South Africa, there exists a “multiplicity of masculinities” (p. 18). This would make sense considering the vast ethnic and tribal diversity of Black and other men of colour in South Africa, as well as the impact of Western values and influence on traditional African cultures and masculinities since the colonial era. For Black indigenous South African men, the rural and urban backgrounding of culture and heritage is important to consider too, as there exists a “disjunction between a masculinity which dominates at a national level, the repository of greatest power, and masculinities that enjoy popular support in communities at the grass roots” level (p. 18).

Morrell’s (1998) earlier research rests a more traditional Black masculinity upon “ideas of the women’s place, of order and of male decision-making and gravitas” (p. 625). In Langa and Leopeng’s study of contemporary masculinities in post-apartheid, they talk to the increase in more consumerist values to explain how Black masculinities have evolved since access to material resources has increased in post-apartheid, affirming the variance in how Black African masculinities exist today, particularly across an evolving class differential, set against urban/rural and traditional/modern contexts.

For the purposes of this study, which does not allow for further research into this area, suffice to say that Black African masculinity and the masculinities of other men of colour were forced to change and adapt over time under the oppression of “hegemonic white masculinity” (p. 616), under labour-intense oppressive working class conditions that were “owned and

controlled by white capitalists and supervisors” (p. 623), where Black men laboured under “hard and dangerous” (p. 623) conditions in both urban and rural settings that demanded “endurance and physical strength” (p. 623) as well as constant negotiation (Morrell, 1998). These conditions have engendered an othered and historically socio-economically disadvantaged class and power positionality for Black and other men of colour, against the privileged position of the majority of their white South African male colleagues, who, if they are currently not pursuing entrepreneurship or the start-up culture, remain ensconced in middle class office jobs and positions of authority in the workforce across industries.

## **2.5. Neoliberalism and Entrepreneurship**

In the following section I will examine how neoliberalism, as a socio-economic system, has provided the systemic and structural socio-economic backdrop to entrepreneurial discourse that has impacted the subjectivity of women entrepreneurs operating in South Africa today.

### ***2.5.1. The Global Rise of Neoliberalism***

Neoliberalism emerged out of the “golden age of capitalism” (p. 47) in the late 60s and early 70s. This was a global development, with relevance in the USA and the UK, that unfolded under the leadership of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. (Kotz, 2015; Vogel, 2020). The core tenets of neoliberalism include less government spending, bureaucracy and intervention, more ‘market freedom’, fewer corporate taxes and regulations, deregulated global markets, a shift for the individual from reliance on government to self-reliance, competition-driven economies, lower social spending, encouraging a climate of ‘innovation and invention’, the acceleration of the notion of small business as job creators and the encouragement of personal wealth creation by individuals driving profits through practising entrepreneurship; in summary: an increase in production, privatisation, money flows and consumption (Fernandez-Herrera & Martinez-Rodriguez, 2016; Kotz, 2015; Vogel, 2020).

The emergence of neoliberalism was tied to a global shift for big business, which, under “regulated capitalism” (p. 45) “had to contend with relatively powerful trade unions” (p. 62), “help pay the cost of social welfare programs” (p. 54) as well as “endure various kinds of state regulation” (p. 62). Under this “neoliberal perspective” (p. 315) and within the “new context of economic globalisation” (p. 315), the state gradually took on a “purely

instrumental role” (p. 315), that served the interests of big business. Due to this shift in policy, big business was increasingly able to “assert their dominance over other groups” (p. 48) and as a result, “high-level corporate managers became far richer under neoliberal capitalism than they had previously been” (p. 48). Big business deserted its previous coalition with organised labour, allying with small business instead (Kotz, 2015, p. 72). Rather than continuing to cooperate with labour, governments and big business turned their attention away from a collective approach to society, towards a narrative of individualisation and competition.

Parallel to this shift in economic policy in the private sector, we have witnessed an upsurge in the promotion of “entrepreneur-heroes” (Vogel, 2020, p. 4), who have emerged over the last fifty years. The narrative of self-reliance, competition, independence and a heightened urgency to strive towards one’s own “interests, desires and aspirations” (Read, 2009, p. 29) has resulted in a turn away from outward consideration of the community, inwards, towards oneself. Intrepid citizens are urged to seize the moment, to go out and conquer new ground, albeit “in the absence of government support” (Vogel, 2020, p. 4).

The convenience of this narrative for both government and business requires scrutiny, as subjects are encouraged to become self-sufficient and to break away from any reliance on institutions that were previously engaged in a collective, communal approach to governance. This move to neoliberalism also encouraged entrepreneurial hype and small business myth-making.

### ***2.5.2. The Rise of the Neoliberal Individual***

When Foucault proclaimed Homo Economicus as “an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself” (Foucault as cited in Read, 2009, p. 28), he was referring to the neoliberal imaginings of the entrepreneurial individual, who competitively pursues opportunities for trade, exchange and resulting profit, towards self-actualisation and self-sufficiency. Homo Economicus is a business within themselves, enterprising within and of themselves. This widespread acceptance of the neoliberal ideology of individualism, self-interest and competition has successfully captured the popular imagination, and become entrenched as a common-sense discourse, as the analysis of the magazine covers will attest. It has, however, driven a widening chasm of inequality, as the big business elite are seen to increasingly amass fortunes while those citizens at the bottom of the food-chain find themselves

increasingly isolated from any kind of communal safety net or social security, existing outside of state protection and institutions.

Adoption of the neoliberal approach can be attributed as being a large reason for the state's breaking of its original contract with citizens. Read (2009) describes this shrinking of the government's "focus on rights and obligations" (p. 29) towards "privatisation and isolation", (p. 34) as constituting a new mode of "governmentality" in which people are governed and govern themselves (Read, 2009, p. 29). Labour is reinvented as human capital (p. 31) and the discourse of the economy (Read, 2009, p. 31) becomes an entire way of life, while the commodification of most exchanges enforces a transactional relationship between organisations and individuals.

Viewing neoliberal discourse critically, this encouragement of citizens to become self-sustaining and entrepreneurial masks a potentially diffusive power function – a breaking up of the capitalist alliances of labour and the workforce through a disruption of state and institutional dependency by the individual. When the state encourages individuals to move into entrepreneurship, the individual is not only delinked from the labour force and the labour movements that protect their rights, but big business has fewer labourers to deal with on their permanent payroll.

Evidence of this exploitative neoliberal model driving the pursuit of 'entrepreneurial selfhood' has historically emerged through large organisations outsourcing labour practices, and more recently through the rise of the 'gig economy'. From this standpoint we observe how the narrative of becoming an entrepreneur is conveniently framed by both government and business as becoming increasingly independent and 'free', braving the market wilderness, setting out on an (often solo) entrepreneurial mission, to work for oneself, to hunt for opportunities, to compete, soar and conquer and to hopefully come home victorious, however, with no labour, social or human rights safety net in sight.

### ***2.5.3. Entrepreneurs as Social Icons***

Holborow (2015) describes entrepreneurs as the "social icons of our neoliberal age" (p. 72) and indeed, as our analysis of the magazine covers will attest, entrepreneurship has been packaged as a highly-prized social trait that has elevated successful individuals to celebrity status. However, when one simply considers anecdotal evidence of friends and family in the

privileged middle classes – of both genders – who have ventured into entrepreneurship, or had it forced on them through systemic, economic and social conditions, the evidence tends to affirm that the notion of ‘economic freedom and success being achieved through entrepreneurial methods’ is in fact a rare occurrence - and highly challenging to attain, particularly when considering the difficulties presented by the COVID-19 backdrop against an already suppressed economic climate.

In the 2000s, ‘enterprise’, ‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘entrepreneurial’ became “buzzwords of governments of all hues, as they sought to privatise public services” (Holborow, 2015, p. 74). Aspirational keywords and “entrepreneurial logic” (Keren, 2016, p. 77) has been disseminated across a multitude of media, from television, newspapers and radio, to blog-posts, podcasts, thought-leadership articles, social media and digital content, becoming “the subtle bearers of thought control undreamed of by earlier makers of dominant ideologies, east or west” (Holborow, 2015, p. 72). The placid acceptance of the inevitable ‘journey of entrepreneurship’ by the potentially naive entrepreneur – of its hardships and struggles, its dark moments and highs, its affective disordered constitution - and the eventual rationalising of these choices, is an indication of how obscure the embodiment of entrepreneurial selfhood can be, set against this neoliberal background.

As we witness how “... the contemporary articulation of neoliberalism transcends the original market logic to create a neoliberal, entrepreneurial subject” (Ahl & Marlow, 2019, p. 1), we simultaneously observe how the responsibility of citizenship is increasingly transferred to the individual, who through the process of delinking from their reliance on the state, become in many ways, obliged to make a success of their endeavour. Against today’s entrepreneurial backdrop, winning at entrepreneurship equates to winning at life.

#### ***2.5.4. Neoliberalism in the State of South Africa***

“For the oppressors, ‘human beings’ refers only to themselves; other people are ‘things’. The oppressed, as objects, as ‘things’, have no purpose except those their oppressors prescribe for them” (Freire, 1993, p. 60). In this quotation, Freire is referring to the idea that those in power will disregard the citizens, communities and people in their care through a process of dehumanisation, whereby those under their power become more like objects or products, useful only in so far as they help the dominant party to achieve their self-serving goals and objectives. While critiquing our nation’s history, we must remain cognisant that the

very idea of a ‘nation state’ is a raced and gendered imperial notion - and that “the territorial borders of African states were carved out by colonial powers without regard for existing patterns of group identification” (Robinson, 2014, p. 710). This slicing and dicing of the African continent into nation states, such as South Africa, was often done without centering the human beings and the many diverse tribes and ethnicities who already inhabited the land in different configurations. These manufactured borders and boundaries were imposed on the previously borderless land mass to serve the needs of the colonial authorities, giving rise to the idea of nations.

For the nation state known as South Africa, the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1994 marks the dawning of democracy, with the end of the oppressive and discriminatory apartheid system that was imposed in 1948. It also heralded the inauguration of the revolutionary party, the African National Congress (ANC), which represented hope for the millions of disenfranchised indigenous Black South Africans who had been dehumanised and delegitimated by the racial capitalist economic and social policies of the white-supremacist National Party (NP).

The ANC’s initial stance as the incoming government was to address the social and economic damages of apartheid. They began by adopting a “leftist, basic-needs-oriented” Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) “as the popular foundation for its economic policy” (Sebake, 2017, p. 2). The RDP was a policy framework empowered by an infrastructural programme that centred the integration of “growth, development, reconstruction and redistribution into a unified programme”<sup>3</sup>. While South Africa had “been in an economic decline since the early 1970s” (Ndziba-Whitehead, 1993, p. 97), there was hope that this more socialist-leaning and more just RDP model, which focused on economic redress in the fundamental sites of governance: jobs, land, housing, water, electricity, telecommunications, transport, a clean and healthy environment, nutrition, health care and social welfare’, would ‘begin to reconstruct family and community life in our society’<sup>4</sup>.

The legacy of apartheid was a deeply unequal and unstable society, marked by some of the highest levels of inequality in the world. The population was divided mainly along racial lines with the minority ethnic group, ‘white South Africans’ living in comfort. The

---

<sup>3</sup> An extract from point 1.3.6 from the RDP Policy framework available at <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/reconstruction-and-development-programme-rdp>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

inequitable apartheid government had used legal, structural and socio-political means to ensure that most Black South African citizens did not have access to basic human needs. Effective economic and social redress was a huge task for the new governing party.

Within two years of its implementation, the RDP programme was shelved, despite some “major accomplishments” (p. 507) towards economic redress such as the building of over 1 000 000 houses, the provision of electricity and water to over 1 000 000 citizens, the building of nearly 300 healthcare clinics and the launch of over 500 public works programmes (Cheru, 2001). In 1996 “South Africa was formally subsumed into a neoliberal, free-market paradigm”, “with the adoption of the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) program” (Narsiah, 2002, p. 5). From being an enabling government of redress and social change, the ANC shifted to one that put “market-led economic rationalism ahead of everything else” (Ndhlovu, 2019, p. 147). This might have seemed like a sudden repositioning, but there is consensus that the ANC’s shift to a neoliberal policy was “the same neoliberal restructuring that began in the mid-1980s under the National Party of FW De Klerk” (Cheru, 2001; Bond, 2013; Ansari, 2019).

Another school of thought believes that the IMF and World Bank influenced the decision by cooperating with the incoming party and other institutional players in the lead up to 1994 (Narsiah, 2002, p. 4). While others argue that with the liberation project being such a highly contested fragile space, the incoming party needed to reassure, preserve and protect the traditionally white business capital, interests and fears by shifting to a neoliberal policy.

Critics have pointed out how coming off of such high levels of inequality, that this basal socio-economic shift towards the neoliberal trajectory (p. 208) via the implementation of GEAR in 1996, which continues through to President Cyril Ramaphosa’s term in 2021 (Ansari, 2019, pp. 208-209), resulted in drastically increased levels of economic and social inequality. Despite achievements such as the roll out of some basic social grants (Francis & Webster, 2019), the choice to follow a neoliberal framework has been fingered for placing the livelihoods, health and wellness of the “poorest of the poor” (Sebake B. , 2017, p. 2) the majority of Black citizens, whose progress and potential was already fractured by apartheid South Africa, once again on the line (Ndhlovu, 2019, p. 132).

Narsiah (2002) reminds us that “neoliberalism is characterised by fiscal austerity, export-oriented production, deregulation and privatisation with a distinct withdrawal/shrinking of the

state and a transfer of competence to the private sector” (p. 3). Ending the apartheid regime was one of the greatest human achievements of the past century (Bond, 2013) and the democratically elected ANC had a massive challenge on their hands to correct the huge imbalances of our modern history. However, looking back we can attest to how this shift to a neoliberal model placed an enormous amount of power in the hands of the private sector and individuals. By removing or deferring these rights and responsibilities from the gambit of the state, we see how the ANC government went on to encourage the private sector to build a parallel universe of privilege - that caters for the haves, leaving the majority of South Africans to remain destitute and literally ‘on their own’.

It was once said that “all South Africans are now required to become entrepreneurs and are forced to take responsibility for their own welfare” (Miyachi, 2014, p. 68). Along with this shift away from the ANC’s initial policy of social redress and reconstruction, towards full-blown neoliberalism (Ansari, 2019, p. 170), in 1997 the Department of Trade and Industry set up two small business agencies, Khula and Ntsika (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015; Cheru, 2001) to “assist all entrepreneurs on services such as entrepreneurial and business training, business network and information research” (Mandipaka, 2014, p. 130). In so doing, they began to invest in the empowerment of individuals through entrepreneurial education and support, so that they may be encouraged to pursue the field of entrepreneurship, towards becoming more self-sufficient.

In 2002 Narsiah cautioned that in the absence of the government driving meaningful and desperate social transformation by outsourcing their job to “the privatisation of basic services, the means of production of services are in the hands of capitalists who now operate facilities on the basis of profit” (p. 7). And while we are unable to draw out more of the neoliberal history of the last 27 years of democracy within this analysis, Vally and Motala remind us that notwithstanding the socio-psychological problems generated by an era of neoliberal ideas where “even the mild concessions of capitalist forms of knowledge have been reneged on in the name of austerity”, that “not all is “doom and gloom” (Harvey as cited in Vally & Motala, 2017, p. 9). While this optimism is welcomed, and notwithstanding the progress that has been made, challenges such as the rolling strikes, student and civil protests,

out of control inequality, the corruption narratives attested to at the Zondo commission<sup>5</sup> – and stories of the many defunct state owned-entities, tell a different story.

### ***2.5.5. Neoliberalism and Women Entrepreneurs***

Across many of the studies reviewed, entrepreneurial failure or struggles experienced by women in business and entrepreneurship in South Africa have been put down to a variance of inadequacies including: attitudinal problems (Ogbor, 2000, p. 620); lack of education (Haupt & Ndimande, 2019, p. 7); lack of knowledge (p. 323), low financial confidence and literacy (p. 319), confining themselves to traditional business areas (p. 323), not being capable of developing business opportunities, and consequently business plans, that are capable of attracting funding (Chitakunye, Derera, & O'Neill, 2014, p. 325); the challenge of women navigating in-group or out-group dynamics (p. 24), as well as women's ability to be ambidextrous and build goodwill (Boshoff, de Villiers Scheepers, & Oostenbrink, 2017, p. 25); gender stereotyping and sexual harassment (Aneke, Bomani, & Derera, 2017, p. 38); a lack of awareness around government support (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015, p. 844); a lack of psycho-social support (p. 70), a low-trust social culture (p. 72), lack of support from the community (p. 76), with accompanying envy, jealousy, slander, gossip, discouragement, intimidation of and aggression towards women entrepreneurs (p. 81), lack of reliable staff to trust, depend and count on (p. 79), societal perceptions of becoming too 'successful' and being socially outcast (p. 77), a lack of fruitful friendships, networks and social capital (p. 79), lack of confidence and self-esteem (p. 77), a lack of support due to traditional views and values around the place of women (p. 73), questions around credibility and authority (p. 77), criminal activities (Nambiar, Scheepers, & Sutherland, 2019, p. 77); a lack of access to finance and learning institutions (p. 26), a lack of success mindsets (p. 26), punishing labour laws and family responsibility preventing women from exploiting opportunities for growth, not being technically savvy enough to apply for tenders (Akhalwaya & Havenga, 2012, p. 26); and lastly, embodying the wrong attitudes towards the meaning of work and business (Mandipaka, 2014, p. 127).

Most of the outlined reasons for why women entrepreneurs struggle with entrepreneurship are fairly reductionist, likely stemming from a more positivist and quantitative research approach. This approach individualises the issues – while positioning the entrepreneurs as

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sastatecapture.org.za/>

passive victims without agency – placing the individual at the centre of the social construct of entrepreneurship, responsible for their own perceived failure. Much of this reasoning places the blame on women’s individual attributes - and even includes attitudinal justifications such as ‘a lack of success mindset’ or ‘embodying the wrong attitudes’ - while some justification is put down more sensibly, to social, legal, economic and operational constructions.

If we apply an inverted interpretation of these ‘limiting’ entrepreneurial beliefs and behaviours attributed to women entrepreneurs, as described above, the results would talk to notions of: being well-educated, confident, having high self-esteem, being knowledgeable about finance, being modern, credible and authoritative, popular, accepted, growth-minded, resilient, technically adept, connected, with a strong and established social network, being able to multi-task and to rise above an insurmountable range of challenges. These diametric descriptors all talk to many of the assumed male traits associated with contemporary conceptions and understandings of entrepreneurship – which as our analysis of the entrepreneurial discourse will reveal and confirm, form an integral part of the discursive lexicon of entrepreneurship.

What is of concern is how the responsibility, blaming and shaming of entrepreneurial battles, floundering or failure is overly individualised and set at the feet of these women entrepreneurs and their immediate environments and contexts. Little attention has been paid to how this came to be from a socio-historical or other more critical and systemic standpoint; and without taking cognisance of the complex structures and systems of power that have enabled the discursive conditions within which entrepreneurship plays out. This confirms more of a functionalist analytical approach to the research, where the individual is seen as operating outside of endemic systems of power. It assumes that any negative impact that results from their lack of entrepreneurial capabilities, can easily be diagnosed and fixed: by the women course-correcting their persons and their inadequacies. This narrative projects an individualised solution to what we can concede are mostly systemic fault lines, yet as we will observe in our analysis, the message is clear, the responsibility of overcoming these issues is firmly placed ‘within their hands’.

By focusing on the individual limitations when trying to determine where challenges for women entrepreneurs may lie, we limit the possibility of finding viable systemic solutions to effectively transform entrepreneurship. I propose rather applying a structural and power-based lens to understanding how these power differentials come to be, or we leave room for

obfuscation and sophistry, which will not advance a workable solutions-based approach to an endemic social issue.

### ***2.5.6. Women Entrepreneurs as Flawed Heroines***

Maziriri et al (2019) argue that “the key to unlocking economic growth is South African women entrepreneurs” (p. 1690). This statement contradicts the numerous ways in which women entrepreneurs have been critiqued as lacking in entrepreneurial capability as illustrated. The liability-laden narrative is echoed by a number of contemporary authors within the entrepreneurial domain: “Entrepreneurial activity among South African women is critical for the country’s future economic development” (Boshoff, de Villiers Scheepers, & Oostenbrink, 2017, p. 25) and must be harnessed “to foster economic growth and development” (Ngek, 2018, p. 326), to “eradicate poverty and unemployment” (Nxopo in Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015, p.836) and for the growth of leadership, management, innovation, efficiency of research and development, job creation, competitiveness, productivity, and the formation of new sectors (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015, p. 836).

Analysing these notions within a neoliberal framework policy, we start to see an interesting pattern at play, where the responsibilities of the State: economic growth, innovation, research and development, education, formation of new sectors, job creation, the provision of efficient and effective education, community development, global competitiveness etc. are outsourced into the realm of responsibility of the individual. In this case, we see how these responsibilities are conveniently outsourced to the few women entrepreneurs who, at the same time, have been found to be wanting across the range of entrepreneurial traits as outlined above.

This contradiction reveals how within this narrative, women are increasingly positioned as ‘human capital’ and as resources of the state, as vehicles of governmentality and as useful cogs in the neoliberal wheel of government and business accountability. This may be interpreted as a double or even triple oppression (Matotoka & Odeku, 2020, p. 594): women are tasked with managing their households and families, while dealing with multiple intersecting oppressions such as gender, race and class, they’re also highly critiqued for their lack of entrepreneurial and business ability, while also being tasked with carrying some of the socio-economic future of the nation on their shoulders. It is difficult to imagine women answering this challenge when they continue to operate within a system that has never been

designed with them in mind, and that is not set up to cater for their maternal, familial, entrepreneurial or communal needs.

In this section we have tried to sketch out how the literature sets up women as ‘flawed heroines’, who, despite their apparent inherent defections, are tasked with resolving and fixing a myriad of national social crises.

## **2.6. Entrepreneurship, Work, Race and Gender in South Africa**

In their review of the racial inequalities in the “new South Africa”, Treiman (2003) asserts that “the legacy of 350 years of apartheid practice and 50 years of concerted apartheid policy has been to create racial differences in socioeconomic position larger than in any other nation in the world” (p. 1). Race and ethnicity are woven into the fabric of South Africa’s enduringly unequal society. This has resulted in South Africa retaining its classification 27 years post-apartheid as one of the “most unequal countries in the world” (OXFAM, 2020). This is due to the impact of colonialism, apartheid and a history where “a small minority, comprised of immigrants from Europe, dominated the majority from the 17th century until the 1994 transformation to a non-racial democracy” (Treiman, 2003, p. 1). The socio-historical implications of this history can never be understated when analysing the current day economy, jobs or entrepreneurship opportunities, in particular how they impact the lives of the majority Black South Africans and other South Africans of colour.

