

**POLYGyny & GENDER:
THE GENDERED
NARRATIVES OF ADULTS
WHO WERE RAISED IN
POLYGynOUS FAMILIES**

2015

BY

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DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Graduate programme in
Gender Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal,
South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was not utilized. The dissertation is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree examination in any other University.

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Signature:

Date:

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to God almighty for giving me the strength and resilience to see this project to completion.

I would also like to thank my mother for her belief, support and guidance and my family for their unrelenting support and encouragement. I would also like to thank my father whose encouragement and support has allowed me to pursue my dreams and bring them to reality. To my other family members, my sister Zakithi, thank you for your kind words and daily encouragement and belief in me. My extended family, Makhiwane, Lungi, Thobe, Thandeka and aunt thank you and I am blessed to have you as my family.

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Lastly but not in the least, I am greatly indebted to my research participants who granted me an opportunity to have a glimpse into the lives and recounted their past stories to me. Without your co-operation this work would not have come to fruition.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all my African sisters, for your struggles and for doing the best you can, born into the culture you are born into. One day we too will experience true freedom.

ABSTRACT

The thesis interrogates the gender identity construction of adults raised in polygynous families in the Hammarsdale area in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The study aims to contribute to the fields of gender and identity construction from an African perspective by examining gender relations in polygynous families of Zulu origin. As researcher I seek to highlight the complexities of the gender identities under investigation, as participants negotiate between modern, constitutional, individual freedoms and patriarchal, cultural, communal customs and traditions.

Through the use of a qualitative interpretivist theoretical paradigm, I highlight how the communal processes; revealed in the views and perceptions of the research participants, intersect with my multidimensional positionality as researcher, to produce knowledge. I also position gender relations as an important dynamic in the data collection process. The body of data reveals that although women and men experience different influences on their gendered identity construction, both female and male study participants also cite certain similar factors prevalent in Zulu culture that have bearing on their gender identity construction, namely; gender role socialisation, naming practices, and the principle of seniority.

African perspectives on concepts such as gender, feminism and the family are vastly different from their Western counterparts. Similarly, mechanisms of socialisation such as religion, capitalism and the law require context-specific application to the notion of polygyny. The study is underpinned by three key theoretical frameworks, namely; gender relations, social constructionism and African feminism. The gender relations approach entails three key concepts; power relations, sexual division of labour, and cathexis. The themes arising from the study point to the contestation between individuality and collectivism in the construction of gender identity within polygynous families in the Zulu culture. The South African Constitution guarantees gender equality and individual rights and freedoms for its citizens, yet customary law practices, such as polygyny, appear to contravene these principles. The study traces a sample of formally educated participants as they navigate this treacherous contradiction and construct culturally hybrid gender identities for themselves.

Keywords:

polygyny, gender identity, power, culture, social construction, gender relations in an African context, construction of gendered identity, gendered identities, Zulu culture.

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Appendix III: Interview guide in English and IsiZulu translation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Preamble

This study examines the construction of gender identity from the perspective of adults who were raised in polygynous families. Polygyny¹ is a very complicated and complex topic to research because intrinsic to it are several deeply intertwined factors. Amongst these one can mention culture, tradition, societal and religious expectations, personal and even political considerations. Polygamy² is commonly understood as the practice whereby a person is married to more than one spouse at a time. The authors I will cite as references for my study use the term *polygamy* but are in actuality referring to *polygyny* and therefore I will use the term *polygyny* throughout my study.

My study is located in Hammarsdale in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This is a peri-urban³ area which means that it is a mixture of rural living and township life.

¹ The word *poly* (the common prefix for polygamy, polygyny, polyandry and polyfidelity) to refer to relationship orientated people who love and are open to being sexually intimate with more than one person at a time, it could be polygynous or polyandrous (Anapol, 2010:162). In principle there are three forms of polygamy; *polygyny* in which one man is married to several wives; *polyandry* where one is married to several husbands; and *group marriage* in which several husbands are married to several wives, it is a combination of polygyny and polyandry (Zietzen, 2008:3).

² Gasa (2011) states polygamy in the African context has been more about necessity and not wants. In the Zulu culture the only form of polygamy recognized and sanctioned is polygyny. In the state of Himachal Pradesh in the Western Himalaya is where polyandry is practiced and it is because of an excess of males over females. In a place where there are fewer females this custom must be widespread for the majority of the male population would have to remain unmarried. Parma (1975) states that polyandry is prevalent in Kullu, Saraj, Bashahr, Simla Hills and Sirmur and even those who cannot afford to have a wife separately manage to do so jointly (Parma, 1975: 53). Those people who were too poor to have obtained a wife would be able to obtain one if they combine their resources with another woman's husband and in effect the two men would have one wife whom they would share in running the household or farm (Parma, 1975: 40). According to Sheff (2011) polyamory is a form of relationship in which people openly court multiple romantic, sexual, and/or affective partners, with an emphasis on long-term and emotionally intimate relationships. In recent years there has been an increase in polyamorous relationships especially in the west.

³ These types of areas are difficult to define because it is a mixture of rural and urban living. The peri-urban interface is a transitional zone between city and countryside (Adell, 1999, Adam, 2001, Lawn et. al. 2006 and Mkhize, 2011).

Hammersdale is a suburb of Durban located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The reason I chose Hammersdale as my research site is because it is a peri-urban area and the dominant population is isiZulu-speaking people. It is a blend of traditional culture as well as modern Zulu culture. I had used this field site before in my Masters research so I was familiar with the area and the participants. During my research each participant narrated their experiences of being raised in a polygynous family and the constant negotiations they encountered as a consequence thereof, which reinforced their current perspectives on gender⁴. Gender relations⁵ not only facilitated or constrained both men and women participants' movements but they also structured how their gendered identities were constructed.

During my research each participant narrated their experiences of being raised in a polygynous family and the constant negotiations they encountered as a consequence thereof, which reinforced their current perspectives on gender⁶. Gender relations⁷ not only facilitated or constrained both men and women participants' movements but they also structured how their gendered identities were constructed.

⁴ Gender refers to socially and culturally determined characteristics associated with women and men, stereotypes based on these characteristics, the conditions in which women and men live and work and the relations between them.

⁵ Gender relations are the relationships that arise in and around the perceived differences between men and women based on their reproductive differences. Not all gender relations are direct interactions between women and men only; they are also between women and between men. Relationships may be amongst women or men, for example hierarchies of masculinities among men, but they are still gender relations (Connell, 2000).

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As a result of their polygynous family upbringings, the participants' narratives in my study both challenge and reinforce hegemonic notions of gender based on cultural and religious traditions. These men and women each had to find a way to renegotiate modern gender roles based on the South African Constitution⁸'s guarantee of equal individual rights and thereby construct their gendered identities⁹.

1.1. Background of the study

This study examines how adults who were raised in polygynous families construct and reconstruct their gender identities based on various interrelated factors. Polygyny is a very complicated and complex topic to research because intrinsic to it are several factors which are deeply intertwined. Amongst these one can mention culture, tradition, societal and religious expectations, personal and even political considerations.

According to Zietzen (2008), polygyny is worldwide and cross-cultural in its scope. It is found among adherents of all world religions including Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, as well as local native religions. Polygyny is found on all continents,

⁸ Republic of South Africa *Constitution Act 108 of 1996*. Section 9:

- (1) Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.
- (2) Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.
- (3) The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.
- (4) No person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (3). National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination.
- (5) Discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed in subsection (3) is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair.

⁹ Gender identity has to do with somebody's sense of being a woman or a man and is socially constructed rather than biologically determined. Stoller (1986) advanced that gender identity was only one aspect of the person involving her or his involvement in gender relations. In order to understand gender identity one must acknowledge the interconnecton with other forms of social identity such as; nationality, race, social class, ethnicity and community.

(Africa, Asia, Americas, Europe and Oceania); various populations practise polygyny because it is part of their cultural repertoire. The legitimate basis for polygyny in a particular society is like a swinging pendulum sometimes found in religious codes or cultural codes (Zietzen, 2008:29).

Polygyny is practiced by traditional patriarchs as well as modern feminists. However the spread of Christianity and European-based legal codes through colonialism and the imposition of State laws on aboriginal peoples living within the borders of modern Nation States appears to have spelt the end of polygyny for many. In traditional¹⁰ polygynous non-Western societies, where factors such as modernisation, economic progress and women's emancipation have challenged polygynous practices, they have not disappeared but rather they have adapted to new circumstances, perpetuating old ways in new forms. Polygyny therefore has become part of the social and political discourse in contemporary societies (Zietzen, 2008:16).

Polygyny is by its very nature a gender issue because of its inherent gender asymmetry: the fact that one man can be married to several women but one woman can only be married to one man paves the way for potential conflict between the sexes. In polygynous societies that have witnessed the emancipation of women through education and economic opportunities, polygyny's creation of inequality and power differentials has become a key aspect of contemporary gender relations (Zietzen, 2008:18).

The literature has showed numerous studies (see Solway, 1990; Oyefeso & Adegoke, 1992; Madhavan, 2002; Tabi, 2010,) conducted on polygyny from a clinical psychological standpoint. Tabi (2010) researched the experiences of women in polygynous marriages as well as the negative impact it has on women's mental health in Ghana. From a legal perspective, Jones (2012) conducted a study in Botswana in which she discussed the legal implications of polygyny for women. Feminists debate amongst themselves about the topic of polygyny; some argue that polygyny is the subjugation of women to men while others advance an argument that polygyny shows that women are truly free to choose which type of marriage they want to enter into. Women and Children's Rights advocates state that polygyny

¹⁰ Tradition includes elements from the past. Tradition is fluid; its content is redefined by each generation and its timelessness may be situationally constructed (Linekin, 1983: 242).

highlights unequivocally the inequalities between the genders and that such an institution infringes on the rights of the child to be raised in a healthy home environment. In South Africa, Ngwenya (2011), from an anthropological perspective, stated that ‘culture’ has been used to justify polygyny but instead it is abused to justify male promiscuity.

Very little research on polygyny has been done from a gender and socio-cultural perspective however. In particular the experiences of adults who were raised in polygynous families and how they construct their gender identities has largely been ignored in the literature and I hope my study will fill that gap somewhat. My research therefore focuses on the gendered narratives of adults who were raised in polygynous unions. The participants I engaged in my study were 18 years and older and had each attained the minimum educational level of Matric.

1.2. Significance of the study

This study is significant because it seeks to examine gender in a polygynous context. Gender has been extensively theorised from a Western Euro/American nuclear context of family but it has not been thoroughly examined from an African polygynous context. Many scholars writing on gender and polygyny have written about its impact on women (see for example Tabi, 2010; Al-Krenawi 1999; Elbedour, 2002). It is important to bear in mind though that gender is relational and that men are also gendered¹¹ in terms of their identities.

Further, whilst there has been more focus on the impact of polygyny on women and men married into such unions, very few studies have examined how being raised in a polygynous family impacts on children and how they construct or reconstruct their gendered identities. This study attempts to bridge this gap by examining gender identities under social experiences in polygynous families.

This study is also significant in that it seeks the inclusion of people who are formally educated. Most studies on polygyny do not focus on the participants’ level of education, which is usually very low. This study is a continuation of my previous Master’s research

¹¹ To be gendered means reflecting or involving gender differences. Gender difference theorists accept and celebrate gender differences and argue that whether gender difference is a biological given or was a result of social conditioning, it should be recognized and valued (Squires, 1999). Cultural values can influence the meaning of being different from others and our responses to that meaning through biases in terms of superiority and inferiority (Pinderhoughes, 1989).

which focused on modern, educated and financially stable women who willingly enter into polygynous marriages. My study is different in that my participants have all been exposed to a Westernised education system and therefore in theory their mind-sets regarding traditional gender roles is expected to be different from their traditional family upbringings.

In as far as I could establish from the extensive literature that I accessed, a study on the gendered narratives of adults raised in polygynous families and how they construct their gendered identities, has not been previously undertaken. The findings of this study have enabled me to highlight and document critical insights generated in the area of gender identity (re) construction and hence contribute to knowledge in the area of gender in a family context of polygyny.

1.3. Key questions addressed in the research.

The key question addressed in this study is how does a polygynous family upbringing shape perceptions of gender identity and gender relations. Furthermore, what are the dynamics of polygynous families in terms of participants' relationships with their fathers, mothers, co-mothers, siblings and half siblings. In attempting to answer this key question the study addressed the following sub-questions:

- How do adults raised in polygynous families negotiate their gender identities (i.e. masculinity/femininity)?
- How does a polygynous family upbringing affect adults' perceptions of emotional relations for current and future partners and potentially polygynous marriages?
- How does a polygynous family upbringing shape adults' understandings of power relations and the sexual divisions of labour within the family?
- How is decision making negotiated in polygynous families? How does this inform relations between family members within a polygynous family?
- How do adults raised in polygynous families perceive/interpret the relationship between their customary laws and their individual rights?
- How are the relationships the interviewees have with their parents as adults influenced by a polygynous family upbringing?
- How are the interviewees' current or future marital relationships influenced by a polygynous family upbringing?

1.4. Objectives of the study.

The objectives of this research are:

1. To examine how gender identity is constructed and reconstructed in a Zulu polygynous family setting.
2. To investigate power relations and divisions of labour in polygynous families and its influence on gender identity formation.
3. To examine how a polygynous family upbringing affects the participants' present/future relationships.
4. To interrogate how the participants negotiate the tensions between customary laws and constitutional rights.
5. To study how participants' given names influence how they perceive their gendered identities.

1.5. Plan and structure of the thesis

This thesis has been structured into the following chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction

The introduction forms the first chapter of the thesis and outlines the central research problem: how do adults raised in polygynous families negotiate the challenges of forming gendered identities. This chapter presents the background of the study, the key questions to be investigated, the broad problems to be addressed and the significance of the study. Lastly the chapter provides an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The second chapter reviews previous studies in the area of polygyny and gender. This chapter highlights how existing studies on polygyny have focused primarily on men and women married into such unions and their reasons for doing so. Very little has been said about adults who were raised as the children of such unions. I also look at various debates around polygyny and gender from both Western and African feminist perspectives. In this chapter I anchor the research topic in literature by identifying gaps in research and applying the relevant theoretical frameworks emerging from the literature.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Methods

This chapter motivates the use of qualitative research methods in order to elicit rich, narrative data. By employing an interpretivist framework, I explore how presenting the reality of the participants from their own views intersects with my personal subject position and role as a researcher to create meaning. In order to delineate where the study was undertaken and the selection of the participants, this chapter specifies the sampling procedures, how informed consent was sought and the actual data collection process. This chapter profiles the research participants in order to provide an understanding of their narratives. The gender dynamics in the data collection process are further highlighted as a key finding of this study.

Chapter Four: Gender Role Socialisation and Gender Identity

This chapter introduces the body of data examining the various factors which influence the adult participants' perceptions of their gendered identities. The interrogation of this data reveals the extent to which the participants' socialisation and gender relations within polygynous families impacts on the construction of their gendered identities. I also examine how my participants' culture influences their masculine and feminine identities.

Chapter Five: Naming and the Construction of Gender Identity

This chapter examines how names are used a weapon in the war within the polygynous family. In most cases in the Nguni¹² culture, personal names generally function as a signal to others or to the family, about issues that cannot be openly discussed and resolved. The names of children in the Zulu culture are significant. It is believed that when a child is born and named, that child will then have to fulfil their destiny based on the name they carry. I scrutinise how names with supposed negative connotations impact on the gendered identity of my respondents.

Chapter Six: Family relations and its impact on gender identity

In this chapter I investigate how the various dynamics of the polygynous family structure influence the manner in which participants construct their gendered identities. A polygynous family has many more family members than a nuclear family therefore there are more people,

¹² The Nguni group consists of; isiZulu, isiXhosa and Ndebel speaking African people (Valchev et. al. 2011).

including co-mothers, who have an impact on how the participants construct their gendered identities. Sibling relations are also observed in terms of their impact on identity construction and deconstruction.

Chapter Seven: Negotiating Customary Law and Constitutional Rights

In this chapter I interrogate the body of data surrounding how the participants negotiated their individual rights against the backdrop of a patriarchal Zulu culture, also condoned by the South African Constitution. This chapter foregrounds how individuals of Zulu heritage struggle with their gendered identities within a modern society and as such how they tend to create culturally hybrid gendered identities for themselves.

Chapter Eight: Economic resources and power relations

This chapter examines how adults raised in polygynous families interpret and redefined their gender roles and expectations as they negotiate their identities. In this chapter I also focus on how my participants engage with their traditional roles and the way in which such roles have been transformed, reinforced or reconfigured. The chapter also suggests that Western liberal feminism is not sufficient for African female empowerment and that what is needed is social cultural empowerment.

Chapter Nine: The Impact of Religion on Polygynous Families and Gender Identity Formation

Religion is arguably a key aspect of socialisation. This chapter examines the significance of religion in the Zulu culture and its impact on the participants' construction of their gendered identities. I also foreground the ongoing battle between religion and tradition within the Zulu culture and interrogate my participants' current relationships with their parents in order to be able to fully appreciate the institution of polygyny.

Chapter Ten: Emotional relations and the construction of gendered identity

In this chapter I examine how emotional relations, particularly between mother and child, influence my respondents' perceptions of their gendered identities. Butler (1993) argues that gender is created through performance and is therefore not a fixed identity. It is an identity constructed through time and space through repetition of stylised acts. I also highlight how emotional relations vary according to the hierarchical placement (i.e. first, second, third wife)

of each respondent's mother in the polygynous family structure. I further illustrate that co-wife conflict has a bearing on gender identity construction in terms of how my participants dealt with the conflicts as children.

Chapter Eleven: Conclusions

This concluding chapter presents a summary of the findings and the significant contributions of the study and provides suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2. Introduction

In this chapter I attempt to anchor the research topic in the existing body of literature by identifying gaps in current knowledge, as well as exploring the topic in terms of the relevant theoretical frameworks. I examine an extensive body of literature on polygyny and children of polygynous families based on studies that have been conducted by different scholars from different perspectives. The literature that is available is based on research by scholars from various disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, feminism, religious studies as well as legal studies, and the studies focus on polygyny from their various standpoints.

2.1. Polygyny from different scholarly perspectives

2.1.1. Psychological perspective

The studies based on psychological perspectives (see Anderson, 2000; Cherian, 1990; Oyefeso, & Adegoke, 1992) have shown the detrimental psychological effects on women and children living and being raised in polygynous families. The leading researcher on children who have been raised in polygynous families in the Middle East, Al-Krenawi (2006), states that polygyny has far-reaching consequences for children, such as poor academic performance in school and antisocial behaviour. Another study from a psychological perspective in Ghana, conducted by Tabi (2010), focused on polygyny and women married in such unions but her approach was based on a clinical perspective and she endeavoured to discover the psychological and emotional strains that such marriages have on women. The findings from Tabi's (2010) study showed that women in such unions suffer from depression, intense stress and other psychological disorders. Sociologists and anthropologists have also reiterated that a polygynous marriage has a negative effect on the multiple wives (Ozkan, Altindag, Oto & Sentunali, 2006:215). The most frequently cited reasons for accepting polygynous marriages, according to a study by Ozkan et al (2006), were: cultural obligations; infertility; not giving birth to a son; medical illness; and the husband having had an affair with the junior wives before he married her (Ozkan et al, 2006:218).

2.1.2. Anthropological perspective

From an anthropological viewpoint polygyny is studied as something that is cultural and pertaining to a particular region or people based on their cultural traditions. Numerous anthropologists have studied the reasons as to why polygyny occurs (see Draper, 1989; Draper & Harpending, 1988; Dudgeon & Inhorn, 2004; Gausset, 2001; Holy, 1996; Jankowiak & Diderich, 2000). These reasons are that polygyny may: increase the probability of children, particularly when a wife is barren or gives birth to female children only; increase the labour supply within a kinship network; deal with the 'problem' of surplus women; expand the range of a man's alliances so that he is able to maintain or acquire a position of leadership; and perhaps provide sexual satisfaction to men particularly in societies with lengthy post-partum sexual taboos.

2.1.3. Sociological perspective

The sociological perspectives on polygyny provide similar views to those held by anthropology scholars. From a sociological standpoint, polygyny is viewed as a practice that occurs in cultures where public displays of courtship and affection between men and women are shunned (Wittberg, 1994). In some societies polygyny is also used as a solution to divorce. Other sociology scholars (see Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997; Berger, 2011; Grossbard-Shechtman, 1993; Mauss, 1984) state that polygyny is a result of the socio-economic stratifications among men. A few wealthy men have surrendered to polygynous marriages in exchange for political support from poor men and this is thus a display of hegemonic masculinity as well as hypermasculinity. Polygyny researched from a sociological perspective also focuses on the effects of polygyny on the women and children of such unions and society's impact on the practice (Agadjanian & Ezech, 2008; Bird & Coddling, 2015; Kilbride, 2006; Klomegah, 1997). These effects include constant fighting and jealousy among the wives, which would also affect the children of the family.

2.1.4. Religious viewpoints on polygyny

Religious studies have been ambiguous regarding the issue of polygyny (Gaskiyane, 2000; Helander, 1958; Maillu, 1988; Philips & Jones, 1990). The religious debate surrounding polygyny is contradictory because although the Christian Bible speaks of God creating one man for one woman, the Bible does not outrightly condemn polygyny because there are

historical figures referred to in the Bible who were in openly polygynous marriages. In order to avoid venturing into different explanations, the definition of polygyny must be a narrow one. Religion is often used to justify many behaviours but the religious justification for polygyny is weak because while condemning divorce and remarriage, the Bible is ambiguous on the subject of polygyny. Authors argue that there is a misconception that early Christians were monogamous (Philips & Jones, 1990:3). Early Christianity was born from the Jewish tradition therefore it followed the Jewish tradition of the practice of polygyny. It was only after Christianity was revised in accordance with the Pauline doctrines¹³ that the concept of monogamy was introduced into Christian philosophy (Philips & Jones, 1990:3). The reason for the introduction of monogamy into Christianity was so that the religion could conform to the Greco-Roman culture. In theory, Rome was a State that espoused monogamy but in actuality people practiced unrestricted polygyny because a large number of married men were engaged in illicit extra-marital affairs. The reality is that polygyny protects the man's rights to engage in many sexual affairs free of responsibility because infidelity is higher amongst men than it is amongst women (Philips & Jones, 1990:17). Philips and Jones (1990) further contend that men in Western societies vehemently opposed the institutionalisation of polygyny as it would prompt men to be faithful because they would be forced to take economic responsibility for their polygamous partners and their children.

In Islam, polygynous marriage is considered to be more than just a means to obtaining legal sex; it is an extremely important institution that safeguards the rights of men, women and children whilst at the same time satisfies the physical, emotional and intellectual needs of the family members. Marriage in Islam is built on the principles of love, honour, respect and mutual caring. Stable marriages stabilise society by protecting its primary unit; the family (Philips & Jones, 1990:11). In Islam, Allah advises that a man is first told to marry two, three or four women, and then he is advised to only marry one woman if he cannot deal justly with more than one. However, Philips & Jones (1990) stress that this is not to be confused with Islam encouraging men to marry many women. Instead it allows those men who can fulfil the

¹³ Pauline Christianity is the Christianity associated with the beliefs and doctrines espoused by Paul the Apostle through his writings. Most of Christianity relies heavily on these teachings and considers them to be amplifications and explanations of the teachings of Jesus.

necessary requirements of polygyny to be able to take more than one wife. The Quran allows a man to take a maximum of four wives in a polygynous marriage. Before a man is allowed to take a second wife he has to prove that he will be able and willing to divide his time and wealth in an equitable fashion. If the man is unable to feed, clothe and house all his wives equally then by law of the Quran he should not marry more than one wife (Philips & Jones, 1990:35). The Quran talks about polygyny as a way of marriage for socio-political purposes such as marrying widows with children so that they will not starve as a result of having no one to take care of them, linking clans and breaking certain taboos. According to Philips and Jones' (1990:35) study, the majority of Muslims in modern society find polygynous marriages "distasteful and demeaning to women".

From one vantage point the Bible and Quran are clear about their positions on polygyny but with more careful reading and consideration of these religious texts it comes to light that the prescripts of each are conflicted on the issue. The legal studies perception of polygyny, on the other hand, is quite clear (see Behar, 1991; Kaganas & Murrary, 1991; Shah, 2003; Tamale, 2008). Some more progressive countries, in terms of their prevailing laws, have entirely prohibited polygynous marriages. This is an attempt to practically apply the doctrine of equality of all genders. While modern day polygyny has strayed far from the original context, Muslim men's right to marry up to four wives remains largely undisputed (Hassouneh-Phillip, 2001:738).

2.1.5. Legal perspective on polygyny

From a legal perspective, some countries have been very clear and decisive in criminalising the practice of polygyny. In the United States and Canada, polygyny is illegal, yet the Mormon religion still practices polygyny under the constitutional protection of 'Freedom to practice one's religion'. Some Muslim countries have recently placed certain restrictions on polygyny to bring the practice more in line with the prescripts of the Quran. International law states that polygyny undermines the self-worth of women and defies all the basic tenets that the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) stands for. The CEDAW has urged States to take legislative measures to enforce the prohibition of polygyny. Practices such as polygyny and widowhood rites are considered a violation of Article 12 of the CEDAW, which guarantees the right to health, because polygyny increases the chances of spreading HIV and other venereal diseases (Jonas,

2012:145). The CEDAW also notes that polygyny contravenes a woman's right to equality with men.

The South African Constitution is widely considered to be one of the most progressive in the world, yet it is conspicuously quiet on the topic of polygyny. Section 9 of the Bill of Rights states that if a practice is by its very nature discriminatory towards a group of people it is not supported or sanctioned by the law, however the Customary Marriages Act¹⁴ of 1998 recognises the practice of polygyny. If the Bill of Rights states that any cultural practice which is discriminatory it is not protected, then the question arises as to whether or not the customary practice of polygyny contravenes Section 9 of the Bill of Rights. If a certain group is allowed a certain 'privilege' based on their gender and race and other groups are not extended the same privilege then this is fundamentally a form of discrimination which renders a practice such as polygyny unconstitutional. The Constitution states that if there is a contradiction between customary law and the Bill of Rights, the latter takes precedence. Polygynous marriages are thereby unconstitutional because in the South African Bill of Rights. The equality clause supersedes the right to adhere to cultural practices as polygyny discriminates against women and people traditionally not indigenous to South Africa, such as white people. The Constitutional Court may not however declare polygyny unconstitutional because it recognises the traditions and customs of a particular community whose culture was previously disrespected and marginalised during apartheid¹⁵. In addition, the Constitutional Court would not want to give the impression that those groups prohibited from entering polygynous marriages are less worthy of such a privilege and that it does not affect their human dignity.

In the past, men have held the belief that African culture does not permit women to be active in the public space or to be equal to men. Zulu men argued that in Zulu culture women are inferior to men and should never challenge men when it comes to issues of politics because politics is culturally a man's domain. Many Zulu men feel that displaying dominance in their relations with women is part of being/expressing 'real manhood'. This cultural belief, still held by many Zulu men, is therefore in glaring conflict with Section 16 of the South African

¹⁴ Customary Marriages Act 120 of 1998.

¹⁵ A former South African policy or system of segregation or discrimination based on race.

Constitution, which states that everyone has a right to freedom of expression (Mncwango & Luvuno, 2015:246).

2.1.6. Women's choice

A modern argument surrounding women and 'free choice' to marry polygynously currently exists. According to Jonas (2012), the argument that women willingly consent to enter into polygynous marriages is suspicious because it is fundamentally flawed. Social decisions, such as the decision to get married, are made within the context of the value system prevailing in the particular society. If that society accepts and encourages polygyny, this potent societal force will bear upon women to succumb to its pressures and accept polygyny as the 'preferable' marriage type. This is then mistakenly labelled as 'women's choice' when in fact it is societal choice unconsciously imposed upon women and merely portrayed as their choice. According to Jonas (2012:147), a woman's consent to a polygynous union is illusory and is therefore no consent at all.

According to Al-Krenawi et al (1997), cultural attitudes towards polygyny vary from complete acceptance to total condemnation, and within practicing cultures the social construction of the practice is likewise heterogenous, reflecting culturally specific social mores, values and customs (Al-Krenawi et al, 1997:446). Many scholars have found that better educated and urban women are less likely to favour polygyny (Al-Krenawi et al, 1997:447).

2.1.6.1. Feminist stance on polygyny

From a feminist viewpoint polygyny has been vehemently discouraged and criticised by Western feminists but African feminists remain divided on the subject (Iversen, 1984; Nnaemeka, 2005; Steyn, 1998; Van Wichelen, 2013). Some argue that it is their cultural practice and should be upheld while others support the white Western feminist standpoint that is vehemently against the practice of polygyny. There are different strands of African feminism. Intellectual African feminists, such as Oyewumi (1997), are in agreement with Western feminists who are against the practice of polygyny, while popular African feminists are supporters of polygyny as their traditional cultural practice. Western feminists claim not to support polygyny. Smith (2015:61) states that the West views practices such as polygyny

as sexist, uncivilised and harmful to females. However, some people in the West practice polyamory¹⁶, which is a form of polygyny where there are additional partners who are married or unmarried both male and female in a 'monogamous' relationship. This shows that reaching a decision on an overall feminist stance regarding polygyny is controversial because the West claims to be against it yet condones polyamory, and some intellectual African feminists go against their collective group's consensus and support polygyny as part of their culture and the social fabric of their communities.

2.1.6.2. African feminist perspectives

Feminism in Africa has to contend with its own issues. On the one hand, African feminism has failed to achieve a gender consensus between African men and women regarding its agenda and cause, and there is a division amongst African women themselves with regard to feminism. There are essentially two types of African feminism: intellectual feminism and popular feminism¹⁷. African feminists are divided on the topic of polygyny; some are for the practice (popular feminism) while others are against it (intellectual feminism) but neither of these groups have focused on how polygyny impacts on the construction of gender identities by children who are raised in such unions.

While many intellectual feminists are against the practice, there has been a growing support for polygyny amongst modern educated African women. Zeiten (2008) discusses an interesting phenomenon currently taking place in Ghana whereby some modern, educated,

¹⁶ According to Sheff (2011) and Zietzen (2008) polyamory is a form of relationship in which people openly have multiple romantic, sexual, and/or affective partners, with an emphasis on long-term and emotionally intimate relationships.

¹⁷ The difference between the two types is that intellectual feminism is a form propelled by urban and educated women (who export debate about African problems outside of Africa) and which condemns certain aspects of African culture (polygyny); a tone echoed by Western feminists. Intellectual feminism may alienate some African women who are rooted in their cultures which forms part of their lived experiences. This discourse only shows a glimpse of women's reality and does not allow for serious reflection on African women's conditions and appropriate solutions to related problems. Popular feminism, on the other hand, is rooted in the culture and lived experiences of African women and thus caters to the majority of African women. These feminists consider the importance of women in traditional African society in terms of food production and women's role in the liberation movement. Popular feminism rallies for gender equality based on women's historically important and influential role in food production and day-to-day running of pre-colonial African society (Nnaemeka, 2005).

professional women are choosing to be married into polygynous families. These women claim that a polygynous marriage is more advantageous than a monogamous one because there are other women available to take care of their children, maintain their household, and even attend to the needs of their husband, whilst they focus on their professional careers. Zeiten (2008) states that this is a new form of African feminism in which women use a cultural practice that has been forced upon them by their patriarchal traditions to their advantage. They therefore enjoy the best of both worlds because they are married and thus respected by outside communities and they can also pursue their own careers without hindrance or interference from society and their families.

Although many African feminists support the practice of polygyny, there is a group of African feminists who are against it. This group contends that polygyny ‘violates the constitutional right of women’ and breaches the CEDAW. This group contends that such practices continue to perpetuate gender inequality and violence against women and that a truly ‘free’ African woman does not need to marry another woman’s husband (Ickauitz & Mohanty, 2015:78).

2.1.6.3. Non-nuclear family context

The stereotypical idea of the family is the nuclear family: mother, father and their children. In the twentieth century there was a shift in the social landscape which gave way to acceptance or at least acknowledgement of the diversity of types of families. There are now various family structures such as: single-parent families, usually headed by women; blended families in which a woman and man bring children from different relationships into a new family; cohabiting couples; same-sex relationships; cohabiting parenting in which unmarried couple members agree to have children and share responsibility but do not live together; older children who are divorced returning with children to live with their parents; cultural and ethnic family structures; immigrant populations with family members separated for long periods of time; grandparents raising their grandchildren; and polygynous families (Altman & Ginat, 2009: 5)

My study focuses on the dynamics of children raised in polygynous households in respect to their gender identity construction. Studies have shown (see Chazan, 2008; Francis-Chzaroro, 2008; Fitzgerald, 1999; Goebel et al. 2010; Koh et al. 2015; Ruiz-Casares, 2007; Van Dijk & Van Driel, 2009) that even if the ‘head of household’ changes, the gender stereotypes remain

the same. In single-parent households, being the only parent in the household requires the adult to adopt a less traditional gender role and socialisation practices (Chazan, 2008). These single parents also tend to be more progressive in terms of what is considered more traditional gender roles. With regard to child-headed households, the research (see Ruiz-Casares, 2007) showed that despite sharing household chores and caring responsibilities between siblings, young people often looked towards one particular family member as the overall leader and decision-maker based on age, seniority and to some extent income-earning responsibilities. It is interesting to note that even in child-headed households, including female child-headed households, the division of labour in the household was based on gender. In the absence of sexual difference, age hierarchies substitute and younger boys are feminised by having to take on female roles. A previous study (see Fitzgerald, 1999) about gay and lesbian households indicate that the wealthier, better educated person in the intimate relationship tends to have more power than their partner.

2.1.6.4. Principle of seniority in the African context

Oyewumi (2002), writing in the Nigerian context, describes the traditional Yoruba family as a non-gendered family because kinship roles and categories are not gender-differentiated. Power centres within the family are diffused and are not gender-specific. The fundamental organising principle within the family is seniority based on relative age and kinship categories encode seniority, not gender. Seniority is the social ranking of persons based on their chronological age and in Yoruba culture there are specific words which refer to older siblings regardless of gender. This seniority principle is thus dynamic and fluid, unlike gender roles and divisions which tend to be rigid and static (Oyewumi, 2002:3).

West African families' gender dynamics are different from the dynamics that exist in the context in which my study is located, which is the Zulu culture. I examined the construction of gender identity in a non-nuclear context in a polygynous set up in the Zulu culture. Oyewumi (2002) considers gender as a separate category from the categories of just men and women, and seniority in an African context is an important socially organising category. In a polygynous family, depending on where the mother is placed (in terms of what number wife she is), girls born from her can be more privileged than the boys born of subsequent wives. If a woman is the first wife in a polygynous family her children, regardless of gender, are more privileged than children of subsequent wives. This challenges Western paradigms of boys

being more privileged than girls in the nuclear Euro-American family. Previous studies, while focusing on polygynous households, have largely ignored how gender identity is constructed within a non-nuclear family context and my study is an attempt to address this gap in some way.

2.2. Studies done on polygynous households

Previous studies on polygynous households (Al-Krenawi, 2014; Altman & Ginat, 2009; Cutas & Chan, 2012; Embry & Bradley, 1985; Hosali, 1944; Hubel, 2015; Iyokes, 2015; Yonka, 2014) have focused on: patriarchy in Indian society and how mothers socialise their daughters to accept their fate in life as the 'lesser' gender and to submit to patriarchy; Mormons and their polygynous lifestyles, from courting to marrying and having children in the polygynous family; and on different types of polygyny as well as the legal ramifications of such practices. One study, (see Embry & Bradley, 1985) examined the Mormon religion and how teenage girls are coerced into polygynous marriages with older men by threat of physical violence or spiritual damnation, which is considered to be religious brainwashing. This study looked at the daughter's experiences of growing up in a polygynous family, and having to watch her mother suffer and navigate relationships with the other wives in the family. Al-Krenawi's (2014) book focused on all members of the polygynous family and their relationships with each other. It also explored Islam's role in polygyny as well as social and economic consequences of this phenomenon. Lastly, Yonka's (2014) conducted a comparative study based on adolescents aged 17-19, regarding how they view their monogamous and polygynous families in Ethiopia. The study yielded interesting results in that adolescents from polygynous families voiced dissatisfaction with their parents' neglectful parenting styles, especially the father's failure to give them adequate attention. The respondents from monogamous families were found to be more socially competent than respondents from polygynous families. My study contributes to the existing literature by examining how adults who were raised in polygynous families have constructed their gendered identities.

2.3. Debates around gender identity construction

2.3.1. Freud and Lacan

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theory suggests that while there may be biological differences according to sex-assigned categories (male and female), gender is different from biological sex. Freud was implicitly arguing that parts of gender, namely psychological identity experiences, are crafted or developed and are not fixed from birth (Tate, 2014:3). Freud looked at gender from a biological standpoint and not a culturally constructed one, and adapted a psychoanalytical approach which is essentialist. Adler put forth the idea of 'masculine protest', which suggests that men who exhibit compassion, sympathy, cooperation and similar 'feminine' traits are less 'manly' than those who exhibit aggression, ambition or competition. Adler proposed that in men, feminine traits are carefully hidden by exaggerated masculine wishes and efforts. This, he proposed, is a form of overcompensation because the feminine tendency is evaluated negatively in a patriarchal, masculine-dominated culture (O'Donnell, 2014:114).

Lacan provides a key for understanding the socialisation and symbolisation processes which have shaped women's specificity through the ages. For Lacan, identity does not derive from genetic predispositions or from an unfolding of neuro-psychological developmental sequences, nor is it the product of a war between biological and cultural forces or the reflection of collective archetypes. Identity, in Lacan's understanding, is built up as a composite of images and effects - i.e. mental representations - taken in from the outside world from the start of life, which are developed in relation to the desire for recognition and the later social requirements for submission to an arbitrary law which illustrates that identity is constructed and not biological or inherent (Lacan, 1982:7).

2.3.2. Feminist psychoanalytical perspective

Chodorow (1994) considers Freud's theory on women and femininity to be flawed. Chodorow (1994) suggests that in any given society, feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than masculine personality does. For Chodorow, gender identity is the unchanging core of personality formation and

development¹⁸. Feminist researchers use gender as the explanatory model to account for women's subordination and oppression worldwide. They assume both the category 'woman' and her subordination as universals, but argue that gender is first and foremost a socio-cultural construct and that the social category 'woman' is not universal (Oyewumi, 2002:1).

Feminist theory is correct in suggesting that gender cannot be seen apart from culture (Chodorow, 1995:518). Feminist sociologist, Nancy Chodorow (1995), states that each person's sense of gender - their gender identity or gendered subjectivity - is an extricable fusion or melding of personally created and cultural meaning. Perception and meaning are psychologically created; people use available cultural meanings and images, but they experience them emotionally and through fantasy as well as in particular interpersonal contexts. Individuals thereby create new meanings in terms of their own unique biographies¹⁹ (Chodorow, 1995:517).

Feminist concepts are rooted in the nuclear family, which is a gendered family. Since the nuclear family is a single-family household, it is centred on a subordinate wife, a patriarchal husband and children. The structure of the family is conceived as having a conjugal unit and at its centre promotes gender as a natural and inevitable category because within this family there are no crosscutting categories devoid of it. In a gendered, male-headed two-parent

¹⁸ Drawing on attachment theory, Chodorow sees the initial relationship of the infant girl with the mother as fundamentally stable and positive. There is no need for the girl to 'differentiate' or 'separate' in order to continue her identity formation. This allows her to grow and develop along a 'relational' trajectory, as opposed to the well-known 'separation-individuation' trajectory followed by boys. From the perspective of this theory, masculinity is defined through separation and femininity is defined through attachment (Chodorow, 1995).