### ***2.6.1. Colonialism, Entrepreneurship, Race and Gender***

The racially-inscribed inequality levels can be located back to the very beginnings of the colonial expansion into South Africa and her exposure to some of the earliest forms of Western entrepreneurship, when one of history’s first globally recognised “multinational firm(s)” (Rei, 2014, p. 8) set their sights on the southernmost tip of the abundant continent of Africa. Indeed, from the mid 1600s, the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Town as we know it today, was the contested site of shiploads of entrepreneurial men spilling out from Europe and the United Kingdom into a number of fertile “virgin” territories (Guelke, 1988), ready to create and drive new profit-making ventures to support a global “soaring volume of trade” (Rei, 2014).

Many settlers came to the southernmost point of Africa initially as employees of their colonial prospecting firms like the Dutch East India company or Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), or later as imperial immigrants imposed on the indigenous landscapes and people. The geographical region of South Africa was, until that point, inhabited by mostly nomadic pastoralists, agriculturalists and hunter-gatherers, made up of the Khoi, the San and the Bantu people (Marks, 1972; Green, 2014).

Historical authors document that this bountiful mercantile period in Southern African history, where the white, European settlers increasingly and often violently imposed their technology, laws and business methodologies upon the brown and Black indigenous people “encouraged the formation of a small, elite immigrant society which maintained a disproportionate share of wealth, human capital and political power” (Fourie & von Fintel, 2010, p. 231).

“The Cape Colony was characterised by initially moderate inequality, followed by a series of changes which brought inequality to high levels by the end of the first century of European colonisation”. These initial high levels of inequality were reinforced with the introduction of slavery: “the Cape economy was predominantly based on slave labour” (Fourie & von Fintel, 2010, p. 10), whereby the white European colonial landowners and business owners were able to build profitable businesses with minimal labour and production costs (Green, 2014; Guelke & Shell, 1983).

It feels logical to draw a parallel between the high levels of inequality of the early phases of European settlement and inequality in modern-day South Africa, particularly as “...the institutions that evolved from the early settlement period protected the status quo, binding the high levels of inequality at the Cape and establishing similar institutions as the colony expanded to the east” (Fourie & von Fintel, 2010, p. 30). Fourie and von Fintel (2010) go on to explain that countries that exhibit “high inequality from early stages of development, generally continue to do so later on” (p. 230). The literature of the colonial period describes an elite class of landowners and “Cape gentry” (Green, 2014, p. 48), which suggests that the economic and social inequality of the imperial administration during the 17th and 18th century marks the roots of the racial and economic inequality that persists in current day South Africa (Baderoon, 2014).

### ***2.6.2. Black Women in Traditional Roles in Colonial South Africa***

“Female invisibility, it has been argued, is the “most dominant trend in African historiography” (p. 351), Black African and other women of colour’s stories have been downplayed, ignored and omitted from colonial history. Women’s stories are “not merely neglected: their existence is often conceptually denied” (Bradford, 1996). Unfortunately, this means that detailed and nuanced accounts of how pre-colonial life was experienced by Black African women from different cultural backgrounds, remains largely untold: “African women's agricultural work has also been neglected” (p. 351). “Marriage, reproduction and sexuality, too, are marginalised” (p. 364) and “the political significance of female sexuality and reproductive labour in a colonial context has been side-lined” (Bradford, 1996, p. 358).

However, in a recent feminist reading of pre-colonial times, Moagi and Mtombeni’s (2020) detailed exhumation of the societal roles played by Black African women affirms that Black women in pre-colonial southern Africa were not “trapped in domesticity and in dire need of a saviour” (p. 8) or “instruments of production and reproduction” (p. 18). Instead of tropes about Black women’s “passive, oppressed, harmless, and defenceless” subjectivity being generalised across multiple African ethnicities including Zulu, VhaVhenda, Batswana, Shona and Ndebele cultures, their review posits that Black women in pre-colonial times were confidently independent - and that they “controlled their bodies, owned their labour, and determined their destinies” (p. 2).

There is a dearth of research that centres an accurate and first-hand analysis of Black women’s roles in early traditional family and domestic units - and by extension in the production, economic and financial operations prior to the colonial enforcement of power and oppression. Due to the patriarchal and raced history of academia, much of the research and analysis has been conducted by men, mostly white men - and has focused largely on men, leaving room for a distortion of facts and history and the erasure of Black women’s stories, told from the heart.

### ***2.6.3. Colonial Era: White Women's Rights to Work***

Literature does however document white women's stories from the colonial era. Against this unequal society, "Cape Town was the hub of economic activity in the Cape Colony" (Fourie & von Fintel, 2010, p. 234), and teeming with white settler "free farmers" (Green, 2014, p. 11) who outnumbered the settler women engendering a stark imbalance of sexes (Guelke, 1988, p. 460). White women had been "brought out to the Colony", to satisfy the shortage of 'settler wives': "...there were also large shipments of single women, unmarried working-class women often picked up, it seems, around the dock areas by captains eager to fill their ships. Some of these shipments came to South Africa" (Driver, 1988, p. 6). Due to this perceived 'shortage of white women' within the increasingly racially stratified society, many of the settler men married white girls who were barely pubescent: "The pressure on women to marry early was intense, and females were married at extraordinarily young ages... twelve, thirteen and fourteen" (Guelke, 1988, p. 463).

While 'white girls' may have had to become settler wives early on, more white women, "surplus women" (Driver, 1988, p. 6) were summoned to South Africa in order to further prevent the white settler men from having relationships with local women of colour: "emigration also addressed the threat of an unproductive and unstable male community: the men might sink into sloth and might even consort with Black women instead of marrying white" (Driver, 1988, p. 7). Guelke's (1988) analysis of colonial marriage records substantiates that several white men "married free Black women" (p. 472) before the laws changed.

The limited literature on inter-racial and inter-cultural communing reveals that in the early colonial period, racial constructions were not yet stable; racism, while bubbling under, had not yet been mobilised as a disciplinary method of force and control. This was to change with Dutch and later British laws that inscribed segregation along racial lines, eventually resulting in the heinous laws of apartheid South Africa, which forbade any integration, mixing or marriage between races.

In her review of the "changing meanings of female honour in white culture during the first half of the nineteenth century" (p. 57), McKenzie (1996), points out that as the white middle class became more urbanised and established during the 1800s in what we know today as

Cape Town, women's roles shrank from being actively involved in informal trading into home-makers, who were increasingly assigned to stay at home within the private space. Many of the Dutch and English women settlers – independent or married, started off as fervent traders and active entrepreneurs trading from the front rooms and living rooms of houses, however this shifted with the rapid social and cultural changes of this nascent society evolving along more prudent British cultural notions, which had clear ideas about gender roles in the colony (McKenzie, 1996). “Nevertheless, eighteenth, and early nineteenth, century women did find space in the informal business practices of Cape Town to participate directly in the realm of trade”, however “Settler women's personal involvement in the economic life of the colony disturbed British ideas about the separation between the private and the public spheres” (McKenzie, 1996, p. 57).

McKenzie (1996) puts forward that the increasing invisibilisation of women into the home-maker role was due to the “increasing separation of private domestic from public commercial life as well as the progressive identification of women with the former and men with the latter” (p. 61). As retail was relocated out of the front rooms of houses and into formal shops in the Cape, the men moved with it, while the women were required to stay out of the public: “The result was a decline in the direct involvement of high-status women in commercial activities” (p. 61). Parallels can be drawn here with the earlier descriptions of the plight of the Neolithic women, newly settled into unexplored lands, who were relegated to the developing homesteads to breed children and take care of domestic chores, sequestered from the men's entrepreneurial hunter-colonial activity, out in the world.

#### ***2.6.4. Khoi, San and Women Slaves in Colonial South Africa***

For women not classified as ‘white’, the Cape Colony evolved into a cruel, punishing place. As commerce and trade increased, the demand for extra labour grew (Fourie, 2011, p. 16), and captured women were brought to Cape Town from “Sri Lanka, Benghal, South India, Indonesia, Madagascar, and the East African Coast” (Arnott, 2019, p. 6) to work on the wine and wheat farms as slaves to the growing community of settler landowners. “There is a significant gap in the literature on both slave and Khoikhoi women in the Cape” (p. 6) as well as their dehumanisation under Dutch rule and their subsequent mistreatment as assets and property by the VOC company employees and settlers. And yet slavery “was rooted in the very foundations of (the) Cape Colony” (Arnott, 2019).

According to Arnott (2019), “Female slaves typically worked in the domestic sphere, performing household tasks, and male slaves typically worked outside the home, though this was a pattern rather than a strict rule” (p. 11). In addition, women slaves were subjected to sexual and physical abuse as “white colonists were granted sexual license to Black women’s bodies” (p. 85), as “enslaved and Khoisan women’s bodies were designated as available for sexual access with impunity” (Baderoon, 2014, p. 84). In the Cape Colony, a woman of colour’s diminished place in society and the workplace was affixed from the late 1600s through to 1834 (and beyond) when slavery was eventually abolished (Fourie, 2011, p. 17). Many of today’s ‘Coloured people’ of South Africa, a title designated by apartheid law makers, represent this rich and painful mixed heritage of Khoi, San, the imported slaves and the settler colonials, whose lives would forever be imprinted with the suffering of bondage and indenture.

#### ***2.6.5. A Racialised History of Inequality***

This section has shown that it was the arrival of white colonial men that significantly shifted the trajectory of Black and indigenous women in South Africa – and whose hierarchical power via patriarchy and imperialist culture impacted white women’s agency adversely. While this colonial period was over 350 years ago, if one observes the evolution of these initial discriminatory racial economies and practices, which become inscribed through the colonial period, into the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and on into the period of apartheid from 1948 to 1994 – through the dawning of democracy – bringing us to today, it becomes clear that economic, social and gender inequality have been stitched into the very fabric of our nation, with “historical routes that go back several centuries” (Francis & Webster, 2019, p. 792). It is against this backdrop of gender, racial and importantly economic and class inequality that my research question is framed: my interviews will situate the backstory of our women entrepreneurs within our more recent socio-economic history. I hope that our analysis of the current-day magazine covers will also demonstrate how little the hunter-colonial-entrepreneur discourse has changed since the 1600s.

### ***2.6.6. Inequality in Contemporary South Africa***

South African economists, Francis and Webster (2019) explain that “South Africa’s historical inability to meaningfully address the high levels of inequality is due, in part, to insufficient attention to the way power produces and reproduces the conditions that facilitate growing inequality” (p. 788). The Oxfam report on inequality from 2019 revealed that there were only two Black men and one white woman in a list of “South Africa’s 24 richest people” (OXFAM, 2020, p. 25).

Despite the racial capitalism that has shaped our disjointed country along colour lines, much of the contemporary literature on women entrepreneurs inadequately addresses race and gender when interrogating entrepreneurship. In several more quantitative post-apartheid studies, we observe a continued racial skew in the choice of participants towards white women-owned businesses (Valla 2001; Chitakunye, Derera, & O’Neill, 2014). In some instances, the study did not talk directly to South African racial branding, for example by employing international racial terminology such as “ethnic minorities or majorities” (Haupt & Ndimande, 2019).

Dating back already to 1992, Stella Nkomo speaks to how, rather than being explicit about race and race relations in order to illuminate the implicit power issues that require attention, race has been considered ‘irrelevant’ or not a problem and is often ‘unstated’ in business and workplace literature (Nkomo, 1992). There appears to be, however, a noticeable turn towards a more intersectional approach in contemporary entrepreneurial research (Dhliwayo & Moyo, 2019; Aneke, Bomani, & Derera, 2017; Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016; Gouws, 2017; Knight, 2016; Byrne, 2017) with more recent analysis directly interrogating the racial and class implications of being a woman entrepreneur in South Africa and how women’s entrepreneurial progress is thereby impeded.

Considering that the “combination of race and gender disparities works largely to the detriment of Black women, who register the lowest levels of income and of formal access to economic opportunity and financial services” (Witbooi & Ukpere, 2011, p. 5649), it is vital and urgent that more studies on entrepreneurship centre the lived experiences of Black South African women entrepreneurs and women of colour. It is also important that future research applies a class-ed lens to research, interrogating the lived experiences of Black women across

different rankings of class and from different socio-economic and rural/urban backgrounds, particularly in our ever-evolving post-Apartheid landscape.

## **2.7. Theoretical Framework**

### ***2.7.1. Critical Diversity Literacy***

Mainstream entrepreneurship discourse calls for inquiry – it has largely been left unchallenged in our setting and remains a problematic space. My research focuses on the gender and racial intersections of entrepreneurial subjectivity and how the discourse of current-day entrepreneurship has been construed to invisibilise and mute the underlying power dynamics. The setting in which my study takes place, South Africa, requires that a thorough socio-historical excavation is undertaken in order to identify how power has been produced within the paradigm, and how it reproduces itself against our social backdrop.

In order to effectively examine, situate and expand on my research question, I will be applying the dynamic research framework of Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL). The framework of CDL provides both theoretical and practical tools that allow the researcher to lift the lid on the surface assumptions of a research question to reveal the power relations underneath.

CDL is a domain that has evolved out of Whiteness studies and the larger area of Critical Social Theory. It provides us with a useful approach to understanding how power, hierarchies, difference and othering have manifested for over 350 years. My research hopes to unravel some of the gendered and racial mythologies and assumptions inherent in the socially constructed field of entrepreneurship in South Africa – CDL provides a framework to effectively do this. My hope is to contribute towards a more emancipatory re-imagining of entrepreneurship, that unbundles the contested and inscribed meanings that weigh it down – however my “first task is to make visible the assumptions that normalise unjust relations and to question that which the normative would have remain unquestioned” (Steyn, 2018, p. 6).

In Booyesen and Nkomo’s (2010) intersectional analysis of managerial identities along class and race lines in 2010 they state that their paper “is also the first study of its kind in South Africa” (p. 2). Indeed, applying a critical diversity lens to the area of organisations, work and

by extension entrepreneurship remains novel. Melissa Steyn's (2015) explanation of the utility of CDL is its ability to "foreground unequal power relations, social inequities and fundamental contestations of situated interests in society, the tradition seeks to critique and not just understand or explain society" – I hope to apply this framework effectively in my analysis.

It must be made explicit that I am a woman entrepreneur, with nearly ten years of being active within the sphere of entrepreneurship where I have built a business that reflects a gender and racial make-up reflective of the South Africa I wish to live in. I work within a team staffed by a majority Black women and Black people within an inclusive ownership and profit-sharing collective-style model. It is through my own experience of operating within this realm that I felt an epistemic pull towards better understanding some of my own experience and frustrations. Along my entrepreneurial journey I experienced a constant coursing of moments where I felt powerless and overpowered, on one hand, unable to understand or manage many of the varied challenges that come with the territory of solo entrepreneurship.

Paging through the articles in *Entrepreneur* magazine, reading the wave of entrepreneurial posts on LinkedIn or Twitter – and attending to any kind of entrepreneurial literature provided content that, for the most part, consisted of entrepreneurial rhetoric that provided scant relief. What was most confusing for me, was that while my 'requisite' entrepreneurial skills may have improved over time through learning in the field, and despite my relative perceived success in running businesses, my emotional and psychic experience was always challenged, raising more questions. At times I could feel that I was entangled and operating within a hidden force of power - albeit effectively - but that I was often unable to locate or name these underlying "prevailing social relations" (Steyn, 2015, p. 381). This research is a critical part of my own sense-making. Employing the toolbox of Critical Diversity Literacy enables me to better establish and critique these mostly indiscernible forces of subjection and control, and hopefully to provide some theory for other women entrepreneurs to make sense of their own entrepreneurial positionality and ensuing struggles.

Ahl (2002) in her important writings on 'The Makings of the Female Entrepreneur' under the auspices of the emerging field of Critical Entrepreneurship Studies (CES) lays out four pertinent areas of inquiry which overlap with my own research and analysis: "The first, and

almost universal assumption, is that entrepreneurship is a good thing. The second such assumption is that men and women are different. The third is a certain division between a public and a private sphere of life, and the fourth is individualism” (p. 159). As a practicing entrepreneur, I deeply question if entrepreneurship, as it is currently promoted, is a good thing. This study hopes to demystify some of the embellishment that escapes critique through the hyperbolised narratives being accepted as common experience. Ahl’s gendered observations as well as their inquiries around the divisions of ‘public and private spheres’ echoes some of the research already shared within this literature review. Lastly, Ahl’s highlighting of individualism speaks to the neoliberal economic system as highlighted, that has given birth to many of the complexities experienced by those pursuing entrepreneurial selfhood.

These shared entrepreneurial observations will be tested using the framework and principles of CDL that I will apply to unearth the power relations inherent in entrepreneurial discourse and assumptions. This will be done through a critical discourse analysis of 12 covers of *Entrepreneur* magazine, as well as our face-to-face interviews with the 10 women entrepreneurs. In the discourse analysis I will be analysing the textual and socio-semiotic choices made in order to demystify the entrepreneurial narrative employed by the magazine publishers.

To conclude this subsection and the chapter may require a restatement of the thinking about CDL as enunciated by Steyn (2015). Here is a reminder of the 10-step process:

1. *Understanding and acknowledging the constitutive role of power in issues of diversity* – here I will seek to outline the ‘normative orders’ that are at play within the discourse.
2. *Establishing and recognising the symbolic and material value of the hegemonic identities that dominate* – my research will crystallise some of the dominant identities at play and how they have been constructed.
3. *Mapping out how these systems of privilege intersect, interlock, co-construct and constitute each other* - once the power models of privilege have been identified, it is important for the research to draw out how these systems play out, are reinforced and held up.

4. *The research seeks to establish 'the making of' these existing oppressions against their historical telling* – it is important that the analysis points out how the oppressions manifest systemically and structurally as current issues.
5. *Comprehending that social identities are learnt and are an outcome of social practices* – this research is centered on analysing how the dominant social identities are reinforced through mainstream narratives – such as the naturalised positionality of masculinity within the field of entrepreneurship and over time through social practices and norms.
6. *Grasping the language of the field in such a way that one is able to tackle the subject matter, so as to be able to express one's opinions using the appropriate subject matter language* – I have the advantage of being able to tackle the domain of entrepreneurship as both an insider-practitioner and an outsider-analytical scholar equipped with the semantics of power and oppression through our coursework and academic learnings.
7. *A critical element of analysis for this research is being able to make out the hegemonies at play and to be able to interpret their 'coded practices'* – establishing the white male and patriarchal hegemonies of the entrepreneurial domain will be achieved through the semiotic and discourse analysis.
8. *Hierarchies of power and institutionalised oppressions require analysis in order to understand how they come to life against their contextual backdrop* – my research applies a situational, cultural and material lens.
9. *Considering Affect and how it is impacted by the social arrangements, power and constraints* – at the core of my research is a qualitative approach that allows me to draw out some of the emotional journeys around the notions of entrepreneurship, perceived success and failure and affectual responses and reactions such as envy.
10. *Engaging with these issues in such a way that we may begin to imagine how to alter, improve or transform these oppressive systems in emancipatory ways and towards driving social transformation* – my research will conclude by imagining what a more emancipatory, transformative version of entrepreneurship may look like. I hope to contribute some workable, pragmatic ideas when summarising my analysis.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. Methodology

In my research I wish to contribute to the emerging critical theories around the shifting realm of entrepreneurship. To date, a more clinical quantitative-style research methodology has been overly favoured, typically employing surveys, questionnaires, sampling at scale and “box-ticking methodologies” (Ahl, 2002; Dean & Ford, 2017), which tend to reify the prevailing epistemologies. I wish to contribute to the qualitative turn, which relies less on mainstream hypotheses “that obscure more penetrating understandings of historical and current social realities” (Steyn, 2015, p. 381) but rather that encourage the application of a more critical lens to the entrepreneurial realm.

At the core of my research lie multiple ‘stories from the heart’ which consist of ten personal narratives and life stories shared with me by my interview participants: ten women entrepreneurs whose businesses are based in Gauteng and surrounding provinces. These women generously shared their personal experience of being an entrepreneur against the neoliberal backdrop, as well as their personal backstories, allowing me to ask questions about their childhood, their family dynamics, their studies and careers, partnerships and motherhood and crucially their lived and affective experiences as social actors in the highly raced and gendered entrepreneurial domain.

By critically examining the power relations at play implicit in the grand narratives of entrepreneurship, I hope for my research to contribute to a “radical undoing” (Cain, Ditchburn, & Donaghue, 2017, p. 184) of the assumptions embedded in the positivist research paradigm that has traditionally dominated this field of inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). In accordance with the positivist approach, historically, much of the research has been conducted in an objective manner by Western and male researchers, often with a non-critical, narrow lens (Hamilton E. , 2014, p. 704) that fails to take into account the layered socio-historical backdrop, structural inequalities, constraints and complexities of practicing entrepreneurship as a woman (of colour) in the Global South.

By employing a qualitative approach, I hope to offer up a dynamic reframing that will situate the woman entrepreneur within the hegemony of patriarchy - and thereby expose the

“asymmetrical power dynamics” and “open up new ways of thinking” (Dean & Ford, 2017, p. 179) towards an emancipatory reimagining of the entrepreneurial construct.

### **3.1. Rationale of Methodology**

I chose a mixed-method approach to data collection: first, I interviewed the ten women entrepreneurs operating in the formal sector. I then reviewed the visual and written content of twelve front covers of *Entrepreneur* magazine.

On one hand, I attempted to provide a safe space for the participating women entrepreneurs to “exercise their own voices” (Chappell, Dlamini, Nkala, & Rule, 2014) through dialogical storytelling and narrative, while a parallel investigation of the popularised discourse of entrepreneurship at the site of the magazine covers dialectically and visually probed and unraveled the common-sense authority of the texts to reveal “racially gendered histories of oppression (or structural power)” (Knight, 2016, p. 311).

In order to achieve this goal, it was imperative that I located this research within an Interpretivist and Critical-Theory/Transformative approach. According to Lather (1991), critical theories seek to “enlighten, empower, and emancipate” (p. xvii) by focusing on marginalised subjects and foregrounding their lived experiences. The questions posed in the semi-structured interviews applied an “in-depth life history approach” (Dean & Ford, 2017, p. 182) that I hoped would give the participants “agency in authoring their own stories” (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011, p. 267).