¹⁹ Gender identity, gender fantasy, the sense of gender and the sexual identifications and fantasies that are part of this identity are formed and reformed throughout the life cycle (Chodorow, 1995:519). Chodorow (1995) does not mean to imply that the sense of gender comes directly from the parent who has that gender label. The emphasis she makes is that any label (man, woman, mother, father, sister, brother, feminine, masculine) gains meaning not just from language, once learned, but from personally experienced emotion and fantasy in association with that person (Chodorow, 1995:533). Conscious construction of gender includes a strong feminism and anger at male privilege and societal sexism. She understands her feminism to be a result of growing up in an ideologically male-dominant family that explicitly valued her brothers over herself and her sisters (Chodorow, 1995:534).

household, the male is conceived as the breadwinner and the female is associated with home and nurture. Chodorow (1995) discusses how the gender division of labour is divided in a nuclear family where the woman, the mother, sets up vastly different developmental and psychological trajectories for her son and daughter, which ultimately produces gendered beings and gendered societies. The woman in a nuclear family gives socially and historically specific meaning to gender itself. The engendering of men and women with particular personalities, needs, defences and capacities creates conditions for and contributions to the reproduction of the same division of labour. Thus the categories of 'woman' and 'mother' inadvertently and inevitably reproduce themselves (Oyewumi, 2002:2).

Gender distinctions are foundational to the establishment and functioning of this family type. Therefore gender is the organising principle of the family, and gender distinctions are the primary source of hierarchy and oppression within the nuclear family. On the other hand, gender sameness is the primary source of identification and solidarity in the nuclear family. Thus the daughter self-identifies as female with her mother and sisters. Marriage encapsulates and reproduces antagonistic relations of the two coherent social groups, men and women. The nuclear family however is specifically a Euro/American family type; it is not universal (Chodorow, 1995).

Chodorow (1995) argues that an infant experiences their mother as a gendered being because she is the wife of the father, which has deep implications with regard to the detrimental psychosocial development of sons and daughters. Chodorow universalises the experience of nuclear motherhood and takes it as human, thereby extending the boundaries of the very limited Euro/American form to other cultures that have different family organisations (Oyewumi, 2002:3). In terms of Euro/American cultural and social organisation of gender, children were: primarily taken care of by their mothers; saw fathers as dominant and attractive in recognisable Euro/American cultural ways; not explicitly taught that women were inferior and men superior; and could be said developmentally to have followed the Lacanian path from the imaginary mother-child semiotic realm to the phallic-symbolic world of the father (Chodorow, 1995:526). While in Euro/American culture children were not explicitly taught that women are inferior, Zulu culture both implicitly and explicitly promotes the idea that men are superior (Mkhize, 2011).

Chodorow does speak from the Western nuclear family perspective but her arguments and statements do apply to the African nuclear family structure as well. The only slight difference is that from the African perspective, culture and customary practices and traditions play a significant role in the African family. There is a consensus amongst scholars (see Leve & Fagot, 1997; Lui, 2013; Pettifor, MacPhail, Anderson, & Moman, 2012) that gendered tasks and time are shifting toward greater equality in the household²⁰ however gendered responsibilities continue to be largely intransigent to change.

2.3.3. Socialist feminist perspective

Socialist feminists believe gender inequality is rooted in the division of labour, the public and private dichotomy. Socialist-feminism originated in part as a critique of structural Marxist perspectives that viewed capitalist economic processes as gender-neutral (Wharton, 1991:373). Socialist-feminists' theory of gender inequality treats capitalism as a structure or system, while gender is analysed from an agency perspective that assumes purposive actors. By treating these two types of social relations as if they were lodged in two distinct domains, socialist-feminist approaches reify the distinction between social structure and agency, creating problems for the attempt to analyse the relations between gender and capitalism (Wharton, 1991:374).

Socialist-feminists have endorsed a dual-systems approach to gender segregation, attempting to integrate structure and agency viewpoints. Hartman (1981) refers to this as depicting the 'partnership' between capitalism and patriarchy; her view implicitly brings together structure and agency perspectives. Hartman (1981) suggests that capitalist economic processes generate the positions within the division of labour and patriarchal relations determine whether men or women fill them (Wharton, 1991:375). Hartman (1976) suggests that the most precise explanation of gender segregation is that men resist allowing women and men to work together as equals because doing so undermines differentiation and hence male

²⁰ An *egalitarian household* is defined as one in which the man and woman within it do "share(d) housework equally" and "whose contributions are roughly equally to one another". Over the years researchers have come to assume that a 50-50 "equal sharers" or egalitarian division of domestic labour is the ideal or most successful model (Doucet, 2015:227).

dominance. Other feminists have also argued that sex segregation ultimately led to patriarchy (Wharton, 1991:379).

The notion of 'gender identity' at the core of femininity and masculinity is the psychological counterpart of the notion of a 'sex role' into which one is socialised (Connell, 1987:194). Some researchers trace the foundations of gender identity to the first years of life when a child is introduced to definitions of femaleness and maleness. Socialist feminist theory states that gender identity is rooted in the division of labour between the sexes into 'public' and 'private' spheres. This division confines women to the 'private' sphere, which is organised around child care and domestic chores, while the 'public' sphere is reserved for men in professions, businesses, politics and sport. Work done in the private sphere is generally undervalued due to the material value placed on public work. Work done in the private sphere (childrearing and domestic chores) is usually less paid than work done in the public sphere. Walby (1992) argues that the dichotomies of public and private are not clear-cut in non-Western societies and that gender identities should not be based on such distinctions. African feminists advance the argument that to dichotomise the social space into public and private spheres according to gender does not adequately reflect the historical and oral histories of African women.

Oyewumi (1997) states that the application of gender theories to the African context is problematic because gender debates and research originated in the West and from Western women's experiences. She continues to say that within the African family system, which is not nuclear, the family is not gendered and power is not gender specific but age specific. Other African scholars have argued that gender divisions were present in pre-colonial societies but deeply entrenched by the colonial governments. During the colonial era women were marginalised as producers in a rural economy and the sexual division of labour forced men into the cash crop economy whilst women were relegated to subordinate subsistence activities. Conceptions of gendered identities need to be viewed as relationally and historically constructed rather than relying on the conflation of the gendered division of labour with public and private dualism (Oyewumi, 1997). Gender is far from being a stable conceptual category but is fluid and constructed anew in every encounter.

The feminist poststructuralist approach posits that subjectivities and identities are not given but are socially constructed (Hall, 1996). This discourse is often in tension with other

discourses because it suggests that the human subject is complex with multiple layers of contradictory meanings. Subjects are therefore always under construction (Muthuki, 2010:30). People are born in social locations that confer upon them certain advantages and disadvantages.

Socialist feminists have argued that the sexual division of labour is the cause of the status difference between women and men. The way in which work is divided in a patriarchal society guarantees that women will have less control over economic resources than men do (Lips, 1993:52). Men's control over economic resources, achieved through better jobs with higher salaries and continuous participation in the paid labour force, creates the expectation that women and children will depend on men for support. These expectations are communicated to children long before they understand the economic realities on which the expectations are based. The division of labour by sex and the parallel male-female difference regarding control over resources contributes to gender differences in behaviour.

Socialist feminist theory suggests that the traditional notion that gender identity is 'natural' and 'obvious' is rooted in the sexual division of labour between the sexes into 'public' and 'private'. Ojong and Muthuki (2010) state that the dichotomy of social space divided into private and public spheres according to gender does not accurately reflect the historical and cultural realities of what actually happens in the lives of Africans (Ojong & Muthuki, 2010:171). African women were enabled to operate in various spheres and perform multiple tasks. Ojong and Muthuki (2010) suggest that this assertion of a genderless African family system has been countered by other scholars who argue that gender divisions were in fact present in pre-colonial governments (Ojong & Muthuki, 2010:171). African scholars such as Isike and Uzodike (2008) call for a reinvention of African patriarchies, claiming that patriarchy in pre-colonial African societies respected women and retained significant socio-cultural and economic spaces for them.

2.3.3.1 Liberal feminist perspective

Liberal feminism is an individualistic feminism, which focuses on women's ability to maintain their own choices and actions. Liberal feminists theorize that women should have; political freedom, cultural freedom, economic freedom as well as educational freedom. Liberal feminists believe that freedom is a fundamental value and insist on freedom for women. There is no consensus on what "freedom" means, so 'freedom' to liberal feminists

takes on many forms. Freedom, (personal autonomy and political autonomy) liberal feminists believe women should enjoy personal autonomy, that is; women should live lives of their own choosing; be free from violence and threat of violence (Brison, 1997); be free from limits set by patriarchal and moralistic laws (Connell, 1998); have access to options such as education and secure economic employment (Alstott, 2004).

Criticism of Liberal feminism is that it can be insufficiently liberal. The measures intended to promote gender fairness and the autonomy of women could end up unreasonably hindering autonomy (Cudd, 2006). Other criticisms of liberal feminism is that it cannot support the claim that the right of some against coercive interference may be violated in order to promote the autonomy capacities of others, such as affirmative action programs (Epstein, 2002). Some feminists criticize liberal feminists for focusing too much on the distribution of benefits and neglects to take into consideration power relations (Young, 1990) and the eroticization of domination and subordination that are true linchpins of the gender system (MacKinnon, 1987).

Liberal feminists argue that if women were given access to and enjoy all the freedoms that men they will be emancipated and empowered. Liberal feminism fails to acknowledge that African women do not just have gender constraints but cultural constraints as well. African women may be empowered through education, economic freedom and personal autonomy but those freedoms are not recognized in their cultural settings.

2.3.3.2. Gender in the African context

Ojong and Muthuki (2010) state that the dichotomy of social space divided into private and public spheres according to gender does not accurately reflect the historical and cultural realities of what actually happens in the lives of Africans (Ojong & Muthuki, 2010:171). In the struggles for national independence in African countries women were not confined to the private sphere. The opposite actually happened because women were very public in the fight for independence and their participation was critical in the achievement of independence from colonisation for these countries (Ojong & Muthuki, 2010: 171). Gender in the African context is different conceptually from the Western conceptualisation of gender for a number of reasons (Ojong & Muthuki, 2010:171), one of these being that African women operated in many spheres and performed diverse tasks and roles. According to various authors the current

negative practice of patriarchy in Africa has been brought about by the forces of imperialism, colonialism and foreign religions (Ojong & Muthuki, 2010:171).

2.4. Zulu culture & gender identity

In every culture, the individual internalises a culturally shaped gender polarity that directs him or her to develop qualities attributed to his or her own sex in some measure and to suppress qualities of the other sex. Culture plays a pivotal role in interfacing with the psychodynamics of gender identity (Diamond, 2006:1104).

My study was situated in the Hammarsdale area of KwaZulu-Natal which is a predominantly isiZulu speaking area. Geographically the area of Hammarsdale is located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. It is a peri-urban area meaning it is a mixture of rural and township life. As a result of this environment, traditional roles are reinforced but since it also has a township quality, modern, progressive roles are accepted. The Zulu culture is a patriarchal culture rooted in deep traditional customs. In a traditional Zulu home the father is the head of the household and the boys enjoy more privilege than girls in the family. Boys/men are more privileged or are treated slightly 'better' because boys will continue the family name. A Zulu man will marry a woman who will take his surname as will any children born in the marriage, while Zulu girls will marry into another family and extend that family's name. 'Zuluness' is both a feeling and a consciousness of being Zulu. This means that while 'Zuluness' is 'imagined' it is nevertheless 'real' because people believe in it and their behaviour and attitudes are influenced by it (Mhiripiri, 2009:224). In the 1980s and early 1990s, discussions about 'Zuluness' were potentially explosive and dangerous because one could be classified as an African National Congress (ANC) sympathiser or an Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) supporter with dire consequences (Mhiripiri, 2009:225). The Zulu culture of ancient times was an antediluvian culture, but it was a traditionalist culture not tainted by Western education, thinking or other influences. Before colonisation, Zulu culture was influenced by external forces such as different cultural groups and other African cultures. Contemporary Zulu culture is a relic of other cultures because cultural dynamics have changed and have adopted modern ways of thinking and influence. Appertain to this current situation is the question of what it means to be a Zulu today. Mhiripiri (2009) states that Zulu identity *per se* is not universal, but to be true to the empirical realities of lived experiences by both individuals and groups, there has to be a shift towards thinking in terms of Zulu 'identities'.

Contemporary 'Zuluness' is ambivalent, incongruous and in flux, even when political leadership would prefer a homogenous unitary identity and social formation (Mhiripiri, 2009:229).

*Hlonipha*²¹ is very important in the Zulu culture because one must, by all means, avoid appearing disrespectful (Rudwick & Shange, 2006:474). The crux of the custom lies in the significance of interactional politeness linked to societal power dynamics. These may be who represents the inferior social positions and the individual who is of superior status, such as child and father, daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, younger brother and older brother (Rudwick & Shange, 2006:475). Rudwick & Shange (2006) assert that many African women initially rejected feminism, perceiving it as a Western ideology imported to Africa to ruin the family structure. Young, urban isiZulu-speaking women therefore consciously negotiate 'hybrid' identities. Negotiable identities are understood as types of 'identity' options which can be, and are, contested and restricted by particular individuals and groups (Rudwick & Shange, 2006: 478).

My study is significant because it is situated in KwaZulu-Natal and is about a type of family structure that has in recent years become more visible both formally and informally, yet the children of such polygynous families have been largely ignored in research.

2.5. Households and the family

The concepts of 'household' and 'family' have been given a greater degree of precision in recent years by those scholars who have pointed out that the former is a residence group that carries out domestic functions while the latter is a kinship group. While the concept of 'household' has been analytically distinguished from that of 'family', the distinction is still burdened by the inclusion of two social phenomena that are logically separate and vary somewhat independently, namely co-residence and domestic functions. Despite the fact that these are often thought of as aspects of a single social phenomenon labelled by the term 'family' they are in fact semi-independent variables (Bender, 1967:493). Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992) describes the household as a contained unit, composed of kin-related persons who

²¹ *Hlonipha* is respect. Zulu culture is grounded in and influenced by the idea of respect and respecting your elders and parents.

share a set amount of land, labour, capital and social resources (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992:395).

There is a difference between families and households; first they are logically distinct and second they are empirically different. The referent of the family is kinship, while for a household it is a residence (Bender, 1967:493). Kinship and residence are very different; therefore families as kinship units must be defined strictly in terms of kinship relationships and not in terms of co-residence. In African contexts people who live in the same residence are usually regarded as family no matter how distantly related.

Housework is gendered labour that can be thought of as a set of culturally and historically specific tasks that convey social meanings about masculinity and femininity and also about power (Ferree, 1990:874). Even the label 'housework' connects extremely diverse responsibilities. The nature of the work women do for their families in industrialised countries is quite unlike the work women do in many developing nations (Ferree, 1990:874). The gender perspective points to the symbolic construction of housework as 'women's work' (Ferree, 1990:877).

2.5.1. Family

The family is the foundation of society, the building block of more elaborate structures and the most complex structure (Connell, 1987:119). The interior of the family is multi-layered in its relationship and in no other institution are relationships so extended in time, so intensive in contact and so dense in their interweaving of economics, emotions, power and resistance. The only way to understand the family is to unpack it by three structures: gender division of labour, power and cathexis. The sexual division of labour within families and households is well organised. The division of tasks is however not absolute and does change with time (Connell, 1987:121). In contemporary urban families, the household is constituted by a division of labour that is defined in terms of certain kinds of work: domestic, unpaid and usually women's work; and other kinds such as public, paid and usually men's work (Connell, 1987:122). The interplay of the structure of production inside and outside the family changes character in different class settings. Most households include children and this affects the division of labour in two ways. Firstly, childrearing itself is work and is a large part of the sexual division of labour as a whole. Secondly, most care of young children

is unpaid and is done in the home by their mothers. The children also work (such as; household chores) in the home and this work is structured along gender lines.

The sexual division of labour reflects ideas about 'a woman's place'. According to the patriarchal pattern, young people are subordinate to old and women are subordinate to men, as has been established in sociological research on families in different countries, as well as research into the ideologies of masculine authority that supports it (Connell, 1987:122-123). Research into the family power-structure has taken a conventional approach to the definition of 'power' as influence in decision making, although there are also many accounts of how other factors are involved such as force, where fierce emotional pressures can be brought to bear on family members without an open command or display of power. An example of this power is the power of mothers over their children. The matriarchal sexual relationship can itself embody power; in most cases it is the husbands who hold initiative in defining sexual practice. One way of handling a strong power imbalance is to build a praxis of compliance. Domestic patriarchy is dependent on support from its environment (Connell, 1987:124).

There are several points already at play between structures within the family. Wages and career affect domestic power and in turn domestic power affects the definition of the division of labour. The very idea of 'the housewife' and 'the husband' are fusions of emotional relations, power and the division of labour. The gender regime of a particular family represents a continuing synthesis of relations governed by the three structures (Connell, 1987:125). This synthesis is not trouble-free; the components of a family gender regime may in fact contradict each other. In the traditional patriarchal household a marked sexual division of labour actually places some limits on the patriarch's ability to exercise power, since women monopolise certain kinds of skills and knowledge (Connell, 1987:125). A very sharp division of labour may produce a degree of segregation in daily life that makes it difficult to sustain patriarchal power as a routine (Connell, 1987:125).

2.6. Gender relations in the family

The field of study of gender divisions of domestic labour evolved slowly between the 1960s and 1980s and developed into a large subfield of family and feminist sociologies. There has been a slow but steady pace of change in gender divisions of domestic labour but this change

has nevertheless been combined with the persistence of gender differences and inequalities in domestic and parental care-giving responsibilities. Research has demonstrated that:

“Women have been responsible for the bulk of routine housework and caring for others, while men tend to spend their domestic work time on non-routine domestic work. Women’s ‘second shift’ of gendered responsibilities indicate that mothers ‘felt more responsible for the home’. Only recently men have shown a willingness to spend more time with their children.....change has been very slow and the proportion of men assuming equal responsibility is currently very small” (Doucet, 2015:224).

The disproportional household division of labour is based on the myth that a true woman can derive a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction only from her home, her husband and her children (Lui, 2013:2). Relative resource theory is prevalent when explaining the allocation of housework. The theory presumes that housework is inherently undesirable and that the unequal distribution of labour is attributed to the differential in the exchange value of assets that each spouse brings to the relationship. Lui (2013) asserts that the spouse who earns more and holds the most prestigious job may trade these assets for greater authority and less work at home. Husbands usually have more ‘resources’ to bring to the family and these ‘resources’ allow men to negotiate fewer obligations to assist with the children or housework. The logic seems plausible but empirical research shows that the trade-off is not that simple. Studies have found that there is indeed a division of household labour when husbands earn more than wives; the more dependent the wives, the less housework their husbands do. However when the wives out-earn their husbands, the husbands share a greater proportion of household duties.

Wallace (1991) on the other hand talks about a gender system of maintenance and reproduction that asserts that superior male power which exists in societies allows men to coerce women into assuming work roles that reinforce their disadvantaged status, at both macro and micro levels (Wallace, 1991:136). Male power also allows the development of social and interpersonal definitions that devalue women and femininity and strengthen and legitimise the gender system.

The concept²² of gender is contentious and has been greatly debated. Gender is distinguished from sex; whereas sex is a set of biological differences, gender is the social construction of femininity and masculinity. This distinction has generated two approaches: biological essentialism and social constructionism. Connell (2002) declares that biological essentialism is the notion that gender identities and roles are natural and are based on the difference in reproductive abilities of men and women. The social constructionist view, on the other hand, disputes this and argues that gender is formed by social and cultural forces at work such as prescribed tasks and dress codes based on perceived differences between men and women. Gender practice is powerfully constructed and people are unable to move around or through these constructions freely. Gender is also relational; social theory claims gender is the structure of social relations that assigns different tasks to men and women based on their biological differences.

The preceding discussion of the existing literature examines the findings of different studies that have been done on the topic of polygyny but from different perspectives. Studies have been conducted on polygynous households but these were centred on a Middle-Eastern Islamic perspective and no studies have been done on a Zulu polygynous family. The previous studies considered have shown the detrimental consequences polygyny has on the members of the polygynous family, namely the women and children, but no studies have been done on adults who were raised in polygynous families and how they constructed their gender identity. The literature highlights that the construction of gender identity has been researched in the West in the context of a nuclear family but has not been considered from a non-nuclear African context. I have also highlighted the various arguments put forward by both Western and African feminists. My study aims to fill the gap in the literature by focusing on adults who were raised in polygynous families and how they constructed their gendered identity in an African Zulu context.

²² In order to construct theories smaller components, the 'basic building blocks of theory' named 'concepts' are needed. Concepts are symbolic or abstract elements representing objects, properties or features of objects, processes or phenomena. Concepts may communicate ideas or introduce particular perspectives or they may be a means for casting a broad generalisation. Concepts provide a means for people to let others know what they are thinking and allows information to be shared (i.e. instead of describing a youth who is involved with crime and has problems with their parents, one might use the concept of *delinquent* to communicate these same elements (ideas) (Berg, 2009:22).

2.7. Theoretical Framework

2.7.1. Gender relations approach and social construction

My study is underpinned by three theoretical frameworks: gender relations, social constructionism and African feminism. The gender relations approach entails: power relations, sexual division of labour, cathexis, and symbolism (the latter I do not employ in this study). Social constructionism underpins my research because gender relations as well as socialisation processes are socially constructed. Socialisation is applicable for my study because socialisation shows that culture is a key factor in the influence of identity construction. African feminism is applicable in my study because it aims to highlight the difference in how gender is conceptualised in Africa as opposed to the West.

According to Flax (1987), gender relations are relations of dominance. In a wide variety of cultures and discourses men tend to be free from or not determined by gender relations²³. From a social relations perspective men and women are both prisoners of gender but in highly differentiated yet interrelated ways, men appear to be the ‘wardens’ whilst women and children can be considered the ‘prisoners’ (Flax, 1987:629).

The most sophisticated accounts of gender relations as a social structure are those offered by Juliet Mitchell and Gayle Rubin, who focus on the institution of kinship as the cross-cultural basis of sex inequality. Their account of the structure underlying kinship is the Claude Levi-Strauss model, which is the exchange of women (women are viewed as property to be attained and exchanged) among groups of men which constitutes society itself. To Mitchell and Rubin this exchange was the foundation of the subjection of women (Connell, 1987:93).

Studies over the past decade have traced the outline of two substantially different structures of relationship between men and women. One has to do with the division of labour, the

²³ The ‘sex/gender system’ is the organisation of production which is the sexual division of labour. Child-rearing and housework is assigned to women (Flax, 1987: 630). The root cause of gender relations or more narrowly defined, male domination, may reflect partially a mode of thinking that is itself grounded in particular forms of gender relations in which domination is present (Flax, 1987: 633). The single structure of gender relations must be broken down into component structures or substructures (Connell, 1987:91).

organisation of housework and childcare, the division between unpaid and paid work, the segregation of labour markets and creation of 'men's jobs' and 'women's jobs', discrimination in training and promotion, unequal wages and unequal exchange (Connell, 1987:96). The second focuses on authority, control and coercion, the hierarchies of the state and business, institutional and interpersonal violence, sexual regulation and surveillance and domestic authority and its contestations. Each of these structures is different yet they intersect constantly. Many of the institutional and psychological issues related to gender can be understood in terms of the structures of labour and power. The ways people create emotional links between each other and the daily conduct of emotional relationships seem to follow a different but socially logical course (Connell, 1987:97). These are major structures of gender relations; the division of labour, structure of power and the structure of cathexis are what Connell calls 'structural models' (Connell, 1987:98). Power relations between men and women are the structural inventory of an entire society. These three structures of gender relations are constantly and simultaneously in play but with shifting emphasis (Connell, 1987:99).

2.7.2. Sexual Division of Labour/Production Relations

Connell (1987) states that the sexual division of labour is the allocation of particular types of work to particular categories of people. The social structure influences the constraints of such a practice. The prior division of work amongst people becomes a social rule in allocating people to work. A segregation rule in operation becomes the basis of new forms of constraint on a practice such as differential skilling, where men and women are trained and skilled differentially (Connell, 1987:100). Skilling and training is one of the mechanisms by which the sexual division of labour is made a powerful system of social constraint. The construction of the sexual division of labour is not just a matter of the allocation of work to people; it also involves the design of the work (Connell, 1987:101).

There are two major principles underlying the gendered division of labour: the gendered logic of accumulation and childcare. The overall gender organisation of labour concentrates economic benefits in one direction and economic losses in another on a scale sufficient to produce a dynamic of accumulation in its own right (Connell, 1987:105). Marriage is a one-to-one relationship in which there is limited scope to extract material advantages from the

labour of just one other person. So the scale of economic inequalities resulting from labour organised through marriage is severely limited. In this respect the nuclear family form must be seen as an important restraint on sex inequality. Child-care is the basis for sexual division of labour and child-care is the structural basis of feminism. Child-care is an issue for both men and women but the notion that child-care is not an occupation for men is extraordinarily deep-seated (Connell, 1987:106). Men have more control over the division of labour than women; their collective choice not to engage in child-care reflects the dominant definition of men's interests and helps them keep predominant power (Connell, 1987:106). The hegemonic pattern of masculinity in organising the solidarity of men becomes a cultural force. This force operates with resistance because the sexual division of labour itself creates bases for solidarity among women.

2.7.3. Power Relations

According to Smith (2001) Foucault has been the most influential thinker in the field of contemporary field of cultural theory. Foucault argued that discourses were never free of power relations, nor should they be understood as the products of sovereign and creative human minds (Smith 2001:122). Foucault says "that power and knowledge directly imply one another (Smith 2001:123). Foucault describes a picture where by human thought and actions are shaped by cultural codes rather than individual will. Foucault suggested that power was fundamental and inescapable dimension of social life. Foucault further reiterates that the terms of power at play have undergone a transformation over the past centuries and that disciplinary power has replaced sovereign power in the modern era (Smith 2001:124).

Foucault argues it is wrong to consider power as something that institutions possess and use oppressively against individuals and groups. Foucault tries to move the analysis one step beyond viewing power as the plain oppression of the powerless by the powerful, aiming to examine how it operates in day-to-day interactions between people and institutions. Foucault argues that we must overcome the idea that power is oppression, because—even in their most radical form—oppressive measures are not just repression and censorship, but they also productive, causing new behaviours to emerge (Balan, 2010).

Unlike Marxist thinkers Foucault is concerned less with the oppressive aspect of power, but more with the resistance of those the power is exerted upon. Power has two key features; first power is a system, a network of relations encompassing the whole society, rather than a relation between the oppressed and oppressor; and individuals are not just the objects of power but they are the *locus* where the power and the resistance to it are exerted (Mills, 2003).

According to Balan (2010) Foucault states that where there is power there is resistance. That means that power relations between individuals cannot be reduced to master-slave or oppressor, where there is power, there is always someone who resists it (Balan, 2010:3). Foucault states that in every human interaction, power is subject to negotiation, each individual having their place in the hierarchy (Balan, 2010:6).

It is difficult to see beyond individual acts of force or oppression to the underlying structure of power, a set of social relations with some scope and permanence. Actions (individual) are nevertheless not intelligible without the structure. This connection of violence with ideology points to the multiple character of social power. Force is an important component. Power may be a balance of advantage or an inequality of resources in a workplace, a household or an institution (Connell, 1987:107).

Connell (1987) declares that men are empowered in gender relations but in specific ways which produce their own limits. In a patriarchal gender order emphasising monogamous marriage, there is a serious tension between men about issues of adultery; a structure that defines women as a kind of property makes men liable to reprisals for theft. Sustaining hegemonic definitions of masculinities is an issue of importance for men (Connell, 1987:108). The structure of power is an object of practice as well as a condition. Patriarchy gives the impression of a simple, orderly structure but behind the façade is likely to be a mass of disorder and anomaly. Imposing order requires mobilisation of resources and expenditure of energy - the 'policing of families'. Imposing order in and through culture is a large part of this effort. Catholic hierarchy (just men) emphasises an ideal of purity, meekness and obedience of women.

If authority is defined as legitimate power then it can be said that the main axis of the power structure of gender is the general connection of authority with masculinity (Connell,

1987:109). The authority of men is not spread out in every facet of social life. In some instances women have authority and in some others the power of men is diffuse, confused or contested. Feminists in the 1970s identified the family as the strategic site, the key to the oppression of women. It has become clear that the household and kinship relations are not a test of pure patriarchy. The family as an institution is best regarded as the periphery rather than the core complex. Connell (1987), states that the authority of husbands requires a good deal of bargaining and negotiation for it to be maintained in working order. The shifting of power occurs in my study because the father of the polygynous family cannot be present in all his family's different residences; as a result the mother of that particular home is the de-facto 'head of the family' in the absence of the father. This concept informed my study because it showed the power shifts that take place in a polygynous family.

2.7.4. Cathexis

Similarly to gender, many theorists argue that sexuality is socially constructed. Its bodily dimension does not exist before or outside the social practices in which relationships between people are formed and carried on. Sexuality is enacted or conducted and is not merely 'expressed' (Connell, 1987:111). There is an emotional and erotic dimension to all social relationships. The 'sexual social relationships' are relationships organised around one person's emotional attachment to another, which Connell calls the 'structure of cathexis'. Cathexis is the construction of emotionally charged social relations with other people (Connell, 1987:112). Freud noted that the emotional attachment may be hostile and not only affectionate, or it could be hostile and affectionate at the same time and therefore ambivalent. Most close relationships have this degree of complexity. The members of heterosexual couples are not just different; they are specifically unequal (Connell, 1987:113). There are material reasons why women participate in unequal relationships. The 'double standard' permitting promiscuous sexuality to men and forbidding it to women has everything to do with greater power and the structure of cathexis is multileveled (Connell, 1987:114). The cathexis aspect helped inform my study because my participants discussed future or potential marriage partners and what type of unions they hoped to marry into. This is explained further in my emotional relations chapter.

2.8. Social Constructionism

This theory acknowledges that identities are stable but are capable of change in different contexts. Social constructionist²⁴ theory stresses the role played by culture and context in making sense of behaviour. Social constructivist theory also perceives knowledge, in general, as resulting from social interaction and other social practices (Mariana, 2014:39).

Social constructionism²⁵ is a theoretical orientation which to a greater or lesser degree underpins newer approaches that offer radical and critical alternatives in the Social Sciences and Humanities (Burr, 2003:1). Social constructionism originated as an attempt to come to terms with the nature of reality. In attempting to make sense of the social world, social constructionists view knowledge as constructed as opposed to created. Society is viewed as existing both as a subjective and an objective reality. Meaning is shared, thereby constituting a taken-for-granted reality (Andrews, 2012:1).

Social constructionist positions figure prominently in discussions of race, gender, sexual orientation, emotions and mental illness (Mallon, 2007:93). Social constructionists are particularly interested in phenomena that are contingent upon human culture and human decisions, conceptual schemes of particular individuals and groups of people in particular places and times. Some constructionists go further and defend specific accounts of how decision and culture play a role in determining various things (Mallon, 2007:94). Feminists claim that gender is a social construction, which means that people's dispositions and their ideas about gender are not predetermined by their biological sex differences. Ideas about

²⁴ According to Andrews (2012) the terms constructivism and social constructionism tend to be used interchangeably and included under the generic term 'constructivism'. Constructivism proposes that each individual mentally constructs the world of experience through cognitive processes while social constructionism has a social rather than an individual focus. It is less interested, if at all, in the cognitive processes that accompanies knowledge. I will be using 'social constructionism'.

²⁵ Social Constructionists place themselves within a postmodern tradition. Poststructuralist influence is also an influence in social construction because of the focus on language. According to these theories, ideas, concepts and memories arising from social interchange and mediated through language knowledge are viewed as evolving in the space between people in their 'common world'. It is through on-going conversation with intimates that an individual develops a sense of identity (Augustine, 2002:13).

gender and the social practices that they institutionalise are alterable, indicating that gender is variable from culture to culture and is therefore socially constructed (Conrad & Baker, 2010: 73). Gender is achieved and constructed through psychological, cultural and social means (West, 1987:125). Socialising gender means creating differences between girls and boys, women and men. These differences are not natural, essential or biological but once the differences have been constructed they are used to reinforce the 'essentialness' of gender (see West, 1987).

The gender relations approach and social constructionism are entwined and one cannot be spoken about without considering the other because gender is socially constructed. Polygyny today has been reconfigured and reconstructed; it is time and context specific. The practice can therefore be considered to be socially constructed and this theoretical perspective is thus applicable to my study in order to understand the ways in which polygyny plays out and the significance that it has in Zulu culture

2.8.1. Socialisation

The new-born child has a biological sex but no social gender. As it matures society provides a string of prescriptions, templates or models of behaviour appropriate to one sex or the other. Agencies of socialisation such as the family, the media, peer groups, schools and churches make these expectations and models concrete and provide the settings in which they are appropriated by the child (Connell, 1987:191-192). Various mechanisms of learning come into play: conditioning, instruction, modelling, identification and rule learning, and through these processes the social models and prescriptions are internalised. The result is a gender identity which corresponds to the social expectations for that sex in that particular society or culture. In some cases individuals will 'deviate' because of the abnormal functioning of an agency of socialisation, for example, in the case of a father-absent family. The notion of a school, family, peer group and other forces such as the media as an 'agency' of socialisation implies a definite script, a character under which the agency acts on behalf of the society and a degree of consensus about what a person is to do and how to do it (Connell, 1987:192).

The notion of 'socialisation' rests on the idea of internalisation through one or other of the mechanisms described by the psychology of learning. What is produced inside the person is a psychological structure that reproduces or reflects the characteristics of the socialising agency

(Connell, 1987:193). Gender ideology²⁶ emerges out of socialisation theories. Gender ideology posits an inverse relationship between traditional attitudes and an egalitarian division of family work. Research has shown that regardless of the type of household, single-parent, child-headed, grandparent-headed or gay or lesbian, gender relations remain the same (see Chazan, 2008; Evans, 2010; Francis-Chazaroro, 2008; Fitzgerald, 1999; Leve & Fagot, 1997; Thomson, McLanahan, & Curtin, 1992).

2.8.2. Cultural influence on socialisation

Africans are raised in collectivistic environments and cultures²⁷ in which people are socialised into strong extended families or tribal communities with paramount loyalties. An individualistic environment is one in which people are integrated into groups such that people in this environment would regard their individual rights as more important than those of the group they belong to (Mariana, 2014:20). Culture is fluid and can change following contact

²⁶ This ideology assumes that a more traditional ideology reinforces a division of labour in the home in which women perform more of the work traditionally associated with being female (i.e. housework, child care and emotional work). The gender ideology explanation assumes that spouses will view the performance of family work differently depending upon their attitudes about gendered family roles. People who hold a more traditional gender ideology are more likely to view family work as being ‘appropriately’ performed by women. Women see themselves in significantly more feminine-expressive terms than men, and men apply more masculine-instrumental characteristics to themselves than women. Usually men who are older than women hold more traditional gender ideologies and spend more hours in the paid labour force. Women are significantly more economically dependent on their husbands than vice versa. Women also reported performing more emotional work than did men (Erickson, 2005:344).

²⁷ Culture is difficult to define because it encompasses different things for different people. Some say that culture is shared behavioural patterns; others state that culture is something that is social as well as public and is shared by groups of people and expressed through rituals and artefacts. Culture is an ‘invisible’ influential force. Another interpretation of culture is the language and social aspects of human contact and the ways in which people perceive, interpret and understand the world around them. Culture can also include shared social pursuits within a community as well as spirituality. Culture encompasses biological factors such as race, age, sex and systems of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours and other products of a particular group. A broad definition of culture would incorporate socioeconomic status, religion, gender, age, ethnicity and orientation towards individualism or collectivism (Mariana, 2014:19).

with other cultures through colonisation, modernisation, globalisation and Westernisation (Mariana, 2014:28).

2.9. African Feminism

The assumption is that there is one 'African feminism' which is problematic because African feminism is not a clear cut concept that can be precisely defined and delineated. There are complexities involved with being an African and feminist simultaneously.

Western feminism fails to effectively represent and cater for African women. African feminist, Nnaemeka (2005), states that the issue of balance is neglected in the one-dimensional Western constructions of African women, who are usually viewed as poor and powerless. Western feminism does not acknowledge the agency and potential of African women. African women are depicted as confined, powerless and unable to 'control their lives'. African intellectual feminism is criticised for being elitist and pro-Western, whilst popular African feminism is rooted in the lived experiences and cultural beliefs of African women but fails to mobilise against cultural practices that are oppressive. It is difficult to reduce both strands of feminism into a single theoretical context because of their inherent differences (Nnaemeka, 2005).

'Motherism' is presented as an African alternative to feminism and tends to spotlight the centrality of mothering in the African female life experience (Ncolaides, 2015: 201). The concern I have with 'Motherism' is that it further segregates African women based on whether or not they have children, and creates issues in terms of African women who may be barren or who chose not to have children. It becomes problematic to determine whether this makes them ineligible to become part of the 'Motherism' group.

Molara Ogundipe, (1994), the Nigerian scholar and activist, talks about 'Stiwanism' which is defined as the 'social transformation including women of Africa'. She endeavours to emphasise the fact that what women in Africa want is social transformation. They do not want to be warring with men or reversing traditional roles, or doing to men whatever women think men have been doing for centuries, but rather African women want to build a harmonious society. The word 'feminism' itself seems to be a red flag in the understanding of African men. Some say the word, by its very nature, is hegemonic or implicitly so others find the focus on women in themselves somehow threatening. Some women who are genuinely

concerned with ameliorating the difficulties in women's lives sometimes feel embarrassed to be described as 'feminist' unless they are particularly strong in character.

'Motherism' or 'Stiwanism' has not achieved broad acceptance or popularity in indigenous African gender theories. Thus there remains a huge need to create or produce an indigenous African theory of feminism so as to offer African women a place in the on-going gender discourse, based on their unique experiences in what are generally highly patriarchal African societies. African feminism is essential both for the liberation of African women from patriarchy as well as for a uniquely African paradigm of feminism which attends to African women (Nicolaidis, 2015:202).

The negative attitude of many Africans toward the term 'feminism' and the concept of feminism is an indication that antifeminist positions are widespread in Africa. These antifeminist reactions stem mainly from stereotypical notions of white Western feminism that may have some grains of truth but do not do justice to feminism's heterogeneity. Feminism is often equated with radical feminism and with hatred of men, non-acceptance of African traditions, a fundamental rejection of marriage and motherhood, a favouring of lesbian love and an endeavour to invert the power relationship of the genders. Even African women and men have problems with the notions and approaches of white Western feminism. One central critique is that feminism does not see beyond Western societies and hence ignores or marginalises the specific problems of African women (Arndth, 2000:710).

The massive rejection of feminism in African societies and the discontent of Africans who sympathise with feminist ideas have caused some African-American and African women to conceptualise alternatives to feminism (Arndth, 2000:711). The oldest alternative is Alice Walker's 'Womanism'. Walker wanted 'Womanists' to be concerned with overcoming not only gender discrimination but also discrimination based on race or socio-economic status. A more recent African-American alternative concept to feminism is Hudsonweem's 'Africana Womanism'. Like Walker's 'Womanism', 'Africana Womanism' is created and designed for Black women. According to Ogunyemi only African women may be African Womanists (Arndth, 2000:711).

Lewis (2001) states that terms such as 'black feminism', 'womanist' and 'African feminists' are socially inscribed identities which take on very different forms from women's acquisition of gender identities in the West (Lewis, 2001:6). In particular, the cultural resonance of

motherhood as practice and icon, as well as valorising of ‘superwomen’ means that African women’s official identities frequently challenge the myths and stereotypes linked to Western notions of femininity (Lewis, 2001:6). Salo (2001), when interviewing Amina Mama, stated that she has no problems with ‘womanism’ but changing the terminology does not solve the problem of global domination. African feminists choose to stick with the original term, (feminism), insist that their own reality inform the application of it (Salo, 2001:61).

2.10. Feminism in South Africa

In the context of South Africa where individual human rights are juxtaposed with collective cultural rights in the same constitution, ‘culture’ becomes an area of intense contestation. Section 31 of the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) grants people from diverse cultural groups “the right to enjoy their culture and the right to participate in the cultural life of their choice” but it is unclear whether ‘other rights’ supersede cultural rights. This creates loopholes that unfortunately can be manipulated by some individuals to perpetrate discrimination, abuse and even violence against girls and women in the name of enjoying their ‘cultural rights’. Where young girls below 18 years of age are concerned, *ukuthwala*²⁸ is on the one hand a cultural right, and a criminal act on the other. This is in light of the South African constitutional provisions which criminalise not only child and forced marriages, but even virginity testing for girls under 16 years of age (Venganai, 2015:149).

A major area articulated by theorists is the role of culture in feminist thinking. Zama (1991) discusses South Africa as a land of contradictions that need to be addressed. “*As an African woman I do not have a problem with carrying a baby on my back, or water on my head or working at home or going to work in a law practice or sitting down to write conference papers*” (Steyn, 1998:44). She argues for the retention of a “usable residue of Africanness” in reconciling women’s rights with traditional African values (Steyn, 1998:44).

The question of rights for women within South Africa is closely linked to cultural issues and this interface is probably one of the most difficult the feminist movement has to address. The different cultures in South Africa have impacted on women in different ways, and the right to

²⁸ A form of abduction that involves kidnapping a girl or a young woman by a man or peers with the intention of compelling the girl or young woman's family to agree to marriage between the man and the abducted girl or young woman (www.justice.gov.za/brochure/ukuthwala)

practice one's culture and the right to equality are often in direct conflict, a conflict that is pronounced in the issue of customary law. Under African customary law women become part of an extended family. A woman does not have the right to own property, her children are regarded as a part of her husband's clan and she cannot be legally married unless her husband-to-be has paid *ilobola*²⁹ which determines her economic value (Steyn, 1998: 45).

The interface of culture and women's rights remains complex and a site in which cultural imperialism can be rife. A telling example is the question of polygyny, which is also sanctioned by custom. Not all African women perceive polygyny as oppressive. A truly South African feminism would have to grapple with this issue in novel and creative ways (Steyn, 1998: 46). Just as feminist issues are being affected in terms of the cultural realities in South Africa so too are cultural issues are being explored. It offered a framework for understanding the unique cultural circumstances and realities that contribute to the construction of gender identity in polygynous families. African feminism is unique to Africans because of the constant negotiating of cultural gender roles and modern gender roles.

In post-apartheid South Africa, this has culminated in the drafting of the now heavily contested Traditional Courts Bill which seeks to regulate customary courts so that they operate in line with the Constitution (Weeks, 2011). Unfortunately, in its current form, the Bill reaffirms the patriarchal nature of customary courts thus rendering them weak in addressing crimes against women and children (Gasa, 2011). South African feminism informs my study because South African feminism is a hybrid of traditional popular African feminism and intellectual African feminism and thus allows an understanding of the tensions between cultural gender roles and modern gender roles to be developed.

2.11. Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine the body of literature related to theorising around gendered identity construction. The literature I reviewed showed that adults who were raised in

²⁹ *Ilobola* is a process whereby a man pays a certain number of cattle or money (Helander, 1958). *Lobola* in recent times has had negative connotations associated with it because it has been so convoluted and used by feminists claiming that it is the buying of a woman. *Lobolo* in its purest definition is the claiming of paternal rights of any offspring that may result in the marriage.

polygynous families have been largely ignored in studies conducted on polygyny. The practice of polygyny is a practice dating back to ancient times and the major religions of the world all have laws pertaining to it. Studies investigating religious perspectives of polygyny have highlighted that a careful reading of religious doctrines espouses the notion that religions are actually against the practice of polygyny in cases where a man cannot support more than one wife. Studies done by various scholars on the subject of polygyny have focused on how polygyny affects women from a clinical psychological standpoint and how polygyny is practiced from an anthropological and sociological perspective. Various studies suggest that polygyny has detrimental effects on wives and children in these family arrangements. I have also discussed various international and national laws' dictates on polygyny and how these are in glaring contradiction to South Africa's Bill of Rights which is enshrined in the Constitution. This chapter also explained the gender relations approach, social constructionism and African feminism, which are the frameworks that I used to situate the research and to interpret the findings of the study. The relevance of the research findings in relation to the body of literature will be discussed in subsequent chapters. In the next chapter I will expand on the research methods and methodologies employed in the study, as well as the data collection process.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES

3. Introduction

This chapter broadly motivates for the use of qualitative research methods in order to gather rich, narrative data. Specifically the chapter identifies where the study was undertaken, the sampling procedures employed to select participants, as well as the informed consent and the data collection processes. I interrogate the gender dynamics inherent in the data collection process in terms of how my identity as a researcher as well as the nature of the research questions impacted on the kinds of data I was able to collect. I also explain how the data was analysed and outline the ethical considerations and the limitations of the study. This chapter also provides brief biographical information on each of my study participants.

3.1. Research Methodology

Methodology is the linking of a particular ontology³⁰ with a particular epistemology³¹ in order to provide rules that specify how to produce valid knowledge of social reality (Chilisa & Kawlich, 2012). Different methodologies are based on different beliefs about what really exists. Methodologies are therefore underpinned by philosophical positions and assumptions that inform the researcher's collection, collation and analysis of data.

My study employs a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is characterised by an emphasis on rich description, understanding and explanation of complex phenomena. Qualitative research allows a research question to be examined from multiple vantage points (Creswell, 2009). The steps of qualitative design involve certain procedures. Firstly qualitative researchers are concerned with *process* rather than outcomes or products. Secondly qualitative researchers are interested in *meaning*; that is how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world. Thirdly qualitative researchers are the *primary instrument* for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this

³⁰ Ontology is a way of specifying the nature of something; in this case the belief that gender is a social construct rather than a biological predetermination. Different ontologies offer varying beliefs regarding social existence and hence different theories about the nature of reality.

³¹ Epistemology is a way of specifying how researchers know what they know.

human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires or machines. Fourthly qualitative research involves *fieldwork* although one can also conduct a desktop qualitative study. In most cases however the researcher physically goes to the people to observe or record behaviour in its natural setting. Fifthly qualitative research is *descriptive* in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures. Lastly the process of qualitative research is *inductive* in that the researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses and theories from observed details (Creswell, 1994:145).

Qualitative research has been criticised for failing to produce adequately rational or unbiased knowledge as contrasted with quantitative research. Quantitative research uses numerical data to answer research questions through the employment of statistical procedures (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research requires a greater degree of self-awareness on the part of the researcher in order to make sense of people's perceptions and beliefs. The objective of qualitative research is to understand the full multidimensional, dynamic picture of the subject under study. Quantitative methods would be unsuitable for my research because I sought to capture the lived experiences, held beliefs, feelings and worldviews of my participants.

My background in gender studies informed the situating of my study within a gender-based framework where theory and practise are inseparable and self-reflexive. An interpretivist framework is a communal process involving the presentation of the participants' realities from their own viewpoints, the role of the researcher as a co-creator of meaning, and the types of knowledge frameworks or discourses informing that particular society (Henning, Vans Rensburg, & Smith, 2004). This communal process is in line with the focus of my study, which is to gain a deeper understanding of the gendered experiences of adults raised in polygynous families.

3.2. Reflexivity of the Researcher

Reflexivity³² is self-critical, sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious *analytical* scrutiny of the self as researcher. Reflexivity is critical to the conduction of fieldwork; it

³² In research, the self-conscious interplay between interviewer and interviewee refers to the notion of reflexivity. To speak the truth, means to utilise a reflexive approach within the telling of the story, and the necessity to consider reflexively the researcher's position and the self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious *analytical* scrutiny of the self as researcher (Locke, 2015:10).

induces self-discovery and can lead to insights and new hypotheses about the research questions. Research is a *process* not just a product. Part of this process involves reflecting on and learning from past research experiences; as such research is an ongoing, intersubjective and dialogic³³ activity (England, 1994:244). The researcher is an instrument in their own research and despite some commonalities (our education, race, class, gender, religion, culture) we are differently positioned subjects within those commonalities with different biographies. This subjectivity does influence the research, such as the gender of the researcher and those being researched influences the nature of the fieldwork (England, 1994:248).

England (1994) states that the research relationship is inherently hierarchal. Reflexivity can make the researcher more aware of asymmetrical or exploitative relationships but it cannot remove them. We conduct fieldwork in the world between ourselves and the researched. At the same time this ‘betweenness’ is shaped by the researcher’s biography, which filters the ‘data’ and our perceptions and interpretations of the fieldwork experience (England, 1994:251). As such England (1994) stresses that as researchers we need to locate ourselves in our work and reflect on how our location influences the questions we ask, how we conduct our research, and how we write our research (England, 1994:251).

Relevant researcher’s positioning includes personal characteristics, such as gender, race, affiliation, age, sexual orientation, personal experiences, linguistic tradition, beliefs, biases, theoretical, political and ideological stances and emotional responses to participants. These varying positions of the researcher may impact the research in major ways, such as access to the ‘field’, because respondents may only want to share their experiences with a researcher they perceive as sympathetic to their situation and potentially helpful and informative to them for accessing particular resources. Another way in which personal characteristics may shape the nature of the researcher—researched relationship is in how it affects the information the participants are willing to share. This is because the worldview and background of the researcher affects the manner in which they construct their world, use language, pose questions and choose the lens for filtering the information gathered from particular

³³ Dialogism is Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1986) theory about encountering ‘otherness’ through the potential of dialogue between people or with oneself. It involves the continual interaction between meanings, each of which has the potential of conditioning the others. Dialogism turns on the notion that people’s responses are conditional and human circumstances are contingent.

participants and make meaning of it, which thus shapes the findings and conclusions of their study in a particular way (Berger, 2015:220).

Al-Hindi, and Kawabata (2002) advise that a reflexive researcher should ‘return the look’ and argue that such a process provides the opportunity to understand more fully who and what are under investigation (Pini, 2004:170). The reason why reflexivity has been so widely engaged by feminist researchers is because it is epistemologically and ontologically connected with feminism and the feminist critique of knowledge and knowledge production (Pini, 2004:170). The focus of feminist work is on an acknowledgment of one’s own subjectivities and on examining how these subjectivities may impact on knowledge production (Pini, 2004:170).

The reason I chose to study polygynous households as a topic is because I am from a nuclear family; it is just my mother, father and sister. I find it fascinating how other families which are not ‘traditionally’ nuclear in a sense navigate their gendered identity within the family. As a young, single, Zulu, Christian woman I am aware of my positionality. One of the fundamental principles in the Zulu culture is respect for elders. As a result I was unable to interview men and women much older than me. I thus utilised the help of an older research assistant and she was able to conduct these interviews. When I attempted to interview older women for my Masters’ research study I encountered largely negative attitudes and silence so I wanted to make sure I avoided similar problems in this study that is why I utilised an older research assistance. My research assistant is a teacher in a school in the Hammersdale area and she was the one who introduced me to my participants in my Masters research and those participant’s children were some of the subjects in this study. My research assistant was an older woman age ranging from fifty and above, she resides in Hammersdale and she has a university degree in education as well as a teaching diploma.

3.3. Methods of Data Collection

My study employed in-depth interviews over a period of one year from July 2013 to July 2014 in order to elicit rich qualitative data.

An interview is an interactive process between the researcher and the respondent. In-depth interviews are essential for understanding how participants view their worlds. In-depth interviews lead to a deeper understanding of topics as both interviewer and interviewee

construct meaning. Since the interview is an interactive process, which involves listening and recording participant views, the way in which the interview progresses plays an important role in the interpretation of the eventual data (Creswell, 2002, 2009, 2014).

I made use of certain ethnographic tools such as in-depth repeated interviews and document analysis for data collection. In conducting in-depth interviews, I used open-ended questions to enable the participants to reflect on and give detailed accounts of their polygynous upbringings. These experiences contained information such as the age at which they ‘realised’ their family was not nuclear as well as their experiences of being raised in a polygynous family. I also presented questions to my participants asking them to relate how their gender affected their experiences. The advantage of in-depth interviews is that when the meaning of anything they said was unclear, I was able to seek clarification from the respondents and this allowed me to probe for additional information.

I recorded the interviews by writing down what the participants told me on their interview guides. I would have liked to have used a digital voice recorder but the participants did not agree to this because all of them were concerned about their privacy and confidentiality. I went through the interview guide with each participant and explained the questions they needed clarity on and requested clarification on some ambiguous answers they gave. Interviews usually lasted between forty-five to ninety minutes. The interviews were then transcribed and responses were analysed for content and discourse. Transcription took place in tandem with the data collection process and was time consuming. It was gratifying in the end though because it brought out the richness of the data and I could begin to observe patterns and recurring themes.

As resourceful as in-depth interviews are however, they can also be limiting in the sense that the respondents’ verbal answers to questions may actually be different from what they practice in reality.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data was analysed and transcribed manually³⁴. An in-depth analysis of literature has revealed various common themes that are present in this research. According to Braun and

³⁴ This process involves the researcher taking voluminous amounts of information and reducing it to certain patterns, categories or themes and then interpreting this information by using some schema. Creswell calls this “decontextualization” and “recontextualization”. This process results in a “higher

Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is rarely acknowledged but widely used in qualitative analytic methods. Thematic analysis is not a specific method but it is a tool used across methodologies (Braun & Clarke, 2006:4). Authors (see Aronson, 1995; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hammersley, 2015) argue that thematic analysis should be a method in its own right because it is flexible; it incorporates methods that are essentially independent of theory and epistemology and can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches. Thematic analysis fits in with the essentialist and constructionist paradigms and it has the potential to provide rich, detailed and complex accounts of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006:5; Aronson, 1995:4). Thematic analysis was useful for my study because it helped to identify themes that would have been meaningless if read alone. I wove the participants' narratives together to form a coherent story which showcased the collective experience. Interrogating the data further also presented new sub-themes that I did not initially think would occur and that is yet another reason why thematic analysis is so useful.

According to Silverman (2013), data analysis is the most important part of any research. You must show that your data analysis is sound and thorough. Silverman (2013) states that qualitative researchers must use open-ended interviews to try and tap the perceptions of individuals and contexts to which their subjects refer (Silverman, 2013:84).

3.4.1. Narrative Interviews

Narrative interviews centre on the stories the subjects tell; on the plots and structures of their accounts. The stories may come up spontaneously during the interview or be elicited by the interviewer. The authors state how interviews understood as narratives emphasise the temporal, the social, and the meaning structures of the interview. In everyday conversations, answers to questions often display the features of narratives and when stories appear so often, it supports the view that narratives are one of the natural cognitive and linguistic forms through which individuals attempt to organise and express meaning and knowledge (Kvale, 2009:153).

level" analysis "while much work in the analysis process consists of 'taking apart' (for instance, into smaller pieces) the final goal is the emergence of a larger, consolidated picture" (Creswell, 1994:154).

In a narrative interview³⁵ the interviewer can ask directly for stories, and perhaps together with the interviewee attempt to structure the different happenings recanted into coherent stories (Kvale, 2009:155). The interviewer may introduce the interview with a question about a specific episode, as I did in some interviews where I would ask my participants about the first moment when they became self-aware that their family was polygynous.

3.4.2. Narrative Analysis

Kvale (2009) states that narrative analysis focuses on the meaning and the linguistic form of texts; it addresses the temporal and social structures and the plots of interview stories. The narrative structures of stories people tell have been worked into the discipline of humanities (Kvale, 2009:222).

A narrative³⁶ can be analysed in many different ways, and here we will mention analyses of *structure*, *plot* and *genre*. In a linguistic sense, a narrative analysis concerns a chronologically told story, with a focus on how its elements are sequenced. The standard linguistic framework in an analysis can help to highlight the structure of a narrative by breaking the narrative down into specific interconnected components. These are; 1) the *abstract* that provides a summary of the narrative, inserting it into the framework of conversational turn taking; 2) the *orientation* of the listener to the time, place, actors and activity of the narrative; 3) the *complicating action*, containing the central details of the narrative; 4) the *evolution* of the central details; and 5) the *coda* which summarises and returns the narrative time frame to the present (Kvale, 2009:223).

Labov in Franzosi (1998), defined narrative as “one method of recapitulating past experiences by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which it is inferred actually occurred” (Franzosi, 1998:519). Narrative analysis permits a holistic

³⁵ Narrative interviews can serve multiple purposes; first, a narrative can refer to a specific episode or course of action significant to the narrator, leading to a *short story*. Second, the narrative may concern the interviewee’s life story as seen through the actor’s own perspective, and is then called a *life history* or biographical interview. Third is the oral history interview, where the topic goes beyond the individual’s history to cover communal history; here the interviewee is an informant, recording the oral history of the community.

³⁶ Narrative is defined as an oral, written, or filmed account of events told to others or to oneself. Narrative is regarded as a basic and universal mode of verbal expression (Smith, 2000:327). Humans recount their experiences or tell stories to inform, instruct, entertain, impress, empower and exonerate.

approach to discourse that preserves context and particularity. Advocates believe that narratives yield information not available by other methods. Language is the medium through which meaning and socially constructed reality can best be studied.

For my purposes, narrative is used to refer to accounts of personal experiences or the experiences of others (Smith, 2000:328). Narratives are characterised by perspective and context. The functions of narratives such as reflecting back on events and talking about them can provide meaning and coherence to and perspective on, experience and one's social traditions; construct a person's knowledge, including a person's sense of self or identity; and bring about emotional adjustment and healing. Narratives can "raise consciousness", create a shared history and a shared group identity and preserve and transmit culture (Smith, 2000:329).

In my study I used thematic analysis, which emphasises the content of a text, "what" is said more than "how" it is said, the "told" rather than the "telling". A philosophy of language underpins the approach: language is a direct and unambiguous route to meaning. The thematic approach is useful for theorising across a number of cases; finding common thematic elements across research participants and the events they report (Riessman, 2005:3).

3.4.3. Life Histories

I chose the life history method in line with the view of social identity as a resource that people draw on in constructing personal narratives that give meaning and a sense of continuity to their lives. We assume that by eliciting people's life narratives we gain access to the repertoire of key social group memberships available to them, which inform their personal histories and around which their social identities cohere (Campbell, Mare, & Walker, 1995:291).

Life histories³⁷ and narrative inquiry are in-depth interview methods used to gather, analyse, and interpret the stories people tell about their lives. These methods assume that people live

³⁷ The five criteria for life histories are; first, the individual should be viewed as a member of a culture, the life history "describes and interpret the actor's account of his or her development in the common-sense world". Second the methods should capture the significant role that others play in "transmitting socially defined stocks of knowledge". Third, the assumptions of the cultural world under study should be described and analysed as they are revealed in rules and codes for conduct as well as in myth and rituals. Fourth, life histories should focus on the experiences of an individual over time so that the "processual development of the person can be captured". And fifth, the cultural world

“storied” lives and that telling and retelling one’s story helps one to understand and create a sense of self. The story is important, but so is how the story is told. The researcher, working closely with the participant, explores a story and records it.

Life histories seek to “examine and analyze the subjective experience of individuals and their constructions of the social world”. They assume a complex interaction between the individual’s understanding of their world and that world itself. They are therefore uniquely suited to depicting and making theoretical sense of the socialisation of a person into a cultural milieu. Thus, one understands a culture through the history told in ways that capture the person’s feelings, views and perspectives. The life history is often an account of how an individual enters a group and becomes socialised into it. That history includes learning to meet the narrative expectations of that society by gender, social class, or age peers. Life histories emphasise the experience of the individual—how the person copes with society rather than how society copes with the stream of individuals (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:151). Life histories are valuable in studying cultural changes that have occurred over time, in learning about cultural norms and transgressions of these norms, and in gaining an inside view of a culture. They also help capture the way cultural patterns evolve and are linked to the life of an individual.

One strength of life history methodology is that because it pictures a substantial portion of a person’s life, the reader can enter fully into those experiences. Another is that it provides a fertile source of intriguing research questions that may be generative for focusing subsequent studies. And yet a third strength is that life histories depict actions and perspectives across a social group that may be analysed for comparative study. This kind of research requires sensitivity, caring and empathy on the part of the researcher for the researched. Life histories are often used in feminist research as a way of understanding, relatively free of androcentric bias, how women’s lives and careers evolve (Marshall & Rossmann, 2011:152).

The major concerns with the life history method are that generalising is difficult, sample sizes are by definition quite small, and there are few concepts to guide analysis. Once the researcher acknowledges the possible challenges with the method, however, she can address

under study should be continuously related to the individual’s unfolding life story (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:152).

them, perhaps by supplementing in-depth interviews—“storying”—with other sources. In addition, the researcher might substantiate meanings presented in a history by interviewing others in a participant’s life.

A life history account can add depth and evocative illustration to any qualitative study. As with any qualitative genre, however, the abundance of data collected in a life history should be managed and reduced so that analytic headway can be made. Instead of using a chronological order to present the story, the researcher might focus on; (a) critical dimensions or aspects of the person’s life, (b) principle turning points and the life conditions between them, and (c) the person’s characteristic means of adaptation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:152-153).

3.5. Selection of Research Sample and Project Area

The reason I chose Hammersdale as my research site is because it is a peri-urban area. It is a blend of traditional culture as well as modern Zulu culture. I had used this field site before in my Masters research so I was familiar with the area and the participants.

Sampling can be regarded as the process of selecting a representative sample for observation from an entire population in order to draw conclusions about the entire population of the study based on that sample.

Since my study is qualitative in nature, I decided to use a non-probability sampling method in selecting my sample. A non-probability sample is suitable for qualitative research because it is aimed at deeper understanding of complex human issues rather than generalising of results. In qualitative research, the characteristics are less likely to be known as is required in the selection of a random sample in probability sampling. Using the non-probability sample however does not mean that as the researcher I knew nothing about my participants but meant that I did not know enough to use probability sampling. This is because it is difficult to establish that the values, beliefs and attitudes that form the core qualitative study are evenly distributed within the population (Blaikie, 2000). Further, in a qualitative research one realises that some respondents are more informative than others and are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher thus making it untenable to use probability sampling.

The non-probability sampling method employed in this study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allows for the selection of respondents whose qualities or experiences permit an understanding of the phenomena in question and are therefore valuable. Since my study is in part a continuation of my Masters' research, I asked the women I had interviewed previously if their children would be interested in participating in my study. This led to snowballing because participants would recommend other potential participants and that is how my sample grew. In the snowball sampling method the researcher locates one or two key people and asks them to name others who are likely to participate in the research. The snowball method is useful for studies involving social networks and is therefore effective for people who are likely to be in contact with one another.

My sample frame is made up of adults who were raised in polygynous families. I selected adults who have at minimum a Matric certificate and the highest qualification is a postgraduate degree. I believe that educational level is key to separating my study from previous related studies that focused on children from very poor polygynous families who had rarely completed their basic formal education. There have been studies done on children in polygynous families see (Al-Krenawi, 1998; 1999; Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000; Al-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo, 2008, Al-Krenawi, 2012; 2014) so I decided to study adults who were raised in polygynous families rather than children as I required participants mature enough to reflect on their experiences regarding how their gender identities have been challenged, reaffirmed and reconfigured over time. Participants' ages thus ranged from eighteen to fifty-six years old. I wanted as wide an age group as possible so as to compare their responses for any similarities or themes evident across generations.

Due to the use of in-depth interviews and research methods, the number of participants involved in this study was constrained. An interview with one person took at least forty-five to ninety minutes on different days. Some participants were busy and it was difficult to secure interview appointments with them but this required patience and perseverance on my part.

A sample of twenty adults raised in polygynous families (ten women and ten men for the purpose of comparative analysis and not a binary reduction of gender), was used in this study to enable an in-depth investigation in order to elicit rich qualitative data. Literature has limited sources on guidelines for actual samples sizes. Creswell (1998:64) and Morse (1994:225) suggest twenty to thirty interviews are significant for a qualitative study. Other

scholars such as Bertaux (1981) and Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, (2006) state that fifteen is the smallest acceptable sample. Marshall (1996) states that new themes generally stop emerging after fifteen interviews and thus for an acceptable interpretative framework based study it is appropriate to have between fifteen and twenty-four interviews to avoid saturation (Marshall, 1996: 524). Green and Thorogood (2004; 2009) state that nothing new emerges from the participants after twenty interviews. I found that new themes stopped emerging after fourteen interviews but in order to be safe and ensure sufficient data I decided on twenty interviewees. According to Mason (2010) samples for qualitative studies are much smaller than those used in quantitative studies. Scholars tend to agree that as a qualitative study progresses more data does not necessarily lead to more information (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003). This is because qualitative research is concerned with meaning and not making generalised hypothesis statements (Croutch & McKenzie, 2006).

3.6. Demographic Information about Individual Research Participants

3.6.1. Female Participants

Dlabembalela

Dlabembalela is twenty-eight years old and has a Matric certificate and she is employed in retail. She grew up in a polygynous family where there were three wives and her mother was the second wife. Her mother had three children and there were seven half-siblings from the other wives. She lived in a separate house but it was on the same plot of land (I call this a compound). She was thirteen when she first realised her family was not a nuclear family.

Phakimpi

Phakimpi is twenty-eight years old and has a postgraduate degree (Masters) and she works for a research company. She grew up in a polygynous family where there were three wives and her mother was the third wife. Her mother had five children and there were eight half-siblings from the other wives. Her family had their own separate residence to the other wives and their children.

Thalengabona

Thalengabona is forty-five years old and has a Matric certificate and a teaching diploma and she works as a teacher. Her family had three wives and her mother was the second wife and she had seven children. The other wives had twelve children bringing the total number of children to nineteen. She lived on a compound with the entire family although they had their own separate house to the other wives. She was fifteen when she noticed her family was polygynous.

Qondeni

Qondeni is twenty-four years old and has an undergraduate degree and her family had three wives and her mother was the first wife. Her mother had four children and the other wives had twelve combined. They lived in a separate house as did the other wives. She did notice that since her mother was the first wife her father always treated her mother with the most respect and as such she was the wife with the most influence in the family.

Zehlhlati

Zehlhlati is twenty-five years old and has postgraduate qualifications. Her mother was the second wife and only had three children. Her family lived in a separate residence from the first wife's family. The first wife had two children and in total there were five legitimate children from her polygynous family.

Bhekezunu

Bhekezunu is forty-five years old and has a Matric certificate and she is self-employed. Her father married two women and her mother was the second wife. She comes from a family of six children from her biological mother and the first wife had seven children. They lived in their own separate residence and she was twelve years old when she asked her brother why her family did not look like her friends' families.

Shongani

Shongani is thirty-five years old and has a Matric certificate and works for a security company. Her father was married to four women and her mother was the second wife. Her mother had ten children and the other wives had six children. They lived in a house on the family compound. She stated that she was ten when she realised her family was not nuclear.

Thuleleni

Thuleleni is nineteen years old and has a Matric certificate and is currently enrolled at university working towards her undergraduate degree. Her family consisted of three wives and her mother was the third wife. Her mother had three children and the other wives had seven children combined. They all lived together in one house. She was fifteen years old when she asked her father why she had three 'mothers' instead of one and that is when she became aware of her family dynamic.

Soneni

Soneni is thirty years old and has a postgraduate certificate. She works for a government agency. Her family consisted of two wives and her mother was the second wife. Soneni is the first born of the second wife and her mother has one other child. There were seven children in total and the wives had separate homesteads. She was eleven when she noticed her family was unusual.

3.6.2. Male Participants

Mpiyezulu

Mpiyezulu is thirty-nine years old. He has a Matric certificate and is self-employed. His father married three women and his mother had six children and the total number of children in the family was eight. His family lived in a separate house and he was thirteen when his friend told him he was from a polygynous family.

Shongani

Shongani is eighteen years old and has a Matric certificate and is currently enrolled at university. His father married two women and his mother was the second wife. His mother had seven children and the other wives had five children combined. They lived in a separate house on the family homestead.

Sandelani

Sandelani is thirty-four years old and he has a Matric certificate and started his own company. He has two mothers and his mother was the second wife. His mother had three

children and the other wife had four children. The entire family all lived in one house. He says he was seven when his sister told him his father had two wives.

Thuluzufe

Thuluzufe is fifty-six years old and has a postgraduate degree (Masters) and works for a research company. He comes from a family with two wives and his mother was the second wife. His mother had eight children and the other wife had four children. He grew up in a separate house from the other wife and her children.

Qalimpi

Qalimpi is twenty-three years old and has a Matric certificate and works in hospitality. His father married three women and his mother was the third wife. His mother had two children and the other wives had five children combined. He grew up on a family compound and was twelve years old when his mother told him that his family was polygynous.

Muzowambango

Muzowambango is eighteen years old and has a Matric certificate and is currently enrolled in university studying towards his undergraduate degree. His father had three wives and his mother was the third wife. There were a total number of twelve children from the family and his mother had six children. He was ten years old when he realised his family was 'different'.

Thulubona

Thulubona is eighteen years old and has a Matric certificate and is enrolled at university. His father had five wives and his mother was the fifth wife. His mother had three children and the other four wives combined had a total of twelve children. He says he was twelve years old when his father told him that he had four other wives.

3.7. Ethical Issues

This study was approved by the higher degrees ethics committee of UKZN. The consent of the participants was sought at every level after the purpose of the research was explained to them. Each interview was conducted with the interviewee's full consent. The informants were assured confidentiality and reassured that they had the right to choose at any time whether to

participate or not. Participant's names and identities were replaced with pseudonyms and any distinguishing characteristics were disguised for the purposes of anonymity.

3.8. Limitations of the Study

It is possible that a larger sample may have elicited more themes but as previously stated this is not necessarily the case with qualitative studies. Comparisons with people who do not have a formal education would also have been interesting to see if similar or different themes emerged. As is the nature of Doctoral research however this study was limited to a certain extent by time and financial constraints.

3.9. Gender Dynamics Encountered in the Fieldwork

According to Willian and Heikes (1993), research in the field of gender forces the researcher to use a gender lens as well as self-reflexivity. Gender relations are an important dynamic in shaping the interview process, which can significantly influence the kinds of data obtained. The interviewer and the interviewee are actively involved in the co-performance of gender in the interview process (Muthuki, 2010). The gender focus of the research and the gendered context of the research environment are critical factors in mediating the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee.

These dynamics were highlighted in the course of my data collection process, particularly as I am a female researcher with both female and male participants, some of whom are older than me. In my study I personally interviewed the younger generation of interviewees and it is very likely that some of the answers they gave to me they would not have given to my research assistant (who is an older woman) because those answers would have been viewed as rude and disrespectful.

As a female researcher I made the presumption that some male respondents' usage of patriarchal language and their expression of cultural traditions as a justification for polygyny, was an attempt to place themselves in a position of power. For example, in an interview with Muzowambango, he made the following comments with regards to his culture:

Yes I am getting an undergraduate degree but that does not change anything for my future wife. She may even be more educated than me and have the highest qualification in her postgraduate studies but I will always be superior to her. She is a woman and if I decide to

take a second wife, as is my right in my culture, she will have no choice but to accept my decision.

Thulubona made a similar statement during a separate interview:

Culture is culture women would be happier if they accepted that won't change. Okoko (our ancestors) practiced these cultural traditions and they know better than us, a woman is below a man and that is what it is, no amount of time, money and education will change that certain fact. It is like wanting to change the sky from being blue....impossible.

As a feminist scholar I was angered by such comments and would have liked to engage in debate with these respondents but as a researcher seeking information I had to remain impartial and as open-minded as possible. I also had to acknowledge that these responses may have been intended to provoke me because the participants were aware that I am a feminist researching a practice that feminists do not generally adhere to or support. It is likely that if I was a man they may not have not phrased their comments so defensively and perhaps would have been less insistent on showcasing their hegemonic masculinity behind the safety curtain of cultural practice. Another male respondent, Mpiyezulu, stated that gender equality is not applicable in the African context. Such statements indicate that some of the male respondents in my study appear to structure their masculine identities around notions of power accorded to them on the basis of patriarchal culture.

Certain gender and cultural biases were also evident among some of the female respondents. During her interview with my research assistant, Thalengabona made personal enquiries about me and asked my research assistant to pass along a message to me which stated:

Tell this young woman who is conducting this research that it is good that she is highly educated but she must remember her place as a Zulu woman in our Zulu culture.

Most African cultures have a patriarchal system in place that governs gender relations between men and women but age is also a key factor. Men have positions of authority over women but older African women possess greater power than younger women since they are charged with the responsibility of preserving indigenous cultures and traditions (Muthuki, 2010). Within the Christian religion older women are also expected to train younger women on how to be good wives (Muthuki, 2010:72). Social identities such as age may therefore confound attempts to make claims on gender-based differences, as is evident in the above

response from an older African woman who seems to have adopted a masculine role in ‘advising the younger generation’.

3.10. Conclusion

This chapter motivated the use of the qualitative research method for data collection by situating the study within an interpretivist paradigm. In the interpretivist paradigm the researcher and the participants are simultaneously involved in the creation of meaning. In this chapter, I also introduced the reader to the demographic profiles of the individual study participants in order to provide understanding of their backgrounds. This chapter also highlighted how the views and perceptions of my participants intersected with my multidimensional identity in a communal process to produce knowledge.

The practise of reflexivity, to observe our own role as researchers in either enabling or constraining the production of gender and other identity-based performances during the data gathering process, is vital. I had to question whether my identity as a young, educated, feminist, Zulu, Christian woman would render me biased in any way and thus I returned to the data numerous times for further interrogation. My sincere perception is that my self-awareness, achieved through scrutiny of my multidimensional identity positionality, has in fact aided me in producing work that has a high degree of integrity.

My key purpose in this study is to make a contribution towards addressing the existing gap in the literature on the gendered narratives of adults raised in polygynous families. In the next chapter I examine the process of gender identity construction within a polygynous family.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENDER ROLE SOCIALIZATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

4. Introduction

Much of the existing research on gender and polygyny tends to focus on how polygyny has impacted upon women of low socio-economic status (Al-Krenawi, 1999; Elbedour, 2000; 2002; 2003; 2006; Tabi, 2010). Considerably less attention has been paid to the children of polygynous families and how they construct and deconstruct their gendered identities³⁸. This chapter initiates a body of data examining the construction of gendered identities of adults raised in polygynous families. The interrogation of this data reveals various factors that influence adults' perceptions of their gendered identities; namely, gender role socialisation, and women's empowerment or sense of agency in relation to the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy. This chapter thus focuses on how my study participants have constructed their gendered identities in relation to these factors.

4.1. Gender Role Socialisation

As enumerated in the literature review chapter, a number of scholars have theorised the nature of gender identity construction. Sociologists posit that society exists as both objective and subjective reality. Social Constructionism argues that people actively construct their perceptions and use culture as a guide to do so. As such, society is understood in terms of an ongoing dialectical process whereby reality is constructed via three moments; *externalisation*³⁹, *objectification*⁴⁰ and *internalisation*⁴¹ (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:149).

³⁸ Identity is vital to every individual. Identities convey information about who people are, what they are all about and help to set apart one individual from another making people unique (Erikson, 1950:1968). The process of identity development is crucial to the existence of human beings and is known to play a significant function from infancy to old age (Mariana, 2014:6). Conceptually, identity is defined by Santrock (2008) as a sense of self, which persists through time within a social world. This description of an individual includes vocation, political, religious, relational, intellectual, sexual, physical, and personality aspects, amongst others (Mariana, 2014:17). Conceptually, identity construction is the practice of endless developing or shaping, reinforcing, modifying, improving or upholding an awareness of being consistently unique. Identity construction is a process leading to the attainment of a particular identity (Mariana, 2014:17).

³⁹ *Externalisation* refers to the ways in which different cultures, societies and social groups make sense of, and 'make' their social world.

In light of the above definitions, an individual member of society simultaneously externalises their own being into the social world and internalises it within themselves as an objective reality. So to be in society is to participate in its dialectical nature. The individual is not born a member of society; they are born with a predisposition towards sociality and they become a member of society through induction into participation in the societal dialectic. The beginning point of this process is socialisation, which is defined as the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it. Primary socialisation is the first socialisation an individual undergoes in childhood, through which he/she becomes a member of society. Secondary socialisation is any subsequent process that inducts an already socialised individual into new sectors of the objective world of their society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:150). It is evident that primary socialisation is the most important one for an individual and the basic structure of all secondary socialisation has to resemble that of primary socialisation. This is where cultural practices such as patriarchy would be introduced to the child. Every individual is born into an objective social structure within which they encounter the significant others who are in charge of their socialisation. These significant others are imposed on the individual and mediate their world to the individual and modify it in the course of mediating it. Significant others select aspects of their world in accordance with their own location in the social structure and also by virtue of their individual, biographically rooted idiosyncrasies. These selected aspects are then mediated to the child through primary socialisation that involves cognitive learning and which takes place under highly emotionally charged circumstances. This results in the child identifying with the significant others in a variety of emotional ways (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:151).

⁴⁰ *Objectification* refers to how social constructs and institutions are perceived as naturally given.

⁴¹ *Internalisation* is the basis for understanding of one's fellow (wo)men and for the apprehension of the world as a meaningful and social reality. The process of internalisation involves understanding the world the individual lives in, understanding the certain definitions of shared situations, and understanding that there is an ongoing mutual identification between people in society and the individual. Only when the individual has achieved this degree of internalisation can they be considered a member of society. The ontogenetic process by which this is brought about is socialisation.

What is most evident about socialisation is that the individual not only takes on the roles and attitudes of others, but in the same process takes on their world. Identity is objectively defined as location in a certain world and can be subjectively appropriated only along with that world. All identifications take place within horizons that imply a specific social world. The child learns that they are what they are called; every name implies a nomenclature, which in turn implies a designated social location. To be given an identity involves being assigned a specific place in the world. In primary socialisation there is no problem of identification. Since the child has no choice in the selection of their significant others, their identity formation is quasi-automatic (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:154). Society presents the candidate for socialisation with a predefined set of significant others; one must make do with the parents that fate has regaled them with. The child is disadvantaged in the situation of being a child because the parents or adults set the rules of “the game” but the child is not altogether passive in the process of their socialisation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:154).

Gender roles refer to the sets of attitudes and behaviours that are socially expected and accepted from members of a particular gender identity. The process through which an individual learns and accepts roles is called socialisation (Muthuki, 2010). The socialisation process within the family is central to the construction of gender roles (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Irish, 1964; Adler et al, 1992). The process of socialisation begins within the household and spills over into the larger community where the child is exposed to societal values and norms. Societal factors such as community norms and cultural values determine whether men and women act accordingly. Most African cultures have a patriarchal system in place that governs gender relations between men and women. Most of the men and women I interviewed echoed these patriarchal sentiments.

Shongani

I think it is important for both males and females to understand their gendered roles and expectations. Men and women need to know their roles and duties especially in our culture. It makes things easier when both genders understand their duties and expectations. If a man is not doing what he is supposed to do as an adult man, especially if he is supposed to be a good husband and father, it causes problems.

Thalengabona

Men and women have specific roles they must perform in our culture. If men and women mix up these roles things become confused and upsets the gender system. I think it is alright for a woman to have a career and be a wife and mother but have someone help her to look after her children and her house. I do not think it is alright to a man to do the same. To be what they call it now....a 'house-husband'. What is that? How can a full grown man be a house-husband? How will women and other men respect him? He is not a real man.