### **3.2. Data Collection**

#### ***3.2.1. Participant Recruitment and Demographics***

##### **Table 1**

*Demographic descriptors of ten women entrepreneurs interviewed.*

Alias	Age	Racial/Cultural/ Religious Identifier	Industry	Province	Children
Tshego	51	Black	Property	Limpopo/Gauteng	2
Lorna	43	Black - Kenyan	Fashion	Gauteng	3
Natalie	41	Mixed-Race	Pet shop retailer	Gauteng	2
Mbali	31	Mixed-Race	Creative Media	Gauteng	1
Lihle	38	Black	Culinary world	Tembisa/Gauteng	0
Regina	46	Black	Mining	North West/Gauteng	1
Nabeela	35	Indian - Muslim	Footwear	Gauteng	0
Sandra	39	White - Jewish	Health shop	Gauteng	1
Unathi	31	Black	Beauty spa	Gauteng	0
Gloria	29	Black	Catering	Gauteng	0

*Note: The participants names, cultural and geographical backgrounds and industries have all been altered for confidentiality and to protect their anonymity.*

In conducting this research, I employed a mixed-method approach. Firstly, semi-structured interviews were conducted remotely with ten women entrepreneurs. Due to a nationwide lockdown, I had to adjust my method of contacting formal business institutions to locate participants. Instead, I identified three women entrepreneurs from my own circle who had set up and registered their own SMMEs in the formal sector. I also searched for qualifying participants online, two of the ten participants were identified in this way. I then asked my circles to assist me in recruiting the remaining participants and used snowball sampling to find the five final participants. I had never met seven of the entrepreneurs I interviewed, so they were not familiar with our shared circumstances, and I tried to not reveal this during the interview process. For the three women who read me as a fellow entrepreneur I explained that I was conducting research into their socio-historical background and entrepreneurial experience. I also assured them that the information they supplied would be treated as strictly confidential.

The participants' ages ranged from 29 to 51, seven of the ten participants were either single or divorced - two were married and one in a partnership (see Table 1). Six of the ten women were mothers to biological children, with three having 'only' children (one child only). All declared themselves whether overtly or discreetly as cis-het women.

The racial distribution within the sampled participants included nine women of colour, and one white woman; this was done intentionally to not only ensure the sample was in line with the racial demographics of South Africa but to also prioritise the marginalised voices of Black women and women of colour.

Five of the women identified as Black South Africans, one as a Black Kenyan resident in South Africa, one as a Muslim Indian South African, and one as a Coloured South African. Interestingly, one of the participants who I had misidentified as a white South African revealed herself to be of mixed race, 'passing as white'; and the tenth participant identified as a white South African. Cultural and religious backgrounds included women from the Tswana, Tsonga, Zulu and Xhosa indigenous cultures, as well as being of Gujarati, Indian and Mozambican descent. There were also women of British and Greek colonial heritage, and women from the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths.

All their businesses were active within the formal economy at the time of the interviews; however, some were in a precarious state due to the impact of the COVID-19 regulations against a shrinking economy. Three of the women are sole founders, whilst four are co-founders who started their businesses with at least one friend or family member. One participant purchased the business from a friend in its early stages; while another started out as a partnership that later dissolved, so that they became sole owner. The tenth entrepreneur began as a sole founder but shifted into a partnership.

### 3.2.2. Analysis of the Magazine Covers

Figure 2

Entrepreneur magazine covers, March 2017 to February 2018



The other key source of data for this study was the twelve full-colour images of the covers of *Entrepreneur* magazine. Full versions of all twelve of the magazines were purchased from the Magzter<sup>6</sup> website and a digitised image of each cover was captured and compiled into a PDF document, in order of publication, from March 2017 to February 2018 (See Figure 1 and Appendix D). I selected this time period as it reflects the generic fiscal year of an SMME, which typically runs from 1 March through to 28 February in South Africa. The PDF version of all twelve images was used to analyse the visual elements and particular layout of each magazine cover, the configuration of which I compiled into a spreadsheet. I also manually extracted the copy on each cover and inserted it into a table on a tab on the spreadsheet for ease of analysis. Lastly, I created a text document of all the words and copy on all twelve of the covers.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.magzter.com/magazines/listAllIssues/14955>

### **3.3. Conducting and Transcribing the Semi-Structured Interviews**

For nearly all the women entrepreneurs interviewed, the economic and social impact of COVID-19 and the consequent lockdowns have had a considerable effect on their businesses, which has been crippling in some instances. Practically speaking, it was important that we adjusted our research method in order to continue with the research unimpeded. I was only able to meet with one of the ten participants in person and I had to depend on technology for the other nine. This meant employing a series of collection methods including live digital video calls recorded on software such as Google Meet, Zoom or Microsoft Teams, live WhatsApp phone calls, recorded WhatsApp voice notes, text messages and email.

This resulted in the transcription process being complicated in some respects due to the variety of data sources. Nonetheless, all ten of the interviews were recorded and captured in writing within the technological constraints. The recordings ranged from one hour to five hours long.

### **3.4. Analysis of Interview Data**

Once the interviews were transcribed, I read and processed the content of each interview. As I perused the first few narratives, with a view of systemising the data in a methodical way, I began to identify common themes that connected the lived experiences of the ten women.

I then conducted a textual and narrative analysis of the extracted content of the participants' "self-accounts" (Burck, 2005). When applying narrative analysis, "emphasis is on the content of a text, 'what' is said more than 'how' it is said, the 'told' rather than the 'telling'" (Riessman, 2005, p. 2). It was therefore vital that the testimonies of the interviewees were analysed, understood and interpreted against the backdrop of social, racial, economic, gender, class and other intersecting factors that impact the participants' entrepreneurial experience.

For this purpose, I created a spreadsheet where I indexed, in short summaries, the biographical information provided by each participant, such as race, ethnicity, religion, language, age, career, industry, parental situation, marriage/partnership, number of siblings, gender in the family, education, their experience and memories of apartheid and other general

notes. This would prove useful in summarising the rich and varied backstories of all ten participants for easier reference.

All the participants were provided with a PDF containing copies of the twelve magazine covers. They were asked to review them, then to record and share their thoughts about any three of the covers. Their interpretations of the covers were recorded as part of the interview. This is where the co-creation element of the interviews came about, as by this point, I had either revealed or they had established that I was also an entrepreneur (which, in most instances, heightened the intimacy of the interview, creating a bridge of understanding and empathy between the participants and I). Hence, for the most part, this analytical part of the interview was a shared conversation about the magazine covers and entrepreneurship rather than an interviewer-interviewee question-answer format like the preceding more intimate questions.

For the textual analysis of the secondary data source, the magazine covers, I firstly extracted the relevant copy and words from each cover and listed them in a text document in order to establish which words or phrases were the most salient or frequently used in the discourse.

I also created a spreadsheet where I listed the different analytical themes as well as the naming conventions of magazine layout such as: pose, dress code, facial expression, use of colour, strapline, masthead, skyline, plug, anchorage text, cover lines, sublines, puffs, signifiers, mode of address, kicker and left third. This helped me to line up the socio-semiotic content of the magazine covers for a multi-modal method of analysis, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA as an analytic methodology will be applied to both the copy, the layout and the visual representation.

Bearing in mind that “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned” (Meyer & Wodak, 2009, p. 10), my objective is to apply CDA as a toolkit to guide the deconstructing and decoding of the manufactured discourse of entrepreneurship as articulated by the magazine covers. The semantic analysis of the text will be done by visiting the text at different levels and asking questions about the socio-historically produced power and ideologies inherent linguistically (Cerveja, Postigo, & Herrero, 2006). This Faircloughian technique is summarised by Janks (1997) as:

1. Text analysis (description),
2. Processing analysis (interpretation) and
3. Social analysis (explanation).

For the visual analysis in my multimodal approach, I will be applying the socio-semiotic methodology, as authored by two of the founding members of the CDA movement, Kress and Van Leeuwen. The socio-semiotic analytic method equipped me, as the researcher, with a visual analytical framework to better understand to what purpose the magazine covers project “images of reality which are bound up with the interests of the social institutions within which the images are produced, circulated and read” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, 2006, p. 47). Their socio-semiotic repertoire includes a practical analytical taxonomy well suited for a technical analysis of the twelve cover images towards formulating how “the apparently neutral” (p. 14) texts “realise, articulate and disseminate discourses as ideological positions” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, 2006).

The last step in my methodological approach was to cross-check the real-world insights, the ‘stories from the heart’ gleaned from analysis of the participant’s narratives against the discursive analysis of the representation of entrepreneurship as advertised by the magazine covers. This comparison of the two data sets completed the research process, as the dominant narratives and manufactured narratives inherent in the texts of the magazine covers were strength-tested against the lived experiences and testimonials of the women entrepreneurs.

### **3.5. Ethical Considerations**

#### ***3.5.1. Confidentiality, Ethical Clearance and Informed consent***

All participants signed a Participant Information Sheet which outlined the purposes and goal of the study, thereby providing their informed consent. They were all provided with the option to request counselling support if required during or post the interview session and they were made aware that they could withdraw from the research at any time.

The participants were assured that their personal data would remain confidential. They were each assigned a pseudonym to protect their identities. Any business names or descriptions

have been altered to ensure anonymity. All recordings as well as additional documentation provided to me by the participants has been saved on a password-protected device.

A non-medical ethical clearance certificate was issued by the Wits Centre for Critical Diversity Studies in September 2020. The clearance certificate's protocol number is DIV200915.

### **3.6. Limitations**

In this case nearly all the ten entrepreneurs interviewed said that they described their interview experience as 'therapeutic'. This assisted in bringing out their sense of vulnerability and added authenticity and depth to their storytelling. However, it also meant that the conversations were longer than envisaged, so I have had to cherry-pick highlights from their texts and omit a large portion of each of their vivid depositions.

While my representation of participants ticks many diversity boxes, I am not aware of any of my participants being part of the LGBTQTIA+ community, which is a consideration for future intersectionally-based research. Only two of the participants speak English as a home language, yet the business and academic world requires that the interviews are conducted in English. This means that some cadence is potentially lost in translation for eight of the participants. Finally, there is a risk of essentialising gender by lumping all the participants under the banner of 'women entrepreneurs', particularly as we tackle subjects of masculinity and femininity intrinsic to the entrepreneurial tropes during analysis. In many respects this is unavoidable.

Another possible limitation was my sharing of my entrepreneurial subjectivity, as both subject and analyst - in the cases where the participants were aware of it, it did not seem to impede the flow of conversation and in fact appeared to encourage more trusting, open-hearted sharing. In the case of some of the participants who perhaps considered that as a student I may not have a grasp of their complex positionality, I felt drawn to inform them earlier on in the interview than planned that I was also an entrepreneur and that I have walked a similar path, in order to unlock more free-flowing conversation. In most cases this was effective.

### **3.7. Self-Reflexivity**

Sharing the designation and accompanying subjectivity of also being an ‘entrepreneur’, I was acutely aware of my positionality throughout the process of this research. I journaled my thoughts and considerations as they surfaced - and actively took on a more neutral interlocutor role as much as required, dialling up my entrepreneurial persona when and if needed. While it was tempting to interject and break bread at certain points of the different interviews, I ensured that my own voice was toned down and my ears wide open and receptive to the stories being shared without needing to impose my own experiences from the heart.

As a white woman conducting research with a large majority of women of colour, from a diversity of backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities, I was candid about my awareness of my advantages and privilege as a white woman. I also tried to ensure that all the participants were comfortable with the content and tone of questioning. Conducting the interviews at a distance helped me to detach myself and perform the role of attentive researcher and listener.

The advantage of our shared entrepreneurial experience was that I am acutely conscious of the affective impact of the entrepreneurial journey, which can manifest in negative psychosocial outcomes, such as loneliness, shame, depression and heightened anxiety - as well as in physical manifestations, for example exhaustion, insomnia, impact on weight or health, as well as self-imposed social isolation. This meant that I attempted to approach all the conversations with care, while encouraging candour, building trustworthiness and trying to gently open the door to the resulting heart stories.

Most of the entrepreneurs shared sad and difficult stories; some even broke into tears or emotive states. I did my best during these moments to comfort the participants, while reassuring them that I understood and, in many ways, shared their pain. I was also able to console them to some degree with the idea that I, along with other critical theory researchers, am conducting this research to shine a light on the subaltern positionalities relegated to women within the domain of entrepreneurship - while at the same time imagining transformative new ways of being.

### **3.8. Conclusion**

In this chapter I have given an outline of the approach and methodology employed in collecting data about the lives of the women entrepreneurs I interviewed. I have described the process of conducting the interviews and of the analysis of the magazine covers.

My interviews all took place within the first year of our society managing and coping with the COVID-19 pandemic - amidst its atmosphere of turmoil, loss and fear. I tried to bear this in mind and hold space for the women whose business or families had been negatively impacted. In many ways, my research is a dedication to these brave women who push forward despite the many forms of intersecting oppressions that they come up against.

In the following chapter, I will give an account of the results of my analysis of the data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. Discussion, Interpretation and Analysis

*The people with real power are the ones who own the society, which is a pretty narrow group.*

Noam Chomsky<sup>7</sup>

This chapter delves into the presentation, interpretation and discussion of the data that was gathered in the course of the research.

Launched in 2006 as a print edition, and now defunct in South Africa since early 2019 due to licensing issues with its US counterpart, *Entrepreneur* magazine appears to have been a popular purchase, since it claimed to have more than fourteen thousand subscribers and over two hundred thousand readers<sup>8</sup> per edition. Positioning itself as ‘the ultimate “how to” handbook for building companies’ (see Appendix D), the twelve covers that were analysed as part of this research range from March 2017 through February 2018. This corresponds to the standardised fiscal year for businesses in South Africa as declared by the South African Revenue Service<sup>9</sup> (SARS). 2018 was also the year that the magazine received the accolade of ‘Best-Selling Business Title’ by the industry body known as the Audit Bureau of Circulation<sup>10</sup>, during a time of significant decline in magazine sales globally.

In analysing and interpreting these twelve covers, I will be employing Critical Discourse Analysis as described by Hilary Janks in her paper ‘Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool’ (1997), which entails integrating “the three interrelated dimensions of discourse” in our process (Janks, 1997, p. 329):

1. The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts),
2. The processes by which the object is produced and received,
3. The socio-historical conditions that govern these processes.

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://chomsky.info/mediacontrol01/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20171019150438/http://www.entrepreneurmag.co.za>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.sars.gov.za/Tax-Rates/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.marklives.com/2018/05/abc-analysis-q1-2018-the-biggest-circulating-consumer-mags-in-sa>

I applied this three-tiered approach throughout my analysis of the magazine texts. I then interwove the corresponding narrative analysis from the ten participant interviews into the critique and enhanced my interpretation with a Critical Diversity Literacy reading. I hope that my findings reveal some of the mythologies inherent in entrepreneurial discourse and also indicate whom they serve.

#### 4.1. The Objects of Analysis

Figure 2

*Entrepreneur magazine covers: March 2017, November 2017, September 2017.*



I began with a multimodal analysis of the texts which consisted of a collection of twelve images of the covers of *Entrepreneur* magazine, as shown in Figure 1 and in Appendix D. They were analysed by employing both socio-semiotic and textual analysis. The title of the magazine, as confirmed by the mastheads of the magazines, is *Entrepreneur*. Of the twelve covers analysed, there are twenty-four (24) ‘entrepreneurs’ or social agents visually depicted through photographic impressions, sixteen of whom fill most of the central part of the frame: their images are both ensconced and foregrounded by accompanying anchorage text and several cover lines. Eight of the ‘entrepreneurs’ are positioned in the bottom left third, presented as smaller headshot images. The cover lines are mostly written in bold and full

caps – and the font size tends to be adapted to the length of the sentence; the shorter the coverline, the bigger the font size.

## 4.2. The Makings of an Entrepreneur

Figure 3

*Entrepreneur* magazine covers, May 2017, July 2017, August 2017 to October 2017



Revisiting the earlier classical definition of an entrepreneur: as someone who launches an innovative venture that will solve a problem or challenge, one would expect all the subjects featured visually on the covers to represent this commonly ascribed-to definition accurately. While twenty of these ‘social agents’ are confirmed as founders of their businesses, four covers include photographs of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of corporations: Peter Mountford of Super Group (May 2017), Erik Venter of Comair (October 2017), Trevor Raman of Saab Grintek (July 2017) and George Mienie of Autotrader, (August 2017) (see Figure 3). The inclusion of these ‘honorary’ entrepreneurs within the discourse raises the first semantic challenge: who or what is defined as an entrepreneur within the context of the traditional media format in South Africa, who is included in its etymology - and what ideology is being communicated through its current exclusions?

It is clear when analysing the covers of *Entrepreneur* magazine, whose strapline positions it as the “How-To” handbook for building companies’, that the definition of ‘entrepreneur’ or ‘companies’ does not stretch to include the millions of enterprising “survivalist” (IEJ, 2018; Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015) entrepreneurs in the informal sector, the broadest representation of the South African working population. The concept of entrepreneurship is

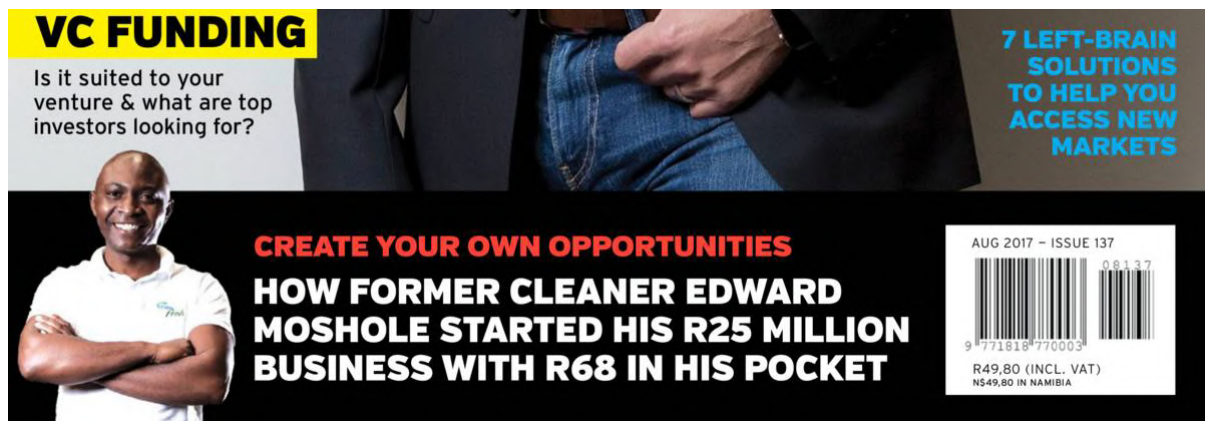
positioned as being reserved for the more elite practitioners in the formal sector: white male South Africans and their boardroom colleagues of colour. If anything, it can be argued that the inclusion of four CEOs on the covers extends the definition of an entrepreneur away from an inclusive conception that is cognisant of the broader base of the population, towards the privileged, affluent minority and corporate class.

Of the 24 entrepreneurs represented visually on the covers, only three women are included and six people of colour. This means that of the 24 entrepreneurs (including the CEOs) presented on the covers, 18 are white men. Of the six entrepreneurs of colour, four are identifiable as 'Black South Africans'.

The August 2017 edition introduces Edward Moshole (see Figure 4), a 'former cleaner' who began his entrepreneurial adventure with just R68 in his pocket, and who went on to grow a R20 million-rand business. Moshole's rags-to-riches portrayal is the only narrative that positions a Black person who was once operating in the 'informal sector' as having transitioned through the entrepreneurial journey to land up as a successful middle-class entrepreneur.

**Figure 4**

*Extract from Entrepreneur magazine cover, August 2017.*



This explicit inclusion of corporate CEOs in the magazine's entrepreneurial realm illustrates the blurring of the lines between salaried corporate managers of global firms and the mythic, heroic entrepreneur, off on a hunt to find new adventures. The neoliberal intentions of the state are to encourage individuals to become autonomous entities, self-authored and self-

serving, with minimal need for state dependency or support. In this way citizens are unbundled from the state's responsibility while socio-economic agendas of privatisation and the enrichment of the private sector are pursued. By including the CEOs side-by-side with entrepreneurs, the publishers idealise entrepreneurial embodiment in the form of a corporate CEO who instructs powerful, immutable corporate entities that, in turn, wield enormous power over the body politic. Revisiting our interpretation of the term entrepreneur, unless the CEOs were part of the founding team of the corporation, they are in effect not entrepreneurs, but salaried employees and possible shareholders.

### **4.3. Formal versus Informal Sector**

In considering who or what an entrepreneur is in South Africa, it is important to bear in mind the extreme economic inequality that forms the backdrop to the discourse of these glossy magazines, whose target audience appears to be selected businessmen from the 'formal sector' of business. Statistics South Africa qualifies the formal sector as "a sector of employment made up of all employing businesses that are registered in any way" (p. viii).

Conversely, a business from the informal sector, is one that is considered an "enterprise/business with or without employees that is not incorporated and not registered for taxation" (StatsSA, 2019). The 'informal sector' is described as including "economic activities by individual operators and economic units (in law or practice)" with "no formal contractual arrangements" (p. 3) who are operating "outside accepted norms of society in that they are not regulated or registered with the government and are hence non-taxable" (Daramola & Etim, 2020) and where "production and employment"... "takes place in unincorporated, small or unregistered enterprises" (IEJ, 2018, p. 2).

The informal sector is reported to have contributed an estimated 6% to the GDP in 2017 (p. 1), providing for approximately "5 million informal jobs" in 2019 (p. 8) and accounting for almost "a third of total employment" (StatsSA, 2019). The Statistics SA study also showed that men accounted for the "highest share of those employed in all types of employment" (p. 23), with the statistics revealing that nine out of ten persons running informal businesses were identified as 'Black African' (StatsSA, 2019).

These informal sector economic activities in South Africa include: ‘micro-enterprises’ which are, “located in informal settlements and include spaza, shebeens, and liquor shops” (Daramola & Etim, 2020, p. 15). The operators are described as “street and spaza shop traders, taxi drivers, construction workers, educare providers, waste recyclers, tailors, shoe repairers, bush mechanics, among others” (IEJ, 2018).

According to Cichello and Rogan (2017), the informal sector is also “characterised by poverty and under-development” (p. 2) and “is structurally disconnected from the formal economy” (p. 2) despite its being “understood as a critical source of employment and earnings for workers on the margins of the labour market” (p. 2). “41 percent of workers (both the self-employed and employees) in the informal sector lived below the poverty line in 2012 (compared with 17 percent of workers in the formal sector)” (p. 2) and “about 37 percent of the working poor in South Africa are from the informal sector.” (p. 2). From these figures it becomes clear that the phrase ‘informal sector’ has become a euphemism for the majority of Black and disenfranchised working-class survivalist South African (and other Black African) entrepreneurs living in poverty, who are not included within the formal, regulated and taxed entrepreneurial economy.