Thalengabona claims that she is a modern woman and encourages all women to become highly educated and to pursue professional careers but she also occupies a seemingly contradictory position by saying that a man cannot do what a woman does. The pinnacle of equality is that men and women can do what they each were previously prevented from doing, whether it be a particular profession or being a house husband. The participants I interviewed stated that their individual families provided them with a space to negotiate gender relations in a way that was different from their outside societies. The family is a basic unit of society where individuals confront and reproduce societal norms, values, power and privilege. The family is a significant institutional site whereby gender norms and relations are constructed, reinforced and challenged (Kabeer, 1997). Many of the participants echoed the sentiment that they did not observe strictly defined gender roles in their biological mothers' households but when they spent time with their half-siblings and the other wives and extended family then they noticed that the gender role divisions become more pronounced.

Qalimpi

I used to cook and wash clothes in my mother's house. My mother taught us the boys to do such chores and she did not believe that her children should not do such chores just because they are boys. She always said it is important to know how to cook, clean, wash and iron because it will make you a better man. My mother used to say one day we will grow up and leave home and how will we survive if we cannot cook, clean or wash our own clothes. We would have to find a girlfriend, any girlfriend because we are desperate to have someone to do such chores for us because we do not know how to do them. She said a good, disciplined man knows how to completely survive on their own without a woman because they were raised right.

Qalimpi states that his mother taught him how to cook, clean, wash clothes and iron. These chores did not threaten his manhood but instead Qalimpi believes they enhanced it because as a result of learning these skills he is self-sufficient and does not need to depend on anyone to do such chores for him. As such Qalimpi willingly engages in chores that are considered women's work because he believes that being an adult independent man means being able to cook, wash and clean for yourself in order that you do not need to depend on a woman to perform these tasks for you. This example is almost a reversal of what Western scholars (see Lui, 2013) have reiterated; that males will not do female chores because it somehow diminishes their masculine identity. Lui (2013) further states that the more money a woman earns in comparison to her husband, the less domestic work he would do in their home as a way to assert his masculinity and authority since he feels emasculated because his wife makes more money than he does.

Muzowambango

My mother was very strict and always made me and my brothers do everything our sisters did. She said there is no one better or less-than anyone in her house and all her children will do the exact same chores. The boys would sweep and clean the house and the girls would wash the windows. I would take turns in cooking with my sisters and I was never the best cook so I was always the last person to cook or be asked to cook because I was not good at cooking but I was excellent at washing the dishes they always sparkled after I washed them.

Muzowambango also claims that doing 'girl chores' did not threaten his gendered identity. He was actually proud to be known as the best dish-washer amongst his full biological siblings. Yet when they were all together with the other half-siblings and wives for special family occasions, the boys were vehemently prohibited from being in the kitchen or do any kitchen chores. Despite the relatively fluid gender dynamics at their immediate family level then, both Qalimpi and Muzowambango drew from the traditional and cultural gender roles in constructing their masculine selves. These are educated men who seem to want to portray an image of modern gender equality but they also benefit from the more traditional gender roles and therefore they do not distance themselves completely from the strict gender roles of traditional Zulu culture.

Thus, even while appearing 'gender neutral', my participants tended to reflect, recreate and naturalise a hierarchical ordering of gender (Messner, 2000:771). Some participants stated

they were raised as ‘gender neutral’ but further probing revealed that this may not have actually been the case because some tasks were designated to boys or girls only and the two would never do tasks ‘assigned’ to the other gender; such was the case with Thuleleni.

Thuleleni

I was raised to believe that certain tasks were done only by boys and other tasks by girls. In my home the girls cooked, cleaned and washed clothes. The boys would slaughter the chicken and other livestock and we the girls would clean and cook it. I do not want to slaughter a chicken or a cow it is very difficult and it is not a nice chore I would prefer the boys to do it. As for cooking I hate cooking and I do not like it and I would make my younger brother cook but he would complain and say it is a chore for girls. I would say (laughing) I am not his wife he should cook for me because I am older. But it is very strange to see a man cooking I do not trust them to be hygienic so it is better if women cook.

Mpiyezulu

I witnessed there was a difference in the type of chores boys and girls did but they were treated the same in terms of love, affection and punishment. Boys had tougher jobs such as running after cattle whilst the girls had easier jobs.

Muzowambango

Looking back our family was very progressive in terms of gender relations because all the children regardless of gender were treated the same.

Thuluzufe

Boys were treated differently as far as the allocation of roles and responsibilities were concerned. Boys had more serious responsibilities than girls. My father told me and my brother the wealth he had accumulated was his own and he worked hard for it so they too must go out in the world and work hard and be men with their own wealth.

Shongani

It was difficult in that the family was not wealthy and they could not go out and pursue the type of careers they wanted to. In a way the identity they wanted to forge for themselves was stifled.

Further analysis of the above statements reveals that some of my participants are conflicted on their stance regarding the gendered division of chores. On the one hand Thuleleni states that boys should cook but in the same breath he says it is not 'correct' for boys to be in the kitchen. Some participants initially stated that both genders should know how to perform all chores because it is part of being a modern, independent, self-sufficient individual who does not need to rely on the opposite gender for anything. Yet almost immediately my participants would contradict themselves by commenting that it is better if genders remain with their assigned traditional roles because, as one participant stated "it is not aesthetically pleasing to see a man in the kitchen".

Although some polygynous families encouraged boys and girls to share chores more equitably, the majority of my participants' responses appear to add weight to Connell's theory of the sexual division of labour, which states that some chores are strictly designated based on gender. According to Butler (1988:531) gender is a continuous act performed daily, which is mistaken for natural or cultural given power. Butler (1988) attests that gender reality is performative, which means that gender is real only to the extent that it is performed or enacted. Certain acts are interpreted to express a core gender identity and these acts either support or contest an expected gender identity (Butler, 1988:527). Connell's notion of gender as situational can be linked to Butler's notion of gender performativity. Connell argues that gender is reinforced, as the above excerpts show. Connell states that gender is also situational and in some cases gender roles are enacted and reinforced whereas in other cases they are enacted and challenged. By displaying a willingness to perform a combination of traditionally male and female tasks, some of my respondents challenged gender role conformity to a certain extent. Deeper level analysis of these same participants' belief systems however indicates varying degrees of continued conformity to many traditional gender stereotypes. Thus these individuals appear to have adopted something of a modern hybrid gender identity that both challenges and maintains the gender role status quo.

4.1.1. Male Identity

The social relations perspective on male identity is based on the idea that identity emerges from men's positioning within social structures. The social relations perspective is influenced by feminism and addresses how cultural institutions such as; the family, school, work and peer groups, and cultural identifiers such as; race, class, gender and sexual orientation, affect the development of individual's identities (Augustine, 2002:45). Social relations argues that

the tendency for men to become aggressive, oppressive, unemotional and competitive, is due to the nature of the social structures they are raised in. The child's struggle for his parents' recognition initialises his competitive nature and then formal education adds the dimensions of peer rivalries and hierarchies. School introduces boys to the idea of a hierarchy and by working their way up through these hierarchal structures, boys are forced to adopt masculine values, such as competitiveness, personal ambition and emotional restraint. Peer groups are also instrumental in the development of male identity and the competitive nature of academics and sport serve to measure "masculine competence" (Augustine, 2002:45).

Muzowambango

Some men form their identity as a man based on what they see their father do. Growing up in a polygynous family made me self-aware at a young age and learnt how to negotiate my own identity separate from the family.

Sandelani

My father told me and showed me how to be a man, how a man behaves, to have discipline, dignity, self-respect and how a man carries himself. My father also taught me that a man provides and protects his family. Since my father showed me how to behave like a man and I just followed his footsteps. My gender identity was shaped by what I learnt from my father.

Thulubona

My identity was shaped by witnessing my father conducting himself as a man and I made a conscious decision to be a better man than my father and treat women as equals and not as property or status symbols.

Thuluzufe

I think men are socialised into accepting a particular identity because it is what God intended. I was fortunate enough to be educated with postgraduate degrees and qualifications and I believe education enlightened me to respect everyone equally especially women. I call myself a feminist. Religion/church also helped shape my identity.

Qalimpi

I just did what I was told to do and adopted the masculine identity. The polygynous family had a positive effect because the competition with my siblings helped push me further than I ordinarily would have in a nuclear family and it made me work harder in life.

Mpiyezulu

We (my brothers and I) were socialised by our father and mother to be strong Zulu men and to one day head our own families and households. Religion did also play a minor role in the construction of my identity.

Most of the male participants quoted above used their father's gendered identity as a starting point on how to construct or in some cases, reconstruct, their identities. This proves Chodorow's (1995) theory that the male child has to break away from the mother and try to connect to their father's idealised image of manhood in order to establish their male masculine identity, as valid in the polygynous Zulu context.

4.1.2. Female Identity

Phakimpi

Culture is used to brainwash women into getting married and reproducing children as quickly as possible. Zulu culture teaches women to be strong and to accept men behaving badly but men are not reprimanded for their bad behaviour and instead are allowed to 'celebrate it' by marrying many women at the same time. Zulu culture takes male superiority too far. I do not believe that women should be subordinate to men just because they are women. Religion is also oppressive in its own way. But I was fortunate that both my parents taught me to be strong, educated and independent. My family structure had no bearing on how I saw myself as a woman; it has more to do with me individually than my family.

Dlabembalela

Having been raised in a polygynous family I think made me independent from a young age and it also taught me patience, respect and to be proud to be a woman. I was raised to be proud to be a Zulu woman and to know my rights and demand to be treated with respect especially by men. It is difficult because our culture is collective and emphasises collectivity. Individuality is frowned upon or viewed as Westernisation. Sometimes I think if I grew up in

a nuclear family I would be a completely different person than I am now. In a nuclear family I would have been allowed to continue my education and encouraged to follow my dreams and not being deliberately prevented from progressing and being successful in life. I would also be a different person because I would not have to compete with other sibling; all the resources and time would have been given to me and therefore I would not be the bitter person I am today. I absolutely would have become a completely different person if I was raised in a nuclear family.

Qondeni

The polygynous family was oppressive in my life.

Thuleleni

It made me independent at a young age and taught me to be self sufficient

Shongani

My parents instilled in me an identity as a female which is; you must be kind, compassionate, empathetic, and respectful to others and also have self-respect and always carry yourself well and be a good representation of your family in the outside world.

Bhekezunu

I constructed my identity as a woman based on my mother's identity. The family gave me a sense of doing or finding a solution or a coping mechanism that worked for each of us as individuals within the family. It also made me more self-aware when I left home and went to university. At home my sense of self and individuality was oppressed. "Umntu umuntu ngabantu".

Thalengabona

I forged my identity through difficult times. I worked hard to form a gendered identity based on what I wanted and how I wanted the world to see me.

The female respondents quoted above all stated that they looked to their mother as a foundation on which to build their gendered identity. Female children in polygynous families thus tend to remain close to their mothers while male children in polygynous families break the connection with their mothers in order to connect with their father. Theorising about

female identity may become problematic however because various social interests are at play. From their families and the mass-media culture, children learn that the woman's role has traditionally been to attract a man who will bestow his status on her. Although many more women have careers than in previous generations, children see that these jobs are often accorded secondary status within the family and society and may be located within the sphere of 'women's occupation'(Adler et al, 1992:184). This shows that there have been modifications to the traditional gender roles, especially for girls, compared to previous studies that found only minimal changes in children's gender socialisation, the notions of appropriate roles and behaviours of the girls in the study accord somewhat greater with societal transformations (Adler et al, 1992:184).

Since women are the bearers, nurses and primary caretakers of children, the role of primary child socialisers also devolves upon them. As elaborated by Chodorow (1978), this role accounts for further, far-reaching differences between male and female personalities. Chodorow states that universally, both boys and girls are brought up by women. Both sexes must learn their appropriate gender identity but a girl accomplishes this simply by modelling after her mother; as has been long recognised by psychoanalytic theorists, a boy in order to become a man, must give up a primary identification with his mother and shift to an identification with his father or other salient adult males (Quinn, 1977:193). This held true for my research study as many participants, both male and female, stated that they imitated their mother(s)/father in terms of constructing their gender identity while growing up.

Bhekezunu

When I was growing up I always thought my mother was so strong and resilient. She never once spoke badly about my father or his other wives to me or my siblings. She always exuded an air of quiet dignity and sophistication that I want to exude too when I am older. My mother was my role model, my hero and the woman I always aim to be in my own life.

Thulubona

My father is the man, he was a god amongst men. He is married to four women and they all respect him and fear him as the head of the household. My father always used to tell me and my brothers that a real man has more than one wife but he must be able to look after them correctly. He said men respect their wives and support their children. When I was younger

my father was not just a mere man he was a 'chief' in my eyes I wanted so badly to be like him in everything he did.

As Bhekezunu and Thulubona state above, they imitated their identity after their mother and father. They both said their parents were their role models and everything about their parents they wanted to be. Freud (1921) first observed that the father plays an important role in the establishment of his son's gender identity within the early triadic relationship. In the little boy's turning away from his mother and experiencing loss, an available preoedipal father tempers his son's defensive tendency to disengage forcefully from her, while also providing a conventional focus for masculine identification (Diamond, 2006:1116).

Sigmund Freud's oedipal theory encompasses the critical idea that the boy wants to 'have' his mother. To overcome the castration anxieties aroused in competing with his father, the boy identifies with him and in turn, constructs the sense of his own masculine identity. Attention has been redirected to the fact that before the boy wants to *have* his mother, he wants to *be* her, or at the least be with what she provides, her maternal nurturance. Hence, the boy's preoedipal relationship with his mother and the actual involvement of the father in the early triadic environment are now seen as crucial to understanding male gender identity (Diamond, 2006:1100).

Chodorow argues that because a man does not play a caretaking role and because in most societies his male activities take him away from home, he is relatively inaccessible to his son or sons. "As a result, a boy's male gender identification often becomes a 'positional' identification, with aspects of his father's clearly or not-so-clearly defined male role, rather than a more generalized 'personal' identification—a diffuse identification with his father's personality values, and behavioural traits—that could grow out of a real relationship to his father" (Chodorow, 1978:49).

Consequences of the boy's struggle to define his gender under these conditions are denial of femininity, denial of attachment to and dependence upon his mother (coupled with her tendency to push him into the male role), and in the attempt, devaluation of whatever he considers feminine. In contrast, the development of a girl's gender identity is continuous, unproblematic and mediated by the real affective relationship with her mother (Quinn, 1977:194). The explicit training boys received reinforces their differential development: it is orientated toward achievement and self-reliance rather than nurturance and responsibility; it

is delayed rather than continuous and it entails a particularistic role relations. While women's particularistic interactions cut across generational lines and encompass diffuse relationships and responsibilities, men's interaction are likely to crosscut kinship units, to be restricted to a single generation, to be recruited along universalistic criteria, and to invoke highly specific relationships and responsibilities (Quinn, 1977:194). Features of boys' upbringing cause them to prize achievement, seek out competition for status and maintain the social distance requisite to authority.

The male participants in my study spoke of their half and full siblings and how they saw them as competition in school and in sport. Achievement in school or sport would garner boy children more of their father's attention. The female participants on the other hand did not mention competition with their brothers or sisters. This may tie in with the notion of expected femininity; that females are supposed to be passive and cooperative and not be aggressive and competitive (see Culley & Portuges, 1985; Di Lenardo, 1998 and Gneezy et al, 2009). According to Di Lenardo (1998) in women's culture there was an understanding that women's nature had the same characteristics over space and time and these characteristics included; moral superiority to men, cooperative rather than competitive, selfless maternity and benevolent sexuality (Di Lenardo, 1998:98). My female respondents' lack of competitive leanings seemed to confirm the notion of female non-competitiveness and lack of aggression.

Since my study looks at the family from a non-nuclear, non-western context I believe that African feminism is better suited to explain African children's socialisation. In Zulu culture boys are socialised differently to girls and this is because it is believed that boys will grow up to be head of the family and head their own families as well. The girls are also valued in that they will grow up to be men's helpers. So from an early age, Zulu children are taught their significant roles in life. African feminism echoes the same sentiments as Zulu culture in terms of socialisation. Western scholars tend to discuss socialisation as if it is an early brainwashing of the genders into a belief of which gender is superior to the other. African feminism recognises that seniority also is an important indicator of who will yield the most power. In African society the grandmother is the head of the family if the grandfather is no longer living, it is not her first born child. Some families if the first born child is a girl then she will be head of the family but other families want the male child to head the family even if he is the youngest in the family.

Chodorow views the content of task socialisation as contributory to sex differences in interpersonal involvement, although it requires a somewhat broad construction of nurturance, responsibility, achievement and self-reliance to allow that differential training in these behaviours contributes to a more general pressure on girls “to be involved with and connected to others, and boys to deny this involvement and connection” (Quinn, 1977:195). A study done on boys in a Kenyan community, many of whom care for infants and perform domestic chores, showed that these boys more frequently offered help and support than boys in other societies. In a separate study, sister-less boys in a Western Kenyan community who did childcare, cooking and other domestic chores proved to be more like girls over a range of behaviours. Although this particular study did not measure differences in nurturance, these boys were more responsible, less aggressive both physically and verbally, less ‘dependent’ in the sense of seeking help, support, attention, information or material goods and less ‘egoistically dominant’ in the sense of dominating, reprimanding or prohibiting others actions non-responsibly. Interestingly boys who did women’s work outside the homestead, such as fetching wood and water, digging root crops, picking vegetables and taking flour to be milled, were not viewed as more feminine than boys who did no ‘feminine’ work at all, indicating the specificity of the context in which this complex of behaviour is learned (Quinn, 1977:196).

Quinn (1977) goes on to discuss the division between public and domestic domains as a universal focus for the sexual division of labour, entailed by women’s role in child-bearing, nursing and rearing. Other writers have preferred to stress the particular economic conditions which enhance the ‘inside-outside dichotomy’ (Quinn, 1977:198). Men are often away from home, caring for animals, clearing fields, working for wages and interacting with other men. Women in turn, are at home more than formerly. Their gathering activities curtailed, they spend much more time processing and preparing domesticated foods than was necessary for gathered foods. The houses and possessions which come with the settled way of life require time-consuming upkeep (Quinn, 1977:199).

4.2. Culture and Socialisation

According to De la Rey (1992), culture plays a role in what one becomes by helping one to adapt to their environment and gives one a sense of community with their past. Culture also

functions to control and limit individual behaviour so that one conforms to the predominant values and norms such as traditional gender roles.

Bhachu (1996) examined the construction of identities of Asian women in Britain and contended that an ethnocentric perspective on Black and Asian women gave the impression that their cultural values were oppressive to them. This is because the perspective viewed culture as rigid and unchanging rather than as values that the women continually adapted. Bhachu (1996) advanced that there is a lack of understanding of African women's perspective of culture and why they accept some of the traditional roles of their communities. Ngcongco (1993) advanced that African women experience a dilemma because of the cultural upbringing of the 'ideal good' African woman who is subservient to male authority and is a homemaker versus an ambitious, independent career woman that is a product of Western education.

In the South African context, Muthuki (2004) has documented the changing gender roles of Zulu-speaking academics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the dilemma they face in negotiating between the modern gender roles afforded to them by their Western education and maintaining traditional cultural gender roles. In line with the Muthuki's findings, the younger female participants in my study voiced that even if they become highly educated they will remain humble and will not abdicate traditional gender roles because they respect their culture and their culture dictates that they be the demure wife to their husbands.

Thuleleni

I think education means nothing to men in our culture. Actually education might mean the opposite of being uneducated. If you are a highly educated woman and marry a Zulu man immediately there is unconscious tension especially if you are more educated than the man. The Zulu man will resent you and impose culture traditions and customs more so on you because they are trying to enforce their masculinity and remind you the woman that the Zulu culture belief system is that he is 'better' than you the woman even if you have more degrees than him. I want to get my degree and get a good job and I want to pursue postgraduate studies as well, even if I have all those degrees any Zulu man would always remind me of my place and so I must just resolve myself to my fate as a Zulu woman because if I fight it I will never win in this life and the next.

Shongani

We live in a country that guarantees equal rights to men and women but my culture does not believe that. I want an educated woman but I do not want a woman more educated than me because she will start to believe she is completely equal to me and my culture says that is not true. What can I say? No I do not want my mother or sisters to suffer discrimination just because they are women but it is CULTURE? How can I one man change something that has been practised since the beginning of time? I know my place as a man and the respect I deserve as a man, women should know the same too and maybe there would be no conflict.

From the findings of my study it can be observed that many participants voiced the same or similar narratives about culture and gender. Both male and female participants referred to multiple levels and forms of social and cultural contradictions, which act to challenge, shape and transform their ideas, thoughts and sense of self. Through this process participants actively constructed new gender identities for themselves that occupy hybrid spaces between modernity and tradition. Gender identity is framed as a social and cultural construction which is negotiated through social behaviour and performance (Butler, 2001). The struggle and tension between challenging hegemonic notions of gender on the one hand and reinforcing the same on the other, enabled participants to acquire the mark of cultural hybridity thus brokering new gender identities. Gender identity is thus not fixed but instead can be observed to be a fluid and contextualised process of unfolding and constant reconstitution (Hall, 1996).

4.3. Gender Identity Construction

Connell (1987; 1997; 2000; 2002) discusses the concept of hegemonic masculinity⁴², which is constructed in relation to other subordinated masculinities and femininities. The hegemonic

⁴² Masculine ideology refers to beliefs about the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards of behaviour. It differs from masculine gender orientation and is also distinct from gender related beliefs. Masculinity ideology is the individual's endorsement to and internalization of cultural belief systems about masculinity and male gender, rooted in the structural relationship between the two sexes. Through social processes, masculinity ideology informs and encourages men to conform to prevailing male role norms by adopting certain socially sanctioned masculine behaviours and avoiding certain behaviours. The seven norms of traditional masculinity ideology are: avoidance of femininity, fear and hatred of homosexuals, self-reliance, aggression, dominance, non-relational attitudes toward sexuality and restrictive emotionality (Rizni, 2015:15).

form of masculinity maintains this position by adapting and transforming in order to adjust to new situations and contexts and reassures its dominance by incorporating the challenges levelled against it. There is no simplistic hierarchy of categories (Cronje, 2012:4-5). It is simply a case of men 'choosing' between rejection or confirmation to particular masculine roles. It is proposed that 'certain available' discourses and structures constrain both the issues which are seen as important and the ways in which men position themselves in relation to these specific issues. Different forms of masculinity claim the hegemonic position in different contexts and shifts may occur within the hierarchy. The hegemonic position claimed by different forms of masculinity, although continuously contested by subordinated groups, does not necessarily undermine the existing power relations (Cronje, 2012:5). Even in light of relentless contestation by the gay and feminist movements, the hegemonic form of masculinity manages to adapt and readjust in such a position as to allow its continued dominance.

At the late adolescence level, girls are closely bonded with their mothers and become distant from their fathers as gender differentiation is at its peak during this developmental stage. In the case of boys, early adolescents look up to their fathers as role models in a heroic manner. Boys do not face any conflict of interest at that stage and they try to copy and follow their fathers as closely as possible. Analysis of the male participants' narratives in my study confirms Rizni's (2015) findings that boys imitate their fathers when constructing their masculine identity. As adolescence progresses, boys start developing their own personalities and individual priorities resulting in varying conflicts which may last up until late adolescence. This is why late adolescent boys tend to perceive their fathers as less effective at fatherhood as compared to late adolescent males' view of their mothers and motherhood.

Morrell et al (2012) states that although global developments in feminism feed into South African gender politics, the issues of race and class dominate the local debate (Morrell et al, 2012:8). Third World feminists have argued that African feminism has sought to support a more benign form of patriarchy that builds on existing family and community structures, rather than seeking a more radical reconfiguration of domestic forms of social organisation. The focus is firmly on women and sisterhood and there is little analysis of men either as oppressors or as allies (Morrell et al, 2012:9). In recent South African gender politics, there has been a shift towards gender equality in construction of masculinity that has held promise of hegemony (Morrell et al, 2012:15). The hegemonic model has a set of protocols for men

which allow them access to the hegemonic position. These 'protocols' are what men rely on when relating to other people. This include protocols for relations with women as well as men. They are a solution to the problem of gendered relations (Cronje, 2012:5).

The men in my study noted that the family structure in which they were raised did not significantly affect how they constructed their gendered identity.

Thuluzufe

There was no identity difference. I would have had the same identity even if I grew up in a nuclear family.

Qalimpi

Boys were close to their biological mothers because their father was away for long periods of time. Even if my father had not married a second wife I do not think the type of family I grew up in had a significant bearing on my identity. In some ways one can say I grew up in a 'nuclear' family without my father constantly present because we had no interaction or communication with the other family. Being in a polygynous family inspired and motivated me to excel in school and to always do better than my siblings and half-siblings so it was friendly competition. It made me compete with my siblings to be the best at everything whether it be soccer or academically at school.

Shongani

Boys were close to their father because they respected and feared him immensely as well as the fact he taught them how to be men. After telling my friends at school about my polygynous family, it did change people's perception of me because they pitied me and thought I must have had a horrible childhood.

Sandelani

The boys were close to both parents so they both influenced my gendered identity but if I needed something from my father I would ask my mother to ask my father for me.

Shongani

My mother always told me how to be a man in that I must be self-sufficient, independent, respect the family and women and must always carry myself with dignity and self-respect. I

tried to be independent from a young age and construct my own identity. It would have been different if I was raised in a nuclear family because I would not have been motivated or driven to be the best at everything I did and to beat my siblings at everything.

4.3.1. Masculinity

Diamond (2004) argues that in infancy boys develop in a feminine direction as a result of their ‘primitive, symbiotic identification with a mothering person’, and thus by age 2, boys have established a *primary femininity*. In order to achieve a masculine gender identity, boys must subsequently *disidentify* with their mothers and *counteridentify* with their fathers (Diamond, 2004:359). Moreover, this premise rests on the notion that such disidentification or repudiation of feminine identifications, *must* occur if the boy is to achieve a secure sense of their masculinity. The author propounds that the success of the boy’s ensuing identification with his father is determined by his ‘ability to disidentify’ (Diamond, 2004:360).

Gender identity development is no longer thought to be a linear, continuous trajectory. As scholars Gobbard and Wilkinson (1996) have discussed, a boy’s (and later a man’s) experience of the ambiguities of his gender are continually being reworked across differing development junctions. By questioning the notion that boys normatively ‘dis-identify’ from their mother in order to establish a secure sense of gender identity and expanding upon the formation of the gendered masculine ego ideal, Diamond (2004) maintains that, unless a boy pulls away in order to differentiate himself from his mother, he will be femininised and that father’s active presence is necessary to bring about the needed maternal disentanglement (Diamond, 2004:360).

The father plays an important role in the establishment of his son’s core gender identity within the early, *triadic father-mother-child relationship*. The father tends to be aligned with a mother who maintains a ‘consistent affective relational presence’ and who therefore needs neither to be repudiated nor renounced. In addition to providing a conventional focus for masculine identification, an available, pre-oedipal father tempers his little boy’s more defensive tendencies to disengage forcefully from a mother who is unable to affirm her son’s maleness, in order to organise his gender identity. Instead of an oppositional or counter identification with the more symbolic father against the mother, the boy is able to achieve a

reciprocal identification with an available father and as such is provided with the foundation for a more secure and often varied gendered expression of the self (Diamond, 2004:362).

The baby boy's 'internal working models' are gendered from the beginning of life, albeit not as a function of some form of symbiotic identification with his mother's 'femaleness and femininity' but rather, as a result of the *particular interactions* that go on between him and his mother, as well as with his father. The little boy's 'models' are constructed in interactions with parents who treat him as 'male' in relation to their own gendered selves (as 'female' or 'male'). The boy's task is to then establish his own sense of maleness, is not about overcoming profemininity but rather, *building on the gendered schemes he has been establishing since birth*. The little child must 'newly' articulate and (consolidate) his sense of himself as "boy" in same-gender relations with his father and (males in general) and in other-gender relations with his mother (Diamond, 2004:365). In terms of his masculine gender identity, a boy identifies especially with the sense of his mother relating to him as a male person (of the opposite sex). These identifications remain core aspects of his internal world and significantly affect the formation of his male identity (Diamond, 2004:366). Thus, a small boy's internalization of a secure masculine gender identity is strongly impacted by his mother's ability to perceive and endorse him as a male person, both objectively and subjectively. The author elaborated the paradox of 'masculinity-in-femininity' in what they called 'transitional oedipal relationship'. The author noted that it is 'in a relationship with a woman that the boy's male identification and paternal idealization originate' (Diamond, 2004:367).

The establishment of gender identity begins then with the child's 'capacity to identify with both mother and father at the same time', while its eventual transformation requires what Ogden referred to as 'the creation of a dialectical interplay between masculine and feminine identities. A healthy, cohesive sense of manhood develops when core gender identity is not split off from a flexibly masculine gender role identity (Diamond, 2004:374). The author points out the importance of appreciating how 'culturally embedded the unconscious constructions of masculinity are, particularly in 'the mind of the mother' (Diamond, 2004:375).

4.3.2. Masculinity in the South African context

The concept “Hegemonic Masculinity” is widely used in South African gender research. The adoption of the concept occurred in specific political and intellectual circumstances. The power of the concept was complimented by a shift in gender politics in the post-1994 period which gender activism was broadened and mainstreamed and began to involve men. One of the major reasons why, intellectually, the concept was taken up was that it sought to analyze gender power in conjunction with issues of male hierarchy, allowing for differentiation between groups of men who had different relations to one another and more or less power in relation to the dominant group. This was particularly useful in an historical context in which colonialism and apartheid had so clearly divided the political and economic landscape along lines of race and social class (Morrell et. al. 2012: 2).

After the democratic elections of 1994 president Mandela represented a “new” masculinity. His public representation challenged much of the violent and authoritarian behaviours and attitudes associated with apartheid’s white male politicians (Morrell et. al. 2012: 7). The next president Mbheki (1999-2008) carried forward part of Mandela’s gender equality programme. Current President Zuma (2009-) epitomized a rejection of more thoughtful, egalitarian masculinities, rather asserting in the name of “tradition”, a masculinity that is heterosexist, patriarchal, implicitly violent and that glorified ideas of male sexual entitlement, notably polygamy and conspicuous sexual success with women (Morrell et. al. 2012: 7).

Global development in feminism fed into South African gender politics though it was the issue of race and class that dominated debate (Morrell et. al. 2012: 8). Third World Feminists have argued that African Feminism has sought to support more benign patriarchy that builds on existing family and community rather than seeking a more radical reconfiguration of domestic forms of social organization. The focus was firmly on women and sisterhood and there was little analysis of men either as oppressors or as allies (Morrell et. al. 2012: 9). In recent South African gender politics, there has been a shift towards gender equality in construction of masculinity that have held promise of hegemony (Morrell et. al. 2012: 15).

Masculinity in a South African context was highlighted in my research findings. My male respondents voiced how they felt at times misplaced in the western feminist movement and did not understand their role or place in it. Their Zulu culture helped clarify that by reminding them that in their culture they are men and ‘real’ men are responsible, mature

adults who provide and protect their families and respect women in their culture as their grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters and potential wives. Their Zulu culture heavily influenced their construction of their gendered identity and defined what it meant to be a man in modern South Africa.

4.4. Role of production relations in shaping gender in a polygynous family

Gender models predispose the researcher to look for differences between men and women, this study conceptualises gender as relational and as situational. This section examines situations in which gender was emphasised and where it was de-emphasised.

4.4.1 Zulu Household

In traditional Zulu society, the father is the head of the family and he has absolute authority over the wife and children. The father sets rules and punishes whoever does not obey his rules. Women hold less powerful roles and lack formalised control which explains that women's submission is a dilemma which stems from the very foundations of Black culture. Respect is the glue that holds relationships together. It is not simply respect for the individual, but also respect for the integrity of the relationship and family, being able to walk with each other and not for one to feel superior over the other (Mncwango & Luvuno, 2015: 246).

4.4.2. The polygynous household

“The household implies common residence, economic cooperation and socialization of children” (Bender, 1966:495). The author states that the household usually acts to fulfil the functions of providing food and shelter and bringing up children. According to Nurmila (2009) researched the relationship between wives in polygamous marriages among her research participants they were categorized in four ways; the first category is that in which an established wife has never met her husband's second wife and they have never contacted each other. The second category is that in which a second wife has contacted her husband's second wife by phone. The third category is a relationship in which a first wife and a second wife have known each other and tried to have a good relationship even though they have often felt jealous of each other (Nurmila, 2009:116).

The most frequent situation in which the members of family normally do not all reside together is that in which the father-husband resides separately from the rest of the family. On the other hand, if it is unclear whether polygynous families have common residence when the husband and each of his wives have separate but contiguous dwellings, it is quite clear that polygynous families do not form common residential groups when the wives reside at considerable distance from each other (Bender, 1967:494).

4.5. Gender relations in an African non-nuclear context

Gender relations in an African context are complex because gender plays a pivotal role in the family but seniority is respected regardless of gender. Older women usually grandmothers are revered and respected and yield as much power as men when it comes to decision-making. Older family members are usually consulted about the family or to resolve family disputes and whatever decision they say is what is done.

Connell states that there are three structures of gender; the division of labour, power relations and relations of emotional attachment. Connell however views gender from a nuclear western context of family. I examined this model in the context of an African polygynous family. Gender in the African context is constructed differently than the western context. In Africa there is a principle of seniority as Nigerian feminist, Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997) highlights. She believes that power within the African family context is not gender specific but is based on age and seniority. As in the polygynous family the first wife is expected to wield the most power in a polygynous family. The gender relations approach encapsulates my work because the construction and deconstruction of gender is a constant ongoing process.

The *Nguni*⁴³ culture is traditionally very hierarchal when it comes to age, younger people are expected to respect and obey older people as in many other Southern African cultures. Zulu

⁴³ The categories of “child” and “adult” are noticeably hierarchically organized in *Nguni* culture. An older person has power over a younger one and ‘children’ are perceived as almost powerless. A child is not supposed to object or question what an elder says. Communication between children and adults is far from being straight forward. Asking something directly of an adult is perceived as being highly inappropriate. As a result many youngsters are hesitant to ask for help. From these perspectives children in child-headed households live in situations reserved for adults (married men and women).

culture and tradition confirms that children should obey adults and accept their choices. Adults and children argued that a person is a child as long as they live under their parent's roof. An unmarried young woman, irrespective of her age, can still be regarded as a child, as long as she is living with her parents. She is not free to do as she wishes and she has to do what her parents tell her to do. Even if an unmarried woman has children of her own, they are not considered an adult until they are married (Van Dijk & Van Driel, 2009:922).

4.6. Household Division of Labour

Connell (1987 & 1997) asserts that the sexual division of labour is interwoven with and mutually supportive of, divisions of power and authority among women and men. Messner (2000) states that even people's choice to volunteer for certain positions are shaped and constrained by previous institutional practices (Messner, 2000:771). In turn, structure becomes an object of practice, as the choices and actions of today's parents re-create divisions of labour and power similar to those that they experienced in their youth (Messner, 2000:772).

Punch's (2001) study illustrated the importance of intergenerational divisions of household labour affected by factors such as; age, birth order and sibling composition. Adult household labour is highly determined by gender roles, but children's labour cuts across gender stereotypes and does not merely mirror the adult division of labour in rural households (Punch, 2001:804).

Children contribute to household tasks as soon as they are capable and from a very early age. Studies show that girls have a greater burden of labour than boys. Girls participate more than boys in domestic work but not in household maintenance and repairs (Punch, 2001:806). In other studies it was found that the firstborn children participate more at an earlier age than

However, these children and young people are to a certain extent, perceived to be capable of taking care of themselves and their siblings and running their households as far as cooking and cleaning is concerned but it is noted that there is nobody who corrects or advises them. Community members feel that these youngsters need to be taught how (not) to behave and to be supported in the raising of their siblings (Van Dijk & Van Driel, 2009:922). By living in a child-headed households, youngsters particularly challenged the generational constructions (Van Dijk & Van Driel, 2009:926).

their younger siblings. It was also reported that children's work is less likely to be divided according to gender norms if only girls or only boys were present in the households (Punch, 2001:807).

Bender (1967) discusses economic cooperation that is said to exist between husband and wife (based on the division of labour by sex), between parents and children (based on the division of labour by age), and between siblings. But to say that the nuclear family always carries out an economic function because a division of labour by age and sex occurs within that group, is to misplace the functions. The division of labour by age and sex exists in the society as a whole and thus also in any social groups that contain persons of both sexes and different ages, including all types of families. This is not strictly a nuclear-family phenomenon. It may be that in some instances particular economic aspects of the division of labour can only be carried out by parents in the relationship to their children, not by unmarried persons or by married persons without children (Bender, 1967:501).

Most polygamous husbands controlled their own income which makes it easier for them to fulfil their desire for another woman (Nurmila, 2009:133). Male participants usually managed their own income. They usually gave some to their wives as maintenance and kept the rest for themselves which allowed them to fulfil their desire for another woman (Nurmila, 2009:134).

4.6.1. Socialisation in the Zulu Polygynous Family

Societal division of labour on the basis of gender still prevails in Zulu homes. Women are confined to their roles as housewives, and the male tasks are considered special; more valued than female tasks (Mncwango & Luvuno, 2015:248). According to Isike and Uzodike (2011), Zulu culture is "deeply patriarchal, with women seen as subhuman, commodified and subordinated". Religion also does not allow women to lead free lives. In theory, men and women in Zulu society are equal but in practice, equality in Zulu society is non-existent (Mncwango & Luvuno, 2015:249).

Bhekezunu

Boys were groomed from a young age to follow into their father's footsteps and to be outside and involved in his work. Girls were groomed from an early age on how to be 'good wives'. On how to cook, keep a clean house and piety.

Dlabembalela

Girls cooked, cleaned and did other household chores whilst the boys did neither. Boys and girls also worked very hard tending the land in some rural areas.

Shongani

Each wife had her own plot of land on the farm which she tended with her children. The girls tended the land whilst the boys herded the cows.

Bhekezunu

The children did most of the hard labour and chores in the rural areas. So the younger you were the more work you did and vice-versa.

Thuluzufe

Boys looked after the livestock, whilst girls cooked and cleaned and the older women (wives) tilled the soil and planted the food. In the family there was a clear gender division of labour in his home boys only did certain tasks and girls did certain tasks and never did the two gender swap/change tasks 'designated' to their genders.

Thulubona

Labour was divided according to age groups.

Sandelani

All the children did the chores they were assigned to do. There was no difference in how boys and girls were treated very progressively in that way. Parents saw children not gendered children. The way we were socialised made me see gendered division of labour as something that is normal and natural but education enlightened me to now know better.

Mpiyezulu

I believe men and women should understand their roles and expectations of them. Boys and girls do tasks that they are capable of doing and which their natural strength will allow them to do. Boys slaughtered the animals because they had the natural strength to do such a taxing chore. Girls did the housework because it groomed them from an early age to be good respectable wives.

The excerpts above showcase that there was a clear gender division of labour in some polygynous families and not so in others. The respondents who had a clear gender division of labour justified such division of chores as ‘natural’ and ‘normal’. These respondents echo Connell’s (2002) declaration regarding biological essentialism, which states that the gender identities and roles are natural and are based on the differences in reproductive abilities of men and women. The respondents also highlighted socialisation as the key factor that shaped their beliefs regarding the gendered division of labour. Kabeer (1997) argues that the family is a significant institutional site whereby gender norms and relations are constructed, reinforced and challenged. The social constructionist view on the other hand disputes Kabeer’s argument and contends that gender is formed by social and cultural forces at work such as prescribed tasks and ways of dressing based on perceived differences between men and women.