From a gender perspective, the study shows that in addition to the harsh socio-economic conditions experienced in the informal sector, women employed within the above-mentioned enterprises “face multiple challenges compared to their male counterparts, such as childcare, productivity and the ability to earn a reliable income” (StatsSA, 2019, p. 6). This echoes some of the introduction to Chapter 2, the literature review, which dealt with the subjugation of women during the Neolithic period, where the earliest conceptions of the division of labour and the separation of public and private space unfolded.

#### ***4.3.1. Formal/Informal ----> Centres/Margins ----> Human/Not human***

The word ‘informal’ is used in South Africa not only to describe a type of employment or business, but for ‘settlements’ too. Used in the context of housing, ‘informal settlements’ is considered a common-sense term in South Africa; it indicates a temporality in where and how a large number of indigent citizens live. It speaks specifically to the geo-spatiality of ‘informal’ residential areas occupied largely by Black Africans from other countries, some of them ‘illegal immigrants’, asylum-seekers, as well as inter-provincial and rural-urban

migrants and poverty-stricken Black and other South Africans of colour, who, without formal housing arrangements, are resigned to eking out a living on the margins of society, living in makeshift and temporary abodes.

Ironically, the use of ‘settlements’ in the phrase ‘informal settlements’, turns the colonial sense of the notion of ‘settler’ on its head, as the phrase represents sites where the dispossessed settle on land that, like the original settlers, they do not formally have rights to however these ‘informal settlers’ do not carry the power associated with the colonial meaning of ‘settler’. “Settler” has also taken on a pejorative common-sense meaning in popular colloquial speak, as it is employed as a placeholder for ‘white people’, particularly when discussing contentious issues of land ownership and appropriation.

It is of interest that Daramola and Etim (2020), in their comparison of the Nigerian and South African informal sectors, uncritically refer to informal entrepreneurs as being “outside of the accepted norms of society” (p. 3). It can be assumed that these ‘acceptable norms’ allude to the notions of the formal sector, while the term ‘informal’ would then translate into being ‘not the norm’ and employed as a way of describing those who are not registered or included within the established normativities, living precariously on the margins of settled society.

Under a free market system, ‘registration’ or being registered, traceable, reachable and documented, becomes a way of legitimising one’s inclusion into the formal economy as the owner of an SMME. Formal registration also means that the entrepreneur enters a transactional relationship with the government, who will be collecting taxes of various forms from the individual, the entity and those associated with it. The acceptance of the transactional relationship of registration-taxation by those ‘in the norm’ has become a naturalised and intrinsic part of the social contract under capitalism. Once registered and operational within the formal economy, the entrepreneur will need to honour all their tax obligations in full, and timeously, to maintain their registered status as a viable entity and to prevent any fiscal or fiduciary transgressions and resulting penalties.

This terminology of inclusion and exclusion and the suggestion of what constitutes a norm and what does not, illustrates how conceptual persuasion can give rise to harmful boundary-making. Words such as ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ come to substitute concepts of ‘included’ and ‘excluded’ and/or ‘centres’ and ‘margins’, particularly with regards to basic rights, land, citizenship, economies, taxation and governance. A hegemonic discourse mired in ideology,

particularly if left unchallenged, can project and enforce the extension of these ideas into questions of who deserves recognition and humanity, who deserves to be counted within the normative discourse and ultimately, who is considered external to it, human or not human - one of “the others”... “lacking in full human subjectivity” (p. S18). Patricia Hill-Collins reminds us of the power that “dichotomous oppositional constructs have in maintaining systems of domination” (1986, p. S21) as well as the necessity for a constant and close interrogation of the power relations implicit in normalised concepts that otherwise would go unquestioned.

#### ***4.3.2. A Re-inscription of Segregational Philosophies***

This automated classifying of Black people who live and run businesses precariously into a homogenous ‘informal’ grouping that is delinked from the Western-inspired concept of ‘formal economies’ could be interpreted as a re-inscription of the centuries-old racial stratification that forms the bedrock of post-apartheid society in South Africa. The minority white and privileged population make up less than ten percent of the population, yet it is their ‘formalised’ and ‘legitimate businesses’ that dominate the covers of *Entrepreneur* magazine. This over-indexing of the privileged classes by the magazine reinforces the socio-economic scars of our history.

Notably, the previous monocultural grouping of white South Africans within these elite business and entrepreneurial “white enclaves” (Ndzwayiba, Steyn, & Ukpere, 2018) has been infused over the last 27 years post-apartheid with Black, Coloured and Indian South Africans who, through the democratisation process, talent, hard work and ingenuity, various transformation programmes and an increase in political and social capital, have risen into the ‘middle class’ which represents the privileged, monied minority. Within the middle class there are Black South Africans who have co-opted the neoliberally-produced cues and performance of the entrepreneurial identity. In my analysis of the language and images produced on the covers as well as the real-world testimonies of the women entrepreneurs I have interviewed, I hope to surface and articulate these neoliberal embodiments, as well as the socio-historical influences that give rise to them.

#### 4.4. Growth as a Masculine Marker of Success

Figure 5

*Extract from Entrepreneur magazine cover, February 2018*



When comparing the layout of all twelve covers, the sizing of the coverline font appears to depend on the potential ‘pull’ of the message being communicated to the customer at shelf level. In the February 2018 ‘Bumper Growth Issue’, the phrase ‘DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH’ is written in uppercase, enlarged and spaced across the entire width of the cover. The month of February is important for all businesses registered for the generic tax year in South Africa, as it represents the last month of the fiscal year. Best practice requires that at the end of the fiscal year, entrepreneurs consider the financial health of their business through the application of year-end accounting processes which present a story about revenues, expenses, double-entry-driven profit-and-loss, and the equity, assets and liabilities in the business’ balance sheet. The entrepreneur must then conceptualise ‘growth goals’ in revenue and operations for the fiscal year ahead - and project and confirm budgets for the next year’s anticipated growth. This could explain the placement of this blown up phrase in the month of February.

**Table 2**

*A textual analysis of the frequency of all headline nouns and verbs used across all 12 Entrepreneur magazine covers*

<b>Noun</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
business	24	self	8
million	24	zero	7
start	20	mindset	7
success	19	build	7
<b>growth</b>	<b>16</b>	made	7
years	16	year	7
lessons	12	life	6
funding	11	money	6
billion	9	launch	5
millionaire	8	habits	5

A textual analysis across all twelve covers produces *growth* as the fifth most mentioned word, after business, million, start and success. Year-on-year growth is a conventional accounting measurement, commonly accepted as a marker of a healthy ‘successful’ business (Coleman, 2007, p. 304). Apart from the critical skill of profit generation, sustained growth implies that the entrepreneur steering the entity knows what they are doing: if they can keep their business growing, credibility in their ability is established. Whether the growth number is pegged at a single or double-digit percentage depends on the many aspects the entrepreneur considers, while calculating their growth prediction, including considerations such as the economic climate, the customer pipeline, funding, future staffing and overhead requirements, market confidence and the entrepreneur’s own levels of confidence in their entity.

#### ***4.4.1. The Entrepreneur-as-Source***

For most entrepreneurs, achieving or even surpassing that projected growth target becomes the focus of the next financial year. For the neoliberal state, the entrepreneur’s focus on year-on-year growth falls conveniently in line with the “hegemonic discourse of entrepreneurship

as a significant constituent of economic contribution” (Parry, 2016, p. 1077). An increase in revenues and profits for a registered entrepreneurial entity or SMME means an increase in taxes payable to the state. I therefore argue that sustained growth renders the entrepreneurs and their entities ‘source-like’: as their business is seen to grow and perform, they are increasingly deemed as centres of value creation that offer myriad opportunities for transaction and extraction. Crucially, the more sustainably an entrepreneur grows their SMME, the more taxes will need to be paid across to SARS. These taxes include Pay-As-You-Earn, Company Tax and Value Added Taxes, amongst others.

As the business entity of the ‘entrepreneur-as-source’ continues to grow and expand, it risks becoming reduced to a kind of ‘transactional sphere’ that is increasingly relied on, depended on and drawn from, by an array of stakeholders. As stated, these include SARS - through tax and fiscal demands - as well as the private sector who are on hand to service the numerous aspects of the business. This can include but is not limited to services provided to the growing entrepreneur from: lawyers, accountants, landlords, bankers, moneylenders, marketing and advertising suppliers, computer hardware, software, coding and tech suppliers, transport and vehicle suppliers, furniture and fitting suppliers, electricity, water and basic necessity suppliers, security and insurance companies, catering and sanitary suppliers - as well as a multitude of other suppliers across the production value chain.

Growing SMMEs also become a resource for their consumers, clients or customers within their transactional sphere, who require the entrepreneur’s specialised services or products. They also attract attention from various industry bodies, who wish to engage with the entrepreneur around their expertise and knowledge. They become a source for educational and staff training suppliers and in the last two decades, to Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment facilitation suppliers. Critically, they become an important source for all of the staff members that are hired, trained, upskilled, paid and taken care of by the business, particularly against an economy with so few jobs available.

As the business growth continues, transactions increasingly become the default relational nature of the entrepreneur-as-source’s interactions with the range of stakeholders described above, as they become a wellspring of supply and demand. Much of this is productive, expected and necessary, however the toll on the entrepreneur/s behind the growing businesses remains significant.

Cash flow remains one of the biggest hurdles for entrepreneurs to get right and many are at the mercy of their customers' whims and their client's payment schedules, as well as the terms sheets of the banks and lenders. For many entrepreneurs, being responsible for maintaining a healthy cash flow during high growth phases, particularly against a strained or stagnating economy, requires artful juggling, focus and resilience.

Where the entrepreneur is self-funded and carries most of the risk and responsibility of maintaining the financial commitments of the range of these transactions, the personal and psychic impact can be taxing and difficult to navigate over prolonged periods. Where there are funded models in place, more complex financing relationships may be at play, as the entrepreneur is often beholden to the funders and the resulting interest and returns due. However, funded arrangements often come with entrepreneurial support from the investors. Most bootstrapped or self-funded entrepreneurs will not have access to this kind of free support and mentorship. They will have to learn to cope and adjust to the changing conditions brought on by sustained growth and within their means, invest in their own upskilling and support structures.

With this entrepreneur-as-source analogy in mind, the liminal role occupied by the various forms of entrepreneurship becomes clear: as the entrepreneur's business grows, they must withstand and navigate the mounting transactional exchanges between the different entities that seek to draw from them, as well as the many hurdles that come their way, while continuing to grow a profitable and sustainable offering for those who are integral to their success. Even when there is extreme socio-economic difficulty, for example during the COVID-19 global pandemic, they will continue to be held accountable for maintaining their end of these transactional relationships, as we have witnessed, sometimes with little to no support, assistance or empathy from government or the private sector.

For the entrepreneur-as-source, these arduous conditions can render the entrepreneurial experience not only precarious, demanding and lonely – but also physically and psychologically taxing, and for some, filled with 'near-debilitating anxiety and despair' (Bregman, 2019, p. 3). While we hope to conduct future research into the impact of affect on entrepreneurial embodiment, as reflected on in more detail by the participants towards the end of this chapter, for now, we can summarise entrepreneurship as a highly unpredictable and demanding journey for the entrepreneur-as-source. A humanising narrative, that

accurately reflects the struggles inherent with the lived experiences of the entrepreneur-as-source, is not touched on by the magazine covers. Instead, a more aggressive and bullish tone of entrepreneurial confidence is endorsed.

#### 4.4.2. *Entrepreneurs Gone to War*

### Figure 5

*Extracts from several Entrepreneur magazine covers, March 2017 - February 2018*



An analysis of the vocabulary employed on the covers includes key wording that establishes the competitive narrative of neoliberalism, with some of the language evoking a colonial, war-like mindset and behaviour: ‘fearless’, ‘aggressive’, ‘bravado’, ‘multiple risks’, ‘cut-throat’, ‘dominate’, ‘disrupt or die’, ‘key battles’, ‘silver bullet’, ‘tactics from the trenches’, ‘shark tank’ and ‘titans’. These military-like phrases reproduce the imperialist notion of the colonial-entrepreneur, ready to set off on a battle for new ventures and horizons.

A second element of neoliberal construction emerges clearly from the language extracted from the cover pages: the individualising of risk and responsibility and the encouragement of the individual towards autonomy. Phrases like ‘stay relevant, competitive and profitable’, ‘use grit and determination’, ‘turbo-power yourself’, ‘face down insurmountable challenges’, ‘success starts in the mind’, ‘rewire your brain’, ‘stay mentally fit’ and ‘unlock your potential’ litter the pages. This ‘empowerment’-like language instructs the entrepreneur to

‘stay, use, turbo-power, face and rewire’, suggesting that if entrepreneurs work more on themselves, they will be successful. This ties in with the neoliberal tenet of meritocracy and individualisation, where self-reliance and self-actualisation become the end goal: if entrepreneurs just work hard enough and apply their minds to it, they too can be successful.

While the magazines may project an overly simplistic masculinised conception of the entrepreneurial journey, the intimate testimonials of the women participants debunk the idea that running one’s own business is a shortcut to success and wealth. Tshego, a 50-something entrepreneur in the property space, felt that the magazines “make it look like being an entrepreneur is easy, you know. But it's not” (Tshego). While Regina (46), a participant who grew up in the North West province, spoke to the loneliness of the entrepreneurial figure: “...It’s very lonely - and it never ends because... the entrepreneurship route is not easy and people who do not understand entrepreneurship, they won't understand you as a person” (Regina).

Gloria, our youngest entrepreneur interviewed, at 29 years old, who is already onto her third business, now in the catering space, expressed that being an entrepreneur was more stressful than anticipated: “...it’s been hugely exhausting, hugely emotionally tolling, you know... whereas in corporate you don’t get to be emotionally involved in everything. In one’s entrepreneurship endeavour it’s like a lot of things become emotional” (Gloria). The participants’ stories from the heart are filled with inspiration, courage and good news stories, but equally, hard moments, heartbreak and personal struggles, bringing an affective dimension to an otherwise fairly superficial media portrayal.

This narrative of the cool-headed, aggressive, non-emotive individual that holds the knowledge and authority to determine their future, positions entrepreneurship as “supposedly gender neutral, meritocratic and with an equal chance of success if sufficient energy and enthusiasm was invested” (Ahl & Marlow, 2019, p. 7). In the interviews, it became clear how challenging and complex entrepreneurship has been for most of the participants, affirming the overly simplistic grand narrative of “hard work, self-work and meritocracy” projected by the magazine covers.

My own struggles, particularly in the organically high growth years of my business, brought along their fair share of learning in the field, but also personal challenges, some of which inspired me to conduct this research. I have been lucky to work with a responsive and

adaptive support structure, who have also given me lots of space to learn on the go and bounce back from errors made or tougher periods. Nonetheless, entrepreneurship has had its fair share of lonely and isolating moments for me too at times, particularly as I am a sole founder – which means that there are no partners to turn to when you need some quick decisions, critical advice, guidance, a conversation or just a hug.

#### ***4.4.3 The Shame of Failure, The Power of Social Status***

Lorna (43), our participant from Kenya, who runs a successful clothing fashion retail business while bringing up three children, expressed that her wish was for more women in business to “put their stories out, especially their stories of failure because we hear about all the successes, but we never hear about what, you know, what made a business fail” (Lorna).

In order to drill down into this observation, notions of failure versus success and how they impact one’s social status require interrogating, particularly from a classed perspective. As described, the neoliberal socio-economic context urges individual values of competition, striving, hard work and self-actualisation; thus, conceptions of success are closely tied to one’s perceived upward mobility. If one can, through one’s work, studies or career, ‘rise out of’ a lowered class position – typically inherited through traditional familial and socio-economic class allocations at birth, the perception of their social status will inevitably shift upwards too. Success, class and social status are closely interlinked in the minds of the public imaginary: the higher you rise through the classes, the more successful you are considered to be. Against neoliberal values, success is linked with financial stability and eventual emancipation from financial and economic constraints.

With a rise in economic and class ranking, there is an expected shift in the consideration of one’s social status which is often determined through ‘social consensus’ (p. 1) and associated with concepts of “material possessions” and “educational background” and measured through perceptions of “income, financial wealth, education, type of home, household goods, and type of car” (Bolló, HÁger, Galvan, & Orosz, 2020). These material measurements become determinants for considerations of success. For example, those that ‘started off’ in a similar class band, may consider the ‘successful’ woman entrepreneur’s ability to purchase a house, a car or to furnish their home with the latest design trends, a scaling of class and elevation of their social status. This material affirmation of her rising social status may result

in both positive and negative consequences, particularly in terms of perceptions and reactions from her community, who observe her apparent change in fortunes from the side-lines.

In South Africa, I would argue that against the historically raced socio-economic backdrop, one's economic status closely signifies one's class positionality and vice versa. During the colonial era and apartheid years, Black and other South Africans of colour were systemically restrained to the working and labouring classes, and white people empowered into the middle and elite classes. However, with the opening up of the economy, the workplace and the entrepreneurial industry in post-apartheid to Black and other South Africans of colour, the node where one's racial identity traditionally intersected with one's economic and thereby class positionality, has destabilised and is constantly shifting.

When considering the eight Black participants interviewed, being born to parents or grandparents during apartheid who held professional positions in the civil service, for example within the police, clergy, nursing, teaching or other bureaucratic institutions, would have translated into a privileged class ranking. Southall's (2014) incisive definition of the Black middle class in South Africa pins it as occupying "an intermediate position between white capital and the African working class" (p. 292). If a participant's parent or grandparent occupied one of the roles described above, an assumption of the family being situated within the Black 'upper-lower' or 'middle' professional classes, above the labouring classes, could be made. For the children and grandchildren of these professional classes, moving into 'entrepreneurship' and the private sector away from the civil service, would thereby indicate an upwardly mobile rise in both social status and class, and the possibility of being perceived as 'successful'.

At the same time, if someone considered to be in a higher social status falls into precarity, debt or unemployment, or if one's entrepreneurial venture as a middle-class practitioner never 'takes off', never creates value, stumbles or must be wound up, and they lose their financial and class footing, they may then be considered to have failed and their perceived ranking on the social status hierarchy would automatically be reduced. Like success, failure is related to both class and social status.

Gloria reflects on her own childhood in rural Mpumalanga and her family's shift in class status growing up:

“I would consider my family to be middle class and it's very interesting always having to explain my background because... when you think village or rural area, you don't think middle class, but I consider myself to come from a middle-class family, but it has not always been that way. So, growing up I grew up in a four-roomed house, two of which were bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen - sort of like a standard house. All of us had to share, I've never had a bedroom of my own. And things sort of started to change as we were growing up because my parents started doing things - doing better for themselves. They got a bigger house, um still in the same neighbourhood though, we didn't move out, you know... I grew up in a very loving family with a very hands-on mom and a very present father. He started off as a petrol attendant in his younger days and then he sort of – he worked his way up. My dad never lived at home full-time, you know, the migrant labour system. So, he's always worked away from home. He would come home either on weekends or month ends. I think he might've been a bus driver. I'm not sure - but then somewhere down the way, his career path changed. My father has worked in transportation - mid management. We've had some help at various points in the house. So, we would have people who actually came to support us from a domestic work perspective. Although a key rule in the house was that, you know, we call them Aunty and stuff - because most of them were relatives anyway. You were never allowed to just sit and let them work” (Gloria).

There are a number of issues to consider here – firstly while Gloria's family started off 'working class', when their socio-economic situation changed, they chose to remain within the rural neighbourhood where they started out, even though they could have moved to areas that may have been considered more affluent and reflective of their shifting economic status. Gloria also touches on the fact that due to her father labouring within the migrant system, that his presence in the home came and went, in line with his work opportunities, that due to the geo-spatial constructions of apartheid, were situated far from the family's home. Lastly, while Gloria's family may have ascended from working class into middle class, they did not alter the way that they interacted with the domestic staff who helped the family in their home (having domestic help is often associated with being middle class) but instead continued to

interact with the employees in a culturally respectful manner, using the term 'Aunty' to remain inclusive and indicate shared familial status.

Lihle (38) spent her early childhood in her grandparents' 4-roomed home in Tembisa, her grandfather "...was a traffic cop" and her "grandmother was a nurse". "My grandmother worked for a private doctor in the Joburg CBD - an old Italian man; and my granddad worked for the city (administration)..." (Lihle). Her grandmother had to leave the township of Tembisa, to travel to the 'whites-only areas' in order to perform her job, providing the economic stability to later send Lihle to a private multi-racial school in the same previously whites-only suburbs, at around eight years old. Lihle commented on the class at her new school having "less than 20 students...". She also found herself as a minority in the school: "It was always mixed race; I was never in a predominantly Black class in primary. I remember my best friend was a white girl called Delia" (Lihle). Lihle's private school education, enabled by her grandparents' elevated civil service status, provided her with exposure to the world of culinary arts, which played a role in Lihle later pursuing a culinary degree, working within several foodie spaces and eventually kicking off her own business within the culinary world. Lihle's access to the private school educational system, as a proxy for whiteness, enabled her rise in both social class and status.

Tshego's (51) mother was also a nurse, she grew up in the rural area of Limpopo, where her father tried his hand as an entrepreneur selling vegetables: "We grew up mostly with my father because you know nurses, they work night shift and all of those things" (Tshego). Tshego's mother was away a lot at her nursing job, but her stable civil service position meant that she would often have to step in financially when her father's 'informal' entrepreneurial ventures went through hard times:

"I grew up hating business because of how I saw my father doing in his businesses. You know at those times, it was not a formal business... where you do your taxes and all that. So, for me, it was like living hand-to-mouth, because it's money to the till and from the till, there's no accounting and all that... When he was struggling my mother had to step up because she's a nurse - she had to take loans for him, you know, cancel his policies or make a loan on her policies. So, for me, I saw it as a burden" (Tshego).

Tshego expressed that for her, being successful means being in a position of financial stability, having a profitable business in the formal economy and thereby being enabled to

purchase properties, have more leisure time with her children and assist her extended family, all of which she has been able to accomplish thanks to her entrepreneurial expertise.

Mbali (31), who is of mixed 'Coloured and Black' heritage, lost her mom as an infant and grew up with her 'Coloured' father. He had to leave school in Grade five which meant that to make a living, he had to practice informal entrepreneurship as a hawker, where he hoped to create better opportunities for his child, and later his second wife and expanding family. He continued to struggle financially throughout his life, at one point living in the back room on the property of his extended family while trying to support Mbali with her tertiary studies. He never managed to create enough income to provide stability for Mbali or his other children, as he would have wished.

This continuous striving to rise out of poverty and into a more stable class position left its impact on Mbali: "I still feel that pressure - even now, every single day - I do feel it - because I mean, in our situation now... because we don't have a home, I am the person that needs to... you know, make sure there's a home, I need to make sure my Dad is ok" (Mbali). Success for Mbali means establishing class stability through the acquisition of a fixed residence and property for her family, who, despite her father's hard work and entrepreneurial 'hustling', as Mbali described it, have yet to acquire the social status of a financially secure family, with a fixed abode of their own.

Coming back to our Kenyan participant, Lorna, her backstory is one of an economic migrant who came to South Africa as an accompanying spouse to her 'well-connected' late husband. Lorna's story contrasts vastly with the customary story of migration of African immigrants to South Africa. This highlights how her elevated class position offered her and her husband an expatriate experience of South Africa that many Africans who wish to, or are forced to migrate from their home countries, would consider extremely privileged. Lorna 'grew up middle class' as one of 9 children in Kenya, born to a father who "had several relationships, if you will call it that - and each one had a few children here and there" (Lorna).

She also remembers witnessing her entrepreneurial father's businesses fail: "He had a small [business] with some partners - and that went sour at some point, and he lost everything... The one day we had bailiffs come to the house and just kind of like say, 'okay, you need to get out'" (Lorna). Lorna recalls both the lows and highs of her father's entrepreneurial undertakings: "There was a point that we were, you know, fairly well-to-do... we lived in a

nice neighbourhood... we had a nice big house... each of my parents had a car...” We observe how the acquisition of property— both fixed and mobile, remain universal signifiers of one’s financial stability - and how being perceived as an owner of assets, ensures both the perceived scaling of class and the attainment of a higher social status.

Notably, from the numerous testimonies of the women participants who observed their own parents’ struggles of gaining and losing their financial and social footing, failure is put forward as a very real possibility and likelihood in their entrepreneurial journeys. Perceived failure is related to perceived loss in both material and social status. To Lorna’s point, experiences of both success and failure are consistent occurrences and both form a part of the entrepreneurial (and workplace) journeys, and yet, failure or stress are not notions shared on the covers.

An analysis of the language used across all twelve of the covers shows that there are very few words employed to reflect stories within the magazine that will talk to the struggles, harsh realities and stress of potential failure experienced by entrepreneurs. Instead, there is a painting of an idealised notion of rapid, easy and rocketing self-made success, that enables self-determination, growth and expansion. Being so binary in their hyping of the experience of entrepreneurship sets eager beginner entrepreneurs up for disappointment and potential disillusionment – as well as the possibility of self-condemnation and feelings of shame when the tough moments occur, or ‘failure’ becomes a likely outcome. Yet as the participants have shared, entrepreneurial endeavours are a mixed bag - and success and failure are not monochrome occurrences, the entrepreneurial experience is a whirlwind of ups, downs and a range of successes and failures. With lots of learning and personal growth in between. As Gloria reminds us “...You have your bright days and you have your dark days - but all of them matter” (Gloria).

#### ***4.4.4. Growth as a Marker of Success***

Considering the repetition of the word ‘growth’ across nine of the twelve covers, and the enlarging of the line of copy ‘double-digit growth’, I suggest that the magazine commits to the masculinised, colonially inspired ‘hunter’ notion of growth that springs from a capitalist ontology, in which growth means acquisition and expansion, and expansion offers the possibility of greater gains and profits. Greater profits imply greater financial reward for the

entrepreneur, which enables them, after paying off any debts owed, to acquire more spending power. This common sense understanding of the successful entrepreneur as one who owns, grows and expands, while paying the taxes and bills on behalf of many of those within their transactional sphere, plays perfectly into the neoliberal game plan.

From this angle, the rise in the popular narrative and growing support of ‘women entrepreneurs’ by both government and the private sector, as well as institutions, NGOs and foundations, starts to make sense. What was notable in the interviews with the ten women entrepreneurs, which amounted to over twenty-one hours of recorded conversation, is that only two participants used the word *growth* when talking about their businesses.

Not continuously growing and expanding your business year-on-year opens a crack in the entrepreneurial narrative: against this theory, growth becomes synonymous with the subject’s ability to conquer the landscape. Not growing, struggling, staying still or even reducing one’s operational size or capacity counters the growth narrative. The scant importance given to business growth not only by the ten women entrepreneur participants, matches my own experience as an entrepreneur, growth has not been a priority of mine for a number of years. Within a re-imagining of entrepreneurship, growth as a marker of success should be deconstructed and its importance reconsidered.

In her analysis of the magazine covers, Natalie, 41, a successful pet shop retailer, who is of mixed racial heritage, Indian and Greek, but who identifies as white and who ‘passes as white’, conceived of the notion of *growth* as being masculinised:

“...Everything is about numbers and growth - and I think these are very external markers of success... and I think that these are the male definitions of success. Phrases like aggressive growth don’t win me over. Where are the articles on mental health, balance, unique definitions of success etc...? I am wary of being a slave to profits and eternally growing turnovers for the sake of more” (Natalie).

Being a ‘slave to profits’...‘for the sake of more’ are interesting analogies when one considers the idea of the entrepreneur as this masculinised neoliberal subject, who, if situated in a post-modern context, is likely enmeshed in the pursuit of “a lifestyle of conspicuous consumption” (p. 159) as suggested by Natalie, to display “these external markers of success” (Posel, 2010, p. 159).

Posel's (2010) hypothesis on racially politicised consumption in South Africa explains how historically consumption was regulated as a disciplinary means of controlling the lives of Black and other people of colour, regulating the access and acquisition of consumer goods as "a way of regulating people's aspirations, interests and powers as consumers"...'which produced the idea of freedom as acquisition as one of its (contested) legacies" (p. 60). This enforced containment of the aspirational hopes and dreams of Black people and the ensuing racialised obstructing of access to material lifestyle improvements through consumption, can be likened to the containment of Black people spatially, and geographically through colonisation and apartheid. These bounded spaces serve/d to constrain, contain and delay Black progress and freedom, while enabling and empowering white expansion and the quest for acquisition and capital growth.

Natalie's pet shop business is an interesting example of how whiteness both protects and enables white capital. An astute businesswoman in her own right, Natalie comes from a family background where financial stability was put at risk several times through successive failed ventures by her entrepreneurial father. Natalie is driven by "a very strong desire to be financially stable". Orphaned late in life, without inheritance or the means to start her own business and having grown up across several countries in sub-Saharan Africa as an 'expatriate', Natalie was offered a minority share in a business by a male friend in Johannesburg with experience in the retail industry. Regrettably, their relationship soured over time, with the friend becoming verbally abusive towards Natalie. In the interim she had traced the inner workings of the business and effectively fixed operational weaknesses on the retail side, but found herself most at home working in the pet grooming side of the operations, working closely with the customers who brought their pets to her business.

The geographical location of the pet shop is on the edges of one of Johannesburg's wealthier suburbs, which brought in a monied, older and mostly white crowd. Some of her regular pet-toting customers were so-called 'captains of industry': several white Afrikaans-speaking business tycoons, who were drawn to Natalie's charm and entrepreneurial zest. Natalie opened up to one of her premium customers with whom she had developed an amicable relationship, about her desire to expand her pet shop brand by purchasing her partner's shares. She soon found herself a beneficiary of a substantial off-the-record loan from her "accidental angel investor" (Natalie). This enabled her to pursue her vision. The benefactor, a multi-millionaire CEO, went on to become a mentor and a regular source of off-the-record

loans, which she quickly reimbursed, often before the loan period ended. Over time, through a number of these loans, Natalie was able to become the sole owner of her business and buy her male partner out.

“Even where not primarily marked by financial wealth, whiteness in many places functions as an enormous asset” (Gordon, 2018, p. 12). This provision of financial security from a wealthy, white, heroic benefactor, talks to the power of social capital, which manifested through Natalie’s skilled relationship building, entrepreneurial ability and the pet shop’s proximity to the affluent suburb and major commercial zones. Acquiring banking finance as an entrepreneur without assets is difficult. Typically, there is a no-go period during which banks will not fund an entrepreneur as they have no ‘credit score’. However, this changes when the entrepreneur can prove they have been running their business successfully for a certain period, when they can prove that they have a minimal risk profile and cash liquidity, the credit lines are opened.

Both in her ambiguous appearance and geo-spatial location, Natalie can be said to be performing a whiteness that unlocked white capital which enabled her business to grow. Her Indian mother and heritage seemed to remain muted in her story. Her parents had been disowned by her Greek family when her father married her mother. On arrival in South Africa as a young girl she had to promise her parents that she would never reveal her mixed heritage, as she was attending a segregated school of ‘whites only’ during apartheid and she needed to continue to ‘pass as white’ to benefit from its privilege.

Tshego, from Limpopo equally gave testimony about how her biggest struggle as a Black woman entrepreneur was access to funding: “Most entrepreneurs struggle with funding. That’s the biggest challenge, no matter what good idea you have, you struggle with funding - and largely, from my experience it’s Black people (who struggle the most)” (Tshego). When applying for funding for her own business, she found herself being sent from pillar to post in search of funding, without which, she would be unable to grow her business. After some time, she realised that there were both racial and accompanying class issues that hampered how the ‘purse holders’ viewed her application:

“... once you apply for that funding there are committees within the bank that would sit to assess that application. Most people that sit on those committees are white people. It's really a struggle for them to understand where somebody like me would

be coming from, even if my business idea is a success or I have been successful for a year. They still want more in terms of ensuring that, you know, they will get their money back, but sometimes it's not all about that” (Tshego).

Tshego’s assertion is that in many instances, white people remain the gatekeepers of financial funding in South African corporate banking institutions, but that at the same time, many are lacking in their conceptual grasp of the inter-generational burdens borne by the majority of Black women entrepreneurs seeking funds. We can thereby understand how this cognitive gap – whether through wilful ignorance or exercised more intentionally - would contribute significantly to perpetuating the age-old divisions of racialised capital and prohibitive financial access. In the absence of inter-generational wealth or financial and class privilege, if women entrepreneurs are unable to access funding for their business ventures at the start up phase, how will they manage to reach the dizzying financial heights of success cast by the magazine covers? This is one of the paradoxes for the women champions on whom the state and the private sector depend for this economic recovery and growth: while they are tasked with saving the economy and country, they’re once again on their own.

How capital is unlocked by those who do not have access to funds or funding is not told by the magazine covers, however the possibility of capital’s alluring power to facilitate rapid ascension of class and financial strata towards an increased capacity for consumption and the resulting ascent in social status, is clearly painted by the bold cover lines.

#### ***4.4.5. The Secret Club of Entrepreneurs***

The prevalence of the notion of *growth* on the covers serves to reinforce the mythology of the hard-working man for whom the forward motion of continuous growth comes easily. If the opposite is true, not growing as a business year-on-year or at all would indicate poor performance and potential slippage in the grasp the entrepreneur has on their enterprise. Through suggestive language, the men presented on the covers are projected as belonging to a closed and bounded group, with access to social networks, social capital and business secrets which assist in them becoming successful. This is communicated through the use of phrases such as ‘expert author’, ‘the secret to...’, ‘the world’s top launch experts share their secrets’, ‘learn from him what it takes’, ‘expert advice from...’, ‘life-changing lessons from the world’s super successful’, ‘10 growth lessons’, ‘self-made millionaire on how to...’,

‘learn from those who have been there, done that’, ‘inside the mind of...’, ‘here are his lessons...’, ‘success secrets’.

The promotion of this in-group (and out-group) analogy serves to project and maintain a narrative of dominance, where “the social relations are tightly defined by domination and oppression” (Young, 2011, 1990, p. 33), and where “dominance refers to either dominance in number, hierarchy, status, power or access” (Booyesen; 2007). The secretive language suggests that those within the group have special access to a body of knowledge and information that is reserved for members only, and that this specialised knowledge when unlocked, enables access and ascension through the hierarchy of business, entrepreneurship and by extension, social status. When given access to this in-group wisdom, it is suggested that an individual stands the chance of being elevated from a lowly status of a ‘zero’ start up entrepreneur, up towards the expertise, specialisation and desirability of the CEO’s station, who is affirmed as the ultimate neoliberal ‘hero’. ‘From zero to...’ was the most frequently used three-word phrase on the covers.

When asked to share their general perceptions of the magazine covers, the women entrepreneurs quickly became aware of their not belonging to this in-group. Lorna commented on the dominance of the male entrepreneurs: “...all I see is men...so of course it's an ode to men and how great they are - and that's my opinion” (Lorna), while Unathi (31) who runs a beauty spa, felt discouraged that “the entire selection of covers were males” ... “The world of business is very white male dominated” (Unathi). Mbali, Tshego, Gloria and Nabeela (38), our Indian-Muslim participant, also commented on the fact that the magazines mostly displayed white men as entrepreneurs: “The people on the covers do not look relatable at all. Predominantly white male figures I'm seeing...” (Nabeela); “There is just one single definition of what entrepreneurship and success looks like in SA and that is of a white male...” (Mbali); “White men (laughs) ja they profile white men...” (Tshego) and Nabeela: “...there must always be a white person on the cover”.

#### **4.5. The Dominance of Whiteness**

The magazine’s focus on centering “white, well-off educated human(s)” (Bourke, 2011, p. 3), “white and preferably affluent” (Gordon, 2018, p. 13), “male and Christian” (Ferber, 1997, p. 69) and “white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian and financially secure” (Lorde, A in Boler & Zembylas, 2003, p. 122) excludes the majority of the nation’s population as

potential readers and talks to the “dominance of whiteness” (Steyn, 2012, p. 9) in commercial business. Its seductive editorial tropes about the ease of being an entrepreneur, launching and growing a business, erase the true nature of the experience by over-simplifying and romanticising the headline narratives.

**Figure 6**

*Extract from Entrepreneur magazine cover, May 2017 and October 2017*



But what of the subaltern subjects and people of colour on the covers? The main cover image of May 2017 features Joshin Raghubar, who is of Indian descent (see figure 6). That of October 2017 features Sisa Ngebulana, whose anchor text explains that he ‘went from buying a R22k Kyalami plot to listing a multi-billion rand property group in less than 10 years, overcoming massive adversity along the way’.

When asked to comment on the magazine covers, a number of the Black-identifying participants chose to analyse the cover featuring Sisa Ngebulana, stating relatability and admiration as their reasons: “the Black guy looks relatable-ish” (Gloria); “I know Sisa Ngebulana very well, I admire him as a business person” (Regina).

Mbali, our entrepreneur in the creative media space, pondered on the reasons for why she felt compelled to identify with an older Black male:

“... and then the last one, the third cover, that I also felt stood out to me, because it's the only Black person in the whole batch of the set. And also what I kind of feel like,

(looks like) a general representation of success in this country. Even though Black people are over 80 percent of the population, within the corporate space, within business, we are still a minority. The only Black person in this batch of images of how to be successful, he looks older. Yeah, he looks a little bit older. So I just, you know, I just... I think this reiterates or reaffirms to me that as a Black person you have to work twice as hard to get half of what any white person will get, essentially” (Mbali).

Mbali chose Sisa’s cover out of the twelve covers as his was the only one that featured a Black South African, when she so rightly points out, Black South Africans make up the large majority of the population. Mbali identifies as a Coloured woman from the Western Cape, her father is Coloured and her Mom is Black and of Xhosa origins. She considers the image of Sisa a good representation of what success should look like in South Africa, giving a nod possibly to his suit jacket, collared shirt, watch, his confident poise and his seeming comfort when smiling into the camera.

Sandra (39), the white health shop owner of Jewish descent, described Sisa as being more ‘international looking’:

“Maybe his suit, it looks well put together. His posture I think yeah, like I know this is a bit of a weird expression, but he doesn't look South African ...and it's weird I mean... I don't want to live anywhere else, but there is almost exactly a huge difference between looking at sort of South African people and international looking people. I think we're so used to looking across the borders for inspiration. But also maybe because Europe and America is always kind of one step ahead of us” (Sandra).

Sandra associating Sisa’s sophistication with other forms of ‘Blackness’ that she reads as emanating from the Western world of Europe or America, could imply that most Black men she sees or interacts with in South Africa do not port this ‘international shine’. Her reference to not wanting to immigrate as a white South African could be done to reassure the listener that while she acknowledges the Western influence on his dress style and his posture, she is comfortable to observe it from here and will not be immigrating. Alternatively, she could be expressing a similar interpretation to Mbali: that Sisa’s image represents what they imagine a successful Black business person to look like. The association of success with Western

countries and a Western style of dress by both participants references the idea of the colonial-entrepreneur previously explored in this research.

#### 4.5.1. The Erasure of Women and People of Colour in the Texts.

**Figure 7**

*Entrepreneur magazine covers from April, November and September 2017.*



As we have shown, for women entrepreneurs to overcome generations of oppressive and exclusionary legal and socio-economic constraints, would require global and national recognition, acknowledgement and upliftment. And yet, there are only three women featured on the magazine covers over the twelve months analysed (see Figure 7). A white woman, Christi Maherry shares the key image of the September 2017 cover, standing back-to-back with her husband, Maeson. They wear matching blue suits and white collared shirts with their arms crossed – she is wearing a woman’s version of a men’s formal suit. She smiles nervously as they look directly at the camera, while he looks confident.

What is of interest is that while they are co-founders, in other media texts Christi is registered and acknowledged as the CEO<sup>11</sup>, sharing the cover space with her husband. This did not pass unnoticed as Gloria remarked how great it was to see a woman as a leading figure on one of the twelve covers: “...it’s nice to see a woman on one of the covers - although she had to share the spotlight with a man”. This view was backed up by Nabeela who commented on the gender issue: “But what this is, from a social perspective is that women can't be the main show, and if they are, they need to have support from males, from men...” (Nabeela).

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.itweb.co.za/content/Gb3Bw7WoJeV72k6V>

It is curious that the only time we observe a woman featured in the main image of the cover, she is accompanied by a man. Since the article was published in 2017, Christi's business has been acquired by a major corporate firm. Selling one's business as an entrepreneur can be interpreted as the entrepreneur having successfully completed the business life cycle of starting a business, growing it, nurturing it and carrying it through to a successful acquisition. Perhaps we can assume that like the early women goddesses (Lerner, 1986, p. 31), having a highly successful woman standing alone and facing the camera head on, on the front of what we assume is a clearly male-centric publication, may have been too powerful a notion for the publishers.

Since her business was sold, Christi has started a foundation where she is said to spend a lot of her time - she is also becoming quite well known in the cyber security space as a woman leader who gives advice, mentorship and support for other women in the space.

#### ***4.5.2. White Privilege, Whiteholds and Manholds.***

This point of the analysis presents an opportunity to revisit the concept of intersectionality, which talks to the multiple ways in which oppression intersects and interlocks in a subject's identity. While white women may be oppressed through patriarchy and by virtue of their gender, it is important to bear in mind that "white women's race is invisible" yet "white women's experience is often used as the experience of all women" (Gouws, 2017).

When commenting on the predominance of men on the cover, Sandra, the white participant was the only interviewee who did not mention that nearly all of the male actors were white. Ferber (1997), reminds us that "Whiteness is a privileged status. To be white is to have greater access to rewards and valued resources simply because of one's group membership" (p. 64). Being a cis-het woman, abled, youthful and Christian, adds to the power advantage of having white skin in South Africa.

It can be argued that there are economic differentials that have come into play in the post-apartheid era, that have resulted in an increase in white people 'falling out of the middle class', when their economic and social advantages were previously protected by apartheid legislation. Some white South Africans continue to believe that their financial and social success was gained principally through their own hard work and ingenuity, rather than being

enabled by the discriminatory government policies that privileged the minority white people above the majority of the Black population.

This misreading of meritocracy and unearned privilege translates into white people living with a ‘fear of loss’, a loss of social and financial status, that may be considered a reason for preventing necessary shifts in lingering racist attitudes and behaviour brought about through apartheid indoctrination. Feeling displaced within the social landscape, many white South Africans live in fear of losing their social mobility and freedom, their relative economic comfort, privilege and future opportunities. Along with other fears, this fear of loss of status, whether rational or not, explains the prevalence of white families and communities that continue to live a settler-type existence within ‘safe white spaces’. Unfortunately this laager-like mindset does little to promote social cohesion between white people and the indigenous and other people of colour in South Africa; instead, the centuries old racial divisions first introduced during the colonial period are seen to prevail.

When observing the covers, Mbali commented that she did not consider the presence of the white woman as an empowering moment because while “us as women go through so much, I don't believe the challenges that Black women have and white women have are the same, especially within the corporate or business or entrepreneurial landscape” (Mbali). An example of the social differences that Mbali speaks of is attested by how, despite the legislative privileging of white South Africans since the early history of the Cape Colony, many white middle class people regularly bemoan the implementation of the government’s corrective empowerment policies, citing B-BBEE as a major explanation for white job loss, lack of business opportunity or growth, lack of future opportunities for their children or for any other income-generating related struggle that white people may face.

Feigning ignorance of the substantial economic, educational and lifestyle privilege that the majority of white South Africans enjoy, compared to the large majority of disenfranchised people of colour in South Africa, is an indictment of the racial fault lines that continue to undergird our damaged social relations, as well as the reluctance of many white South Africans to let go of past ideologies. This propensity for white people to obfuscate the past talks to the notion of the ‘ignorance contract’ as conceptualised by Melissa Steyn (2012), “‘blank spaces’ in white awareness” that “are enabled through the psychological, emotional,

discursive and ethical distortion developed and taught to make it possible to live comfortably in a world dislocated from those we oppress” (p. 16).

‘Whitehold’ is a phrase that I have scribed to encapsulate the idea of the steadfast grip that whiteness continues to have over many economic and social contexts in South Africa despite apartheid’s theoretical ending nearly thirty years ago. There is an opportunity for white entrepreneurs to acknowledge the long-term ‘whitehold’ of whiteness and white privilege in the entrepreneurial and business landscape. Rather than operating from a fear of loss, white-identifying entrepreneurs have the opportunity to show their commitment to being more conscientised about the harsh socio-economic realities for all the people of colour with whom they work every day. The positive knock-on effect of being morally and ethically honest, fair and curious about the subject of white privilege is that it enables white South Africans to more successfully build inclusive, representative businesses and communities from a place of abundance and retribution – rather than continuing to live in fear of ‘the other’ and operating from a place of scarcity.

### 4.5.3. The Visual Representation of Women in the Domestic Sphere

“Undervalued, insignificant, invisible, undesirable in this white world”

(Durrheim, Mtose, & Brown, 2011, p. 33).

Figure 8

Entrepreneur magazine covers and extracts from April 2017 and November 2017.