Another participant stated that chores were assigned based on age not gender. This statement highlights the difference between performances of gender in the African context versus the Western context. Oyewumi (2002) goes so far as to describe the African family as non-gendered because kinship roles and categories are not gender-differentiated. She believes that power within the African family context is not gender specific but is rather based on age and seniority. Thulubona’s family represents an example of this non-gender differentiation in practice as age was emphasised more than gender particularly with regard to the division of household labour.

4.7. The Gendered Household

Apartheid policies directly impacted on the family cohesion in South Africa and reinforced the destructive influences that urbanisation and individualisation had on the family. One of the consequences of the legacy of apartheid is the high number of female-headed households, resulting from pregnancy outside marriage and from divorce (Muthuki, 2010).

4.7.1. Gender in the African context and the Sexual Division of Labour

The strict segregation of labour was cause for great tension in some of my participants’ households. They stated that some chores were clearly ‘designated’ girl chores and boy

chores. The girl chores were domestic in nature (cooking, cleaning, child-care) and the boy chores were outside the house (herding livestock, maintenance and basic upkeep of the house outside). This clear distinction of chores taught participants from an early age what their gender-related duties were. The concept was useful for my study because it helped to shed light on the contradictions that exist between the Euro/American nuclear family and the African polygynous family.

4.7.2. Gender Roles in the African Context

African feminism has many varying opinions on the family; they agree that the family is an important aspect of African life but they also maintain that the family is a place of intense suffering for women and girls. Girls and boys are socialised to know their 'place' from a young age and to act accordingly. One can argue that if any sort of 'community' change or progressive practices towards gender equality take place, all must start within the family. Polygyny is another type of family and African feminists have been divided on the issue. Some argue that polygyny is an African cultural practice and can even be a welcome or sort after type of marriage situation because it breeds sisterhood and family cohesion. Other African feminists regard the practice of polygyny as the height of gender inequality and discrimination that is degrading and demeaning to both women and children.

4.7.3. Gender Role Socialisation in the Zulu Polygynous Family

When I asked my participants how the different genders were treated and how chores were divided in their households they all had similar narratives to tell.

Qondeni

The mothers tried to treat all the children the same but gender differences were obvious when it came to chores. The boys worked outside with father and the girls inside with mother/s. The boys I think had tougher chores such as fetching or chopping wood and us the girls just had to cook, clean and wash clothes. I think our work was more tedious but the boys' work you had to be strong to chop a tree trunk for wood.

Muzowambango

The girls did what girls are supposed to do; clean the house, cook the food and wash clothes. The boys had to do hard labour such as helping the men herd the cattle, wash the cattle when we went to visit the farm and fix things around the home that needed to be fixed. We worked hard in the farm and it was not easy work but my father and uncle used to tell us that it will help make us strong men one day.

Mpiyezulu

Yes the children were treated differently. I do not think it was intentional or malicious but it was just the way my parents were raised that you treat boys and girls differently. You need to be strict with the girls and protect them because there are many men out there who want to take advantage of them and ruin their lives. As boys we were raised to always protect our sisters and to respect them and also respect each other. We were also given more freedom than the girls in terms of movement but if we did something wrong I think we were punished more severely than the girls. Our chores at home were the same. I was taught to cook and clean and wash clothes but my father did not like that. He would say to my mother she is making us weak men if we do women's chores. Now as an adult I am grateful my mother taught me such things because when I left home I did not have the money to buy take-aways everyday but I could cook. It was not good food (laughing) but I am talking to you now so it was ok to survive. I remember trying to teach my older sister how to cut grass she complained and said it was too hard and she is glad she is a woman and does not have to do such chores. So I think it is ok that men and women have different chores but it is important to learn how to do the other's chores because who will do them for you if you are not married.

Some participants acknowledged their understanding that the manner in which they were raised was not a form of gender discrimination on the part of their parents but was simply a reflection of how their parents were brought up. Other participants stated that their parents treated boys and girls equally and children were expected to do the chores assigned to them because all children regardless of gender are expected to obey their elders. Some participants highlighted a clear gender division of labour which they were aware of from a young age. They never questioned this division but just did their chores and grew up believing that chores are gender-specific and as such should never be exchanged between genders. The

gender division of household labour was a way of life for many participants and as children they accepted it as such.

When I asked my participants how being raised in a polygynous family had shaped their understanding of production relations and the sexual division of labour within the family, the following narratives were revealed.

Shongani

I think it is important for both males and females to understand their gendered roles and expectations. It would look very strange if my father was cooking for my mother and my mother was herding cattle or washing livestock. Anyway I think women are better cooks than men I will never eat food cooked by my brother because he is hopeless in the kitchen.

Bhekezunu

I think polygamous families are no different to other families; boys and girls are raised differently. My brothers had more freedom than me and my sisters and when I would ask my mother why she would always answer that it is because boys are tougher and no one wants to attack or hurt boys they can look after themselves and no one will bother them. As for housework oh my we the girls worked hard, we had to know how to cook, wash the clothes, iron and clean the house. We were always working from the time we woke up to just before we went to bed. I think my brother did not have to work as hard as we did all they did was to go to school and come home and do their homework. When I got older my sister and I refused to wash the boys' clothes so they were forced to learn how to wash and iron their own clothes because we were not going to do it. That was nice to take back our power and say ok we will wash our parents clothes and iron them but not our brothers we are not their wives. I think I learnt from a young age that certain things must be done by certain genders and it is because that gender is better at it than the other.

Phakimpi

Boys are treated very differently from girls. Some of us were raised to be active girls, always working around the house or in the fields. But when we became adults we were not interested in working the fields with mother or being "professional wives" so that type of training was not necessary anymore. We wanted to have professional careers in the cities. I was socialised

that there are certain things boys and girls do and do not do because of their gender and this is how I will also raise my children to believe. I experienced how the division of labour was based on gender and thought that this is the right way to do things.

Thuleleni

I was raised to believe that men should be the providers in the family and women should stay at home and be housewives. These are the values I plan on instilling in my family in the future.

Bhekezunu

My father was head of household but was very democratic in his leadership. My father was raised with a particular view of men as providers and protectors and how they should behave.

These responses show that my participants were aware of the gendered division of labour that existed in their families. One respondent stated when she grew older she found her own form of agency and resistance to the system of gendered division of labour in her family. She stated that she refused to wash her brothers' clothes and iron them so the boys were forced to learn how to do those chores. It is interesting to note that if women refuse to do something and stand their ground then men usually have no other alternative but to do it themselves. Other respondents stated that the gender division of labour is necessary because certain genders should not do certain things because it looks strange and each gender is best suited to particular chores. It is also interesting to point out that the gendered division of labour is arbitrary because these excerpts show that both genders can in fact perform all chores if they are required to do so. It is society that has socially constructed this system of the sexual division of labour and by not changing it and refusing to change it, the system has become naturalised and normalised when in fact it is a counterfeit man-made system.

4.8. Household Dynamics of the Polygynous Family

4.8.1. Hierarchical Family Structure

The traditional polygynous family set up includes in this order; Father (head of all households), first wife, subsequent wives in numerical order, oldest child of first wife, then subsequent siblings in order of mother's marital number.

Phakimpi

The father has all the power as the head of the polygynous family but the first wife yields some considerable power. The first wife was head of family in father's absence.

Thuleleni

The last wife who in a typical polygynous family would have the least amount of power, in this 'reverse set-up' she would yield the most power and influence. It would be the last wife with the most authority then the middle wives and the first wife would have the least amount of power.

Shongani

Hierarchy was in accordance with wife seniority. Although my father followed the traditional polygynous set-up I witnessed occasions where he would make decisions without consulting the first wife as he should have.

Mpiyezulu

Father then his mother (the grandmother), then the first wife and subsequent wives; that was the order of authority.

My participants noticed that there were times when the traditional practice of polygyny was not fully or correctly followed by their fathers. In traditional polygynous families the father is the head of the family and has the most power and subsequent wives would have power according to their position in the family and the order in which they were married to the husband, such as second, third and so on. The last wife, who is usually the youngest of the wives, is often the most favoured and as a result of this favouritism yields considerable power and influence over the father of the family and the other wives, which disrupts the natural order of seniority within the family and may cause tension and conflict.

4.9. Conclusion

Most African cultures have a patriarchal system in place that governs gender relations between men and women. Most of the men and women I interviewed echoed these patriarchal sentiments. Butler (1988) states that gender is not stable or a locus of agency; it is an identity that is tenuously constituted over time through stylised repetition of acts (Butler,

1988:519). My findings in chapter five demonstrate that children from polygynous families tend to have a more negative self-concept. As such it can be argued that polygyny has an unfavourable influence on the development of self-concept (Owuamanam, 1984:596). Butler (1988) attests that gender reality is performative in nature which Butler explains to mean that it is real only to the extent that it is performed. Certain acts are interpreted to express a gender core identity and these acts either conform to or contest an expected gender identity (Butler, 1988:527). Connell's notion of gender as situational ties in with Butler's notion of gender performativity. African feminism echoes the same sentiments as Zulu culture in terms of socialisation. In this chapter I have highlighted the ways in which gender relations contribute to the construction of gender identity. The chapter has established that gender is central to socialisation, and emphasised that men draw heavily on their childhood gender role socialisation when constructing their masculinity. Most Western scholars view socialisation as an early brainwashing of the genders into a hierarchal gender order. African feminism on the other hand recognises that seniority is also an important indicator of who will yield the most power. Masculinity and femininity in a South African context was highlighted in my research findings. Male respondents voiced how they felt at times misplaced in the western feminist movement and did not understand their role or place in it. Their Zulu culture helped clarify that by reminding them that in their culture they are men and they are powerful. This chapter also illustrated how household dynamics helped shape gender identities. In the next chapter I look at how naming is an important factor in constructing identity in the Zulu culture because it reflects how that individual will shape their future path in life.

CHAPTER FIVE

NAMING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IDENTITY

5. Introduction

According to Mama (2001) in English the word 'Identity' implies a singular, individual subject with clear ego boundaries. In Africa, if you ask an individual who they are; their name will quickly be followed by a qualifier, a communal term that will indicate ethnic or clan origins (Mama, 2001:63). Gender is a quintessential element of human identity. The results of Egan and Perry (2001) article show that gender identity is multidimensional. Given that one's gender assignment ordinarily is immutable and that many fundamental features of life—including the recreational, academic, occupational and relationship activities that one is expected to pursue—are governed by gender (Egan & Perry, 2001:451). These dimensions of gender identity are not strongly related to one another, yet all relate to psychosocial adjustment (Egan & Perry, 2001:459).

Culture is not static but dynamic and ever changing, personal names have undergone a major transformation due to socio-cultural and political factors (Ngubane & Thabethe, 2013:1). Names are not static they evolve over time, often losing their referential meaning and becoming more label-like which is the case for most Western names. Names change with societal changes, as people moved from rural to urban environment and their social framework is transformed. Personal names in Africa are meaningful (Suzman, 1994:253). My participants have highlighted that their names do have a bearing on their gendered identity and a name in the Zulu culture is an intrinsic part of a person's identity.

Traditionally, personal names were unique and meaningful, emerging from circumstances at the time of the child's birth: fathers and grandfathers were the name-givers. The giving of a name to a child had significance within the larger family, with the consequences that the child was rarely the focus of his or her name (Ngubane & Thabethe, 2013:1). According to Neethling (2003) choosing personal names in African societies are conscious decisions, rather than a random process. Parents or guardians bestow a personal name on a child that has social and cultural relevance and meaning (Neethling, 2003). Personal naming is viewed as a significant process of bestowing a name upon a child as a symbol of identity (Ngubane & Thabethe, 2013:2). I emphasize that the names highlighted in this study are specific to

polygynous Zulu families. These names would never be used to name children from nuclear families.

5.1. Africans and the naming process

Among African people, the concept of a name is a complex. The name is very close to the person to whom it is given, because of this close connection between the name and the person (Ngubane, 2013:165). Given names disclose a great deal of information about an individual and their family. Therefore, the naming of a child is a reflection of the society to which they belong. Mphande (2006:104) states that a name may indicate the linguistic structures and phonological processes found in the languages; the position of name's bearer in society and the collective history and life experiences of the people surrounding the individual.

An act of naming is not only the concern of the immediate family. The extended family and the community also play their part—naming is a communal exercise. Even if outsiders in the community can be involved in naming of a child, the ultimate responsibility of naming lies with the parents. A sense of community and humane living are highly cherished values in traditional African life (Ngubane, 2013:166). Ngubane (2013) states that for traditional Africans the community is basically sacred, rather than secular. The environment in which a child is born greatly influences the name of the child (Ngubane, 2013:166). African personal names are widely observed to be meaningful, socially and culturally see (Alford, 1988 & Suzman, 1994; Beattie, 1957; Middleton, 1961; Nsimbi, 1950; Tonkin, 1980).

5.2. Zulu culture and personal names

The names of persons in Zulu are derived from circumstances connected with their birth. In the Zulu country, whether the child is born a girl or boy, it is named by its father. In my study most of my participants would refute this claim because they were named by their mothers. Interestingly the participants who were named by their mothers were born as a result of subsequent marriages. None of the participants who were born from the first wives claimed to be named by their mothers so one can infer from this that their fathers named them.

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child had significance within the larger family, with the consequences that the child was rarely the focus of their name (Suzman, 1994:254).

Suzman (1994) states name-giving provided an outlet for the regulation of social relations in the intense social interaction of small communities, it allowed people to communicate their feelings indirectly, without overt confrontation and possible conflict. This rang true in my study because some participants did voice how their names had affected how they viewed their identity.

The names of children in the Zulu culture are significant. It is believed a child is born and named, that child will then have to fulfil their destiny based on the name they carry. In a polygynous family children are named in response to the in-fighting between the wives. Zondi (2010) demonstrates how women from Zwelibomvu who are in polygamous unions found naming their children to be one of the strategies of dealing with what goes on beyond closed doors. In naming their children they perceive themselves as empowered to have a say about their lives. One respondent Thuluzufe noted the significance of this;

Thuluzufe

My name is an answer to a comment the first wife made to my mother (who was a second wife). The first wife hated my mother which I can understand what woman would be happy to share her husband. But that is the situation we found ourselves in. This did affect me as a man because people (African people) hear my name and know immediately I am from a polygynous family which hate each other.

This name has impacted how he has viewed his own gendered identity and masculinity. Thuluzufe has been viewed as a weapon in the never-ending feud between his mother and the other wives. Names in Zulu culture are significant because a name will fulfil itself on the beholder. Thuluzufe's name means (keep quiet until you die) so it could be literally translated to you have no voice and you cannot speak, maybe in death and in the afterlife you will have freedom of speech. That name has a negative connotation and Thuluzufe did voice that being a man in Zulu culture means the opposite of his name. As a Zulu man you must stand up and speak out confidently and not shy away. Thuluzufe's name is a contradiction to what it means to be a Zulu man. A Zulu man is strong and confident when he speaks so having a name such as Thuluzufe contradicts the identity of a Zulu man.

Mpiyezulu

I do not view my name as 'negative' I like to think of it as a warrior's name. I will fight for my family and protect them. It is a true Zulu man's name.

Thukwase

I do not pay attention to my name. I mean it is a name my parents gave me and I accept that. Maybe when I am older I will care enough to change it but right now I do not care. Besides would it not be considered disrespectful if I change the name my grandmother gave me? (laughing). I am a man I think there are more important things to care about than your name.

Soneni

My name is a negative name because directly translated it means "where did we go wrong to deserve such a child". My grandfather named me. My mother says my grandfather (my father's father) did not approve of her being a subsequent wife and he showed his disapproval even further by naming me Soneni. Of course we know if I was a boy I would have been given a different name and the circumstances would have been significantly different. I do not use my full name I go by 'Sone' so people will not know the full story of my life. Even the shorting of the name 'Sone' (meaning sin) is not ideal but what can I do? I did discuss the possibility of changing my name but mother stated that it will give the in-laws even more reason to hate her and possibly me. My mother says the best way to counter the name is to live a good respected life.

This might be a generational issue because Zehlihlali changed her name when she became an adult because it really affected her personally but Thukwase seemed to not be bothered by his name. Soneni does want to change her name but is conflicted on how that would be construed as disrespectful to the family. Thuluzufe who is much older than Thukwase voiced being affected by his name but he did not change it. Maybe one can conclude it is a gender issue because Zehlihlali is a woman and was severely more affected by the negative name than her male counterpart.

Such issues are not available in Western knowledge. Freud and Chodorow did not consider that a person's name could have a bearing on how they construct their identity.

Traditionally then, Zulu children received names that reflected values and attitudes within a particular social context. The extended family then no longer became the only source of names as often they did not reside with the immediate family therefore they lost their prerogative as name-givers (Suzman, 1994:255). Naming is much more flexible in current Zulu society, name-givers still give children names that emanate from the social fabric of their lives (Suzman, 1994: 258).

5.3. Specifications of naming in Zulu culture

Suzman (1994) identifies themes of name-giving; *structure of the family* (sex and number of children), *God in the birth*; *relationship between parent and child* (including feelings of love, pride and happiness), *parents' circumstances*; *barrenness*; *friction in the family*; *other relatives in the clan and other* themes (Suzman, 1994:259). Suzman (1994) states that names given to a child fall under certain categories; the *mother*, in rural areas the mother and grandmother were also name-givers. The *father*, the father was usually the primary name-giver but depending on the birth order of the child. *Birth circumstance*, this usually points to only when the birth took place in extraordinary circumstances. The *child*, this would depend on if the child had something unusual about him or her. *Religion*, this could also be a reference not only to Christian God but the family's *amadlozi* (ancestors) (Suzman, 1994:232).

Children's sex and birth order, the traditional family would contain many children and they were frequently named in terms of one another. Boys were and are always favoured as future providers and heads of families, so it was seen as good to have a boy first but girls were also welcomes and well received as helpers for the mothers and sources of *ilobolo* (Suzman, 1994: 263).

A number of underlying factors give rise to personal naming practices that are influenced by contemporary trends in the context of human rights and neo-liberal capitalism. The women empowerment discourse, has resulted in more women becoming name-givers whereas in the past only males had the right to name their children.

Zehlihlati (disappointment)

My original name is self explanatory and I do believe in one's name determining their destiny that is why when I became an adult I had it legally changed. I do not know why my grandmother named such a name. I unfortunately never had the opportunity to ask this before she passed but I did ask my mother and she said the woman who named me was my father's mother so she could not argue with her about what she had named her child. My mother said the name my grandmother gave me meant she was a 'disappointment' in that she (Zehlihlati's mother) married her son (Zehlihlati's father) and could not produce a male child as well. If I was born in a nuclear family I would never been given such a horrible name.

This narrative about male children is not only specific to a polygynous family it is also reported in nuclear families. The only difference in a polygynous family the man can add subsequent wives to the family in the hope of having a male child and in the nuclear family he cannot. Zehlihlati⁴⁴ did mention that her name did greatly affect not only how she viewed her own identity but also the community she lived in. The name was a negative name and she did not view herself in that way and did not want her future to be destined by vitriol name. Zehlihlati did mention if she was not born in a polygynous family she would not have been given such a name. Zehlihlati's name contradicts her gender identity because she is an educated, empowered women who has a successful professional career, she is not a disappointment.

Literature has highlighted that there has been a shift in naming practices. Males were usually the name-givers but now women were extended that privilege as well. The reality indicates that women are heads of most households, thus fathers and grandfathers have lost their name-giving prerogative (Ngubane & Thabethe, 2013:12). This change brings to light that women in the Zulu culture are not positioned the same in the patriarchal system because only certain women can be name-givers. This has not proved to be positive or a break with patriarchal

⁴⁴ Zehlihlati's family history is complicated. Her mother is the second wife in the family and she is not liked by her in-laws. The in-laws love the first wife but she did not produce a male child that is the reason her father decided to marry her mother in the hope of having a male child. Zehlihlati's mother only had girls as well. So it is a family of just female children.

thinking because older women have given their grand-children negative names. This affirms the notion of women being the perpetrators of patriarchal thinking and practice. This shows that women are not complete victims of the patriarchal system because they have carved out a space for themselves and are now able to be name-givers. The problem is that when women give a name (especially a negative name) it is empowering as well as disempowering at the same time. Empowering because they have the privilege to name but disempowering because they are perpetrating patriarchy by giving negative names and this shows there are no absolute nuances.

5.4. The following examples are typical names given to children in a polygynous family:

Phakimpi (deploy the war), *Zehlihlali* (disappointment), *Qondeni* (what is the intention), *Mpiyezintombi* (war or battle of ladies), *Zalibekezwi* (until you put the word), *Thintonjengaye* (you are both the same), *Dlabembalelo* (you eat they count), *Thalengabona* (silent deliberately), *Khonabehleba* (you here through the gossip), *Bhekezunu* (look after your business), *Sandelani* (why are we spreading), *Zwangobani* (who did you hear), *Bajahile* (they are in a hurry), *Khalangani* (what do you want), *Thuluzufe* (keep quiet till you die), *Thulebona* (watch and see), *Mpiyezulu* (war or battle of the storm), *Susimpi/Qalimpi* (start a war), *Vimbeni* (What can stop you from taking another wife or having another child), *Buzelani* (why do you ask), *Soneni* (what did we do), *Bhekimbangi* (watch your rival), *Muzowambango* (home of disputes), *Thukwase* (being insulted all the time), *Shongani* (why do you say that), *Bengingasho* (I was not saying), *Felokwakhe* (dying for your belongings), *Bhekezakwabo* (look after your siblings only), *Ndabakayisizi* (gossip does not help), *Gedley'hlekis* (pretend to be nice to your rivals), *Thuleleni* (why are you quiet), *Mfideni* (feed him gossip).

According to African feminist Mikell (1995) states that men and women in the African culture are not positioned equally. Men represent the air and women the earth, therefore men are expected to talk confidently and boastfully. In the Zulu culture men are expected to be strong, confident, warriors who command respect and attention when they speak. A negative name could impact on that identity. *Mpiyezulu* for example is a male name and it confirms his masculinity and he must live up to that name in his lifetime.

These names show that in polygyny there is constant tension and an invisible war going on translating into the names the wives give their children. The above names are directly

focused on someone in the name-givers personal life, they are commands or questions that often identify sources of conflict (Suzman, 1994:259). One might suggest that in making sources of conflict public, they perhaps neutralize or contain them by pointing at the person responsible (Suzman, 1994:260). This affirms and contradicts Zulu patriarchal cultural. In the Zulu culture people are socialized to being private and never making family matters public but by bestowing a negative name on a child that is being very public about the war that is raging within the family. It might be a way the co-wives finds comfort in naming a child a particular name and allowing the mother to say what she cannot say privately or publically to her rival.

5.5. Shift from negative to positive naming practices

The authors (Mphande, 2006; Suzman, 1994) mentioned there is a shift from negative to positive names. Children no longer are given names that bring to mind bad things or tension among several wives and ill treatment of daughters-in-law. My study seemed to refute that claim because one of my youngest participants was nineteen at the time and their name is *Thukwase* (means, insulted constantly) who was born in 1997 has a negative name. So this refutes the literature that there has seen a shift from negative naming to positive naming.

The implications of names on the individual's identity are conspicuous. Identity is a unified, purposeful aspect of self and hence is only part of the self-concept. Frabel (1997) states gender always involves an individual's relationship to gender as a social category. Richard Ashmore (1990) defines gender identity as the "the structured set of gendered personal identities that results when the individual takes the social construction of gender and biological 'facts' of sex and incorporates them in overall self-concept" (Ashmore, 1990:512). Personal identities begin with a name; a name is very personal especially in the Zulu culture. A name states; who you are, where you are from and where you belong. Scholars (see Egan & Perry, 2001) state that gender identity includes personal and social attributes, social relationships, interests and abilities, symbolic and stylistic behaviours and biological/physical/material attributes. An individual's gender identity is separate from their sex stereotype and gender attitudes.

In any culture genders are recognised, named and given meaning in accordance with the culture's rules or customs (Augustine, 2002:25). Culture is the matrix of gender and thus

gender changes as culture changes. I have highlighted that the literature states that there has been a shift from negative naming of children to more Zulu conscious naming practices. Names in a polygynous family reflect the family dynamics of the family. My participants did voice that these negative names did affect their gender construction because when they would state their names most Zulu speaking (or even Nguni speakers) would know exactly what family they are from and their family dynamics. This did prove to be humiliating at times because people would immediately pity them and judge them without knowing them.

Names especially in the Zulu culture do have an impact on identity. Negative names do go against traditional culture roles and expectations. If a man is given a name representing a 'traditional' female characteristic, how is he supposed to reconcile that contradiction? His name is not only humiliating to him but to the public he is an enigma because how can a man live up to a 'traditionally' female characteristic in the Zulu culture.

I do go in-depth in my religion chapter about this but; religion was a source of comfort to some participants with negative names. They have found solace in the Christian church and they believe that the meaning of their name in their Zulu culture has no bearing and carries no negative connotations to their Christian beliefs.

5.6. Conclusion

The social context within which naming is embedded becomes part of the name itself. Names point outward from the individual toward various people, as determined by their participation in a wide range of social relations (Suzman, 1994:259). Naming practices are not static but change overtime and through the cultural experience of people in any society. A change in the social, political and linguistic influences on a society may result in changes in the names given to children. In most cases in the Nguni culture, personal names generally function as a signal to others or to the family, about issues that cannot be openly discussed and resolved. The Nguni tradition avoids open discussion of sensitive issues, the parents or the family will name a child to express their concern in an indirect way (Ngubane, 2013:167). A person is identified by his or her name from birth until death unless there are situations that demand a name change such as when one finds that one's name has negative connotations which may result in negative experiences in life (Ngubane, 2013:168). There has been a shift in naming practices in that women can now be name-givers. This change emphasizes that

women in the Zulu culture are not positioned the same because only certain women can be name-givers. A name can either confirm a masculine identity (Mpiyezulu) or contradict it (Thuluzufe). Although some female participants did not have glaring contradictory names that affected their feminine identity but their negative names affected them more personally than publically. Soneni (where did we go wrong) does not want to live up to her name it is as if she is destined to fail in life. Zehlihlali (disappointment) cannot reconcile living up to that name it is almost the same as being predestined to fail as in a curse. In the following chapter I look at how at how family relations impact gender identity.

CHAPTER SIX

FAMILY RELATIONS AND IMPACT ON GENDER IDENTITY

6. Introduction

Gender identities vary not only between cultures but also within cultures. There is no single fixed masculine or feminine identity which exists within a particular culture; instead there are multiple masculinities and femininities which individual men and women draw on according to particular circumstances such as age, class and race. Identity is not only a matter of individual choice; the process of defining one's self is always taken in relation to other people (Augustine, 2002: 92). Culture cannot be changed but each person can change their attitude towards others. The discourse related to certain issues will thus change, which will invariably change the culture (Augustine, 2002: 117).

6.1. Siblings' relations and gender identity construction

In the theoretical approach underpinning this study the family is considered a 'unity of interacting personalities'. There are several sets of structural relationships concerning life in the nuclear family which are organised as interactions between adult members, interactions between parents and children, and interactions among children (Irish, 1964:279).

The multifarious discussions and studies of 'sibling rivalry' have tended to consider the relations of siblings to each other mainly in terms of the vertical dimension, that is, the competition of children in the family for the love, attention and favour of one or both parents (Irish, 1964:280). Psychologists and sociologists have pointed out that the role of siblings has been considered chiefly in the light of 'displacement' and 'rivalry'. It is a rarity to discover findings in previous studies that do not focus largely on the negative aspects of sibling relationships and warnings for how to deal with these negative aspects appropriately. It is recognised that the polygamous marriage arrangement modifies the intensity and extent of sibling interactions (Irish, 1964:280).

Muzowambango

I would take turns in cooking with my sisters and I was never the best cook so I was always the last person to cook or be asked to cook because I was not good at cooking but I was excellent at washing the dishes they always sparkled after I washed them.

The above excerpt highlights how sibling rivalry manifests even in the most mundane of chores such as washing dishes. This proves the notion that men are competitive in nature (see Culley & Portuges, 1985; Di Lenardo, 1998; and Gneezy et al. 2009); they are competitive against other genders as well as within their own gender.

Thulubona

I would not have been where I am because it was the spirit of competition with other children in my family that made me work harder.

Phakimpi

There was intense jealousy amongst the children. The jealousy usually spilled over from their mothers. The basis of the jealousy was the belief the father favoured a certain family over another.

Dlabembalela

There was competition for father's affection amongst the children.

Shongani

There was rivalry like in any family minor disputes between siblings.

Thulubona

A polygynous family made me compete with my siblings and other children in the community. I wanted to be the best in school.

The excerpts above show that the participants felt that the competition amongst siblings in their polygynous family was quite intense however some of the participants believe that this competitiveness and rivalry made them stronger people. They always tried to do their best in all aspects of their lives, whether it was their schoolwork or their professional careers. Thus from an early age being in a polygynous family socialised the participants to be hardworking, studious individuals. The female respondents on the other hand did not echo such sentiments with regard to competitiveness amongst siblings. Di Lenardo (1998) stated that females are by nature cooperative rather than competitive. As I mentioned in Chapter Four my female respondents' lack of competitive leanings seems to confirm the notion of a lack of competitiveness and aggression amongst females.

Within the immediate family, siblings constitute an important sub-‘we group’. Sibling relationships can perform a number of functions. Brothers and/or sisters spend many hours together and share a wide range of activities. Such contacts within the family tend to be intimate and inclusive, and characterised by frankness, informality, cohesiveness, intensity and extensity. Interaction with siblings functions as one avenue for the socialisation of children (Irish, 1964:281). It helps bring them into social reality, gives them experience in resolving interpersonal conflicts, introduces them to the rights of others and provides a ‘school of mirrors’. On occasion, siblings may act as substitutes for parents. They may turn to each other when sufficient attention or understanding is not shown by an indifferent, harried, or uncomprehending parent. In some instances siblings are more effective teachers than adults, particularly if youthful skills are involved. Siblings may often understand childhood problems and new situations better in some ways, than do the parents they share. Siblings are associates that can contribute importantly to emotional security and, ordinarily, it is pleasant and helpful for children to have other children as companions. Siblings may serve as role models for one another; particularly the younger siblings may observe older siblings of the same sex. They can serve as challengers and stimulators. In the creation of a ‘sense of family’, that is, a psychological unity of members who perform the essential and peripheral tasks of habitation together, each person develops his niche in the total structure. The larger the family, the greater the number, variety and degree of specialisations that may develop in these roles (Irish, 1964:282).

Irish (1964) stated that sibling associations and attachments can also be dysfunctional in their consequences. They may engender so much security and cohesiveness within the group that a member comes to feel insecure or ‘homesick’ when away from their family. Frequently, particularly in larger families, the presence of many siblings may considerably increase the difficulty of the life struggle. Some siblings can become bullies of the smaller and younger ones, while in other circumstances the latter may be coddled. The talents of some children in the family may be sacrificed to the needs and desires of others. This is what I indeed witnessed in my own research. Some participants did mention that they wanted to continue with a specific career path or further their education and could not because the money was used for the needs of the other siblings. Jealousy and rivalry may disrupt cordial relationships and hinder the attainment of adequate personal and social adjustments both within and outside the family.

Another researcher see (Jankowiak & Diderisch 2000) also stated that family size did play an important factor in the mental wellbeing of a child. This researcher stated that every facet of family life tends to be different in a large family which could result in children from large families having different personalities than those raised in smaller families (Irish, 1964:284). In a large family, the group rather than the individual tends to be stressed. The larger the family becomes, the more internal organisation develops and dominance of one or two persons appears. The large family typically involves greater specialisation and multiplicity of roles and functions, in other words, greater complexity. Children in a large family system discipline each other, and adjustments are made relatively more often to intra-family peers. Irish (1964) stated that there are only a limited number of role choices available to a sibling, even in a large family. They suggest that each child tends to develop their role on the basis of, and in relation to, the roles which have already been pre-empted by others in the family. An earlier study indicated that adolescents from small families showed better relations with parents than did those from large families. The study also found that children from smaller families had more favourable relations to parents and to siblings than those from larger families. The data obtained in the study did not corroborate the notion that the large family atmosphere is more favourable to personality adjustment (Irish, 1964:285).

My research findings echoed what the literature shows in terms of sibling influence and rivalry. The literature indicates that siblings from larger families naturally gravitate to one another and develop close bonds because the competition for their parent's attention is extremely tough. Some respondents in my study stated that they looked to their older siblings as role models. On the other hand, they sometimes looked to their siblings as a reference on how not to behave or with the intent to be better than them. My respondents did state that they looked up to their older siblings even with regard to how to construct their gendered identity. Some younger male participants stated that their father was the ideal image they wanted to imitate when they were younger but it was their older brothers who helped shape their gendered identity by showing them some aspects of manhood that their father did not or could not because of the generational age gap. The female participants were closer to their mothers and they looked to their mother as the best image to base their female identity upon. The female participants also looked up to their sisters as role models.

Phakimpi

My younger sister used to tell me when she grows up she too wants to have a Masters degree and have a good job which pays well so she can be an independent woman and not have to put up with nonsense from men. It made me feel proud that my siblings admired me and it made me want to support and motivate them more to not only be like me but to do better than me.

As the above excerpt shows the female siblings usually looked up to their siblings. The family functions as an environment for life and learning. Irish (1964:283) stated “each child uses his sibling as a means of his own self-definition”. In identifying their differences, siblings may strengthen their relationships while each one can also enhance their own individuality.

6.1.2. *Inhlonipo* (respectability) discourse

The nature of discourse suggests that culture is a set of socially-constructed norms that changes over time, so gender inequality can best be addressed by deconstructing messages about women’s ‘natural’ roles, rights and responsibilities. Feminist and gender and development scholars have shown that norms of ‘respectability’ reinforce gender inequality. Such respectability discourse (or ‘respectable femininity’) can reinforce men’s control over women by inducing shame and social ostracism of women who fail to conform, while providing acclaim and resources to women who perform the prescribed ‘respectable’ roles. Respectability discourse also provides a structure through which women can oppress or alienate other women. While different opinions about respectability exist within a single culture, dominant social constructions mask underlying complexity and create an assumption that there is a consensus. Unlike two primary strategies of control over women, seclusion and protection, respectability discourse requires no direct, external control, it endures throughout a woman’s life cycle and affects women of all ages and socio-economic classes (Kumalo et al. 2015: 48).

A study of the Shona found ‘respectable’ women remained in or returned intermittently to rural areas and submitted to the authority of elders. Marriage and motherhood, submission to their husband and his kin, industriousness, hospitality and altruism earn Shona women the

accolade “uyo ndiye mukadzi chaiye” meaning “that one is a real woman” (Kumalo et al. 2015: 48).

Thalengabona

I believe that there are ways of asserting yourself and not being disrespectful. In our culture (Zulu culture) a good woman is a respectable woman, a woman who carries herself with dignity and self respect and most importantly knows her place. I support females becoming empowered by education and having careers but I do not agree when they take their freedom ‘too far’ by having children out of wedlock and saying ‘they do not want to get married but want to be mothers’. I think you cannot have one without the other and still expect to be called a respectable woman. You bring shame to yourself, your family and your ancestors.

Soneni

I am proud to be educated and to have a good job, I am the definition of an ‘Independent Woman’ but I want to have children but I cannot have them unless I am married. In the Zulu culture being respectable is very important and you could be the head of a major company but if you have children out of wedlock that is shameful. I sometimes wish I could just marry some man in name and have my children and we live separate lives because I want children but I am not interested in being married but I know it is a process that I must go through to maintain my dignity and self respect in the eyes of my family and culture.

The male participants in my study did not voice such concerns about their respectability. One female participant did state that having a child out of wedlock brings shame to the woman and her family but not to the man who has fathered the baby or his family. In the Zulu culture it is excused and sometimes even expected for men to have children out of wedlock as it is seen as their ‘cultural and biological’ right.

6.2. The role of the biological mother’s position in the polygynous marriage

In Zulu traditional polygynous families the first wife yields the most power and is most respected. The first wife is the de-facto head of the family if the husband is absent. In traditional polygynous marriages the first wife is usually the oldest and most senior of the wives. Thus Oyewumi’s (2002) notion of seniority is also applicable in the Zulu polygynous family context. Literature on polygyny has highlighted how the subsequent wife or wives are

more loved than the first wife because they were usually chosen by the husband and not arranged by the families. Even if the subsequent wives are more favoured than the first wife, they do not and never will hold the first wife's position in the family and will never be as respected as the first wife as the first wife is viewed as the 'true' wife.

Oyewumi (2002) in her article *Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the challenges of African Epistemologies*, states that in the Yoruba culture in-marrying females are ranked by order of marriage, which is the same as in Zulu culture. The role-identity that defines females is the position of mother. Within the household, members are grouped around their biological mother and the mother is therefore the pivot around which familial relationships are delineated and organised. The relationship between womb siblings, just like siblings in a nuclear family, is based on an understanding of common interests borne out of a shared experience. In Yoruba culture the shared experience bonds the siblings together in loyalty and unconditional love which transcends gender (Oyewumi, 2002: 3). The number of wife the mother is in a polygynous family is of great significance to how the children are treated and perceived.

Dlabembalela

My mother was the second wife so there was anger, resentment and jealousy between the wives. The first wife hated us and her hatred intensified when my mother had my brother. I do not know why because she (the first wife) also had a son. My father treated us children all the same but I did sometimes feel he favoured his first family children slightly more. It was nothing overt.....more like sometimes he would buy the children of the first wife gifts and he would buy us gifts too but they always came later. When my father married his third wife I felt we were treated better because the children's gifts of the third wife came even later than ours so it always felt like father liked us second and the third wife's children last.

Phakimpi

My mother's experience as the first wife was unhappy about the second wife that followed her and of the making of another family. Although my mother did not struggle as the first wife but although her experience was not good, it was not great either but she remained in the marriage for her children. I was the child of the first wife so my status was elevated regardless of any subsequent children that followed me regardless of their gender. That

position at times made me feel superior to the other children because I was privileged. That is how I felt when I was younger now as an adult I sympathise with my half-siblings and their experiences of growing up in our family. I think most women probably stay in such unions for the sake of their children. Polygyny is an outdated practice that only makes sense if the families will live in the rural areas and not in the city.

Phakimpi's position as the child of the first wife made her feel superior to the other half-siblings that followed her. She would always be the oldest and in essence most respected and this is where Oyewumi's principle of seniority proves to be true. Phakimpi's experience as being the oldest in the family did impact how she constructed her gendered identity because she viewed herself as superior even to her younger brothers in a culture that is intensely patriarchal.

Dlabembalela

My mother's experience in the polygynous was horrible as well as her relationship with her husband. The in-laws hated my mother in the beginning because she was the second wife but came to prefer her after many years because they saw how the first wife was constantly fighting with everyone. Polygyny is a difficult situation and most women are coerced into accepting it because their husbands do not ask their permission to take additional wives (as per tradition) they just do it. I at times witnessed a family devoid of love and that is was a family in the sense of us having the same biological father but we were not happy and we weren't living just existing.

Thuleleni

My mother had an unhappy marriage because she was father's favourite wife and the other wives hated her for it. This at times made me feel better because we were well taken care of by our father because he loved my mother the most but I did feel for my other siblings who were unlucky to not have been born from the favourite wife. I would view myself as the favourite child and my identity was intrinsically linked to my mother's favourable position.

Thalengabona

It was not a good or bad experience so we classified it as an 'in-between'. My mother just accepted it was her life and tried to make it work for her and her children. My mother's

experience has been ingrained in my mind from a young age that I will never marry because one day my husband will take another wife. Even though my mother's experience was mixed, it was good and bad but it still made me hate the practice of polygyny and see it as an outdated practice.

Bhekezunu

I had no problem with polygyny as long as the man treated the women and children equally and did everything correct culturally. I think problems begin when favouritism is blatantly shown which naturally breeds jealousy and resentment.

Thuluzufe

My mother's experience was happy because it was their culture and she loved the fact that everything was equal amongst the wives. My mother was well respected and loved in the family even by her in-laws. She loved everyone even the illegitimate children their father got outside the polygynous marriage. My mother's experience was/is good therefore it was encouraging to see maybe in the future I may consider a polygynous marriage.

Qalimpi

My mother was advised by her in-laws to observe family protocol and respect the ancestors and everything will be fine. My mother's experience had no effect on me because it was just the family I was raised in and I believed it was the normal way of life as a Zulu person.

Sandelani

I think polygyny is a good practice when done in accordance to the correct customs and traditions and most importantly everything is done equally.

Phakimpi

As I have grown older I am now able to see things more maturely. My mother being the first wife and a first wife that is educated and financially independent did have a bearing on her empowerment within the family. Since we were already better off my mother could negotiate better her position within the family and that is probably why my father favoured us more. I was more privileged and I think I was able to construct my identity more freely because of my mother's privileged position (first wife and financially independent).

I want to highlight that matters are not always one way or another and that matters do become complicated.. *Phakimpi's* mother was in a privileged position as the first wife who was a modern career woman and is financially stable. It would be interesting to have seen how the positionality of a woman, who was the fifth wife, who was also a modern career woman and was wealthy, would have changed her status within the family. Would her positionality have been different and would it have been significantly better than the first wife? Or would the fact that she is wife number five have determined her status in the family regardless of her personal success?

My respondents did voice an overall opinion that their relationship with their step-mothers was good. Most of them respected their step-mothers and even liked them but a few others did not. Even if they disliked the other wives they would never overtly show them or the family their true feelings because that would have been considered extremely disrespectful in the Zulu culture. Chodorow's (1978) notion of gender identity construction is applicable in my study to an extent because she suggests that male children break away from their mothers to form a masculine identity mirrored after their father's identity. On the other hand, female children stay close to their mother so as to create a feminine identity, with their mother as their example of femininity. In a polygynous family however there are other mothers present to influence the identity of the female children and this is what Chodorow's (1978) theory fails to consider.

I found it fascinating that the older participants were more understanding of their parents' marriages than the younger participants. The older women were more sympathetic to their mothers and the younger men idolised their fathers.

Dlabembalela

I feel pity for my mother she was raised in an era of apartheid and she could not further her education and be able to be independent. Her only viable option was to marry and in her case she married an already married man and she became the second wife. When I was younger I used to be angry at my mother and ask her why she would marry a man already married would she have liked it if her husband did that to her. She responded by saying she had no future so the only glimmer of hope was to marry and have children and then her children would hopefully be more educated than her and not have to choose between dying an old spinster or suffer the shame of having illegitimate children. Now as I am older I

understand the choice my mother made it was not the best choice but the only better choice and I am grateful I would never have to make such a choice.

Qondeni

No I can never understand why my mother stayed in such a union. She is the first wife and she said she was against my father marrying a second wife but she was forced to agree to his second marriage or else there would have been war in our family. She said she only agreed to keep the peace but I do not understand why she stayed. She says she stayed for us (the children) she knew if she left our father he would not support us and we would suffer and be destitute at least staying married we were able to attend school and get better educated. She said she did not care about her marriage once she had her children and she focused on that.

Thuluzufe

My mother has passed on but I did have a good relationship with her before she passed away. She was a very open and honest woman and my father also told me that his first wife was the one who encouraged him to marry my mother because she no longer was interested in those things (sexual relations) so it was a very amicable peaceful union because everyone knew their places and the duties they had to perform. I respect both my parents and their decisions and I think this was how polygyny was done in the past. It was done correctly and openly and everyone had to agree. My father said he would never have married again if his first wife was against the union.

Thuluzufe

Culturally one is taught to respect parents even though they may not agree with their choices and/or type of family they believe in.

Mpiyezulu

I still respect and love my parents because they tried to give me the best life even if my family was 'different'.

In my study my respondents had a different experience in forming their gendered identity because they had multiple 'mothers' to identify or not identify with. Some respondents did explain how they witnessed their half-siblings favouring their mothers (the siblings' step-mothers) rather than their own biological mothers. Some participants said they loved another

step-mother more than their own biological mother for various reasons. However, just because they preferred another mother did not mean they respected their own biological mothers any less.

6.3. Relationship with the co-mothers in the polygynous family

Lack of love and affection poses a serious threat to children's self concept. Situations that may affect children's self concept are divorce, parental death and polygyny (Owuamanam, 1984:594). There is conflicting opinion regarding the role of polygamy in generating love and affection in the home. There are studies which show that there is a strong negative influence resulting from jealousy and unhealthy competition among children of co-wives, however there are also reasonable grounds to believe to believe that due to its contribution to the size of an extended family in the African home, polygyny might generate warmth and affection and improve the general mental health of the home (Owuamanam, 1984:594). Although polygynous homes are more stressful for children, the extended family provides the child with particular security (Owuamanam, 1984:594).

I asked my participants how the other wives treated them when they were children. Some of the responses were:

Phakimpi

The other wife treated us just fine I guess. There isn't much interaction between us (the two families). When we were younger the two wives got along so well such that they would do groceries together and wear similar clothes. Now that I am grown up I'm thinking dad had done something to keep them close. They (the two wives) used to visit my dad in Joburg and they would look after each other's children for about a month at a time, and lovakashayo (the one visiting) would also bring a child from the other household. Life was simple. I guess that is why I didn't realise we were different.

Thuluzufe

There was no love lost between the wives. My mother was the first wife and she hated the second wife. She being a traditional woman would never say it out loud but when we got older we would see by her actions and the way she spoke about her that she hated her. My mother was a kind woman and although she hated the second wife she had no problems with

her children. She would say children are innocent and it makes no sense to be angry at them for being born. My half-siblings always respected my mother and treated her well as they should have and is expected in the Zulu culture. My mother understood her duty as a wife and she always respected our culture and my father even if he did things she did not like.

Dlabembalela

My dad is tough and he maintains the peace but we generally have a cold relationship between the two households. A story: We share a post box and each household has its own key. So my ma lost hers and sent my younger brother to borrow the key from the other co-wife and she didn't give her. The other co-wife told my brother to ask my mother ukuthi sebeqale nini ukubolekana izinto (since when did they start lending each other things).

A story: Recently when preparing for my wedding ma borrowed a stockpot from her (the other co-wife), but when ma took the pot back she refused to take it back saying it was not hers, she said hers was newer, yet it was the only one we borrowed. So she (my mum) had to go and buy a new one and when I asked ma what were you thinking borrowing from her? Ma said if she did not borrow the pot from that woman she would not have come to the wedding.

Phakimpi

My father's oldest wife was respected the most, followed by the second wife. My mother was not loved by others (co-wives) because she was loved the most by my father.

Muzowambango

My mother treated all the children very well because she too came from a polygynous family. All the half-siblings loved my mother so much that they wanted to stay at our house.

Qalimpi

My mother was obligated to treat the other children from the other wives as well as her own.

Thuluzufe

There was love and affection shown to us as children by everyone from our biological mother, co-wives and even our father. There was no distinction between my mother and co-mothers because we loved, respected and obeyed all of them.

There is conflicting opinion from the participants in my study regarding the role of polygyny in generating love and affection in the home. There is a strong negative influence resulting from jealousy and unhealthy competition among children of co-wives, however there is also reasonable ground to believe that due to its contribution to the size of an extended family in the African home, polygyny might generate warmth and affection and improve the general mental health of the home (Owuamanam, 1984:594). Although polygynous homes are more stressful for children, the extended family provides the child with particular security (Owuamanam, 1984:594).

Most of the narratives seemed to mirror each other in that the wives usually did not treat the children of co-wives any differently from their own children. The participants were treated like children but it is important to highlight that although they were all the father's children not all of them were equal in status. The first wife of the man and her children had the most privileges because they were the 'first' family and subsequent wives and their families were treated according to their rank. Some fathers did not care which child belonged to whom but some treated their first born son of any wife better than their oldest daughter.

My respondents stated that their relationship with their step-mothers had little to no bearing on how they constructed their gendered identity. Their step-mothers were respected as wives to their father and if there were any ill feelings towards them it was usually because they were young and sided with their biological mothers if issues arose. Now as adults the participants see that any resentment they may have felt as children towards their step-mothers was out of jealousy because their half-siblings had things that their own mother could not buy them.

Soneni

My mother was the second wife in the family so she inherited a disadvantaged position and was also disliked by her in-laws. As a child I was always taught to respect and fear the first wife because she was very powerful and had the influence to either make my life difficult or easier (in terms of getting father's permission to do certain things). Now as an adult I can empathise with the first wife, what woman would be happy if their husband took a second or third wife? I love my mother but it made me see that women in the Zulu culture are just a way of displaying wealth, male privilege and a sort of hypermasculinity.

As the above excerpt shows the respondent voices how her step-mother affirmed her role as a woman in the Zulu culture in that women are viewed as commodities to be collected and kept by Zulu men as a sign of prestige and wealth to society. Gasas (2011) believes that polygyny is “a purely a male-serving situation with no gain for the woman. It’s a situation that breeds male bravado, lack commitment and use of women as objects of trade and male pleasure. Women who believe otherwise are in denial”. Pato (2010) believes that the institution of polygamy was fairly well-intentioned but today it is hard to justify. Some scholars (see (Pato, 2010, Gasas, 2011 and Jonas, 2012) have argued that polygyny is not a human rights issue but a social issue. Jonas (2010) states that polygyny also constitutes a veritable assault to women’s right to equality.

Thuluzufe

I did not care one way or the other about my co-mothers. My older co-mother (first wife) was just like my mother to me except she was older and was respected more as my father’s first wife. I was close to my biological mother and she did have some influence on my identity as a man because she taught me to be respectful of women, disciplined and have integrity. My co-mother’s presence or influence did not impact my identity because I believe I would have been the same person whether I was born into a nuclear family or not.

Muzowambango

The other older two co-mothers did not influence how I constructed my identity. They were just older women who happened to be married to my father. I did not have any feelings one way or another towards them therefore they did not have a bearing on my identity.

This seems to challenge western scholars who argue that a mother’s presence has a bearing on the child’s identity. Chodorow (2000) states that a child has to consciously break way from his mother to form his identity based on a male figure who may be a role model or his father’s identity. Since some male respondents were ambivalent to their co-mothers this principle was not applicable in the context of this study. African western females believe the principle of seniority is more important than biology. This is illustrated in the excerpts above because these male participants showed that they loved their biological mothers more than their co-mothers but nevertheless they respected their co-mothers as elder women. Therefore

it cannot be said beyond a doubt that their co-mothers did not have an influence on their gendered identity and there appears to be contradictions.

Phakimpi

The wives treated the children 'ok' but it was never sincere there was always a 'falsehood' behind their seemingly kind actions. There was usually little to no interaction with the other families so there was no reason to treat the other children one way or another. The second wife was only affectionate to her own children and the father. Yes we grew up in a loving home. The other wife particularly treats me differently, I mean she would shout and greet me when passing by the road, yet she does not talk to my other two sisters, that made me feel uncomfortable. The younger sister (from the other co-wife) she does not like me because she matriculated the same year as her two girls, she passed and went to University of Cape Town (UCT) while the two girls went to FET College and she blamed me for that. I encouraged her girls to apply through CAO and delivered their forms. So when they did not get any offers, she says I did not post her children's forms. My point is there is no love between the two households.

Thalengabona

Some wives treated the children well even if they were not their biological children. My mother believed children were innocent in this situation and therefore treated the other children as well as her own. Mother was always loving and accommodating to the other children. My mother treated the other children well because her reasoning was the children were there before she married into the polygynous marriage as a subsequent wife.

My mother was the second wife of three wives my father had. My mother showed us love and the other children from the first wife as well. She was always respectful to the first wife and my father. It was when the third wife came that problems started. Everyone hated her, they said she was a witch and is the reason my father has gone crazy. Now as an adult I think it is because the last wife was younger and my father loved her the most. The third wife was always nice to me and my siblings and we could always talk to her about things we could not talk to our mothers about and that was because she was closer to our age. She only had one child and I love her as my sister. Funny how the first two wives did not like each other but were civil but as soon as the third wife came they became best friends and hated the third

wife. My mother told me once she now understands how the first wife felt when she married my father, after the third wife came.

Qondeni

The other wife was the instigator of trouble and conflict. The adults all knew she was the cause of conflict and tension and as a result usually ignored her gossip stories.

Dlabembalela

One mother intentionally treated the other children from the other co-wives badly because they also treated her children badly.

Bhekezunu

Father never openly showed affection but his way of being 'affectionate' was to provide for the family. There was love and affection from all mothers biological and not.

Thulubona

My co-mothers were commanded to love the children as if they are their own regardless if they were their biological children.

Mpiyezulu

My mother treated the children well because her children were treated well by the other co-wives. My father did not show enough love and affection.

Interestingly the male participants in my study had no such stories to share about them feeling animosity towards their fathers' other wives. They all said they were shown significant love from their mothers and they respected the other wives. They had no stories to tell or share because such stories are for women and little girls who pay attention to such things.

Some respondents stated that their relationship with their co-mothers was respectful and that now as adults they feel sympathy for their co-mothers as they do their own biological mothers. They view their co-mothers as women imprisoned in a culture and believe that they were more like their biological mothers than they originally thought. Their relationship with their co-mothers did not seem to influence the construction of their gendered identity.

Phakimpi

My co-mother did not have an influence on my gender identity but her presence did make me notice how in the Zulu women are collectables in my culture, to be displayed ostentatiously.

It is not clear what overall argument the respondents were making because some stated that their co-mothers did not have a bearing on their gender identity but further investigation and prompting during the interviews yielded results that revealed that their co-mothers did have an impact on their gendered identity. Therefore a contradiction is evident in the respondent's arguments, as Phakimpi's excerpt above shows.

6.4. The role of the father in the polygynous family structure

According to Chojnacka (1980), African men bear a relatively low burden of family support. Chojnacka (1980) argues that the presence of multiple wives in a polygynous household represents a form of wealth in African cultures. If women and children provide much of the food and other subsistence items themselves, then there is little reason to assume that there is any given level of paternal income. Children in polygynous families will have access to fewer resources than children in monogamous families (Desai, 1992:693). This is particularly true with respect to nutrition, since provision of food is traditionally considered the responsibility of women, while men may provide for other child-related expenditures, especially educational costs (Desai, 1992:694).

The role of the father in Zulu culture is one of headship and leadership. The father in a nuclear family as well as in a polygynous family is the one who controls his families and is responsible for their well-being and protection. The father in traditional Zulu culture is feared as a strict disciplinarian and despot who controls his family's behaviour and rectifies it if any of the family members misbehave. However, the father's role as the head of the family shifts in a polygynous family to the wife because the father cannot physically be present at all his wives' homes at the same time. The polygynous family structure is one of shifting heads of households because the father delegates most of his responsibilities to the wife of that particular family when he is absent. If the father did not explicitly delegate his responsibility to that particular wife, those responsibilities fall immediately to the first wife.

Shongani

It was quite obvious that my father loved his first family more than us (second wife's family). He (father) treated the girls from the first wife better than he did us (boys) from his second wife. I think it was because they were older and his first family. It certainly was not because they were girls. Although he treated the girls from his first wife well he was overprotective of them than us the boys. We were given more freedom to roam but I think that is because we are boys. I do think that if we were born from the first wife we would have had preferential treatment.

According to Rizni (2015) fathers are considered emotionally distant from their adolescent children. A meta-analysis of the trends in the fatherhood literature indicated a close relation between the construct of 'masculinity' and 'fatherhood' (Rizni, 2015:14). The concept of fatherhood has however evolved in due course over time. The stages of fatherhood are defined as a moral teacher, breadwinner, gender role model and nurturing father. The prime structure of fatherhood in the twentieth century had as its core the father's active breadwinning role in the family. The regular presence of mothers as children's primary care givers encouraged the hidden assumption that father-child relationships had only a minimal impact on children's development, and this popular belief was supported by developmental theorists throughout history. Currently it is understood that fathers present a different kind of parenting from mothers and that many fathers have a longing to be more involved with their children to shift beyond the usual breadwinning role. In the discipline of gender studies, masculine is contrasted with feminine and fatherhood is understood through the reference of motherhood (Rizni, 2015:14). Understanding fatherhood implies that fatherhood is perceived as an expression of masculinity which is related to the construction of gender identity. Although fathers are able to care like mothers, childcare performed by fathers is principally different from mothers' care. It is more a 'masculine' care, which is more playful, physical and protective but less structured.

The 'ideal' man as the imagined or archetype refers to the man that all women want and who all men want to be. The forceful aspect of the ideal and its use by hegemonic masculinity also affects what can be identified as a global shift within western cultures towards 'softer' and more involved men, known as the 'new man' and the 'new father'. The bigger

accomplishment in accepting the concept of 'new father' is in understanding the impact of the masculine ideals on fatherhood (Rizni, 2015:14).

Researchers add that the father's involvement in parenting in some cultures is not natural, universal or even considered essential and yet these cultures produce cognitively, socially and emotionally competent children. It should be pointed out that new concepts of fatherhood may emerge and that varied images of fatherhood co-exist (Rizni, 2015:14). Fathers play a vital role in providing a substantial amount of nurturance, moral and ethical guidance, emotional and financial support (Rizni, 2015:14). While differing views regarding gender and parenting roles of mothers and fathers exist, mothers and fathers continue to have a strong influence, especially upon their children's beliefs, values and plans for the future (Rizni, 2015:14).

Masculine ideology refers to beliefs about the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards of behaviour. It differs from masculine gender orientation and is also distinct from gender related beliefs. Masculinity ideology is the individual's endorsement and internalisation of cultural belief systems about masculinity and male gender, rooted in the structural relationship between the two sexes. Through social processes, masculinity ideology informs and encourages men to conform to prevailing male role norms by adopting certain socially sanctioned masculine behaviours and avoiding certain other behaviours. The seven norms of traditional masculinity ideology are: avoidance of femininity, fear and hatred of homosexuals, self-reliance, aggression, dominance, non-relational attitudes toward sexuality and restrictive emotionality (Rizni, 2015:15).

A man generally marries one woman at a time and considers his wife and children his responsibility and property. Women in most cultures rely on men for financial assistance and societies tend to be highly gender differentiated. Researchers have discussed important differences in urban and rural lives in respect of father roles. Rural fathers are found to spend more time with their children, particularly male children, by working together in fields and in other means of generating earnings. In cities, urban fathers spend less time with their children due to long working hours at places of work outside of the home. They also tend to be more democratic fathers (Rizni, 2015:15). My research showed that both fathers who lived in the rural and fathers who lived in urban areas did not spend as much time with their children as the mothers did. Fathers were viewed as distant and uninterested in their children's lives.

They paid what needed to be paid for regarding their children's needs and were only involved in their children's lives if a serious dispute arose between the families. Fathers were seen as the head of household and were feared as such.

Research shows that fathers who hold more gender equality beliefs have a tendency to be more active, responsible and warm, and check their children's behaviour more than those fathers with less gender lenient values. Good fathering and careful parental training enables children to grow up into well-adjusted normal people (Rizni, 2015:15).

At the late adolescence level, girls are closely bonded with their mothers and become distant from their fathers as gender differentiation is now at its peak. In case of boys, early adolescents look up to their fathers as role models in a heroic manner. They do not face any conflict of interest at that stage and they try to copy and follow their fathers. My study also showed that the male participants reiterated what Rizni's (2015) study found, that boys imitate their fathers when constructing their masculine identity. – As the years of adolescence go by, boys begin to develop their own personalities and individual priorities resulting in varying conflicts which may last up to adolescence. That is why late adolescent boys perceive their fathers as less effective at fatherhood as compared to their mothers and their effectiveness at motherhood.

Qondeni

*“Abanye obuthi bethu babebona ukuthi bayathanda impilo kababa bafuna isithembu nabo”.
(Some of my brothers were enthralled by our father's life and also wanted to have a polygynous family when they were older)*

Shongani

I noticed when I was younger that my father loved my sisters and sometimes I felt he loved them more than he did me and my brothers. I do not know why maybe because my father always said a good woman is a woman who is hard working and industrious and so my sisters were always commended for being good girls always doing their chores, polite and obeyed our parents. As we got older though my father grew closer to us boys.

Dlabembalela

My father was always happy and either oblivious to the tension, fighting, jealousy and hatred within the family or he did not care. He was the 'man' of the house and he got the best of both worlds whilst his family suffered in silence. My father felt very important and would boast that he is a 'Real' man because of his polygynous family.

Phakimpi

Inequality of genders in the Zulu culture. Some father/husband need to be worshipped first before they give out love or affection to their wives or children.

Shongani

I witnessed my father having to constantly mediator amongst his fighting wives and he saw his mother get frustrated because his father failed to honour some of his responsibilities. I think polygyny is emotionally frustrating on men as well. My father was always stressed even at home. I felt pity for him because he had to go to work and be stressed and come home and be stressed, he never knew any peace.

Mpiyezulu

Father's experience showed me how the 'Zulu' traditional way of living was like. This showed me how a real Zulu man provides and protects his family. Since my father had a positive experience they viewed polygyny as a good thing because it provided a large family in which everyone was happy, there was no jealousy or resentment because everything was done equally.

Thulubona

My father's experience showed him that a man makes decisions and stands by them and is a good provider and protector. I have nothing against polygyny but it should only be done if the man can provided equally for all his family and everything is done in accordance to the correct tradition or customs.

Sandelani

My father was happy because his family was happy there were no misunderstandings, jealousy, competition or fights amongst the wives or children. Father's experience was a

positive one because he was happy because his family was happy and healthy and everyone got along as a family. My father was a good experience because he was loved and respected in our community.

Muzowambango

My father was a traditional man and was not concerned about his style of leadership and he enjoyed polygyny. He did try his best to satisfy his family and ensure they had everything they needed.

Thuluzufe

My life was affected so much by what I witnessed I vowed never to enter into a polygynous marriage.

It was interesting to see that men, specifically Zulu men who are known as strong patriarchs, can be emotional beings. Some men did reiterate that although polygyny on the surface does look appealing there are also negative aspects, such as the psychological stress involved in such a union. Most men said they viewed their fathers as very good providers because their fathers provided for many families at the same time. The data also showed that such families affected the husband in various ways just as it affected the women.

Muzowambango

My father is my hero he was able to marry three women and convince them it was alright. I want to be just like my father when I grow up. He is a real man having more than one wife and many children. I get along well with my father and I respect him immensely. I respect my mother as well but sometimes I wonder if she really was desperate to marry a man who already had three wives. I could never ask my mother such a question of course unless I want her to beat me (laughing). I think only desperate women would agree to be with a man who already has a girlfriend or wife or maybe my father loved my mother more than his first three wives I do not know but one day I will be older enough and brave enough to ask him that question.

6.5. Conclusion

Psychologists and sociologists have pointed out that the role of siblings has been considered chiefly in the light of ‘displacement’ and ‘rivalry’ (Quinn, 1977:194). Features of boys’

upbringing cause them to prize achievement, seek out competition for status and maintain the social distance requisite to authority. The male participants in my study spoke about their siblings and how they see them as competition in school and in sport. The female participants did not indicate that they had been competitive with their brothers or sisters. This may tie in with the notion of expected femininity, that females are supposed to be passive and cooperative and not be aggressive and competitive

The literature reiterates that siblings from larger families naturally gravitate to one another and develop close bonds because the competition for their parent's attention is extremely tough. Some respondents stated they looked to their older siblings as role models and sometimes they looked to them as a reference on how not to behave or wanted to be better than them. My respondents did state that they looked up to their older siblings even with respect to how to construct their gendered identity.

In most polygynous homes mother-child interaction may be adequate but father-child interaction is lacking or inadequate. The women in this study were influenced by their mother's identity in constructing their own identity and the men were influenced by their father's identity whether it be positive or negative influences. Thus an individual may think they have formed their own identity but in essence are mirroring their parents' and grandparents' actions of generations past. Chodorow (1995) states that cultural evidence suggests that insofar as a mother treats her son differently, it is usually by emphasising his masculinity in opposition to herself and by pushing him to assume, or acquiesce his assumption of a sexually toned male-role relation to her. Chodorow (1995) however speaks from a nuclear western family perspective. My findings refuted that claim because some mothers from polygynous families consciously treated the children the same irrespective of gender and even made the boys do chores that are traditionally viewed as 'girl' chores. Some participants went as far as to state they were 'gender blind' and that a sign of a modern, progressive, independent individual is that they are able to do everything on their own regardless of their gender.

This seems to challenge western scholars who argue that a mother's presence has a bearing on the child's identity. Since some male respondents were ambivalent to their co-mothers this principle was not applicable to this context. African western females believe the principle of seniority is more important than biology or gender. The male respondents suggested that

they loved their biological mothers more than their co-mothers but they respected their co-mothers as elder women. Therefore it cannot be categorically stated that their co-mothers did not have an influence on their gendered identity and there appeared to be contradictions in the views expressed by the participants. In the next chapter I examine the contradictions that occur between the legal constitution and customary law and how my participants navigated this complicated terrain.

CHAPTER SEVEN

NEGOTIATING CUSTOMARY LAW VERSUS CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

7. Introduction

In the previous chapter I examined how the adults raised in polygynous families considered in this study constructed their gendered identities. In this chapter, I interrogate the body of data in terms of how they made sense of their individual rights and customary practices within a patriarchal culture such as the Zulu culture. Customary law denotes legal systems originating from African societies as part of the culture of particular tribes⁴⁵. In some matters a person can request to be judged by their tribal law (Supreme Court of Appeal of South Africa). South Africa has ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but some customary law practices contravene this international declaration. The shifts at national and international levels have paved the way for reforms and new laws which better address the plight and grievances of South African women. This has enabled feminists to challenge South African laws, especially customary laws and the male hierarchy responsible for them. Nevertheless South African law is flawed and this flaw has hindered women from achieving visible change (Augustine, 2002:40).

7.1. A Short History on South African Law

The fabric of South African law is woven out of two cross-cutting strands: the interface between principles rooted in different European traditions. Rule by Dutch and British powers left a legacy of substantive law consisting largely of Roman-Dutch and English elements, blended over time to form a unique system of civil and common law (du Bois, 2007:33). The law of South Africa thus constitutes the paradigm case of a “mixed” legal system (du Bois, 2007:33).

⁴⁵ The term *tribe* has many different definitions and uses in sociological and anthropological scholars. Some scholars state that ‘tribe’ means; a common language, a common culture, some ancestral lineages and common government or rulers (Wiley, 1981). According to Lowe (1997) *tribe* can mean almost anything. A *tribe* is a group with a shared territory, language, political unit, shared religion, economic system and common cultural practices. The term *tribe* in modern western society is associated with primitiveness and scientific racism of a colonialist past. The term *tribe* is an outdated term that if used today it has been changed to fit new conditions or invent a new identity (Lowe, 1997:2). When Africans use the term *tribe* it is not used in negative connotations of primitivism the word has in western countries (Lowe, 1997:5).

The Nationalists came to power in South Africa in 1948 introducing a policy of apartheid and entrenching racial segregation in statute laws. There was a fundamental break with colonial history which occurred in 1994 when a new constitution was established (du Bois, 2007:34). In 1993 the interim constitution came into effect until 1997. In 1994 for the first time all South Africans could participate in the law-making process via democratic elections and were guaranteed equality before the law (du Bois, 2007:34). The legal system is now based on the Bill of Rights which is a legal order founded on values previously denied by the law. In this legal order customary law and common law are both expressly acknowledged as binding sources of law (du Bois, 2007:34).

7.1.1. Foreign and International Law

International law refers to international customary law, which in South Africa is considered law unless it is inconsistent with the South African Constitution or an Act of Parliament (Supreme Court of Appeal of South Africa). Foreign law is the domestic law of foreign countries. International law comprises public international law and private international law (du Bois, 2007:107). South Africa is in agreement with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and is also a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

7.1.2. International and National Law Stance on Polygyny

According to Jonas (2012), in terms of international law polygyny is the definition of discrimination against women because it undermines their self-worth, and the very nature of the practice encourages inequality. Jonas (2012) states that polygyny defies all the basic tenets that CEDAW stands for. The CEDAW has urged states to take legislative measures to enforce the prohibition of polygyny. Practices such as polygyny and widowhood rites are considered a violation of Article 12 of CEDAW, which guarantees the right to health, and it is argued that polygyny increases the chances of spreading HIV and other venereal diseases (Jonas, 2012:145).

7.2. Women's Rights and Polygyny

The human rights implications of polygyny have left the fundamental rights of women unguarded (Jonas, 2012:143). The rationale behind the practice of polygyny dates back to ancient times where royal families would try to defuse possible future threats of war by

marrying from as many families as possible. According to Jonas (2012), this argument is now outdated because there are different means to avoid or address social conflict in large contemporary societies (Jonas, 2012:143). However, there are now other motivations for the continuance of the practice of polygyny in certain cultures. It is widely believed that polygyny ensures the stability and continuity of the family and clan. Secondly it is believed that polygyny provides economic and social security for women, especially in societies where levirate arrangements are still practiced. Thirdly, polygyny seems to be the most efficient means of producing a large family. A large family is an economic asset in some culture, in which wives and children provide the chief a labour force and the children provide social security for the aged. Numerous children produced from a polygynous family can assist in building and strengthening a power base (Jonas, 2012:143). With the introduction of colonialism and Christendom traditional practices such as polygyny were outlawed but the practice continued to exist under customary law.

The Maputo Protocol Article 6 (C) is a provision which represents a compromise born out of highly contested and diametrically opposed views: on one hand those who support polygyny and on the other hand those who denounce it. This may be the reason for its lack of clarity as to whether the Protocol rejects or condones the practice of polygyny. Article 6 (C) seeks to ensure equality between men and women but cultural practices such as levirate, sororate marriages and polygyny advance gender inequalities (Jonas, 2012:144). It is surprising that instead of enjoining states to legislate against polygyny in a clear and unequivocal language, the protocol only states that “monogamy is encouraged as the preferred form of marriage” (Jonas, 2012:144).

However another school of thought is that women knowingly enter into polygynous marriages and by doing so they are exercising their right to free choice, that is, choosing for themselves the form of marriage to enter, whether it being monogamous or polygamous. Some women are so comfortable with polygyny that when their husband takes “too long to marry a second wife the first wife goes out and finds another wife for him” (Jonas, 2012:143).

7.2.1. Women’s Free Choice Argument

The argument that women willingly consent to enter polygynous marriages is suspicious because it is fundamentally flawed. Social decisions such as the decision to get married are

made within the context of the value system prevailing in that particular society. If that society accepts and encourages polygyny this potent societal force will bear upon women to succumb to its pressures and accept polygamy as the 'preferable' marriage type. This is then mistaken to be women's choice when in fact it is a societal choice unconsciously imposed upon women and portrayed as their choice. A woman's consent to a polygynous union is illusory and is no consent at all (Jonas, 2012:147).

When a husband wants to take a second wife society dictates to the woman that she has no right to prevent her husband from taking additional wives. The first wife then has two choices: to either live with the insult to her dignity arising by reason of her husband marrying another wife or walking out of the marriage and having a divorcee-stigma attached to her, that she is a failed woman who could not sustain a marriage. Her family also suffers if she leaves the marriage because they too are seen as failures for being unsuccessful in grooming a girl or woman of marriageable quality. Therefore, to preserve the dignity and good name of her family, a married woman will have to persevere and endure insurmountable adversity in her marriage. It can thus be argued that women do not voluntarily consent to enter into plural marriages (Jonas, 2012:147).

Legislation alone cannot succeed in eliminating a deeply entrenched cultural practice like polygamy in a once-off fashion. However, calls for its criminalisation are a step in the right direction towards its ultimate elimination. Article 6 (C) of the Maputo Protocol enjoins states to criminalise this practice within their jurisdictions. This will constitute a positive stride towards the empowerment of women and elimination of some of the relics of the past that continue to impede the ideal of the realisation of equality between the sexes. The practice of polygyny subjugates women to men. It also has a deleterious effect on children because when a man has more than one wife, he often has a large number within a short period of time. In a polygynous set-up conflicts amongst the families may arise and several rivalries between wives and children may be formed because of competition for resources. The continued existence of polygyny violates fundamental rights such as rights to dignity, equality, health and equal protection under the law. It also exacerbates women's already lower socio-economic status by forcing women to share already scarce resources with co-wives and children (Jonas, 2012: 148).

7.3. Polygyny and African Culture

Polygyny in Africa is a legally thorny subject (see Andrews, 2009). The African Union can not accept a document that abolishes polygyny because Africa is home to large populations that belong to cultures and religions that permit polygyny and it is embraced under customary law. Customary law and religion continue to be major impediments in the implementation of Article 6 (C) of the Maputo Protocol since customary law and religion continue to be central to the lives of African people.

In addition to culture and religion playing a pivotal role in the existence of polygyny, there is no political will to eradicate the practice because many African leaders and heads of state are themselves polygynous or encourage the practice. Implicit is the message that polygyny is intrinsically African and that anything short of it is either alien or not fully African (Jonas, 2012:145). Popular African feminists have also expressed their acceptance of polygyny as a practice that is intrinsically African and a part of their culture. Intellectual African feminism, on the other hand, has been adamantly against the practice and has viewed it to be degrading and demeaning to women, arguing that polygyny is the definition of gender inequality.

7.4. Polygyny as a Weapon Against Gender Equality

According to Jonas (2012), polygyny can be used as a weapon by men against women in cases where men force women to submit to them or threaten to marry another wife if the woman does not submit the man. In this context polygyny can be used to control and limit women's ability to assert their rights within marriage. It is clear that polygyny constitutes a veritable assault on the intrinsic self-worth of women (Jonas, 2012: 146). Within cultures where polygyny is practiced, women are socialised into subservient roles that inhibit their full and meaningful participation in family and public life.

Africans cherish their 'Africanness' and protect their cultural heritage and therefore issues of culture must be handled in the light of human rights standards. It is important to retain traditional practices and customs based on recognition of human dignity and those which enhance human welfare, regardless of sex, must be encouraged. Fanon said that culture is not a relic imported from the past and imposed on the present, but is something which captures the living aspirations of the people and helps them confront the challenges they face (Jonas, 2012:146). Unfortunately, wives have no legal power or capacity to prevent their husbands

from taking additional wives. Some have argued that polygyny is not a human rights issue but a social issue and constitutes a veritable assault to women's right to equality (Jonas, 2012:144).

7.5. Customary Law and the Constitution

Customary law is a source of law which is referred to as 'indigenous law'. In South Africa customary law has been defined in legislation as 'law or custom as applied by the Black tribes in the Republic'. Each ethnic group in South Africa has its own customary law but since all ethnic groups follow the patrilineal system of marriage and kinship, their laws are substantially similar (du Bois, 2007:101). Customary law was affected by the new constitution. Legislation was designed to bring customary law in line with the Bill of Rights. This legislation has abolished patriarchal aspects of customary family law and has sought to safeguard the interests of women and children. Other rules of customary law have resulted in constitutional challenges in the legal courts. Rule by Dutch and British powers left a legacy of substantive law consisting largely of Roman-Dutch and English elements, blended over time to form a unique system of civil and common law (du Bois, 2007:33). The law of South Africa thus constitutes the paradigm case of a "mixed" legal system (du Bois, 2007:35).

The constitution also authorises the use of public international law as well as foreign law (du Bois, 2007:35). Ngcobo (reference?) stated:

"Our Constitution contemplates that there will be a coherent system of law built on the foundations of the Bill of Rights, in which common law and indigenous law should be developed and legislation should be interpreted so as to be consistent with the Bill of Rights and with our obligations under international law. In this sense the Constitution demands a change in the legal norms and the values of our society".

It is generally acknowledged that there is a dichotomy between the so-called *official* customary and the *living* customary law in the South African legal system (du Bois, 2007:103). It has been argued that 'living' customary law is what is socially practiced. "Indigenous law is not a fixed body of formally classified and easily ascertainable rules. By its very nature it evolves as the people who live by its norms change their patterns of life". However as a result of problems associated with the proof and ascertainment of living customary law, official rather than living customary law is what is applied by the legal courts and other official institutions (du Bois, 2007:103).

7.6. Equality of Men and Women in Modern South African Law

The constitution prohibits unfair discrimination on the grounds of sex and gender. If discrimination on these grounds occurs, whether in private or public law, or in common law, legislation, customary law or any system of indigenous law, it is liable to be declared unconstitutional and invalid (du Bois, 2007:166).

7.7. Marriage Law in South Africa

Law provides two forms of marriage; customary law marriages and marriages contracted under the Marriage Act and governed by common law. A customary law marriage is defined as a union between one man and one or more women; a man, but not a woman, is competent to enter into a marriage with a third person during the subsistence of another marriage (du Bois, 2007:231). Thus a customary marriage is potentially polygamous.

7.8. Gender Advocacy in South Africa

There are many groups and organisations that advocate for gender equality in South Africa. Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) in South Africa strives towards a society in which marginalised South Africans can participate in policies and decision making at all levels of South African life for the achievement of gender equality.

The Women and Governance Programme has been operational since 1998 and with the GAP they advocate for increased representation of women in governance structures. They believe that with more women in governance women's issues will be raised more often and be taken more seriously and increased representation will challenge the patriarchal demeanour. Another organisation, Sonke Gender Justice, advocates for gender equality, safety of women and children and deals with issues such as gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, traditions and cultures, government policies and laws, as well as civil society and the family. In addition, People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) is a feminist organisation that provides services and engages with various sectors in order to ensure the realisation of women's rights and improve women's quality of life.

7.9. South African's Constitution Versus Patriarchal Culture

In theory South Africa has the most progressive constitution however this is not true in practice. South African women are constitutionally empowered but their rights are difficult to

implement in a patriarchal context so despite their progressive rights 'Black' South African women still struggle with continued sexism and racism.

Zulu culture is very patriarchal and men are seen as superior to women. In the Zulu culture men and women are not equal and both genders know their designated roles. However, it has become more difficult to fully apply notions such as the superiority of men in modern South Africa where there are more female-headed households and more women are independent and are in control of their education, professional careers and financial security. As I mentioned earlier this new emergence of female empowerment and African feminism has left some men, especially Zulu men, confused about their gender roles if women are taking more and more positions and responsibilities that used to 'traditionally' belong to them. Some men have expressed hypermasculinity in response to such movements (female empowerment and feminism) and want to reiterate what their culture has taught them.

I found in my study that the younger generation of men also subscribed to the patriarchal mentality. This surprised me because I had previously thought the younger generation was more progressive and modern in their thinking. I assume that their expressions of hypermasculinity are a response to their confusion about the role they play in the modern world where women are afforded all the freedoms previously reserved for men, and the fact that they are now in competition with women and not just men in every field.

Shongani

Yes I believe that a woman is below me in status. It does not matter if she has a PhD in her field or is the CEO of a big corporate company but the fact remains she is a woman and in my culture that will always make her below a man. We were taught in school that all genders are the same and we all pretended to be 'equals' in school but when we go home it is a different story, the girls know their place and status in life and the men do as well. It may appear not to be fair but who am I to change the system. Our ancestors have been living like this before the beginning of recorded time I am just one man following cultural instructions.

Thuleleni

I really do not understand this situation. Do not get me wrong, I love culture, my culture specifically, I am the biggest supporter and promoter of culture but culture needs to move with the times. There are some culture practices that are no longer practiced (such as when a

young girl gets her first menstrual cycle she must stay home and not be seen by anyone especially men and her family will slaughter a chicken in celebration of her now becoming a woman) and that is fine. Now I see these Zulu men shouting 'it is my culture' when barbaric practices such as ukutwala (which in essence is culture sanctioned rape of young girls by old perverted men) and to some extent polygamy continue to exist. I believe culture was never meant to hurt or abuse a certain gender just because they are that gender. Our ancestors respected our grandmothers, mothers and daughters and a good man does that as well. What can I do? I may shout about my rights as a woman which are equal to those of a man but I will be labelled 'crazy' 'too educated' 'disrespectful' so it is easier to just follow the status quo and act accordingly.