The only two Black women featured on the magazine covers are positioned in the bottom left corner as small head shots. Squashed into a secondary position, both women share their covers with the main image of a white man that has been taken from the waist up. Both men stand smiling at the camera with their arms folded. Considering the concept of the separation of private and public space along gendered lines, this herding of women into a window-like corner space could be seen to reflect the private spaces women are assigned to on the periphery of society, where they are to remain out of the public eye, safely at home, looking out at the world. This small display space assigned to the only two Black women published on the magazine cover over twelve months, effectively reduces any potential threat they may

pose to (white) masculinity, to a more manageable consideration, pushed into the margins. They were so unnoticeable that one of our youngest interviewees, Unathi (31), felt unmoved by the appeal of the covers: "...what I did notice was that the entire selection of covers were males and that was discouraging for me, I would have like to have seen some female founders, too... I also would not buy a magazine that largely seems geared towards a male audience, it's not what I would look forward to" (Unathi).

Keeping Black women at bay by containing them to the corner space aligns with colonial and apartheid notions of the restriction of movement and the control of the social dimensions and spaces in which Black women were free to circulate and to take up space. Their exclusion from the main cover spaces means losing out on one of the largest target audiences and consumers in South Africa – Black women; the lack of business sense shown by publishers of a business magazine, particularly considering the rapid decline of the magazine industry nationally, is curious, the lack of inclusivity in the editorial choices has entirely limited the magazine's market.

The April 2017 issue features Rapelang Rabana in the bottom left corner of the cover. Rapelana is a successful technology entrepreneur who has gone on to become a speaker and influencer. The November 2017 cover features Xoliswa Daku, a property developer whose business experienced one of the outlier moments of rare meteoric growth in 2017 according to the coverline on the magazine. Sadly her online presence since 2019 seems to have declined significantly and her business website is no longer live, which suggests a possible business interruption. Lorna spoke to the dismissive way that the image of Xolisa Daku has been treated on the cover, despite her success:

"...the positioning of her images are you know, it seemed like, you know, no care... just shove her in the bottom corner and you know, her story wasn't yielding any excitement... just the fact that it's a Black woman or a woman for that matter despite what she's done and what she's done in the amount of time that she's done those numbers, but she's just shoved off in a little corner." (Lorna).

This speaks to the pervasive 'whitehold' and even 'manhold' of the content of the covers. Over the twelve months featured, the publishers neither made space for, nor showed recognition of the rise in successful Black women entrepreneurs, and rather chose to resign

their images to a corner, out of sight and out of mind. Mbali spoke to the pain of exclusion that this choice in layout generated for her: “it just feels like Black women are an afterthought, you know, you’re sprinkled in-between the people that they actually want to have” (Mbali).

The success stories of the mostly white men on the covers are set against the backdrop of ‘globalising hyper-liberal capitalism’ (p. 308), where entrepreneurship is portrayed as easily accessible and attainable by all. The white male subjects appear to ooze a *laissez-faire* confidence, a possible result of being constantly centered within the “universal reasoned norms” (Casey, 2004, p. 306). White men are used to being the de-facto authority in the room and we see this translating to their dominance on the covers of the magazines. These men, who have succeeded in starting and growing or expanding their businesses are celebrated by the magazine and positioned as being exceptional in their achievements and in being able to rise above the average citizen. Mbali references the potential “myths of exceptionalism” (Ndlovu, 2011) as embodied in the white male subject: “So the fact that I feel like the, you know, white people in general, but in this case specifically white men, don't have the same limitations or the same requirements for success, that their privilege is just so, so immense that you can be on the cover of Entrepreneur and have your success being celebrated and not have your competency or your intelligence or you know, how you've amassed your wealth questioned”. (Mbali).

#### **4.6. Millions and Millions and Billions**

The second most frequently employed word on the cover is ‘million’, squeezed in between ‘business’ and ‘start’. The writers and editors of the magazine pepper the word million over all twelve of the covers to capture the eye of the entrepreneurially-minded passerby. Many of the women entrepreneurs struggled with this overtly neoliberal positioning. Natalie found it to clash with her values: “The major theme that these covers stirred up in me is that this is a money, money, money, ego entrepreneurship game that's just not my personal style” (Natalie); while Sandra talked to the lack of plausibility in the millionaire narrative: “...It says entrepreneur and then all the headings have million million million million million, you know how suddenly, like they think that being an entrepreneur puts millions in your bank... every single cover has this massive big highlighted million. And it doesn't, it just doesn't seem realistic, any of it. It's like, you know, it's that small percentage of human” (Sandra).

For the critically thinking entrepreneurial women who have experienced the daily challenges and realities of running a business, the millionaire narrative falls short.

#### ***4.6.1. Competitiveness as a Masculine Trait***

*Growth* as a notion in business is also related to competition, which is one of the backbone notions within neoliberal philosophy (Holborow, 2015; Akhalwaya & Havenga, 2012). Growth requires that one measures oneself against real or imagined yardsticks and competitors; it requires moving towards and beyond specific comparative data points, measurements or agreed upon targets. It could be argued that one is competing both against oneself – in their prior year or month's results, and against one's competitors, by virtue of these 'industry standards' of measurement.

Competition provides fuel to the neoliberal hegemonic engines - as social agents are distracted from looking to the State to solve their social challenges, but instead, compete to become perceived as financially successful, stable and independent, able to live a monied self-actualised life that others aspire to, reliant only on oneself. The entrepreneur's business becomes the vehicle that produces the financial means to achieve this self-governance.

I found it interesting that in the interviews the word competition (in the comparative sense) was only used by Lihle and Nabeela. Lihle runs a culinary business that has fallen on hard times, however her path to entrepreneurship was via a corporate incubation programme - where she was taught and trained in more traditional ways of doing business inside of a highly patriarchal organisation. It is therefore not surprising that competition surfaced within Lihle's entrepreneurial lexicon. The site of entrepreneurial education and training is where the critical theories require application in changing the more traditionally masculine framed curriculums.

Statistically, women entrepreneurs remain rare - the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs published in 2020 sets the percentage of female owners at ten percent to twenty percent of total business owners in South Africa (Mastercard, 2020), while other research refers to women entrepreneurs as being under five percent of total business owners (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015, p. 836). Perhaps the lack of women-owned businesses diminishes the need for women to focus on competition. Instead, we are witnessing a surge of

women entrepreneurs seeking each other out to connect, organise and link arms against the various forms of oppression encountered in the gendered world of entrepreneurship.

#### ***4.6.2. Competing Against One's Heritage***

Nabeela, a qualified chartered accountant, had several years' experience working casually in the multi-generational family footwear manufacturing conglomerate in the South of Johannesburg, run by her "Muslim, autocratic" (Nabeela) father, as her grandfather did before him. She was immersed in the business in her early teens, when she began working for her father during weekends and school holidays. After graduation, having no brothers, the onus fell on Nabeela to take up the reins of the business. During apartheid, "no 'Black' universities were allowed to offer the Certificate in the Theory of Accounting (CTA), a qualification required by all those who wished to become chartered accountants" (Ruggunan, 2016, p. 108). This speaks to a 'whitehold' in the gatekeeping and hoarding of knowledge during apartheid that was critical for the effective management of business. Nonetheless, Nabeela completed her CTA qualification in the post-apartheid period.

Despite a hostile welcome at the family business, where a "lot of the men felt threatened", Nabeela's excellence at her craft found her pushing through the hostility, uncovering and exposing serious structural and fraudulent issues within her father's business. We are reminded by Gordon that "where power is negative it is hoarded for the purposes of disempowering others" (2018, p. 21). Nabeela faced a web of negative power that blocked and attempted to disable and disempower her investigations, yet together with some supportive family members and the few "strong" and "very feisty" (Nabeela) women in the business, she persisted amid an inexorable, antagonistic resistance from a heavily male workforce, led mostly by white and Indian managers. She also had to face verbal pushback from traditional Black men in the factory 'who didn't want to be taking instruction from a woman' (Nabeela). All her male colleagues were suspicious of her qualifications and intentions, while, as it turned out, some were protecting extensive pilfering and embezzlement.

The due diligence she and the family eventually managed to perform revealed a multitude of corrupt practices and malfeasance throughout the business operations, including "cartels that were stealing stuff" (Nabeela). This resulted in severe financial and operational injury to her multi-million-rand family business of 50 years. Instead of repositioning the business for

growth, Nabeela then had the unfortunate task of driving the discontinuation of the entity, at that point worth over R200 million-rand, through an exhausting business rescue process and liquidation. “And it's soul destroying, soul destroying” (Nabeela). Ultimately, the first women entrepreneur in the family business, instead of assisting with growth, had to expose the unstable base on which it had evolved in the later years, as well as the degenerative rottenness it was riddled with - Nabeela’s revelatory probe led to its final collapse.

Nabeela’s positionality as a successful, educated, unmarried Muslim woman whose courageous ability to navigate the patriarchal system of business, both conceptually and literally (even that of her patrimonial lineage), speaks to her own subversive disruption of the masculinised, raced and gendered rhetoric of entrepreneurship. The pain and frustration experienced on her personal journey, emboldened by the experience at her father’s business, gave her a clear mandate for how she would reinterpret growth in her own way, Nabeela went on to start her own coaching business that empowers mostly Black women-owned SMMEs: “...there are pains from apartheid that we don't even realise, and in the work that we do now, it's very much about inclusive growth” (Nabeela). I would argue that even if growth features strongly in Nabeela’s practice of business, it has shifted to an emancipatory application: it is the growth of other women that she is now invested in.

#### ***4.6.3 Growth as Expansion***

Notwithstanding the competitive landscape and masculinised culture of entrepreneurship, with growth comes added risk and responsibility, which means more time is required for one’s business, which can result in increased levels of stress and the potential for burnout. Women struggle to manage the duality of their roles in the workplace and at home, and while growth may be important for the entrepreneurial venture, overstating its value in determining ‘financial success’ is cited as a more masculine trait (Ahl, 2002; Dean & Ford, 2017).

The nominalisation of the verb ‘grow’ from a verb into a noun is notable. A “common consequence of nominalisation is that the agents of processes, people who initiate processes or act upon other people or objects, are absent from texts” (p. 13). Nominalising a word contributes “to the mystification and obfuscation – of agency and responsibility’ (Fairclough, 2003). According to Fairclough (2003), there is an abstraction in the process that is required for the noun to be enacted. In this instance the actors, systems, methods and challenges required for how to ‘grow’ a business at double-digit pace are invisibilised and thereby

trivialised. The lived experiences of the people whose entrepreneurial feats are cited on the covers are not shared, only their abstraction into lofty aspirational terms for how to be a successful and wealthy entrepreneur.

In addition, *growth*, and by extension, *expansion*, form part of both the neoliberal and neo-colonial lexicons. When layered over entrepreneurial endeavours, one can argue that within the heteronormative, gendered conceptualisation of business, viewed through a neo-colonial lens, as an entrepreneur it is not enough to just have a working, profitable entity. If your business is not ‘gaining ground’ and increasing in its influence and command, it may be considered to be under-performing – and by extension, possibly impotent.

Feminist researchers within this domain assert that the notion of ‘under-performance’ in entrepreneurship is routinely invoked as being rooted within “feminine attributes” and “women’s issues” (Akram, Dean, Ford, & Larsen, 2019), perpetuating the image of the female entrepreneur as both “problematic and inferior to her male counterpart” who is positioned within the entrepreneurial discourse as a capable hero (Ogbor, 2000), able to achieve growth against all odds. Unfortunately, in the experience of most women entrepreneurs, particularly Black women, as indicated in the analysis of the interviewees’ experience, the ‘odds’ represent structural and institutionalised barriers and impediments: not an individual lack of ability, but rather an oppressive lack of agency within a gendered, raced and classed institutional and operational minefield.

If I refer to my own entrepreneurial identity, while I understand the importance of having a vibrant, growing business in order to be considered ‘viable’ within the many definitions of entrepreneurship, over time I have come to embrace that building a business that is stable, that has an equitable and inclusive, progressive culture that benefits more of the actors involved, are more personally valid measurements of success for me. When imagining how entrepreneurship may be recalibrated from a feminist perspective, many of these neoliberal tenets stand to be set aside in favour of a more collective, inclusive and equitable, collective approach.

#### 4.7. Socio-Semiotic Analysis

In all twelve main cover images, bar February 2018, all photographs of the subjects are published at mid-range, presenting them standing and looking either directly into the camera or standing slightly side-on. Where there is a pair of entrepreneurs they stand back-to-back and side-on, with shoulders touching, implying a connection which could be read as a visual analogy for their partnership. Applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) multimodal socio-semiotic approach to the visuals, we can identify the medium shots of the represented subjects as 'demand' images. In every image, the subject's gaze is fixed on the reader, indicating a potential 'demand' or request emanating from the subject who is asking for a response from the viewers – perhaps to connect, to come closer, to recognise or to remember them. A demand request asks the reader to enter into a “social relation” with them (p. 123).

The evoking of a social relation with the reader requires that there is a narrowing of social distance and the forging of an imagined social relationship (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, 2006, p. 124). All of the subjects are smiling in their 'demand' images – and it is perhaps through the symbol of the disarming smile that the publisher's hope to encourage a “pseudo-social bond” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, 2006, p. 118) and relationship between the social actors portrayed and the readers. A smile denotes a non-threatening person – a smile is an invitation to engage, to relate and connect, to find commonalities.

By portraying the male entrepreneurs as approachable, trustworthy and personable, we can hypothesise that the desired target market for the magazine publishers are consumers who seek out male superiors and 'experts' in business, to hear about their war stories of expansion, conquering and success in the hunt. These readers may wish to connect with the figurative entrepreneurs and to form a bond with them, so they too may become success stories. The overt over-representation of white male entrepreneurs on the covers maps out some unspoken and “invisible boundaries” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, 2006) that indicate who the publishers' desired readership may be. It is clear from the lack of representation of women and people of colour on the covers, that they are not considered priority readers.

#### 4.7.1. Getting Suited Up and Badging

Figure 9

*Entrepreneur magazine cover extracts from March 2017 and February 2018.*



Studying the photos of the entrepreneurs further we notice that their arms are either folded or their hands are casually placed in pockets or on belts or jackets – six of the photographs reveal large watches either partly or fully exposed underneath the cuffs of their jackets, a gesture that we can consider is a possible signalling of “status and wealth” (Langa & Leopeng, 2018, p. 70). In his book *Social Divisions*, Geoff Payne (2000) talks to how “better-off groups”...”use ‘positional’ goods as markers to display their distinctiveness” (p. 11). Marketers refer to this practice as ‘badging’: when consumers show off “symbolically loaded goods as the benchmark of respectability and social standing” (Posel, 2010, p. 164). By wearing ‘a badge’ the wearer indicates group belonging, and in some instances, they may hope to indicate that their social status empowers them to consume expensive purchases. When a consumer badges with a brand that is considered of high value or in global demand, their subjectivity is positioned as being closer to Western concepts of consumerism and success.

Revealing a luxurious purchase like a watch may be read as the subject wanting to affirm any assumptions on the viewer’s part about their financial stability and comfort. Signifiers of success such as the wearing of luxury items, well-made suits and ‘good skin and hair’,

supports the greater underlying themes of “neoliberal capitalism, attainment, and accumulation, access to material resources and wealth, and the ability to provide for one’s family” (Langa & Leopeng, 2018, p. 60).

The most common attire worn by the subjects across all twelve covers is the formal workplace ‘suit’ jacket - worn with an open-collared shirt. One of the women featured is wearing a woman’s version of the formal suit - and five of the men are wearing suit jackets and ties. The prevalence of the formal suit jacket as a common workplace ‘uniform’ in South Africa can be explained through its shared social meaning of “professionalisation and respectability” (Knight, 2016, p. 322). In the Western work culture, donning a suit is associated with being part of the formal and corporatised workforce. The suit is perceived as the modern-day “international uniform of business and politics” (Oonk, 2011, p. 534). The professional classes wear suits to mark their belonging - labourers do not wear suits while working, nor do those working in the informal economy.

Langa and Leopeng (2018), in their interpretation of middle class Black South African males wearing suits in articles published in *Destiny* magazine (a business and lifestyle magazine) extend this reading of suit-wearing into the socio-political realm, asserting that the “dominant discourse is that wearing a suit equates with penetrating the capitalist system in some way, either through being a business owner, having good political connections, or owning capital and assets” (p. 67). This observation of the suit as a statement of economic and political penetration and attainment shines a light on the theory that the modern entrepreneurial identity and the original colonising subject share common masculinised attributes.

The formal *suit jacket* as workplace uniform is mired in colonial history and attests to the legacy and “hegemony of the colonial enterprise” (p. 107) – the suit as uniform becomes a “repository of social meaning, cultural symbolism, and moral gestures that reinforce prevailing heteronormative constructs” (Lukhele, 2017). In Lukhele’s analysis of the absorption of the suit jacket into Eswatini’s sartorial culture during the colonial period, the author explains how historically the muscular corporeality of Black men’s bodies in traditional garb needed to be covered up for the colonial gaze – the naked flesh revealed by simple traditional attire was perceived as a threat to whiteness and the suit provided an ideal cover up. Hence the encouragement by the colonisers for the colonised to adopt their ‘civilising’ Western cultures.

In summary, I propose that in the context of the magazine covers, that wearing a suit is a way of signalling one's acquiescence to the masculinised Westernised ideals of entrepreneurship - and the need for men to perform and project "gentlemanly, colonised images of masculinity" that centre around the entrepreneurial notions of "rationality, measurement, objectivity, control and competitiveness" (Dean & Ford, 2017, p. 180). Lukhele posits that during the colonial period "in order to be acceptable before a white man one had to be garbed in white man's attire" – hence the suit jacket becoming "recognised as a prop that signalled a Black man's respect of the white man" (Lukhele, 2017, p. 108). If we consider the positionality of the white man as both colonial venturer and as entrepreneur, we have an understanding of why the symbolic wearing of the suit signals not only group belonging and blending in, but an embracing of the raced and gendered neoliberal identity.

And yet, within this somewhat dated sartorial concept, we observe the prevalence of a more casual pairing of jeans or chinos with the suit jacket – as well as a t-shirt or an open-collared shirt, commonly associated with CEOs of start-ups in Silicon Valley<sup>12</sup>. Perhaps this deconstruction of the suit-and-tie uniform by those wearing the more casual attire is done to appear more relaxed and modern, or as part of projecting a 'coolness' associated with the successful entrepreneur, whose perceived self-made financial independence suggests that they are not beholden to anyone.

Or perhaps a more casual dress style was encouraged by the publishers in order to tone down any possible interpretations of the subjects' "close relationship to power and identity formation in the neoliberal capitalist era" (Langa & Leopeng, 2018, p. 61), thereby positioning entrepreneurship as more accessible and relatable. Regardless, as the magazine covers attest, the suit jacket as entrepreneurial uniform is embraced by most social actors operating within the working world of neoliberalism – and its symbolism goes a long way to marking out the honourable players in the genre.

#### ***4.7.2. The Magazine Business Model***

The business model of *Entrepreneur* magazine is quite simple: the magazine is essentially a vessel of storytelling, where the pages are laid out with content authored by the magazine's team, which is placed alongside advertisements of the brands and organisations that pay to 'own their space' within the publication. As a marketing professional working within the

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2018/9/14/17792298/silicon-valley-stylist-fashion-tech>

media space, I can attest to the power of the corporate brand, whose promising advertising and marketing budgets offer potentially secure income streams for content publishers. Corporations and brands tend to have clearly-defined marketing objectives – they have specific target audiences with whom they wish to engage and sell their products and services too. The magazines provide the canvas for this public connection and engagement to take place, however it is critical that the tonality and the editorial direction and voice of the magazine is aligned with that of the brand, organisation and corporation that is paying to advertise with them.

It is also imperative that the magazine, as a site of consumption, is able to prove their readership numbers in order to justify their advertorial rate cards. There is an entire ecosystem of transaction and value exchange that makes for a magazine's success. In the case of *Entrepreneur* magazine, one may ask why and how the CEOs of corporations are included within the editorial narrative of entrepreneurship? Perhaps the answer lies in the concept of 'association', a notion that arises frequently during the interviews with women entrepreneurs. Association was articulated by the women entrepreneurs as a way of signalling association through one's appearance (Mbali), being associated with corporate brands (Lorna), of having the right physical address (Lorna and Natalie), through appropriate media exposure (Regina) and through having the right educational qualifications (Regina and Mbali).

The concept of association within the entrepreneurial framework offers a powerful way of signalling shared philosophies, agreement, alignment and consensus. Association with certain brands, addresses, organisations, qualifications and individuals signals that there is a connection that binds our persons or entities together. As entrepreneurs, we hope, through association, to communicate messages of credibility and believability, that we can be trusted to make a success of our ventures and fulfil our commitments to our customers and clients.

#### ***4.7.3. Entrepreneurship-in-Motion***

Entrepreneurship is not a stable nor fixed destination, instead, I sometimes think of it as being in a perpetual state of motion: in flux and transitory. In this sense the entrepreneurial experience can be seen to take the form of a passageway of hopeful beings, en route to a destination that always feels just far enough out-of-reach to ensure that the momentum to 'keep venturing' is maintained. Reaching into my own experience, association can be

signalled in many ways by the entrepreneur-in-motion: through public-facing narratives we construct and post on social media platforms, through public relations releases that laud our achievements and opinions, and through industry body association and endorsement; through external signals of social status, such as the vehicle we drive, the house we have purchased from our profits or the watch we wear in our publicity photos; through to the profiles of the brands, customers and clients we service as well as the physical address of our workspaces, the number of staff we employ - and even the length of time we have managed to maintain our entrepreneurial ‘success’.

As much as these indicators of entrepreneurial success are employed as ways of building credibility by association, entrepreneurial failure brings an opposing trajectory – little discussed or analysed in public, entrepreneurial failure is a shameful and shaming experience, ultimately signalling one’s fallout from this upwards trajectory.

#### *4.7.4. A Miraculous Journey of Ascendancy*

**Table 3**

*Phrases representing meteoric growth extracted from nine of the magazine covers.*

April 2017	NEXT LEVEL GROWTH - R100 million to R950 million in 10 years.
May 2017	Zinia's silver bullet to 70% year on-year growth for 3 years running. SELF-MADE SUCCESS - FROM ZERO TO BILLIONS.
July 2017	From 1 rundown warehouse in JHB CBD to R1 billion property portfolio in under 10 years.
Sept 2017	From R103 million to R198 MILLION IN 15 MONTHS. From R18 MILLION TO R80 MILLION IN 4 YEARS.
Oct 2017	FROM ZERO TO R115 MILLION. How to build a R60m business in 5 years.
Nov 2017	From R5000 to R240 million. Feb 18 – From Zero to R780m in 6 years.
Dec 2017	From zero to R1,4 billion in 9 years.
Jan 2018	From the brink of Bankruptcy to R700m in 8 years. 20-Fold growth.

	Business growth R25 million to R300 million.
Feb 2018	From Zero to R780m in 6 years.

Our analysis of the construction of the discourse of the entrepreneurial experience as published by the magazines shows the use of the concept of ‘the possibility of high growth’, rapid financial progress and moving from ‘zero’ to ‘hero’ as being attainable (see Table 3). In these cover lines, which are often written in large red type and capital letters so that they jump out of the page, the length of time is accentuated: three years, ten years, fifteen months, four years, five years, six years, nine years and eight years. This accent on the amount of time ‘success’ has taken, positions these remarkable financial achievements as not only possible, but within reach by the every(wo)man: as just a few months or years away.

Considering the socio-economic context of the informal markets as presented earlier, these bold figures and numbers flashed across the covers feel out-of-reach for most South Africans. Equally, entrepreneurially-minded subjects from the formal markets would be hard-pressed to commit to such vast leaps of success – from zero to billions - yet the magazine presents this kind of unicorn success as achievable and common – parading those who have hit these kinds of financial achievements on the covers as proof of concept. This kind of deceptive wordplay is what provides the framework for the mythologising of the realm and experience of entrepreneurship.

The juggernauted success portrayed through these headlines does not share the details of how such unprecedented financial accomplishments are secured – perhaps the articles themselves provide that detail. The smiling faces of the confident entrepreneurs seem to belie the full range of the lived experience of the individual entrepreneurs, as well as the eventual demise of their fast-paced ventures: of the 24 entrepreneurs presented, six are either no longer in their roles of 2017/8, or their business has been made insolvent, liquidated or ceased to operate. Three have accusations of malfeasance, credibility issues or legal proceedings against them, with one of the entrepreneurs testifying to the current trying economic times impacting their business success. Four subjects appear to have withdrawn from the public eye since their publication in *Entrepreneur* magazine. Undoubtedly, these hyperbolic cover stories only share a moment of the entrepreneur-in-motion’s journey thus contributing to the

mythologising of the fictional entrepreneurial hero. It would be of interest to conduct participatory interviews with the entrepreneurs featured on the covers to understand their full lived experiences, and what has transpired in their businesses since their cover feature in 2017/18 through to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our participant Regina (46) shared her difficult entrepreneurial experience of “institutionalised domination and oppression” (Young, 2011, 1990, p. 15) as she turned her focus to the possibility of one of these ‘miraculous journeys of ascendancy’. A love of mining encouraged this keen entrepreneur to leave her corporate job and to start her own business as a solo founder in the mining industry. Being born to hard-working parents, a nurse and a teacher, her academic prowess resulted in Regina being sent to the province of the Eastern Cape where she attended one of the only boarding schools for girls of colour.

She later was accepted into university, where she opted to work part-time and study at night in order to financially support both herself and her family. After graduating with a degree in accounting, she moved into a corporate job. Feeling frustrated as an employee, but without access to funding, Regina’s mother and aunt cashed in their pension money in order to fund her start-up capital and she gave up her job and registered her first entrepreneurial venture in the late 2000s. Unfortunately for Regina, who described herself as “a very straightforward businesswoman”, her first potentially lucrative deal with international investors that took several years of negotiations, “actually ended up in court...” (Regina).

The potentially life-changing contract worth millions of rands was delayed during a prolonged initial period of negotiations with a third party, however, the international partners promised Regina remuneration for her time and efforts during this period of exploratory work. In good faith, Regina poured her resources into the potential project; however, the investor had refused to sign any kind of agreement. When the deal did not work out, due to the third party, an institution in the mining sector, gradually cutting Regina out of the contractual conversations, she felt bitterly disappointed. Regina says that she “...realised that the international companies” were “as bad as everybody else. If there's a shortcut they will go for the shortcut; and that's when I pulled out of the deal” (Regina). Nonetheless, in good faith, she invoiced them for “the years that I worked without a cent” but no payment was forthcoming. Devastated by her loss and her collapsing business, Regina fell into a depression that required several stints of hospitalisation. Years later, Regina was required to

relieve her disappointing experience, as the investors were taken to court and she was required to testify about her experience working with them.

What is of interest here, is that, despite Regina's first-hand experience of the meteoric rise and fall of an entrepreneur chasing 'fast, big numbers', Regina's reading of the magazine covers remained optimistic, perhaps affirming the allure of the discourse on the covers:

- *What concepts or phrases jump out for you the most on your chosen magazine covers?*  
Starting from nowhere, from zero to multi-millionaires!
  
- *Do any of the headlines or by-lines make you think about your own journey? In what way?* Yes, that we all start with an idea and willingness to explore, I remember seeing the first Million Rands deposited into my account, I framed the bank statement (Regina).

After recovering from her depression and the collapse of her business, Regina has gone on to found a new business with a partner and has signed up to pursue an advanced qualification in Chartered Accounting.

#### **4.8. Motherhood, Relationships and Entrepreneurship**

Every one of the women entrepreneurs interviewed attested to the physical, emotional and psycho-social toll entrepreneurship has had on their personal lives. Many of the participants struggled with the personal loss of relationships, partnerships, marriages as well as the negative impact on their fertility along the way.

Some of the women interviewed shared their stories of pain around motherhood and being in a relationship. Like many women entrepreneurs, Tshego battled with the guilt of being a working mom: "I've missed a lot of their milestones because I was not there" (Tshego) - and she also was subjected to criticism from both friends and family for the hours that she needed to work to run her business – as well as judgements for how her intense schedule would negatively impact her marriage: "The comments would be about the marriage... that it will not last because the husband is always alone" (Tshego). This brings gender differences and shaming into sharp relief, as we wonder if hard-working men are held up to the same

standards and critique as mothers and wives are. In the end Tshego did get divorced from her husband, citing irreconcilable differences, but building a healthy co-parenting model post the divorce and having her financial freedom have meant that in some ways she is happier being single. As Tshego's expertise grew, the hours she needed to work in her business were reduced, she now feels much prouder of the work-life balance that she managed to achieve over time and has a great relationship with her children, who are extremely proud of her achievements.

Lorna's Kenyan husband was not too happy when her business took off, as it required that she be absent occasionally in the evenings – even with two helpers to assist her in raising her three children, he would say: "...you know, I didn't sign up for this. The agreement is you're supposed to be with the kids" (Lorna). Like many men, Lorna's husband seemed oblivious to the implicit double standards imposed on hard-working women entrepreneurs, where men's working habits go largely unquestioned, often women are critiqued and judged for working as hard as is required – if not harder than men – to have a chance at entrepreneurial success. Rather than being supportive with the understanding that she was entitled to work as hard as any man and father would be required to do, when trying to grow and sustain her SMME, he would try to dissuade her from her entrepreneurial ambition by offering to pay her for whatever small profits her business may have been making at the time while encouraging her to give up her business. This was extremely discouraging for Lorna, particularly as she worked hard to get her balance right and to be a present mother in-and-around her busy schedule. His offering to pay her more than she was making undermined her efforts towards independently building her dream business and gaining her own financial freedom, of course this created some tension in their marriage. But despite the discouragement, Lorna's hard work paid off, and her SMME has progressed over the years into a very successful and profitable national fashion retail business.

Nabeela shared how her faith and culture drove some of the societal judgements, demands and expectations made by her family with regards to her entrepreneurial ambitions: "(it was) definitely very lonely... single, no children, and you know... Muslim family... my parents would constantly ask 'when are you going to actually find partners and actually give us grandchildren, you know... we've given you enough time, you're 35!'" (Nabeela). The language used by her family suggest that perhaps her entrepreneurial efforts were seen as more of a 'phase' in her life, that the family were allowing her to enjoy, until she came back

to her rightful role as a woman, as a wife and bearer of children who needed to make the most of her fertile years, to provide her elders with grandchildren – regardless of what her ideas around motherhood may have been.

Wanting to find a partner and have children, while trying to fit in dates in-and-around her busy schedule, Nabeela found that often her perceived success and accompanying rise in social status provided some difficult optics for the men she dated, sometimes even inducing envy around her perceived entrepreneurial abilities:

‘...You know, the intimidation, they’re intimidated by me, it’s the conversation around intimidation that comes up, and how they felt they couldn’t live up to my standards or expectations, or I was outshining them or whatever the case may be... So, it’s tough, it’s not easy finding men who are confident enough in themselves. I’m not that woman that tells them that they... how do I put this... I don’t tell a man that he’s not doing well or whatever the case... these are their perceptions” (Nabeela).

#### **4.9. Entrepreneurship, Affect and COVID-19**

As our research has shown, the grand narrative of entrepreneurship espoused by the magazine covers erases and excludes the repercussions on the personal lives of the social subjects, as well as the spectrum of tough experiences, struggles, challenges and complexities, there also appears to be a gap in qualitative research in academia for further research into the emotional and affective journey of women entrepreneurs. All ten of the women entrepreneurs shared the struggles they had endured with their own mental health:

“I was unhappy.... I was disappointed a lot and I was sad a lot - and I was stressed, and I felt like I had 25 children and you know, I mean having one real child is hard enough” (Sandra). “Running a business is very stressful and when things are not going okay, it definitely affects your mental fitness because we can go into depression - and mental health it's something that's still undermined” (Tshego). “I was in depression. Yeah. I was in depression. I've been in depression for the last four years” (Regina). “I went through a lot... a lot of pain and distress” (Nabeela)... “But I was really stressed and depressed” (Mbali). “I will admit that I started experiencing some mental wellness issues, you know, really profound sadness from

time-to-time. Anxiety started kicking in – which is something I have never experienced before...” (Gloria) ... “anxiety and weeping” (Natalie), “due to some mental wellness issues” (Gloria), “anxiety... depression” (Lihle). “Gosh, it was angst. It was fear. It was sadness...” (Lorna) and “I think I spent those two years burnt out like... I don't even know” (Unathi).

Our interviews took place against the backdrop of the COVID-19 global pandemic, which for most of the participants exacerbated their challenges, adding several layers of constraints to an already precarious and unstable positionality.

Lihle, the entrepreneur in the culinary space was hard hit, she fell sick with the first wave of COVID-19 infections, following which, she fell into a depression: “I was like, oh my God. It just started going downhill and I say depressed because it was the month before my birthday. And I remember just thinking oh my God. Am I going to have to shut down five years’ worth of work? (Lihle)” Sandra felt a huge responsibility to her staff members at her restaurant: “I have 10 staff members that I need to keep afloat. Like what are they going to do if I close?” (Sandra). Lorna spoke about low sales and the pressure from suppliers: “On an emotional level it was always a touch-and-go... you've got days when you've got nobody coming in and of course, you've got every, you know, landlord sitting on you, you know, you've got suppliers sitting on you” (Lorna). This anxiety of the contractual arrangements that entrepreneurs-as-source are beholden to was shared by Sandra: “it also becomes slightly more real because you now have landlords, and you have insurance and you have health certificates, and you have customers that are so hard on you... And I just went one step at a time and 11 years later COVID-19 killed us” (Sandra).

As we observe, in the pre-Coronavirus world, the women entrepreneurs found themselves, despite being a source to so many, feeling judged, misunderstood and alone at parts of their journey. For these women the self-actualisation narrative of neoliberalism seems to transform into an isolation narrative, as they struggle through the entrepreneurial experience, internalising their mixed emotions, which can manifest in self-blame, anxiety and depression.

COVID-19 ramped up this feeling of solitude for many of the participants, intensifying their feelings of detachment. Remarkably, three of the entrepreneurs were in the process of negotiations for some promising transactions: Mbali was waiting to confirm a substantial grant, Lorna was in the midst of tying up a corporate partnership and Natalie had been approached for a franchising opportunity. Unfortunately, a number of the other women

entrepreneurs interviewed were likely going to close their businesses, as continuing had become untenable. There are many stories that need to be shared in the post-pandemic world as we begin to reimagine entrepreneurship as we know it; but what is clear is that the current raced, masculinised and mythologised notion requires a reconsideration.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. Conclusion

The principal aim of this research report was to examine the way in which entrepreneurship has been mythologised in contemporary culture. The secondary objective was to further the knowledge of how marginalised entrepreneurs, women, particularly Black women, experience the entrepreneurial journey in material terms.

I have attempted to answer the questions the research sought to resolve by demonstrating how the neoliberal context has set the scene for the popularising and naturalising of the entrepreneurial discourse, specifically via the sites of education and media. My in-depth analysis illustrates how this mainstream ideological discourse has served to reify and perpetuate the sedimentation of socio-historical inequities within South African society along divisive lines of race, gender and class. I also showed how these notions of domination and inequality have been at play since the colonial era and throughout South African history, negatively impacting the economic and social opportunities of women and people of colour in current day South Africa.

I used an intersectional lens to demonstrate how the women participants struggle with multiple oppressions and I applied the Critical Discourse Literally tools to excavate and shine a light on the numerous systems of privilege at play. A critical analysis of the entrepreneurial language peddled by the magazine covers revealed the ‘normative orders’ and ‘coded practices’ at play, as well as the hegemonic discourse they serve. I show how the power differentials are activated and maintained through the promotion of an exclusionary mainstream social identity of an entrepreneur, which is not inclusive, and lacking in relevance when considering the socio-cultural backdrop.

The detailed analysis of women’s historical subjugation, neoliberalism and the colonial project in South Africa in the literature review section provided the context for the socio-economic, raced and gendered backdrop in which my research took place.

Data was drawn from two bodies of text - the first was the set of twelve covers of *Entrepreneur* magazine and the second was a series of narrative interviews conducted with

ten women entrepreneurs. The data was analysed using the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis and narrative analysis which allowed for a hermeneutic approach.

The data analysis process brought up several themes that required interrogation, including the contested rationale of who qualifies for the title of entrepreneur. It also pointed to the necessity to delve more deeply into how the formal and informal sectors within the South African economy are defined and how the legacies of colonialism and apartheid have given shape to these notions.

The discourse analysis of the covers identified a range of methods employed by the magazine to reinforce a masculine, imperialist and neoliberal embodiment of entrepreneurial subjectivity. These included concepts of growth, secrets, whiteness, competitiveness and expansion.

The ‘stories from the heart’, shared by the women participants through the interview process, proved extremely useful in contrasting the themes from the magazines against their lived realities. The narrative analysis also offered contrasting and alternative ways of understanding how business is experienced and interpreted by marginalised women on the peripheries of power.

Overall, the research affirmed that the discourse of entrepreneurship remains tethered to the fictional narrative of the heroic man of European descent as the quintessential entrepreneur, an archetype that emanates from the earliest days of colonialism and conquest. The entrepreneurial headlines on the magazine covers proved to include some fabrications and hyperbole, as well as outdated and overstated conceptions of success, which call for demystification. The language and philosophies embedded within the entrepreneurial discourse of the magazine covers were shown to originate from overtly neoliberal rhetoric which motivates for a self-serving, privatised and individualised approach to societal organisation and governance.

Considering the deepening socio-economic inequality and precarity in South Africa against which this research was done, as well as the constant struggles and perpetual systemic challenges experienced by all the women participants, it is clear that a reimagining of a more transformative version of entrepreneurship is critical. This would require a shift in economic

policy away from a neoliberal framework and towards a more restorative and rejuvenating formulation, predicated on the principles of equity, justice and community.

In motivating for a fundamental social and economic policy change at the institutional and governance level, a number of scenarios need to be considered including: how entrepreneurship may be decolonised of its imperial, raced and masculine origins; how a collective reinvention of entrepreneurship may be imagined rather than an individualised one; how the goals of large profits and self-gain may be disrupted with ideas of inclusivity, cooperation and collaboration; how the elitism of the formal markets may be disbanded into a more egalitarian model that uplifts and prioritises the upskilling and empowerment of those in the so-called informal markets and critically: a reconsideration of the role of the state in supporting entrepreneurs, towards building a socially just, secure, equitable and fair economy and society that centres the wellbeing of all citizens as its priority.

This research presents the case for a radical reconstruction of the idea of work, business and society and a courageous return to pre-colonial value systems of community, the collective and equality. I call for an emancipatory reimagining of how entrepreneurship may be re-engineered as a useful framework to drive down poverty and inequality, and promote social cohesion, well-being and social justice. This would require an overhaul of the current notions of governance, independent of the neoliberal inclinations, and towards a perhaps not-yet-envisioned socially democratic reconfiguration. It is clear that there is a growing cry for systemic and structural change in South Africa, a country that has yet to reach its true democratic potential. For us to reimagine brighter futures requires a willingness to give up what we know and an openness to ambiguity, discomfort, uncertainty and reinvention.

In order to meet the pressing challenges of our time, an urgent reconstruction in the way we think of the world we wish to live in is required. This process would need to be participatory and truly democratic, drawing wisdom and experience from all cultures, creeds and corners of our nation. Indeed, even the notion of our nation state may need to be questioned.

Practically speaking, my recommendation would be for those charged with visualising and driving these shifts to draw from alternative bodies of knowledge outside of the mainstream approach, for example from Black Radical Feminist theory, Queer theory and Decolonial theories and perspectives. I believe that South Africa, with all her complexities and

peculiarities, holds the potential to offer the world alternative constructions for how humanity may retrace its steps back towards nature and forward towards a restorative, ethical, eco-conscious and transformative way of being.

## REFERENCES

- Ahl, H. (2002). *The Making of the Female Entrepreneur - A Discourse Analysis of Research Texts on Women's Entrepreneurship* (Vol. JIBS Dissertation Series No. 015). Jonkoping International Business School.
- Ahl, H. (2003). *The Scientific Reproduction of Gender Inequality: A Discourse Analysis of Research Articles on Women's Entrepreneurship*. Lund University. Lund: Presented at Gender and Power in the New Europe, the 5th European Feminist Research Conference.
- Ahl, H. (2006). Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions. *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice*, 30(5), 595-621.
- Ahl, H., & Marlow, S. (2019). Exploring the false promise of entrepreneurship through a postfeminist critique of the enterprise policy discourse in Sweden and the UK. *Human Relations*, 74(1), 41-68.
- Akhalwaya, A., & Havenga, B. (2012). The Barriers that Hinder the Success of Women Entrepreneurs in Gauteng, South Africa. *Ontario National Development Agency Journal of Sustainable Development*, 3(5), 11-28.
- Akram, M., Dean, H., Ford, J., & Larsen, G. (2019). Female Entrepreneurship and the Metanarrative of Economic Growth: A Critical Review of Underlying Assumptions. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 21, 24-49.
- Aneke, E., Bomani, M., & Derera, E. (2017). An Exploratory Study of Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in The Construction Industry in South Africa. *International Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 9(2), 17.
- Ansari, S. (2019). *The Neo-Liberal incentive structure in post-apartheid South Africa*. (Doctoral dissertation), University of Toronto.

- Arnott, T. (2019). *Gendered Silence: Female Slave Imports and Khoikhoi Women in the Dutch Cape Colony*. McGill University.
- Baderoon, G. (2014). "Sexual Geographies of the Cape": Slavery, race and sexual violence. In G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims from slavery to post-apartheid* (pp. 83-106). Johannesburg: Wits University.
- Bolger, D. (2010). The Dynamics of Gender in Early Agricultural Societies of the Near East. *Source: Signs, 35*(2), 503-531.
- Bolló, H., HÁger, D., Galvan, M., & Orosz, G. (2020). The Role of Subjective and Objective Social Status in the Generation of Envy. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 1-8.
- Bond, P. (2013). Nelson Mandela's years in power: Was he pushed, or did he jump? *Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal*, <http://links.org.au/node/3620> [2015, July 22].
- Boonzaier, F., & van Schalkwyk, S. (2011). Narrative Possibilities: Poor Women of Colour and the Complexities of Intimate Partner Violence. *Violence Against Women, 17*(2), 267–286.
- Booyesen, L. (2007). Societal Power Shifts and Changing Social Identities in South Africa: Workplace Implications. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences, 1*, 1-20.
- Booyesen, L., & Nkomo, S. (2010). Gender Role Stereotypes and Requisite Management Characteristics: The Case of South Africa. *Gender in Management, 25*(4), 285-300.
- Boshoff, C., de Villiers Scheepers, M., & Oostenbrink, M. (2017). Entrepreneurial women's cognitive ambidexterity: Career and cultural influences. *South African Journal of Business Management, 48*(4), 14.
- Bourke, J. (2011). *What it means to be human: historical reflections 1791 to the present*. London: Virago.

- Bradford, H. (1996). Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and Its Frontier Zones. *The Journal of African History*, 37(3), 351-370.
- Bregman, M. (2019). The Relationship Between Entrepreneurship, Business and Mental Health. *Advanced Writing: Pop Culture Intersections*, 36, 1-23.
- Bruni, A., & Gherardi, S. &. (2004, July). Doing Gender, Doing Entrepreneurship: An Ethnographic Account of Intertwined Practices. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11(4), 24.
- Burck, C. (2005). Comparing qualitative research methodologies for systemic research: the use of grounded theory, discourse analysis and narrative analysis. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 27, 237–262.
- Butler, J. (1988). Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. *Theatre Journal*, 40(4), 519-531.
- Byrne, D. (2017). Teaching and Researching Women’s and Gender Studies in Post-apartheid South Africa. *Gender and Research*, 18(1), 113–129.
- Cain, P., Ditchburn, G., & Donaghue, N. (2017). Patricia Cain, Ngaire Donaghue & Graeme Ditchburn (2017) Concerns, culprits, counsel, and conflict: A thematic analysis of “obesity” and fat discourse in digital news media. *Fat Studies*, 6(2), 170-188.
- Casey, C. (2004). Contested rationalities, contested organizations: Feminist and postmodernist visions. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 17(3), 302-314.
- Cerveja, J., Postigo, M., & Herrero, R. (2006). What is Critical Discourse Analysis? *Quaderns de Filologia-Estudis Linguistics*, 11, 9-34.
- Chappell, P., Dlamini, M., Nkala, N., & Rule, P. (2014). Troubling power dynamics: Youth with disabilities as co-researchers in sexuality research in South Africa. *Childhood*, 21(3), 385–399.