These two excerpts show that younger men and to some extent women feel the same about culture. The women may voice unhappiness with certain practices but they feel powerless to do anything about it. While South Africa has a progressive constitution, in reality patriarchal culture contradicts the constitutionally enshrined women's rights and traditional societies are thus locked in a traditional versus modern paradigm whereby culture is equated with tradition and the democratic constitution is equated with modernisation.

7.10. Hybridized Identities

Individuals in South Africa struggle to negotiate their individual rights guaranteed by the UDHR and the South African constitution in the context of cultural requirements and expectations. My respondents were educated so they were conscious of their rights and were able to observe the contradictions that occur in reality as opposed to what is stated in theory in the constitution.

Mpiyezulu

Yes there is a contradiction because the law says we are all equal but my culture says we are not. I try to be modern man when I am in the city with my family but when I go to my rural home I revert to being a traditional man. I do not do the things I do here in the city in the farm home because there I have to show I am the man of the house. Naturally I am a quiet person and I want to make decisions with my wife as a family and not be the authoritarian traditional Zulu man who rules with an iron fist (laughing). My wife understands this and she too plays her part when we go to the rural home. At home in the city she is loud and

opinionated but when we go to visit my mother's home she is quiet and subservient. It is like we switch personalities to appease our culture. I think it is just a matter of balancing the two sides of your life to keep the peace at home as well as to remain respected as a married man in your culture.

Phakimpi

We as girls were taught to believe that if you are educated you are empowered and therefore that guarantees equality just as our constitution says. That is not true in theory I am equal to a man but when I go home I am reminded I am not. I am married now and I understand there are certain things I must do as a wife that I do not agree with but it is my culture and I must. If I do not do them I will be considered rude and disrespectful and this will bring shame not only to my biological family but my husband and in-laws as well. I have this almost split personality; I am a modern educated woman with postgraduate qualifications but I am a Zulu married woman who knows her place in the hierarchy of our culture. In the beginning I was angry about it but now I have found ways to 'silently resist' some things (laughing).

Mpiyezulu and Phakimpi both noticed the contradictions that they live with every day. They have formed a type of hybrid identity in that when they are in the city they portray a modern, progressive and independent side of themselves while when they are in the rural homes they portray a different side; a more subservient, quiet and pious character (in Phakimpi's case) and a dominant, authoritarian and boastful head of household (in MpiyZelu's case). Butler (1997) stated that gender is situational and certain situations call for certain personalities. In this case certain areas call for certain identities. This constant balancing act at times makes the participants think they have a hybrid gendered identity in that they can be modern, independent career women and also traditional Zulu women. This shows that gender construction, as espoused by liberal feminists, is not a sufficient explanation of how gender identity operates in society. Liberal feminists attest that if women are empowered they will be free from patriarchal oppression but my respondents show that being empowered is not enough for them to assert themselves in all contexts and that there therefore needs to be a socio-cultural change.

7.11. Zulu Culture and the Constitution

Zulu culture is in stark contrast to South Africa's Constitution. The Constitution guarantees women's equality and aims to protect them from all forms of discrimination based on gender and ethnicity however it is not sufficient to protect them from discrimination from within their own cultures. The Constitution and Bill of Rights contained therein, as I have stated earlier, is clear with regard to its stance on discrimination but it is silent on polygyny. Maybe it is not silent because it condones it because a narrow reading would prove otherwise, I believe it is silent because it wants to respect African indigenous cultures that were previously not respected or protected under the law. Women in polygynous marriages do have legal remedies available to them if they suffer under polygynous unions or would like to seek divorce but the Constitution cannot prevent men from marrying multiple wives. The law in South Africa however does allow couples to sign ante-nuptial contracts which would clearly state that the marriage is monogamous and it will never be polygynous. If the husband should decide to be polygynous later within the marriage and the wife is not in agreement with such an arrangement, the husband would be in breach of the ante-nuptial contract and the wife would have sound grounds to sue for divorce.

Phakimpi

Back in the day many wives were a symbol of wealth for a man— he must have had a lot of cattle to have afforded more than one wife and it meant he had a bigger homestead or multi-homesteads. The wives and their children guaranteed more labour for his huge, many fields. Under the capitalist world today, polygamy is just a liability. Polygamy is now fashionable for multi-millionaires—still as a symbol of power. I just cannot think of a reason why anyone (man/woman) would get involved in polygamy, customary or otherwise.

Dlabembalela

Polygyny is coercive because women marry with the assumption it is a monogamous relationship and then they are coerced into accepting polygyny by their husbands, in-laws, culture and surrounding society without seeking their permission or approval. I learned from a young age that women must be independent and strong and not rely on anyone especially a man to support her because then he will not force her into a polygynous marriage.

Having being raised in a polygynous family it helped me develop good interpersonal relations with other people. I think customary law is contradictory to our Constitution, which embraces and encourages individual rights and equality amongst the genders.

Phakimpi

Women should be able to choose if they want to be in a polygynous relationship and not be forced into it. Polygyny is difficult for women even if they willingly chose it.

Married people should respect each other and come to an agreement about certain issues such as; if the relationship could be potentially polygynous because that affects even the children of such a union. Some children of polygyny said they would vehemently fight or refuse to willingly enter a polygynous relationship. Polygyny is only male serving and causes women emotional pain and frustration. I am married in a civil marriage, my husband and I have agreed that no additional wives would follow me.

I think couples should discuss from the beginning of a relationship if it may be potentially polygynous in the future so the woman can make an informed decision whether to continue in a potentially polygynous relationship. Individual rights could be synonymous with women rights in a polygynous family, they are non-existent. The only freedom a person has is to leave and start their own life elsewhere.

Mpiyezulu

The law is the law, tradition is tradition. I believe customary laws are good for people who see value in customary marriages but I do not believe that customary laws may interfere with my individual rights as stated by our Constitution.

Thuluzufe

In theory it is a good law because it aims to protect our customs and traditions as a Zulu nation but it does not translate to practice because some men abuse it and select what parts they like and leave the parts they do not like. I think customary law is good and helpful and it teaches people to respect their culture.

Thuluzufe notes that his relationship with parents has not changed and he still respects and acknowledges his parents.

7.12. Contradictions Between Customary Law and the Constitution

As I argued in my literature review chapter the Bill of Rights clearly states that if a practice is by its very nature discriminatory towards a group of people it is not supported or sanctioned by the law. However, there is also the Customary Marriages Act which recognises the practice of polygyny. The Bill of Rights states that if any cultural practice is discriminatory it is not protected. The question then becomes ‘Is the customary practice of polygyny contravening section 9 of the Bill of Rights?’ If a certain group is allowed a certain ‘privilege’ based on their gender and race and other groups are not extended such a privilege that is the fundamental nature of discrimination, which renders a practice such as polygyny unconstitutional. The Constitution states that if there is a contradiction between customary law and the Bill of Rights the latter takes precedence. Polygynous marriages are unconstitutional because in the South African Bill of Rights the equality clause supersedes the right to culture and polygyny discriminates against women and people traditionally not indigenous to South Africa, such as white people. The Constitutional Court, however, may not declare polygyny unconstitutional because it recognises the traditions and customs of a particular community whose traditions and culture were previously disrespected and marginalised during apartheid. The Constitutional Court must nevertheless also make it clear that those groups prohibited from entering polygamous marriages are not less worthy of such a privilege and that the prohibition does not affect their human dignity.

Thalengabona

I found it difficult at times to form an individual identity outside of the family. My only hope as a child was to grow up and escape the family.

Bhekezunu

I found that my family was my identity. I no longer was “Bhekezunu”, I was the girl from the polygynous family and was judged according to the number wife my mother was in the family.

Phakimpi

The family did not affect my identity because it did not feel like a polygynous family. We were two different families, we lived in different houses, attended different churches and rarely

interacted. Even though we were all from one family, it was individuals making up a family, not a family made of individuals. I also think the small community we were raised in resented my mother for not following 'traditional' polygyny set-up, because my mother had a career and was financially independent and would actually support my father sometimes.

Dlabembalela

I wanted to continue my education and form an identity separate from my siblings but I was prevented from doing so by the first wife. Since I was a child of the second wife no one cared too much about us. The first wife's children took priority and there was resentment that I passed Matric and qualified to go to University but the first wife's children did not pass or some just barely passed and could not still get into University. There were arguments about using the money to pay for me to attend university on other useless things the first wife wanted.

7.12.1. Culture Versus the Constitution of South Africa

In the context of South Africa where individual human rights are juxtaposed with collective cultural rights in the same Constitution, 'culture' becomes an area of intense dispute. Section 31 of the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) grants people from diverse cultural groups "the right to enjoy their culture and the right to participate in the cultural life of their choice" but it is unclear on whether 'other rights' supersede cultural rights. This creates loopholes that unfortunately can be manipulated by some individuals to perpetrate discrimination, abuse and even violence against girls and women in the name of enjoying their 'cultural rights'. Polygyny, according to the Bill of Rights, is unconstitutional and discriminatory because it allows a small group (Black men) to enjoy certain privileges other groups (all women, gay men and people not indigenous to South Africa) cannot.

Phakimpi

I am against such cultural practices as polygyny it is unconstitutional and discrimination at its core. The fact that I cannot marry two men just because I am a woman is ludicrous in this modern era.

Muzowambango

It is a good law (customary law) but people are not the same—there are those who are opposed to their customs.

Bhekezunu

I think culture is culture and we cannot change that. The law and what it says about individual rights is irrelevant because I am a Christian and I follow the Bible's way.

Soneni

I think my culture should hurry up and change with the times. It is 2013 and we still live in a society that believes a woman cannot do certain things because our ancestors said so. It sounds ridiculous when you say it out loud and arbitrary, we are rational, thinking people who have evolved and should know better. I have accepted I cannot change culture but I know my rights and I know my legal provisions if something in my culture just becomes too much for me. I think some men should stop justifying our culture for their own sexism and inadequacies. Men must know you can claim cultural tradition but my law recognises and respects my human rights and will protect them.

Some women participants were of the view that they would be afraid to challenge traditional norms and roles because they would be ostracised by their families and communities. They do however know that they have legal remedies available to them if culture goes 'too far' for them. In his article *Mandela's first wife fights for share of joint estate*, George (2010) discussed how Mandla Mandela's (a Zulu chief at the time) first wife successfully had the High Court declare his second marriage illegal because he did not ask for her permission and forced the polygynous marriage upon her without her consent. This also demonstrates that a woman like Phakimpi's mother, who is empowered, has the courage to fight for her legal rights to be recognised and respected and has the right to be duly compensated regardless of the status of the man.

In post-apartheid South Africa, this has culminated in the drafting of the now heavily contested Traditional Courts Bill which seeks to regulate customary courts in order for them to operate in line with the Constitution (Weeks, 2011). Unfortunately, in its current form, the Bill reaffirms the patriarchal nature of customary courts thus rendering them weak in

addressing crimes against women and children (Gasa, 2011). Therefore, even if the Constitution tries to rectify the glaring contradictions contained therein, it is still not applicable in living customary law.

7.13. Cultural Influence on the Construction of Identity

Hall (1997) argues that the notion of difference is integral to an understanding of the cultural construction of identities. Africans are raised in collectivistic environments in which people are socialised into strong extended families or tribal communities with paramount loyalties. An individualistic environment is one in which people are integrated into groups such that they would regard their individual rights as more important than those of the group they belong to (Mariana, 2014: 20). This is true of what I found in my study when I asked my participants about what they thought of the customary laws in practice superseding their individual rights. Most of the women did believe that some cultural practices are innately unfair but found it difficult to reconcile the fact that even though in theory the Constitution guarantees equal rights to men and women, in some cultural practices these equal rights are not acknowledged. It is therefore difficult to navigate their individual rights and also respect their culture, which can be sexist. It is a complex situation because Zulu culture is collective in its view of community and when there is an attempt to incorporate individualism that is frowned upon as being too 'Western'.

Bhekezunu

I feel sorry for these young men of today because they have to fight against the women's empowerment and equal rights. Look I support equal rights and I have two daughters and I would hurt any man who would abuse them in the name of our culture. I just think things would be simpler if all genders knew and respected their traditional roles. It is not easy being a man you have great responsibilities of providing for your family especially in this day and age when everything is so expensive and just a school Matric certificate is no longer enough. If you want your children to have a decent life they need a university qualification and university is expensive. It is also not easy being a woman, having to prove yourself to your employers, your family, in-laws and society at large. I know my gender identity, I am a Zulu man and there are things in my culture I disagree with and do not accept but other things make us who we are collectively as a Zulu clan and we need to respect that and try to

incorporate it as much as possible in our modern lifestyles. It was good enough for our ancestors so it is good enough for us today.

Bhekezunu raises many issues: gender identity in this modern time, the Constitution and the reality of the lives that Zulu people live today. It is laudable and necessary that we have such a progressive Constitution that affords South Africans protection from discrimination based on gender and ethnicity but what about extending that protection to cultural practices? It is in the name of culture that most crimes against women are committed and where women are violated. The respondent acknowledges that it is difficult to reconcile gender equality and female empowerment within a patriarchal culture. He raises the question of whether one can inhabit both identities. Can you be a modern man as well as a traditional man? This raises the topic of creating a form of identity hybridity; a traditionalist identity in some instances and a modernist identity in others.

7.14. Conclusion

This chapter set out to interrogate the data collected in the study and to investigate how the participants navigated their identity construction whilst balancing cultural limitations and constitutional individual freedoms and rights. There appears to be a contradiction in the law of South Africa. The Constitution guarantees individual rights but customary law is recognised as a legal indigenous system which nevertheless prohibits gender equality. The law cannot completely enforce individual rights, such as gender equality, because customary law was in the past not respected or recognised under apartheid law. The current Constitution attempts to make a previous wrong right by acknowledging customary law but in doing so the Constitution contravenes itself in terms of the Bill of Rights. My respondents described how it still is difficult to reconcile their traditional roles and their equal rights that are guaranteed in the Constitution of South Africa. They have to wear two separate hats at times: when they visit their rural homes they become traditional men and women and when they are in the urban areas they are modern men and women. This was harder for the women participants to navigate than the men as men do not have to change that much when they move between rural and urban areas because they are men and their role is cemented everywhere they go. This constant balancing act at times made the participants think that they have a hybrid gendered identity in that they can be modern, independent career women and also traditional Zulu women. Some female respondents suggested that they inhabit a sort of hybridity in that

they are educated, empowered women but at the same time they have to be subservient. This shows that the view of gender construction put forward by liberal feminists does not adequately address how gender may be negotiated in modern society. Liberal feminists attest that if women are empowered they will be free from patriarchal oppression but my respondents show that being empowered is not enough to free themselves from traditional cultural gender roles and that there needs to be a socio-cultural change. In the next chapter I investigate how economic resources and power relations within the polygynous family impacts gender identity construction.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ECONOMIC RESOURCES AND POWER RELATIONS WITHIN THE FAMILY

8. Introduction

This chapter describes how children of polygynous families interpret and redefine their gender roles and expectations as they negotiate their identity construction. I examine my participants' engagements with traditional cultural gender roles and the ways in which these roles have been transformed, reinforced or even reconfigured by the influences of westernisation and modernity. I specifically explore the engagement of the participants with the discourse of gender in a polygynous household and highlight the contradictions faced by these individuals as they negotiate the dialectic between the conflicting discourses of modernity and tradition.

8.1. Head of Household

As previously stated in chapter four, both nuclear and polygynous families tend to be controlled by the husband who is responsible for his family's well-being and protection. In traditional Zulu culture the husband and father is feared as a strict disciplinarian and despot who controls his family's behaviour and rectifies it if any of the family members misbehave. However, unlike a nuclear family, the husband's role as head of the household shifts somewhat in a polygynous union onto the wife, essentially because as he is just one individual, the husband cannot physically be present in all his wives' homes at the same time. The polygynous family structure is thus one of shifting heads of households because the husband and father delegates most of his responsibilities to the wife and mother of that particular family when he is absent. If he does not explicitly delegate his responsibility to that particular wife, those responsibilities fall immediately to the first wife. As such, although the husband and father retains overall control of the family and his position as head of the family, the first wife in a polygynous family tends to have primary control over the day-to-day functioning of the household, including the other wives.

8.2. Decision Making in the Polygynous Family

As evidenced by the responses of my participants, it was their fathers who usually took the final decisions on major issues, sometimes with input from the wives. The participants reiterated that their mothers made decisions on minor household issues within the private home environment but their fathers made the major more public decisions regarding finances, education, and traditional customs and rituals. If the biological mother was not available to make the decision the first wife made the decision for the child on the behalf of the biological mother. The line became blurred when the biological mother would make a ‘major’ decision’ for their child and pay for it without the father’s consent or if the father had decided against something due to the fact that he cannot pay for it.

Thalengabona

The head of the family, the father, decided on things. It shows that polygamous families are no different to other families, where the male was married to one wife only. There as well decisions are made by the head of the family, which is most of the time the father.

Dlabembalela

My dad is tough he made all the decisions in the family and he maintained the peace but we generally have a cold relationship between the two households. Minor decisions such as chores, groceries, clothes for the children and child rearing were made by mother.

Qalimpi

Father made all the major decisions. We would have a family meeting but our father made the ultimate decision.

Sandelani

Father was/is head of household but he would consult more senior male extended family members before making major decisions pertaining to his polygynous family.

Muzowambango

Father made all the decisions affecting the entire family. Our father made all the decisions and in his absence the first wife made all the decisions. The traditional polygynous set-up was adhered to in his absence.

Shongani

Mothers made decisions affecting her own biological family. Also mother made minor decisions.

My participants agreed that a clear line was drawn between the father as head of the family and major decision maker, and biological mothers as minor decision makers. In instances where the biological mother was not available to make the minor decision, the responsibility fell to the first wife to make the decision on behalf of the child's biological mother. The automatic delegation of head of household to the first wife frequently led to disagreements and tensions between the wives of participants' polygynous families.

Thuleleni

My father was the head of the family as in a traditionally polygynous therefore he yielded the most power followed by his first wife and subsequent wives. But since my mother was the last wife she was the most loved and favoured by her father and as a result had considerable power and influence which the other wives hated her for.

Dlabembalela

My father's oldest wife was respected the most, followed by the second wife. My mother was not loved by others (co-wives) because she was loved the most by my father. Father was respected and feared as the 'man of the house' and he made all the decisions as well as resolved all the conflict. We had a clear dictator in the father because he made the decisions and no one dared question them.

Shongani

Major decisions were made by the father. My father would make an effort to summon all the wives to one location to discuss major decisions but they hated each other so much they never came and he just made the major decisions on his own.

Bhekezunu

Some families made decisions as a family, which was very progressive in a patriarchal family set-up. They discussed their issues as a family and it was a democracy not a dictatorship.

Shongani

Although father was head of household he believed in getting the family to unanimously agree on decisions.

Qalimpi

My parents made decisions together as a family unit/partnership.

8.3. Decision Making and Resource Allocation

In this section I discuss how resources are divided amongst the wives and their families. I also discuss how money or lack thereof changes the dynamics of the power relations within the family. The literature states that men have power by virtue of being male but when women make more money than the men and they use their money as they please, the gender dynamics change and this affects their children as well.

Dlabembalela

The other family had a father who would give the most money to his favourite wife at the time. My father giving majority of his income to his favourite wife did affect me. I felt pity for my mother because she would always say father does not have money to buy us some things that our half siblings had but the half siblings would tell us our father bought them those things. As children we were angry and resentful and jealous because we did not understand what we had done not to favoured by our father. Now as an adult I realise my father's actions had nothing to do with us children but it had to do with how he felt about our mother which was sad because it reflected poorly on us and it was not our fault.

In the above response we witness a participant who voiced how her father's favouring of the other co-wife and her children, impacted on her sense of identity. She felt humiliated around her family and as a child she did not understand why her father hated her. Now as an adult she realises that her father's treatment of her and her siblings had nothing to do with her personally; it was a consequence of the relationship her father had with their mother. This shows that family dynamics are complex because how a father feels about the mother may or may not have bearing on how he feels about his children. In the case of polygyny, the one seemed to affect the other because the father's strained relationship with the mother resulted in his children from that wife feeling alienated, neglected and unloved by him.

Another respondent said her grandmother was the person who divided the resources amongst the family to ensure equality. She constructed her identity around the false belief that her family was the most favoured in the family when in fact that was not the case. It was strictly a case of the biggest family needed the biggest share of the resources.

Shongani

My paternal grandmother divided the money equally amongst the wives. When I was a child I did not understand why the other wives would always complain that my mother received the bulk of the resources. I used to think it was because my father loved her and us the most but now as an adult I realize it is because my mother had the most children. My mother had ten children and the other three wives had six children combined. So in theory and practice we had to have the majority of the resources because we were the most people. I used to have a sense of pride and arrogance amongst my half-siblings thinking that father loved us best because he gave us the most money. This impacted my identity in a sense that I was part of the favoured group in the family which made me more proud and confident in my identity and how I conducted myself. I sometimes wonder if my mother had so many children deliberately to make sure father gave her the most money or because she wanted ten children. Of course I would never have the courage to ask her (laughing).

Thalengabona

Father paid for the major purchases such as; cars, houses and school fees. Mother made the other purchases which were needed for the household. Basic household necessities.

Dlabembalela

Father paid for majority of things therefore was the sole decision-maker when it involved major purchases (educating the children).

Mpiyezulu

Father distributed the money amongst his wives. Father was the major decision maker when it involved money and resources.

Some participants stated that the income was divided equally so one could infer that in that polygynous family everything was more equitably divided.

Thuluzufe

Father equally distributed all resources. Father tried to distribute the money as equitable as possible and be fair according to the size of each individual family.

Bhekezunu

In one family the father would call all the wives when he received his salary and equally distribute the money to them all at the same time. All distributions were made according to each family's individual needs.

One respondent said the resources allocation did not affect her family because her mother had a bigger income than their father and was able to provide them with everything they needed and more. So this showed a shift in the power dynamics because the mother was financially secure to provide for her biological family when her husband could not do so. Thus although the resources were divided equally amongst the co-wives, Phakimpi's mother's income supplemented the father's income, which bred resentment amongst the wives because Phakimpi's mother could afford things the other mothers could not as they relied solely on their father's income.

Mpiyezulu

Father distributed the money amongst his wives. Father was the major decision maker when it involved money and resources.

Phakimpi

My father and biological mother would make the decisions pertaining to their family and he would make other decisions pertaining to the other family with the co-wife of that family. The houses were strictly kept apart as two separate entities. Our father made the decisions pertaining to important things such as education and cultural rituals. My mother was educated and had a good job and was able to educate me and my siblings in better schools and I could attend university at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The younger sister (from the other co-wife) she doesn't like me because she matriculated the same year as her two girls, I went to the University of Cape Town while the two girls went to FET College and she blamed me for that. I encouraged her girls to apply through CAO and delivered their forms. So when they did not get any offers, she says I didn't post her children's forms. My point is there is no love between the two households and there was resentment that my mother could afford to send us to such an expensive university and our father could not even afford to send them to a local university.

In the following excerpt we see that even though Soneni's mother could afford to take her children on a trip, she chose not to because her husband as head of the family refused to give his permission for the trip.

Shongani

My paternal grandmother divided the money equally amongst the wives. When I was a child I did not understand why the other wives would always complain that my mother received the bulk of the resources. I used to think it was because my father loved her and us the most but now as an adult I realize it is because my mother had the most children. My mother had ten children and the other three wives had six children combined. So in theory and practice we had to have the majority of the resources because we were the most people. I used to have a sense of pride and arrogance amongst my half-siblings thinking that father loved us best because he gave us the most money. This impacted my identity in a sense that I was part of the favoured group in the family which made me more proud and confident in my identity and how I conducted myself. I sometimes wonder if my mother had so many children deliberately to make sure father gave her the most money or because she wanted ten children. Of course I would never have the courage to ask her (laughing).

Qalimpi

My parents made decisions together as a family unit/partnership.

Thuluzufe

Father equally distributed all resources. Father tried to distribute the money as equitable as possible and be fair according to the size of each individual family.

In this section we had a participant who voiced how his father favouring the other wife and her children did impact on her sense of identity. She felt humiliated around her family and as a child she did not understand why her father hated her. Now as adult she realises her father's treatment of her and her siblings had nothing to do with her personally it was a consequence of the relationship he had with their mother. This shows that family dynamics are complex because how a father feels about the mother may or may not have bearing about how he feels about his children. In the case of polygyny the one seemed to affect the other because the father's strained relationship with the mother resulted in his children with that wife feel alienated, neglected and unloved by him. Some participants stated that the income was divided equally so one could infer that in that polygynous family everything was more equitably divided. Another respondent said her grandmother was the person who divided the resources amongst the family to ensure equality. She constructed her identity around the false belief that her family was the most favoured in the family when in fact that was not the case. It was strictly a case of the biggest family needed the biggest share of the resources. One respondent said the resources allocation did not affect her family because her mother had a bigger income than their father and was able to provide them with everything they needed and more. So this showed a shift in the power dynamics because the mother was financially secure to provide for her biological family when her husband could not do so.

Soneni

My father was the head of the family and he made all the decisions. Things would get tense when my mother wanted do something for us (me and my biological sisters) and the other wives could not afford to do so. I remember one time my mother would want to take us to visit Lesotho for a weekend and my father was against the idea because he could not afford to take all the children and wives to Lesotho. My mother was financially more stable and she could afford to take us on the trip. My mother did not go and I asked her why because she was

going to pay for the trip and not father. She said she could not go if the father of the home did not want us to go because if we went and something bad happened it would be because we disobeyed his command and went on the trip when he explicitly told us not to. This was just superstitious belief that angering father is tantamount to angering our ancestors.

The stark contrast between Soneni's family dynamics and Phakimpi's family dynamics highlights the issue of positionality within polygynous families. Phakimpi's mother is more financially stable than Phakimpi's father and as first wife is afforded the financial freedom to use her money at her own discretion. Phakimpi's father did not want his daughter to leave home and study but Phakimpi's mother went against her husband's wishes and paid for Phakimpi's undergraduate degree at the University of Cape Town herself. This indicates that financial stability is a key factor in the power dynamics of the polygynous family, however the position of the wives is possibly even more pivotal. Soneni's mother is not the first wife and even before marrying Soneni's father, she was already in a disadvantageous position because her in-laws did not like her. Despite her financial stability therefore, Soneni's mother's position in the family did not allow her the freedom of going against her husband's wishes, as for the sake of her children she could not risk angering her in-laws.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, liberal feminists attest to the fact that the road to true gender equality and freedom is through women's empowerment. Liberal feminists argue that women are empowered through education and financial stability, Phakimpi's mother was financially stable and she circumvented her husband's decision and paid for her daughter's tertiary education herself. Soneni's mother on the other hand had the financial means to take her children on a trip yet she was not able to go against her husband's wishes. In this instance then it appears that education and earning power are not enough to allow a woman the freedom to make decisions about her own children. Upon closer analysis it seems that Phakimpi's mother's position as the first wife in the family afforded her the courage to disregard her husband's wishes. Perhaps what is required then for true female empowerment is a socio-cultural shift, particularly in the context of polygynous families in the Zulu culture. Liberal feminist theory can thus not be applied as a blanket solution to gender inequality in all cultures and societies. In support of this observation, Ojong and Muthuki (2010:171) state that the dichotomy of social space as divided into private and public spheres according to gender, does not accurately reflect the historical and cultural realities of the lived experiences of Africans.

8.4. Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine how decisions are negotiated in families and how this impacts upon children's gender identity formation. The husband and father controls his family and is ultimately responsible for his family's well-being and protection, regardless of whether the family is nuclear or polygynous in nature. However, the father's role as head of the family shifts somewhat in a polygynous family onto the wife because the father cannot physically be present at all his wives' homes at the same time. Although wives are sometimes asked to add their suggestions, the father usually makes final decisions regarding major issues that are more community-based or public in nature, leaving the wives to make more localised minor decisions regarding their own households and biological children. The lines became blurred though when a participant's biological mother made a major decision to pay for her child's tertiary education without the father's consent. This example supports liberal feminists' theory of female emancipation achieved through education and financial stability. But liberal feminism cannot account for why another participant's mother, who was also educated and financially stable and thus ostensibly empowered, yet was paralysed by fear of rejection and persecution and as such was unable to make decisions for her own children. This example highlights a key factor in the power dynamics of polygynous families; the position and order of the co-wives and the complex network of relationships between them. It is at this juncture that socio-cultural change becomes imperative for the achievement of true gender equality in all contexts.

CHAPTER NINE

THE IMPACT OF RELIGION ON THE POLYGYNOUS FAMILY AND IDENTITY FORMATION

9. Introduction

Research has largely overlooked the role of religion in forging identities for individuals and groups (Peck, 2005:217). Participants in Peck's (2005) study stated that religion was just one of the many aspects that defined who they were during their formative years. When the participants in Peck's (2005) study were younger they often identified according to their parents' national and ethnic backgrounds. Individuals had absorbed and internalised many norms, values and behaviours when they saw them exemplified by their parents, peers and others long before they understood them intellectually (Peck, 2005:225).

9.1. Religion and Culture

Bernal (1994) attests that while gender is historically and socially constructed based on local realities, religious systems have remained timeless, monolithic and rigid. Religion does however continue to be renegotiated under changing historical circumstances (Bernal, 1994:37). According to Al-Krenawi (1999), Islamic law and traditional culture is one and the same thing. In the Middle East the culture and tradition is based on the religion of Islam and in turn the Islamic religion informs the culture. There is no clear distinction as there is in the Zulu culture, where one can be a Christian and can also follow the beliefs in *amadlozi* (ancestors). Nevertheless, for some Zulu people religion and culture is deeply intertwined; their culture is their religion and vice versa.

Religion⁴⁶ is an important factor to consider when discussing identity because many of the participants in my study viewed their religious upbringing as a reason for the way their identities were constructed and for the beliefs that they hold today. Religion is an interesting

⁴⁶ Religion is often discussed as a generic concept that ignores similarities and differences between faith positions, denominations and individual expression. Durkheim (1912) stressed the significance of religion in this general sense for keeping communities together and maintaining the moral order while, by contrast, Marx and Engels (1846) put forward the notion that religion encourages social division and social inequality (Madge, et al. 2014:48).

topic because initially it may be forced on the child by the parent and as the child matures they may become more and more indoctrinated into the religion. On the other hand, they may break away from it, which usually has disastrous consequences and results in being ostracised from family, culture and ultimately society. Religion in my study refers to the Christian religion and it incorporates beliefs as well. My participants were all Christian and they worshiped in different denominations.

According to Ojong and Muthuki (2010:14), religion is a major determinant of personal choices and attitudes of people, and influences believers to choose certain forms of behaviour and conduct over others. The authors assert that people practice a particular religion because all members of their society have been programmed to believe in that religion. Religion and culture put forth similar views regarding gender inequality and female submission. The scholars also emphasise that culture is viewed as a collective phenomenon which shapes people's social environment. Culture influences the environment in which a person is raised, and this reinforces their dominant patterns of thinking, feeling and acting in other spheres. Culture is also collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group of people from another (Ojong & Muthuki, 2010:15). This collective programming encompasses both the social and the cultural thereby influencing members of a family, lineage, a village and community (Ojong & Muthuki, 2010:15).

Most scholars who study issues of identity focus on social and cultural influences only and rarely do they pay attention to the relationship between religion and identity construction. Religion is a key determinant of personal choices and attitudes of people and the influence of religion in shaping identity is therefore also research-worthy. Muthuki (2010) states that religion affects us privately in terms of our personal attitudes and view of life and this in turn has a bearing on the way we live our outward lives. Some people construct part of their identity by drawing on their religion, and in turn their religious beliefs have a great impact on their lifestyles. This chapter considers how religion informs my participants' ethnic and gender based identities and their experiences of social life.

9.2. Religion and the Negotiation of Identity

Of all group identities, many consider religion consequential for women's life changes. Most major religions promote a traditional division of labour which prioritises women's familial commitments over their public sphere activities. Research has consistently uncovered a

strong association between conservative religious beliefs and non-egalitarian gender ideologies and behaviours (Read & Eagle, 2014:77).

Young people are, in an informal way, social scientists in their own right because they are engaged in making creative sense of the social situation in which they find themselves. A starting point to understanding their perspectives in respect of their own identities links their perceptions and constructions of population changes with religion in society more broadly (Madge et al., 2014:44). Religion itself is gendered because of the differences in the role of men and women within the church (Madge et al., 2014:57). The usual reasons used to justify gender segregation in the religious houses (mosques, synagogues and Christian churches) is that it prevents both genders from being distracted from prayer (Madge et al., 2014:58). Gender differences had more to do with culture as religion.

According to Madge et al. (2014:19), religious identity is regarded as a complex concept embracing the religious affiliation or label a person chooses to give themselves, their beliefs, a sense of belonging to a local, national or global religious community, acts of public worship and private prayer or meditation. My participants stated that religious doctrine played an important role in their parents' (especially mothers) lives and that it had also influenced their own lives and had shaped their identity. Many female participants credited religion as the 'saviour' of their 'unusual family lifestyle' and many turned to religion when their lives became particularly difficult. Some even said that their identity would not be what it is if they did not have religion in their lives. Although some did claim that religion was initially forced upon them when they were young children these participants said that when they became adults they chose to continue with it.

Thulubona

Religion was a big part of my upbringing my parents were obsessed with the church, I worshiped at Shembe⁴⁷ church. Shembe is a big supporter of polygyny and the lifestyle so I

⁴⁷ Shembe is an African Initiated Church founded by Isaiah Shembe in 1910. The religion bans smoking, drinking, adultery, fornicating and it supports polygyny. UbuNazaretha is pure and independent religion which originates in Africa. It reveres Shembe as an African Messiah and emphasises the Ten Commandments. The church practices arranged marriages amongst its followers and encourages polygyny as well (www.southafrica.net/za).

guess it justified it for my father. I did not care about religion I just attended church because I was forced to. I was so happy when I became an adult because I could decide when to attend church and when not to. I still attend church when I am visiting home out of respect for my mother but when I am at school I do not attend and do not care about it.

Thuluzufe

My mother was a very religious woman and I think it may have given her comfort in times of strife. My mother I noticed later in life, when I was an adult, that she feared or adhered to cultural practices more than religious practices. We worshipped in a church that condemned polygyny (Catholic Church) but somehow she was able to reconcile that fact with our cultural practice of it. My mother was lucky in that she married into a polygynous family in which the first wife was very supportive of the decision of my father to take a second wife and the two wives got along well and dare I say may even have been friends or sisters in marriage. My denomination was supportive of polygyny and accepted that is was an African practice.

Qondeni

My mother was a religious woman and she always made us go to church even when we did not want to. We worshiped in a Zion church and I hated religion because it justified polygyny in that it was practised in the Bible. I would always debate with my mother that yes polygyny was practised in the bible but it was in the Old Testament and that even God changed his mind and realised the detriment that polygyny caused on women and their children in the New Testament. I think Islam has it correct in that it does not support polygyny per se but states that a man cannot take on additional wives if he cannot treat them equitably. That in itself was a veiled protest against polygyny because no one can treat more than one person equally at the same time, it is impossible. I think my mother used religion as a shield or comfort for her in her marriage. Religion has been used to justify inequality of the genders and I have a hard time reconciling that with my individual rights as a free woman in a free country.

Thuleleni

I am a religious girl and my mother instilled religion in me and my siblings from a young age. I love my religion (Protestant denomination) and I think it has impacted my identity. I

identify as a Christian girl and I know religion and my culture agree on many aspects and I like that I can respect and observe my cultural traditions without having to abandon my Christian religion. My church is against polygyny but it would never say it because it does not want to anger the majority of the congregation which is polygynous or supports it as a cultural tradition. My siblings are the opposite of me they are always fighting about how religion is against polygyny and our culture is for polygyny. They say men use religion to 'brainwash' us (women) into entering such 'lesser' unions and the men get to 'have their cake and eat it too'.

Sullins (2006) states that women tend to be more religious than men on every measure of religiosity. Sullins (2006) argues that the encouragement of religious behaviour is because it attends women's commitment or relegation to the domestic sphere. The prevailing assumption among sociologists has been that gender differences in both religiousness and social location as adults are underpinned by broad cultural mechanisms of differential socialisation processes that pattern male and females into different sets of values, roles and norms for behaviour. Males, for example, are said to be socialised into secular ideals of aggressiveness and accomplishment; females by contrast are socialised into the more religiously compatible ideals of nurturance and conflict resolution (Sullins, 2006:838). The findings of Sullins' (2006) study are in contrast to what my research results show. My male participants were also religious, not secular, but nevertheless not as religious as my female participants, which indicates some agreement with the findings of Sullins' (2006) study.

My participants explained that their religious denominations had different stances regarding the practice of polygyny. The Catholic, Anglican and Protestant denominations were opposed to polygyny but the Shembe and Zionist denominations were proponents of polygyny. Other churches were ambivalent towards the practice. My respondents stated that it was difficult to reconcile the fact that their church was against polygyny while living a polygynous lifestyle. One participant stated they felt like a hypocrite.

Soneni

My Catholic Church was against polygyny and that is why as I grew older I was aware of this contradiction and it made me feel like a hypocrite. My mother would try to comfort me and say "God understands, one does not choose the family they are born into, all one can do

is do better next time". So, now as an adult I have reconnected with my church and faith and feel free to choose what type of marriage and life I want to live.

As discussed above, my participants had differing views of how religion impacted their identity; some viewed religion as a ‘saviour’ and others had negative conceptions of religion because it was a ‘partner’ with culture to always keep women in subservient positions. My participants were aware of the contradictions of religious doctrine and gender equality, just as they highlighted the contradiction that exists in the Constitution in terms of equal rights yet in their cultures there aren’t necessarily equal rights for women. They stated that religion and culture are two sides of the same coin in their position on women’s subordination. One respondent stated that religion is less criticised for its stance on gender inequality because it is considered to be holy and the word of God but culture is man-made and should be criticised more for its sexism.

9.3. The Impact of Religion on the Renegotiation of the Gendered Self

The sociology of gender and religion first emerged in the 1970s and 1980s with feminist critiques of religion on the one hand, and studies of issues such as women’s ordination and goddess worship on the other. Reflecting the history of gender scholarship more generally, much of this work has been produced by women sociologists who were politicised by the women’s movement and who turned a critical eye to women’s experiences within various religious traditions (Avishai et al., 2015: 8).

Religion also serves to reinforce patriarchal norms (Avishai et al., 2015: 9). In a different vein, Avishai (2008) maintains that orthodox Jewish women in Israel express agency as they “do religion”, living up to rather than challenging strict religious norms (Avishai et al, 2015:9). This shows that religious masculinity, like religious femininity is being restructured in response to contemporary political, economic and cultural realities (Avishai et al., 2015: 10).

Thuleleni

I believe the one way to combat this ‘resistance’ to religion and its many rules which are usually forced or expected of females (and not males) is to live up to them. I think if a woman is a God fearing, pious woman she is living up to and more to what is expected of her faith and that in a way could be a form of agency. I think patriarchy is designed for women to fail.

Women are expected to 'perfect' and no one can achieve that so if you come close you are respected and revered.