- Cheru, F. (2001). Overcoming apartheid's legacy: the ascendancy of neoliberalism in South Africa's anti-poverty strategy. *Third World Quarterly*, 22(4), 505–527.
- Chikhi, L., & Rasteiro, R. (2013). PLoSONE. *Female and Male Perspectives on the Neolithic Transition in Europe: Clues from Ancient and Modern Genetic Data*, 8(4), 1-10.
- Chinomona, E., & Maziriri, E. (2015). Women in Action: Challenges Facing Women Entrepreneurs in The Gauteng Province of South Africa. *International Business & Economics Research Journal*, 14(6), 835-850.
- Chitakunye, P., Derera, E., & O'Neill, C. (2014). Gendered Lending Practices: Enabling South African Women Entrepreneurs to Access Start-Up Capital. *Journal of Enterprising Culture*, 22(3), 313–330.
- Cichello, P., & Rogan, M. (2017). *Informal sector employment and poverty in South Africa: identifying the contribution of 'informal' sources of income on aggregate poverty measures*. Cape Town: Research Project on Employment, Income Distribution and Inclusive Growth.
- Coleman, S. (2019). The Role of Human and Financial Capital in the Profitability and Growth of Women-Owned Small Firms. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 45(3), 303-319.
- Crankshaw, T., Gumede, B., & Strauss, M. (2020). Menstrual health management and schooling experience amongst female learners in Gauteng, South Africa: a mixed method study. *Reproductive Health*, 17(48).
- Cronje, J., & Mkubukeli, Z. (2019). Pull and Push Elements of Entrepreneurship in South Africa: A Small- Scale Mining Perspective. *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Organization Management*, 7(252), 1-7.
- Crusius, J. & Lange, J. (2015). The tango of two deadly sins: The social-functional relation of envy and pride. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 109(3), 453–472.

- Daramola, O., & Etim, E. (2020). The Informal Sector and Economic Growth of South Africa and Nigeria: A Comparative Systematic Review. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market and Complexity*, 1-26.
- De Sá Mello da Costa, A., & Saraiva, L. (2012). Hegemonic discourses on entrepreneurship as an ideological mechanism for the reproduction of capital. *19(5)*, 587–614.
- Dean, H., & Ford, J. (2017). Discourses of entrepreneurial leadership: Exposing myths and exploring new approaches. *International Small Business Journal*, 35(2), 178–196.
- Dhliwayo, R., & Moyo, T. (2019). Achieving Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Sub-Saharan Africa: 1–10 Lessons from the Experience of Selected Countries. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 35(2), 256–281.
- Dilts, A. (2011). From ‘Entrepreneur of the Self’ to ‘Care of the Self’: Neo-liberal Governmentality and Foucault’s Ethics. *Foucault and Race*, 12, 1-16.
- Draper, P., & Haines, R. (2004). Women’s work, childcare, and helpers-at-the-nest in a Hunter-gathering society. *Human Nature*, 15(4), 319-341.
- Driver, D. (1988). ‘Woman’ as sign in the South African colonial enterprise. *Journal of Literary Studies*, 4(1), 3-20.
- Duby, Z., Katz, A., Musara, P., Nabukeera, M., Palanee-Phillips, T., van der Straten, A., . . . Zimba, C. (2020). "The state of mind tells me it's dirty": menstrual shame amongst women using a vaginal ring in Sub Saharan Africa. *Women & Health*, 60(1), 72-86.
- Durrheim, K., Mtose, X., & Brown, L. (2011). *Race Trouble: Race, Identity and Inequality in Post-apartheid South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwazulu-Natal Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse - Textual analysis for social research*. New York: Routledge.

- Ferber, A. L. (1997). The Culture of Privilege: Colour-blindness, Postfeminism, and Christonormativity. *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(1), 63-77.
- Fernandez-Herrera, A., & Martinez-Rodriguez, F. (2016). Deconstructing the neoliberal “Entrepreneurial Self”: A critical perspective derived from a global “biophilic consciousness”. *Policy Futures in Education*, 14(3), 314–326.
- Fodor, O., & Pinteá, S. (2017). The “Emotional Side” of Entrepreneurship: A Meta-Analysis of the Relation between Positive and Negative Affect and Entrepreneurial Performance. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8(310), 1-16.
- Fourie, J. (2011). *Slaves as capital investment in the Dutch Cape Colony, 1652-1795*. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch.
- Fourie, J., & von Fintel, D. (2010). The dynamics of inequality in a newly settled, pre-industrial society: the case of the Cape Colony. *Cliometrica*, 4, 229–267.
- Francis, D., & Webster, E. (2019). Poverty and inequality in South Africa: critical reflections. *Development Southern Africa*, 36(6), 788-802.
- Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. UK: Random House.
- Gordon, L. (2018). Re-Imagining Liberations. *International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies*, 1(1), 11-29.
- Gouws, A. (2017). Feminist intersectionality and the matrix of domination in South Africa. *Agenda*, 31(1), 19-27.
- Green, E. (2014). The Economics of Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Cape Colony: Revising the Nieboer-Domar Hypothesis. *IRSH59*, 39–70.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.

- Guelke, L. (1988). The Anatomy of a Colonial Settler Population: Cape Colony 1657-1750. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 21(3), 453-473.
- Halberstadt, J., & Spiegler, A. (2018). Networks and the idea-fruition process of female social entrepreneurs in South Africa. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 14(4), 429-449.
- Hall, S. (1980). Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance. In *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (pp. 172-221). PARIS: UNESCO.
- Hamilton, E. (2013). The discourse of entrepreneurial masculinities (and femininities). *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 25(1-2), 90-99.
- Hamilton, E. (2014). Entrepreneurial Narrative Identity and Gender: A Double Epistemological Shift. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 52(4), 703-712.
- Hansen, C., Jensen, P., & Skovsgaardz, C. (2015). *Journal of Economic Growth*, 20, 365-404.
- Haupt, T., & Ndimande, J. (2019). A review on why women-owned construction firms fail in KwaZulu-Natal? *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*. 1378, p. 21. Ota, Nigeria: IOP Publishing.
- Hill-Collins, P. (1986). Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought. *Social Problems*, 33(6), S14-S32.
- Holborow, M. (2015). The Neoliberal Reinvention of Entrepreneurship. In M. Holborow, *Language and Neoliberalism* (pp. 71-95). Routledge.
- IEJ. (2018). *Job Summit Policy Brief Series – Stream 3, Policy Brief 1: Informal Economy/Sector*. Johannesburg: Institute for Economic Justice.
- Janks, H. (1997). Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18(3), 329-342.

- Jewkes, R., Lindegger, G., & Morrell, R. (2012). Hegemonic Masculinity/ Masculinities in South Africa: Culture, Power, and Gender Politics. *Men and Masculinities*, 15(1), 11-30.
- Katz, M. (2000). Sappho and Her Sisters: Women in Ancient Greece. *Signs*, 25, 505-531.
- Kenge, B. (2016). Mixed-gender ownership and financial performance of SMEs in South Africa A multidisciplinary analysis. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 8(2), 117-136.
- Keren, H. (2016). Women in the Shark Tank: Entrepreneurship and Feminism in a Neoliberal Age. *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, 34(1), 75-124.
- Kinnear, L., & Ortlepp, K. (2016). Emerging models of power among South African women business leaders. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 11.
- Knight, M. (2016). Race-ing, Classing and Gendering Racialized Women's Participation in Entrepreneurship. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 23(3), 310-327.
- Knowles, D., & Phillips, M. (2012). Performance and Performativity: Undoing Fictions of Women Business Owners. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 19(4), 416-437.
- Kotz, D. (2015). The Rise of Neoliberal Capitalism. In D. Kotz, *The Rise and Fall of Neoliberal Capitalism* (pp. 45-84). Harvard University Press.
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (1996, 2006). *Reading Images - The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Langa, M., & Leopeng, B. (2018). Black Middle-class Masculinities in Post-apartheid South Africa: Consumerism, Fashion and the Portrayal of Masculine Identities in Destiny Man Magazine. *Fashion Theory*, 23(1), 57-83.

- Langa, M., & Leopeng, B. (2020). Destiny overshadowed: masculine representations and feminist implications in a South African men's magazine. *Feminist Media Studies*, 20(5), 672-691.
- Lather, P. (1991). Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern. In P. Lather, *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern*. London: Routledge.
- Lerner, G. (1986). *The Creation of Patriarchy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, P. (2006). The Quest for Invisibility: Female Entrepreneurs and the Masculine Norm of Entrepreneurship. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 13(5), 453-469.
- Liebenberg, L., Schatz, E., & Teti, M. (2020). Methods in the Time of COVID-19: The Vital Role of Qualitative Inquiries. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19, 1-5.
- Llewellyn-Jones, L. (2003). *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece*. Classical Press of Wales.
- Lukhele, F. (2017). Jacket(ed) and Suit(ably) Coat(ed): Swazi Masculine Sartorial Performances. *Critical Arts*, 31(3), 106-122.
- Macintosh, A., Pinhasi, R., & Stock, J. (2017). Prehistoric women's manual labour exceeded that of athletes through the first 5500 years of farming in Central Europe. *Science Advances*, 3(11), 1-13.
- Maistry, S., & David, R. (2017). Phantasmagoria: Communicating an Illusion of Entrepreneurship in South African School Textbooks. *Educational Research for Social Change*, 6(2), 101-114.
- Mandipaka, F. (2014). Overview of Women Entrepreneurs in South Africa. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(9), 127-130.

- Mannell, J. (2012). 'It's just been such a horrible experience.' Perceptions of gender mainstreaming by practitioners in South African organisations. *Gender and Development: Beyond Gender Mainstreaming*, 20(3), 423-434.
- Marcusson, T. A. (2019). The Status of Women in Late Antiquity: Examining the Sociopolitical Climate, Societal Values, and Gender Roles. *Inquiries Journal*, 11(10).
- Marks, S. (1972). Khoisan Resistance to the Dutch in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. *The Journal of African History*, 13(1), 55-80.
- Mastercard. (2020). *Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs 2020*. Mastercard.
- Matotoka, M., & Odeku, K. (2020). Discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy, denial of maternity leave and lack of conducive environment for nursing mother in the workplace in South Africa. *Obiter*, 41(3), 593-607.
- Maziriri, E., Mapuranga, M., Maramura, T., & Nzewi, O. (2019). Navigation on the Key Drivers for a Transition to a Green Economy Evidence from Women Entrepreneurs in South Africa. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 7(2), 1686-1703.
- McKenzie, K. (1996). Wollstonecraft's models: Female honour and sexuality in middle-class settler Cape Town, 1800-1854. *Kronos*, 23, 57-74.
- Mele, D., & González-Cantón, C. (2014). The Homo Economicus Model. *Human Foundations of Management*, 9-29.
- Meyer, M., & Wodak, R. (2009). Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory, and Methodology. In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 1-33). London: Sage.
- Meyer, N. (2018). *South African Female Entrepreneurs' intention to remain in business*. North- West University.

- Miyauchi, Y. (2014). Imagined Entrepreneurs in Neoliberal South Africa: Informality and Spatial Justice in Post-apartheid Cities. *Mila, The Journal of the Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies*, 12(Special Issue), pp. 68-75.
- Moagi, A., & Mtombeni, B. (2020). Women in Pre-colonial Africa: Southern Africa. *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies*, 1-20.
- Morrell, R. (1998). Of boys and men: masculinity and gender in Southern African studies. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24(4), 605-630.
- Mupotsa, D. (2015). The promise of happiness: desire, attachment and freedom in post/apartheid South Africa. *Critical Arts: A South-North Journal of Cultural & Media Studies*, 29(2), 183-198.
- Nambiar, Y., Scheepers, C., & Sutherland, M. (2019). The stakeholder ecosystem of women entrepreneurs in South African townships. *Development Southern Africa*, 37(1), 70-86.
- Narsiah, S. (2002). Neoliberalism and privatisation in South Africa. *GeoJournal*, 57, 3–13.
- Nattrass, N., & Seekings, J. (2002). Class, Distribution and Redistribution in Post-apartheid South Africa. *Transformation*, 1-30.
- Ndhlovu, F. (2019). South Africa's social transformation policies: raciolinguistic ideologies and neoliberal rhetoric. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 14(2), 131–151.
- Ndlovu, M. (2011). “Just a Bunch of Unbearable, Useless Individuals”, A Decolonial Critique of Minister Mbalula's Rhetoric of South African Exceptionalism. *African Journal of Rhetoric*, 6, 143-167.
- Ndziba-Whitehead, T. (1993). Women's Entrepreneurship in South Africa. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 18(Women and the Economy), 97-100.

- Ndzwayiba, N., Steyn, M., & Ukpere, W. (2018). Debunking the myth of job hopping amongst Black professionals in corporate South Africa. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 45(9), 1266-1282.
- Ngek, N. (2018). Family-work Conflict and Performance of Women-owned Enterprises: The Role of Social Capital in Developing Countries--Implications for South Africa and Beyond. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 19(6), 326-343.
- Nhemachena, C. (2017). *Motivations of sustainable entrepreneurship in Gauteng Province, South Africa*. University of Witwatersrand. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand.
- Nkomo, S. M. (1992, July). The Emperor Has No Clothes: Rewriting "Race in Organizations". *The Academy of Management Review*, 17(3), 487-513.
- Ogbor, J. (2000, July). Mythicizing and reification in entrepreneurial discourse: ideology-critique of entrepreneurial studies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37(5), 31.
- Oonk, G. (2011). Clothing matters: Asian-African businessmen in European suits, 1880-1980. *Comparative Sociology*, 10(4), 528-547.
- OXFAM. (2020). *Reclaiming Power: Womxn's Work and Income Inequality in South Africa November 2020*. Johannesburg: OXFAM South Africa.
- Parry, S. (2016). The influence of neoliberal economics on small business accounting research: A critical evaluation of agendas and methodologies. *International Small Business Journal*, 34(8), 1076–1097.
- Payne, G. (2000). *Social Divisions*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Posel, D. (2010). Races to consume: revisiting South Africa's history of race, consumption and the struggle for freedom. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33(2), 157-175.
- Read, J. (2009, February). A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity. *Foucault Studies*, 6, 25-36.

- Rei, C. (2014). Careers and wages in the Dutch East India Company. *Cliometrica*, 8, 27–48.
- Riessman, C. (2005). Narrative Analysis. In: Narrative, Memory & Everyday Life. Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield.
- Robinson, A. (2014). National versus ethnic identification in Africa - Modernization, colonial legacy, and the origins of territorial Nationalism. *World Politics*, 66(4), 709-46.
- Roelofs, K. (2018). *Doing Entrepreneurship, Handling Masculinity - Young Women and Gendered Norms of Entrepreneurship*. Malmo: Lund University.
- Ruggunan, S. (2016). Decolonising management studies: A love story. In G. Goldman, *Critical Management Studies in the South African Context* (Vol. Supplement 1, pp. 101-137).
- Sawicki, J. (1986). Foucault and Feminism, Towards a Politics of Difference. *Hypatia*, 1(2), 23-36.
- Sebake, B. (2017). Neoliberalism in the South African Post-Apartheid Regime: Economic Policy Positions and Globalisation Impact. *The 2nd Annual International Conference on Public Administration and Development Alternatives*, (pp. 1-8).
- Segar, J., & White, C. (1989). Constructing Gender: Discrimination and the Law in South Africa. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 4, 95-112.
- Southall, R. (2014). The African Middle Class in South Africa 1910–1994. *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 29 (2), 287-31.
- StatsSA. (2019). *Gender Series Volume VII: Informal Economy 2013–2019. Report no. 03-10-23*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- Steyn, M. (2012). The Ignorance Contract: Recollections of apartheid Childhoods and the Construction of Epistemologies of Ignorance. *Identities*, 19(1), 8-25.

- Steyn, M. (2015). Critical Diversity Literacy: Essentials for the Twenty-First Century. In *Routledge International Handbook of Diversity Studies* (pp. 379-388). Routledge.
- Steyn, M. (2018). Introduction. *International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies*, 1, 6-10.
- Treiman, D. (2003). The Legacy of apartheid: Racial Inequalities in the New South Africa. *Revision of a Paper presented at the Conference on Ethnic Minority Disadvantage in the Labour Market: Cross-National Perspectives British Academy*, (pp. 1-51). London.
- Valla, S. (2001). *Barriers facing female entrepreneurs: A study in the Gauteng Province, South Africa*. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.
- Vally, S., & Motala, E. (2017). Education, Training and Work under Neoliberalism in South Africa. *Education, Training and Work in South Africa*, 21(3), 1-20.
- Van der Westhuizen, C. (2017). *Sitting Pretty: White Afrikaans Women in Postapartheid South Africa*. University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Vogel, S. (2020). Neoliberal Ideology and the Myth of the Self-Made Entrepreneur. "Reversing the Arrow: How Entrepreneurship Affects Society", (pp. 1-19). Held Virtually.
- Wheadon, M., & Duval-Couetil, N. (2019). Token entrepreneurs: a review of gender, capital, and context in technology entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 31(3-4), 308–336.
- Witbooi, M., & Ukpere, W. (2011). Indigenous female entrepreneurship: Analytical study on access to finance for women entrepreneurs in South Africa. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(14), 5646-5657.
- Young, I. (2011, 1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Participants Information Sheet

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Sarah Boden, and I am a Masters student in the field of Diversity Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. I am currently conducting my research in the field of Entrepreneurship with Women entrepreneurs.

The aim of the research is to:

- Analyze how the story of the entrepreneur is told by the media and consider how this
- relates to the participants' experience
- Explore the lived experiences and journeys of women Entrepreneurs in Johannesburg
- Paint a picture of how Entrepreneurship for women has been constructed and shaped
- historically in South Africa
- Understand the impact of doing business in a time of COVID-19 on women
- entrepreneurs against this backdrop
- To provide an analysis of the above into a succinct summation of my observations.

I would like to invite you to be one of the women entrepreneurs who participate in the study. If you choose to participate there will be two parts to it.

#### Part One

- You will be provided with some magazine covers to look at and contemplate on – as well as some questions. You will be asked to spend some time looking at these covers and to choose a minimum of three of the months/covers represented - and to answer the questions through recording your feelings, thoughts and opinions of this process on a voicemail note, video or other live recording method.
- You will also be encouraged to express your thoughts and observations through drawing, journaling or any other art form that may assist you in bringing your response to the fore -particularly during the time period between your observation of the magazine covers and our interview. This is not obligatory.
- You will be asked to provide the above digital material to me before the interview

## **Part Two**

We will then hold our interview on a remote platform of your choice (Hangouts/Teams/Zoom/Skype) where I will pose a number of additional questions under these topics:

- Your background and family life
- Your studies
- Work/Career
- Becoming an entrepreneur
- Being an entrepreneur
- Doing business during COVID-19

This interview will be recorded. It will also be conversational, and I hope for it to be relaxed. It is an opportunity for you to reflect on your journey and to share your experience and opinions with me. You will not receive any monetary or other direct benefits by participating and in the same vein you will not be penalised for not participating – you have full agency to withdraw at any time or to refrain from answering any of the questions provided.

You will be able to choose a pseudonym or nickname for the project and your identity will remain confidential and anonymous. All the information provided to me will be securely stored on a password protected device - and not shared with anyone else apart from my advisor.

Should you wish to have a copy of the final report or a summary of my findings you are most welcome to it.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments currently or during the research you are welcome to contact me or my supervisor to clarify your concerns on the details below.

Thank you for acknowledging the information contained in this information sheet and for your consideration to participate in my research project.

Research Supervisor: William Mpofu [william.mpofu@wits.ac.z](mailto:william.mpofu@wits.ac.z)

Sincerely,

Sarah Boden

MA Candidate in the field of Diversity Studies

University of the Witwatersrand, Braamfontein, Johannesburg

2272627@students.wits.ac.za 0741784242

## Appendix B: Interview Consent Form

Stories from the Heart in a Time of COVID-19: A Critical Study of the Discourse of Entrepreneurship and Its Lived Realities for Women Entrepreneurs in Johannesburg.

Researcher: Sarah-Jane Boden

I ..... agree to participate in this research project.  
The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve.

Please circle the relevant options below.

I declare that I am an entrepreneur with a registered business  
operational during the years of 2010 through 2020                      YES    NO

My main business' registration number is: \_\_\_\_\_

My business has been active during the period of                      YES    NO  
24 March 2020 – 30 September 2020

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous                      YES    NO

I understand that only first names will be used in the final  
research report. I prefer to use a pseudonym for anonymity    YES    NO

OR I agree to use my first name and I would like to use: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes  
in her research report    YES    NO

I agree that the researcher will record my interview process    YES    NO

I agree that I will provide any digital footage and all  
other reflection material to the researcher on completion                      YES    NO

I agree that I will permanently delete all recordings of the    YES    NO

reflection process once the researcher has confirmed  
I may go ahead

I understand that my participation in this research  
is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time  
without penalty

YES NO

I would like my information to be kept confidential

YES NO

..... (signature)

..... (name of participant)

..... (date)

## **Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

### **Entrepreneur Magazine**

Please take a look at the covers of the magazine. You can choose a minimum of three that stand out to you to analyse. Please answer the following:

- Why did you choose those three covers specifically?
- What do these magazine covers make you feel about being an entrepreneur?
- What concepts or phrases jump out for you the most on your chosen magazine covers?
- Do any of the headlines or by-lines make you think about your own journey? In what way?
- Who is represented on the covers? Can you describe them for us? What does this make you think?
- Have you ever been interviewed as an entrepreneur? How was that experience?
- Would you buy these magazines if they were still on sale? Why or Why not?

### **Background and family life**

- Tell us a bit of information on your backstory with regards your childhood and later years please?
- Where did you grow up?
- What was it like growing up in apartheid and/or post-apartheid? o What was your role in the family?
- What were the gender roles like in your family?

### **- Studies**

- Did you study after school and if so where did you study? o How far did you go?
- Did you complete post-graduate studies?
- What was the intention for your post-graduate studies?

### **- Work/Career**

- How did you get your first job/break?
- How long was your career before becoming an entrepreneur?
- Please describe some of your highs and lows of being an employee.
- What were some of the obstacles you faced?

### **- Becoming an entrepreneur**

- Tell me about your journey into entrepreneurship
- What made you want to become an entrepreneur? What were the key factors?
- Did you have any ideas for your life and future that gave you the drive to start your own thing? What were they?
- Was there anyone you hoped your becoming an entrepreneur would provide value for?
- Why was that important?

### **- Being an entrepreneur**

- How would you describe the experience of being an entrepreneur?
- What has your journey mostly felt like?
- Are there any standout stories or moments that evoke positive or negative emotions for you?
- Do you feel held and supported as an entrepreneur? By whom? Please elaborate.
- What do you see for yourself in the future on your journey?

### **- Doing business during the COVID-19**

- Has your business been impacted during the Coronavirus pandemic?
- In what ways have you felt its impact?
- How have your emotions been impacted during this time? Could you name some for us?
- How have you coped and been supported during this time? How is that?
- What are some of the differences between the struggles faced now and those before?

### **- Coronavirus arrived – is there a vast difference?**

- Have you had any specific experiences with regards to your business during this time?
- Could you share those with us?
- What is your overall feeling about being an entrepreneur in a time of COVID-19?

## **Appendix D: Entrepreneur Magazine Covers**

Please see accompanying PDF document