Thuleleni confirms the issues raised in the literature in that in some orthodox religious societies women are not 'oppressed' as much as Western feminists believe because they use their religion to enact their agency and they find freedom in this and not oppression. Thuleleni believes if she lives up to what is expected of her as a Zulu woman and she is empowered through education and financial security she will be enacting agency within her culture. Thuleleni believes that if she does not conform to her traditional gender role she will be fighting a losing battle because the patriarchal system is designed to place women on an impossibly high pedestal such that it is actually impossible to attain such a position. However, the closer a woman behaves in accordance with the religious gender ideals, the greater reverence and respect she is accorded within her culture.

Without assuming a deterministic framework, it may be productive to think about how gender and religion constitute each other. For example, to understand orthodox Jewish women's agency or Muslim femininity it is necessary to examine how these categories are created and operate within certain historical and cultural contexts. The suggestion that Avishai et al. (2015) put forward is that gender and religion scholarship would benefit from theoretical perspectives that build on current theories in the sociology of gender, including conceptualising gender and sexuality as constituted through practice and interaction, informed by cultural narratives and institutional contexts, and as profoundly relational and intersecting with other categories such as race and class. This was also confirmed by my participants because some participants stated that they had agency and were able to exercise it within their religion as well as within their culture.

9.4. Religion and its Impact on Current or Future Partners

Religious boundaries and meaning are constructed both from within and without in response to internal conflicts and choices and external pressures and rewards that drive identity formation (Peck, 2005:236). My participants stated that they wanted their future spouses to follow some sort of religion because this would indicate that they had a good upbringing and also had respect.

Mpiyezulu

I was very fortunate that I met my wife in the church (Shembe). She is a good religious woman and we worship together as a family. I do not understand young people today they do not respect their culture or their religion they are too free (emphasis). I would want my son to marry a woman who respects their religion whatever that may be I would never allow my son or daughter to marry someone who is.....what do they call it.....atheist. What is that? What type of person does not believe in anything? I blame that person's parents for failing to raise them up correctly. I could never respect someone who has no religion or culture because that person must be cursed if they cannot respect God or where their ancestors came from (culture). I know sometimes religion goes against some cultural practice but in my church they are supportive of the practice of polygyny. If I had to choose between following Christianity and my Zulu cultural practice I would choose my culture because culture has been before Jesus walked the earth.

Shongani

My fiancé is not very religious but he does attend church with me sometimes. He says he was raised in a household where everything was about church and he got tired of it so as an adult he did not care too much about the church. He says he attends church for me because religion is important to me. I am ok with that at least he is respectful of religion and hopefully if we have children they too will be religious. My religion is against polygyny but they would never state that publically because members of the congregation are polygynous and they would be offended. I would choose my religion if I had to decide between cultural traditional practices and Catholicism because Jesus came to save us and show us the true correct way of life and not follow archaic and arbitrary practices.

Qondeni

I am Anglican well I was raised Anglican but as an adult I have not been a fully practising Anglican. I want my future husband to be a God-fearing religious man. If he fears God he will respect me because God says men should respect their wives. I would never marry a man who does not believe in any religion or is against church because to me if he does not even respect God he will never respect me. Religion and culture can support each other as well as contradict each other. My church is against polygyny but it will never outwardly condemn it

out of fear of alienating some members. I prefer Anglican to my Zulu culture, it guarantees my equality to a man and does not make me feel inferior because of my gender, which I did not choose nor can change.

Thalengabona

God has blessed me with a good man who is respectful of me and my religion. When my husband and I first started dating he was not religious but he would attend church with me. As we are getting older I see he is getting more interested in church (Zion). I think it is part of maturing, religion becomes important to the older generation not the younger ones. I love my religion but I love my culture more and if I could not practice both I would follow God.

Phakimpi

Religion is like culture if you do not observe or respect it you are not an intelligent person. Yes there are parts of religion I do not like or disagree with just like there are traditional customs I am vehemently against but it is God and it is bigger than me so I will respect it. If it was good enough for my parents it is good enough for me. I am torn because I want to respect my culture because my ancestors did but I want to worship God because I am Anglican and I believe.

The participants combined their Christian religion with their Zulu culture. Some placed religion above culture and others thought culture came before religion, but it was important to the participants that their spouses or future spouses respect religion. Even if their potential spouse was not as religious as they were, the participants wanted the future spouse to believe in some sort of religion. Therefore their religious beliefs impacted on the current or future partner that the participants would choose. They understand that at times religion is contradictory and some indicated that they do not know what they would choose if they had to choose between their culture and their religion. Some respondents stated that they would choose their Zulu traditional practices, others would choose their Christian belief system and others wished to be able to practice both. Religion is an important facet in their lives because for some participants' religion was forced upon them growing up and when they became adults they made the decision to either continue with their religious practice or to leave it. Those who left did mention that now later in life they have returned to their religion so it can be argued that age and maturity does have a bearing on a person's religious beliefs.

Foucault's (1972) theory on power was useful in informing my own understanding of power. Foucault views power as constantly moving systems of unequal force relations. It is interesting to see how some female participants moved from one system of control (culture) to another (religion).

Shongani

My religion is against polygyny but they would never state that publically because members of the congregation are polygynous and they would be offended. I would choose my religion if I had to decide between cultural traditional practices and Catholicism because Jesus came to save us and show us the true correct way of life and not follow archaic and arbitrary practices.

Qondeni

I worship in an Anglican church which is against polygyny but it will never outwardly condemn it out of fear of alienating some members. I prefer Anglican to my Zulu culture, it guarantees my equality to a man and does not make me feel inferior because of my gender, which I did not choose nor can change.

The power dynamics in the families in which the participants in my study were raised shifted at times. Some families had separate residences and when the father was not present the mother was the authority figure. The first wife in all the polygynous families yielded the most power and this was felt by subsequent wives and their children. The person who had the power was also the person who made the decisions. In a polygynous family the power would constantly shift because the father would not always be present and then the mother would be made the de-facto head of her biological family. Therefore, this proves Foucault's theory on power and how there are constantly moving systems of unequal force relations as this was indeed the case in the polygynous families considered in my study.

9.5. Zulu Naming and Christian Religion

The excerpts below highlight the case that a name in the Christian religion does not hold as much significance as it does in the Zulu culture. In Christianity a name may be considered as just a name. There are however debates around naming and Christian deliverance. Some scholars (see Brand, 2002 and Munyika, 2004) view deliverance as imperialist, because

missionaries came to Africa with superior ideals of warding away the 'evil' indigenous systems that were in place and to introduce the natives to Christianity so they too can inherit full humanity. This can be considered an imperialist view of indigenous African cultures, which greatly contributed to the devaluing of African cultures and ultimately led to the oppression of African peoples based on religious doctrines.

Thuluzufe

My name is a negative name but I found comfort in church. I am Catholic so I took solace in knowing regardless of my name God loves me and has preordained a path in life solely for me. So my name does not determine my destiny only God does.

Soneni

The church is the big factor why I did not change my name. The church and father (priest) comforted me by saying; the name your earthly parents give you has no bearing on what God had planned for you. So I do not believe my name will destine my future.

Participants' views such as those expressed in the above excerpts show that some participants may have wanted to change their negative names but they do not want to appear disrespectful to their culture. They therefore take comfort in the teaching of the Christian faith which allows them to negotiate the perceived destiny attached to their cultural name and their religious destiny.

9.6. Conclusion

According to Sullins (2006), Christianity in South Africa has the second highest following in the world behind Colombia. This shows that religion plays a significant role in culture and society as a whole. The participants in this study believe that while religion is gendered this is justified because it is the word of God. Zulu culture is also gendered however some participants believe that this is not justified because culture is man-made and not handed down by God. Participants believe that gender differences as espoused by religion cannot be changed because it is the word of God but culture is not divine and therefore can be changed. It can be argued that religion is socially constructed to encapsulate socio-cultural meanings and practices. So religion and culture are somewhat inter-related in societal culture.

In this chapter I examined the role of religion in gender identity construction in a polygynous family. My participants voiced how religion impacted their identity. Some viewed religion as a 'saviour' and others had negative conceptions of religion because it was a 'partner' with culture to always keep women in subservient positions. The combination of Zulu cultural traditions and Christianity resulted in a hybridity of an African traditional religion. Some respondents stated that they were against polygyny and sometimes religion was used to justify this sentiment but they also acknowledged that their traditional practices were entrenched before the missionaries came to Africa and that for this reason they supported the practice of polygyny. The issue of religion and culture does become complex in the African Zulu culture because the worship of ancestors resembles a worship of God. *Amadlozi* (ancestors) were humans and they lived and made decisions with the choices available to them at that particular time in history. Worshiping *amadlozi* may appear illogical to some people but ancestor worship is what is traditionally practiced in the Zulu culture. In its purest form *amadlozi* should be respected as speakers on ones behalf to God, it is only God who is worshiped (Mkhize, 2011).

The participants combined religion with culture and it was important to them that their spouses or future spouses respect religion. Even if they are not as religious as the participants themselves, the participants wanted their potential spouses to believe in some sort of religion. Religion was an important factor to some of my participants. Some of the women found comfort in their religion whilst other women found confirmation of what it means to be a good Christian woman. Both men and women stated that their current or prospective partners must follow some sort of religion, even if it is not entirely like theirs, but their future partners could not be atheist. Religion and culture seemed to blend well in affirming traditional Zulu gender roles. It was also interesting to see how now as adults my participants were more understanding of their parents' marriage and the type of family that they had grown up in. The next chapter discusses emotional relations and their impact on gender identity.

CHAPTER TEN

EMOTIONAL RELATIONS AND GENDER IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

10. Introduction

The social structure of sexuality is that sexuality is socially constructed. Its bodily dimension does not exist before or outside the social practices in which relationships between people are formed and carried on. Sexuality is enacted or conducted; it is not ‘expressed’ (Connell, 1987:111). There is an emotional and erotic dimension to all social relationships. The ‘sexual social relationships’ are relationships organised around one person’s emotional attachment to another, which Connell calls the ‘structure of cathexis’.

According to Connell (1987:112), cathexis is the construction of emotionally charged social relations with other people. Freud (1921) noted that the emotional attachment between people may be hostile and not only affectionate, or it could be hostile and affectionate at the same time and therefore ambivalent. Most close relationships have this degree of complexity. The members of heterosexual couples are not just different, they are specifically unequal (Connell, 1987:113). There are material reasons why women participate in unequal relationships. The ‘double standard’ permitting promiscuous sexuality to men and forbidding it to women has everything to do with greater power and the structure of cathexis which is multileveled (Connell, 1987:114). The cathexis aspect did emerge in my study when my participants discussed future or potential marriage partners and what type of unions they hoped to marry into, as well as in the participants’ observation of their parents’ emotional relationship within the polygynous family.

Theorists (see Cunningham & Barbee, 2000, Curtrona & Russell, 1990, Reis, 2001) have conceptualised emotional support as expressions of care, concern, love and interest. Scholars (Cunningham & Barbee, 2000, Weiss, 1974, Acitelli, 1996, Samter, 1994, Curtrona & Russell, 1987, Xu & Burleson, 2001) state that emotional support has been treated as a basic provision of close personal relationships. Abundant research indicates that spouses who are emotionally supported experience better psychological health than those who are unsupported. This relates to (Al-Krenawi, 1999 and Tabi, 2010) studies of the detrimental

effects of polygyny on wives married in such unions in terms of their physical and mental health.

Long-term committed relationships, and in particular the quality of relationships, is imperative to the health and well-being of men and women (Umberson et al., 2015: 542). ‘Intimacy’, defined as a sense of mutual closeness and connection, is widely recognised as contributing to relationship quality (Julien et Al., 2003 and Peplaus, 2001). The ‘gender-as-relational’ perspective emphasises the notion that how men and women enact gender is influenced by social interactions within relational contexts (Umberson et al., 2015: 542).

Gerstel and Peiss (1985) suggested that “boundaries are an important place to observe gender relations...boundaries highlights the dynamic quality of the structures of gender relations as they influence and are shaped by social interactions”. Emotion work is globally defined as activities that are concerned with the enhancement of others’ emotional support (see Erikson, 2005 and Hochschild, 2003).

10.1. Form and Functions of Relationships

Burleson (2003) states that relationships exhibit both ‘form’ and ‘function’. ‘Form’ means the recognised types of relationships acknowledged within cultural milieus such as acquaintances, co-workers and friends. ‘Function’ refers to the period, that is social and cultural tasks that allow relationships to perform the things they do or provide for their members and the broader social order. Relationship forms and functions are deeply intertwined, with particular types of relationships associated with the performance of certain functions (Burleson, 2003:4). People in relationships learn the rules of relations and prescribed functions of relationships in their families, communities and cultural groups (such as gender and ethnicity). Families, communities and cultural groups influence cognitive representations of relationships and their functions (Burleson, 2003:4).

Tannen (1980) and Wood (1993) state that men and women think about close relationships in fundamentally different ways. They maintain that women value close relationships for their emotional and expressive qualities while men conceptualise close relationships in terms of their instrumental features. Research indicates that both men and women seek intimacy from their close relationships and that they both view empathy and trust as care features of such relationships (see Wright, 1998, Parks & Floyd, 1996).

Research exploring cultural differences in the experiences and expression of emotion suggests that people from different cultural backgrounds may diverge, perhaps substantially, in the extent to which close relationships are organised around the expression, exploration and management of emotion (Burlison, 2003:7).

10.2. Culture and Emotional Relationships

Hofstede (1980) explores the dichotomy of individual-collectivism. The author argues that in more collectivist societies the individual's situation and projects are deeply enmeshed with the situation and projects of in-group others such as family members and close friends. On the other hand, in more individualist societies, such as Western societies, people see their situation as more independent of others and tend to focus on the pursuit of their own defined goals. Members of collectivist cultures, such as African and Eastern cultures in particular, expect communicators to understand and interpret unarticulated feelings, subtle nonverbal, gestures and environmental cues. In contrast, the communicative forms used in individualist Western cultures are more reliant on explicit and elaborated verbal utterances than the communicative strategies employed by members of collectivist African and Eastern cultures (Gudykunst & Matsumoto, 1996).

Cultural value systems have profound implications for the ways in which emotions are experienced, expressed and managed. For example, in individualist cultures, a person's emotional state is commonly viewed as something to be examined, analysed and explicitly explored in discourse. Solidarity with others is less likely to be assumed than in collectivist cultures and therefore must be fabricated through overt expressions of interest, care and empathy. In collectivist cultures, focus on an individual's ego needs and emotional state is often viewed as disrupting the harmony of the social group (see Markus & Kitayama, 1994, Wellenkamp, 1995). Preoccupation with the wants and feelings of a particular individual may call inappropriate attention to the individuality and distinctness of one person at the expense of the group (Burlison, 2003:8).

Studies show that all races and cultures think about emotional relationships in similar ways and see these relationships as built around common emotional foundation (Burlison, 2003:9). In collectivist cultures, an individual's distressed emotional state may be upsetting for the entire social group and result in separating the distressed party from the group, further exacerbating their distress. The aim when providing comfort in collectivist cultures may be to

restore social harmony and restoring personal composure and smooth social functioning in a manner that avoids loss of face, embarrassment and undue emotionalism (Burleson, 2003:14).

In the Zulu culture outward expression of emotion is frowned upon. The Zulu culture is very conservative and declarations of love or anger are usually done in private. In a polygynous relationship it is only natural for a woman to become angry and sad when she learns her husband is planning on taking a second wife or has taken a second wife (Mkhize, 2011). Depending on the woman's circumstances she has three options: she can just accept her fate and care for her biological family; she can sue the husband for divorce; or she could fight legally to have the second marriage declared invalid if traditional protocols were not adhered to. However, this last option could alienate her from her in-laws and subsequently lead to divorce.

10.3. Gender Division of Emotion

In the gendered division of emotion, "emotional" becomes part of a major cluster of other adjectives by which "masculine" and "feminine" are differentiated and through which the emotional/rational divide of female/male is established (Duncombe & Marsden, 1998:234).

It can be suggested that in any heterosexual relationship the woman usually does most of the emotional work. In the Zulu culture the man is superior in the relationship so he is already in charge of the dynamics of the relationship. When he decides to change the dynamics of the relationship, such as by adding a second wife into the family, the woman, in theory, has no choice but to accept the change. The Zulu culture perpetuates the emotional domination of women by their spouses by coercing women to accept polygyny. If a woman does not agree or accept such a union or leaves the union she ostracised by her community as being egotistical and a woman who thinks she is better than her husband and by inference better than her culture and traditions.

10.4. Co-wives and Conflict

Goodenough (1978) asserts that one of the problems with polygyny is that the first wife may be angered if the husband divides his favour evenly and the second wife may become angry if he does not. Other studies (see Colson, 1961) have observed how some African women have resorted to witchcraft and sorcery and even murder of their co-wife or co-wives or her children as a result of intense hatred and competition for their husband's affections or

attention. Some research on co-wife relationships in polygynous families has found these relationships to be emotionally unsatisfactory (see Al-Krenawi, 1991, Strassman, 1997) whilst other research has highlighted that some women living in polygynous family systems experience material and emotional satisfaction (Kilbride, 1994, Madhavan, 2002 & Mkhize, 2011).

The reasons why men take subsequent wives, according to previous research, see (Agadjanian, & Ezech, 2008; Al-Krenawi, 1998; 1999; 2002; Al-Krenawi, Slonim-Nevo & Graham, 2006) are: some men see polygyny as a convenient way to alternate wives as they give birth and breastfeed the children; if the wife does not live up to the required standards of being a good wife, for example, if she is a bad cook or has no manners, the husband may take another wife; if a woman is nursing she is not allowed to have sex with her husband so to observe the cultural taboo men are 'allowed' to take a second wife to fulfil that need which they cannot satisfy with their first wife.

Ozkan et al. (2006) state that the polygynous form of marriage is an expression of a way of life which is deeply embedded in religious and cultural obligation⁴⁸. Many societies accord high status to senior wives; they may have power over the other wives, they may enjoy privileges that the junior wives do not enjoy and have increased influence over the husband. In one society, the senior wife is the manager of the household, overseeing the work and other activities of the remaining wives and the distribution of supplies. In another society the senior wife arranges and consents to the husband's next marriage (Al-Krenawi et al., 1997:447).

According to Gage-Brandon (1992), two-wife unions are the most stable whereas unions with three or more wives are associated with the highest rates of marital disruption (Gage-Brandon, 1992:285). Wife rank is often considered to be an important factor contributing to

⁴⁸ Cultural obligation in Turkish society involve religious permission, the societal acceptance of polygamy and the negative social status of females in the society, who defer to their spouse or family for major decisions (Ozkan et al, 2006:219). In Turkey senior wives exercise considerable authority and control over the junior wives. The junior wives have to assist them with child care, domestic and economic activities. Since polygamy is illegal in Turkey but is common in rural villagers, the junior wives' marriage is considered illegal, they have no official right on beneficial heritage of their husbands (Ozkan et al, 2006:215).

marital instability among women in polygynous unions. However findings of studies conducted on the effect of wife rank on divorce among polygynous married women are not consistent (Gage-Brandon, 1992:286). Polygyny is often advantageous for the senior wife to assist her with child care and domestic and economic activities. In such a situation, the husband's marriage to a third or fourth wife for 'romantic love' or other considerations may be against the better interests of the existing polygynous unit. It can also be argued that despite the ideology of equity, any number of wives in excess of two increases differentiation among polygynous wives on the basis of age, education, family, wealth and status. Consequently, the economics of scale of polygyny may only be fully realised with just two wives (Gage-Brandon, 1992:291).

Jankowiak et al. (2005) discuss a 'pair bond'⁴⁹, which refers to an attachment based on shared sexual intimacy and at times a deep sense of mutual belonging. Authors Moran (1990) and Whyte (1979) have commented on the sexual and emotional ambiguity that women feel about sharing their husbands with co-wives. Their studies indicate that the primary reason for co-wife conflict is a desire to monopolise a husband's attention or sexual services. An 'institutionalized lover' is culturally condoned by both spouses who are both prohibited from extramarital affairs.

According to Al-Krenawi (1999), the first wives of well-functioning families and the first wives of poorly-functioning families have different reactions to the second marriage but the pain is the same in both groups. The first wives usually accept what has happened while the second wives remain angry and hostile. The wives in well-functioning families view their relationship with the second wives as distant but functional, as opposed to the wives in the poorly-functioning families who view the relationship with the second wives as hostile. The factors that contribute to this is that the husbands of the well-functioning families have probably shared their decision to take a second wife with their first wives while the poorly-

⁴⁹ It assumes that men and women have sexual and emotional desires best fulfilled within a dyadic relationship that can endure. People in a pair bond assume that sexual fidelity is important for both partners. Therefore they tend to monitor and prevent their partner's extramarital sexual behaviour (Jankowiak et. al. 2005:83).

functioning husbands may have surprised their first wives with the decision to take a second wife and abandon them during and after the wedding (see Al-Krenawi, 1997, 1999, 2002).

Al-Krenawi (1997, 1999, 2002) asserts that the first wives of well-functioning families usually are in agreement with the husband's decision to take a second wife and accept that this is their fate whilst the wives in poorly-functioning families attribute their husband's decision to take a second wife to the husband's 'out-of-control' sexual urges. The first wives in well-functioning families view their relationships with the second wives as distant and cordial whilst the first wives of the poorly-functioning family view their relationships with the second wives with anger and hate.

The findings of a previous study on polygyny (Slonim-Nevo & Al-Krenawi, 2006) showed that second wives felt that their marriages had been forced upon them. They were actually against second marriages and hated other people's second wives but had in any case become second wives. Some of these wives were schoolgirls when they were forced or tricked into marrying older men (Slonim-Nevo & Al-Krenawi, 2006:7).

Dlabembalela

My mother was the second wife so there was anger, resentment and jealousy between the wives. The first wife hated us and her hatred intensified when my mother had my brother. I do not know why because she (the first wife) also had a son. My mother had said she had always wanted to be married and have children she did not care what type of marriage it was. She said she wanted her identity to be a "Mrs....." she wanted to be a respected woman.

Phakimpi

My mother's experience as the first wife was unhappy about the second wife that followed her and of the making of another family. Although my mother did not struggle as the first wife but although her experience was not good, it was not great either but she remained in the marriage for her children. My mother said when she became married she wanted to be a 'mother' because that would show that she is a true person she is able to give birth to other people. I think most women probably stay in such unions for the sake of their children.

Dlabembalela and Phakimpi both stated that their mothers had constructed their identities around the titles they would be given when they married and had children; they would

become a wife and mother. The emotional relationship of their mothers with their fathers in a way was a means to an end in order to construct their desired identities.

In addition, the findings of previous studies, such as the research conducted by Jankowiak et al. (2005), showed that close proximity was a factor contributing to conflict. If wives lived in separate residences they could not physically fight but if they lived together there was an increased possibility of direct confrontations (Jankowiak et al., 2005:93). However, in other instances distance intensified the hatred.

10.5. Conflict Resolution in Polygynous Families

In my previous study on polygyny I found that there was constant conflict in the polygynous family, usually between the co-wives. I found it interesting that these conflicts did trickle down to the children and they too would end up having conflict as a result of their mothers' conflicts with each other (Mkhize, 2011).

Phakimpi

Yes we grew up in a loving home. The other wife particularly treats me differently, I mean she would shout and greet me when passing by the road, yet she doesn't talk to my other two sisters, that made me feel uncomfortable.

Qalimpi

Phula ubaba umthetho wayenawo ekhaya uma kuvuka inqxabano wayetshela omama bonke ukuthi mabayilungise lendaba angaze azilungisele yena ngenduku (When there was some misunderstanding my father instructed his wives to solve it or he would with a sjambok).

Qondeni

All conflicts were not resolved but 'swept under the carpet' to keep a 'pseudo-peace'. I think at times our mother's conflict did spill over to use children because we would also fight amongst ourselves over things that were petty. I guess in some way we were trying to fight our mother's battle for her against the other wives' children.

Thuleleni

Father tried to be the peace-keeper in the family. Father is/was the conflict resolver in the family. Siblings tried to resolve their own conflict but in extreme cases the father would intervene to resolve the dispute.

Shongani

All the co-wives got involved in resolving a family conflict.

Bhekezunu

There was little to no conflict because the two homes were kept completely separately.

Muzowambango

There was no conflict because my father tried to keep them conflict-free by treating everyone as family. Our father delegated the wives to resolve the conflicts because if they failed to do so he would resolve the conflict by a sjambok. “Phula ubaba umthetho wayenawo ekhaya uma kuvuka inqxabano wayetshela omama bonke ukuthi mabayilungise lendaba angaze azilungisele yena ngenduku” (When there was some misunderstanding my father instructed his wives to solve it or he would with a sjambok).

Thuluzufe

The co-wives resolved the conflicts.

Mpiyezulu

The older siblings resolved the conflict before it even got to their parents because then it would be serious.

Thulubona

I had a traditional family so outside extended family members were mediators in serious family disputes.

It is interesting to note that the women voiced how they witnessed or heard about conflicts within their polygynous family and the men mentioned conflict in passing and did not delve

too deep into the issue of conflict. One participant stated that looking back on the fights she had had with her half-siblings these conflicts were in a way a fight on behalf of her mother against her step-mother through her children. Some participants, especially the men, said that the conflicts or the resolution of the conflicts had no bearing on how they constructed their gendered identity because the fighting had nothing to do with them. The women, on the other hand, had a different story to share; they believed the conflicts were personally against them because if their mother was being fought against by one of the co-wives they were also being fought against. They said that they were children at the time so they could not do anything to fight the co-wife but the only recourse that they had was to fight with the co-wife's children. I think this has more to do with Chodorow's (1995) theory that female children are closer to their mothers and they usually mirror their identity based on her. Therefore if there is conflict involving their mother it involves them as well.

The men may not have fully appreciated the nuisances that occur in family conflicts. It is possible that the women were more susceptible to the in-fighting because they were closer to their mothers and as they grew older in age their mothers may have confided in them about their problems. The men may have also been confidants of their mothers but had possibly never fully acknowledged or felt the serious emotional anguish that daughters would tend to when their mothers are unhappy in the family.

10.5.1. Family Under Distress

Researchers provide evidence suggesting that polygyny, like family violence, is often associated with increased family stress and poor child outcomes (Hassouneh-Phillip, 2001:735-736). In addition to studies documenting the detrimental effects of polygyny on the health of wives, other investigators have identified polygamy as a risk factor for negative child health outcomes. Al-Krenawi (1997:453) found that the offspring of the first wife had inadequate and/or dysfunctional exposure to their father which contributed to the poorer scholastic achievement and increased behavioural problems detected in this group of children. In Al-Krenawi's (1997) study children from polygynous families reported higher levels of family conflict and suffered from lower academic achievement and poorer social adjustment than children from monogamous families. In contrast to the findings of Al-Krenawi (1997), Elbedour, Bart and Hektner's (2000) investigation differed from previous work in that their analysis did not differentiate between the children of first and second

wives, thus overlooking potentially significant group differences (Hassouneh-Phillip, 2001:737). Other researchers of polygyny have investigated polygyny as a risk factor for mental illness among women and their children (Hassouneh-Phillip, 2001:735-737).

10.5.2. Different Emotions in a Polygynous Marriage

Jankowiak et al. (2005) argue that even if a man is married when the wife or wives find out about a clandestine affair they view this betrayal as a slight on their sexual attractiveness and ability to satisfy their husband. Sexual jealousy seems to be the main contributor to conflict amongst wives in polygynous families (Jankowiak et al., 2005:85). The authors have stated that there is less tension when wives live in separate residences. Other studies have however highlighted that the first wife may initially act aggressively towards the second wife but will subsequently slip into indifference and possibly end up at a potential friendship (Jankowiak et al., 2005: 89).

Phakimpi

The other wife treated us just fine I guess. There isn't much interaction between us (the two families). When we were younger the two wives got along so well such that they would do groceries together and wear similar clothes. Now that I am grown up I'm thinking dad had done something to keep them close. They (the two wives) used to visit my dad in Joburg and they would look after each other's children for about a month at a time, and lovakashayo (the one visiting) would also bring a child from the other household. Life was simple. I guess that is why I didn't realise we were different.

Thuluzufe

There was no love lost between the wives. My mother was the first wife and she hated the second wife. She being a traditional woman would never say it out loud but when we got older we would see by her actions and the way she spoke about her that she hated her. My mother was a kind woman and although she hated the second wife she had no problems with her children. She would say children are innocent and it makes no sense to be angry at them for being born. My half-siblings always respected my mother and treated her well as they should have and is expected in the Zulu culture. My mother understood her duty as a wife and she always respected our culture and my father even if he did things she did not like.

Thalengabona

My mother was the second wife of three wives my father had. My mother showed us love and the other children from the first wife as well. She was always respectful to the first wife and my father. It was when the third wife came that problems started. Everyone hated her, they said she was a witch and is the reason my father has gone crazy. Now as an adult I think it is because the last wife was younger and my father loved her the most. The third wife was always nice to me and my siblings and we could always talk to her about things we could not talk to our mothers about and that was because she was closer to our age. She only had one child and I love her as my sister. Funny how the first two wives did not like each other but were civil but as soon as the third wife came they became best friends and hated the third wife. My mother told me once she now understands how the first wife felt when she married my father, after the third wife came.

Thuluzufe

My mother's experience was happy because it was their culture and she loved the fact that everything was equal amongst the wives. My mother was well respected and loved in the family even by her in-laws. She loved everyone even the illegitimate children their father got outside the polygynous marriage. My mother's experience was/is good therefore it was encouraging to see maybe in the future I may consider a polygynous marriage.

Qalimpi

My mother was advised by her in-laws to observe family protocol and respect the ancestors and everything will be fine. My mother's experience had no effect on me because it was just the family I was raised in and I believed it was the normal way of life as a Zulu person.

Qondeni

No I can never understand why my mother stayed in such a union. She is the first wife and she said she was against my father marrying a second wife but she was forced to agree to his second marriage or else there would have been war in our family. She said she only agreed to keep the peace but I do not understand why she stayed. She says she stayed for us (the children) she knew if she left our father he would not support us and we would suffer and be

destitute at least staying married we were able to attend school and get better educated. She said she did not care about her marriage once she had her children and she focused on that.

The excerpts above show that the existing literature is accurate in terms of the argument that the emotional relationships amongst the co-wives may begin as being hostile but then change to indifference and may possibly end up as a quasi-friendship even if it is born from a common 'enemy' in the form of an incoming wife.

10.5.3. Sister-wives

Some studies have found that plural marriage bonds women together as 'sister-wives' in the interest of economic cooperation and promotes female solidarity. Women's solidarity is stronger in the presence of alienating patriarchal control as a challenging force. Women see themselves as fortunate in having a large group of sister-wives and female friends with whom they pray, work, laugh and cry, which forms the basis of intense and passionate relationships, in other words, the female network (Kibride & Page, 2012:105). There also seems to be an emotional distance between a polygynous husband and his wives, which seems to mirror the relationship of a father to a child. Bennion observed that women are more attracted to Mormon polygynous fundamentalists because they experience extreme deprivation in the mainstream. Women are seeking alternative forms of sex, marriage and family in response to the decline of the nuclear family and the growing poverty of the mother-child unit (Kibride & Page, 2012:105). These women develop cooperative networks among themselves because their husbands are rarely home. Bennion illustrated how each wife in a polygynous family setting brings her own unique talents to the group (Kibride & Page, 2012:106). For the wives the home is an important place to express themselves while for the husband the home is a place to visit, a site to house their family and a place to which they make little emotional commitment and over which they exert little control (Kibride & Page, 2012:107).

Polygyny in the West is synonymous with organised marriage between old men and underage girls, and these men are often accomplices to rapes, incest and sex with minors. The Brown family aim to change that stereotype by participating in a reality TV show called *Sister Wives*⁵⁰ on the TLC network in the United States. When reading the literature on polygyny

⁵⁰ The husband Kody was raised in a monogamous household by Mormon parents. When he turned 21 years old he converted to fundamental Mormonism. Kody believes that plural marriage is like a

and the modern face of polygyny presented as reality television in America it was fascinating to witness the emotional dynamics that occur within their family.

In *Love Times Three*, the Darger women note that plural marriage requires each woman to have a constant gentle empathy for her sister-wives and a respect for boundaries and fairness, emphasising that when there are multiple partners, there are multiple perspectives and feelings that must be considered. Their desire to live a polygynous life is framed as a desire to enlarge their conception and practice of love. They say they want to see how closely they can model Christ's teaching about love, acceptance, care and compassion (Park, 2013:229). In *Sister Wives* Kody Brown, the husband, states "love should be multiplied not divided" (Park, 2013:229). Religion is used in *Sister Wives* and *Love Times Three* to justify their polygynous family (Park, 2013:229).

*Sister Wives*⁵¹ and *Love Times Three* all emphasise the notion that the principle of plural marriage is one wherein women marry not only a husband but become eternally united to each other, that is, to the co-wives as well. The man can only court another woman if all the co-wives agree or give permission to do so. Courtship, in the case of these Mormon polygynous marriages, is a family affair (Park, 2013:234). The wives all consider themselves' sisters and are supportive of each other. They all discuss the possibility of their husband

'reward for good behaviour', in that if you are good with one marriage you will be good in two marriages and it will continue. The wives Meri and Janelle also grew up in mainstream Mormonism but are happy being in a plural marriage. The third wife Christine grew up in a polygamist family and has always coveted that type of a marriage for herself and her children. The fourth wife Robyn was in a monogamous marriage before and divorced and is now happy with being in a polygamist marriage.

⁵¹ Since the first episode aired on TV the police in Utah, where the family reside, have launched an investigation into the polygamist marriage. According to Utah law "a person is guilty of bigamy when, knowing he has a husband or wife, the person purports to marry another person or cohabits with another person. This law applies to people who obtain multiple marriage licenses, as well as people who are legally married to only one person while also engaging in other marriage like relationships". The family has been warned to cease their polygamist lifestyle by the Utah prosecutor or prepare to be charged with felony bigamy, which if convicted the husband and wives could face a maximum of 15 to 20 years in prison and their children would go to the State. Kody's wives are well educated professionals in their own Right; Meri used to work in the mental health industry and has since been terminated from her position when her employer discovered she was in a polygamist marriage and subsequently breaking the law. Janelle and Robyn have their own businesses and are successful.

wanting to take another wife and how it will best suit the entire family. There are strict rules the husband has to adhere to in that he is not allowed to kiss or have sex with any other woman besides his wives and even if he is courting another woman he has to marry her first before he could even kiss her and there would be no pre-marital sex. The wives do admit to sometimes feeling jealous but they understand that is human nature and all they can do is work on changing their feelings.

In the Western form of polygyny the women discuss a sisterhood of sorts and they state that they are bonded to each other just as they are bonded to their husband. So they portray a happy and content polygynous marriage whereby in the act of their husband marrying another woman, she is not viewed as a rival but as a sister. These women immediately form or plan to form a positive emotional relationship with the co-wife. This is in stark contrast to polygyny in the African context. In the African context women do not welcome their husbands marrying another woman (see, Allen, 1974, Al-Krenawi, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2012, and Mkhize, 2011). Some African women do fight this new addition to their family even if they know it is a losing war. African women do not welcome the incoming wife as a sister but instead view her as a rival or an enemy to be in competition with and ultimately defeated.

10.6. Co-wives and Their Children

The study by Jankowiak et al. (2005) highlighted that women put their child/children's interest first and above everything else and therefore did not engage in co-wife conflict (Jankowiak et al., 2005:87). In both the Brown and Darger families, in the case of Mormon families in America, the older children care for the younger children, siblings are attentive to and respectful of the differences among them and when one member of the family is 'struggling' they are supportive (Park, 2013:229).

'Affectional solidarity' is both primary and particular. It is primary because a child's earliest experiences of relations of love and affection provide the basis for self-trust and for the ability to engage with and respond to the needs of others. It is particular because it responds to and validates the other as a unique individual with specific needs, talents, preferences, capacities, dispositions and vulnerabilities. The primary-ness and particularity of affectional solidarity is illustrated by the bonds of trust and care among the Browns' children in *Sister Wives*. The generosity with which the existing Brown children accept their new siblings

added from their new mom's family is particularly noteworthy (Park, 2013:230). The Brown children do not appear resentful of their new mother or stepsiblings as children may be. Openness to difference and a commitment to working through disagreement is a primary feature of the independent modern polygynous families (Park, 2013:232). The emphasis is on the importance of good communication that validates the feelings of others, the core family values of responsibility, respect, honesty, self control, selflessness, accountability and repentance.

In the study by Al-Krenawi (1999: 502) however, findings indicated that the wives' relationship affected the children's quarrels. The senior wife's children used to beat up the junior wife's little girl and the two women expressed anger against each other in defence of their children. The conflict between the wives can therefore be seen in the behaviour of the children.

Qondeni

All conflicts were not resolved but 'swept under the carpet' to keep a 'pseudo-peace'. I think at times our mother's conflict did spill over to use children because we would also fight amongst ourselves over things that were petty. I guess in some way we were trying to fight our mother's battle for her against the other wives' children.

Al-Krenawi (1996) argues that the literature also associates polygamous children with problems in psychological and social adjustment. Some children from polygamous marriages are diagnosed with mental health problems, have higher incidences of drug abuse and incidences of son-to-sibling and son-to-mother intimidation are more common amongst children from polygamous marriages (Al-Krenawi, 1999:506). My study did highlight the fact that the participants, even from a young age, realised the complex dynamics they witnessed in their families. As children they were already conscious that their mothers were in competition with each other whether it be for resources, attention or affection from their husband. This type of mental battle started from a young age and did breed competition and resentment, which is unhealthy for the physical and emotional construction of a positive gendered identity.

10.6.1 Competition Between the Wives

Competition often develops between the junior and senior wives, which in turn can create sub-family competition, as the wives and their children compete for the husband's social and economic support (Al-Krenawi et al., 1997:454). The grievances that a senior wife's child may feel toward their father can be perceived on several levels. The first is that they directly experience the reduction of the father's social and economic support towards the senior wife and her children. Secondly, the reduction in the father's support toward their mother and in the quality of their parents' relationship often exacerbates the children's resentment towards the father. Thirdly, from a systemic perspective, the reduction of fatherly support is often, in turn, associated with an increase in reciprocal mother-to-child bonds, which in turn furthers the child's sense of commitment to the mother and anger towards the father. Finally, anger toward the father may be displaced toward the junior wife and her children. It is common for children of the two sub-families to perceive one another as "enemies" rather than "brother" or "sister" (Al-Krenawi et al., 1997:454).

My respondents all stated that even if at times they did fight with their half-siblings and were in competition with them they still viewed themselves as their father's children. The wives' competition and rivalry did spill over to the children (see Mkhize, 2011) but it was never as severe and prolonged as their mother's fights.

10.6.2. Jealousy within Polygyny Amongst the Co-wives

One of the objections monogamists in the US hold against polygyny is that romantic love is considered at odds with plural marriage. Polygyny is seen as injurious to women. Many monogamist women in the West cannot reconcile how the wives of a polygamist husband cannot be jealous of one another. Among the FDLS⁵² wives there is very little jealousy because of the division of labour among the wives and because the responsibilities of their own children lessens or eliminates jealousy (Kibride & Page, 2012:52). Most studies done on societies who openly practice polygyny found that the wives are not jealous of one another unless the husband shows favouritism to one wife or her children. According to Al-Krenawi

⁵² FDLS: Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

et al. (2006), competition between co-wives for the husband's social and economic support is common, as is jealousy.

A study done on Swazi women by Allen (1974) highlighted how men do show favouritism amongst their wives and the wives voiced how they were powerless to prevent their husband from taking subsequent wives. This is however against traditional culture because the wife has to agree with her husband taking a second wife or else the union is invalid in customary law.

Thuleleni

My mother had an unhappy marriage because she was father's favourite wife and the other wives hated her for it. This at times made me feel better because we were well taken care of by our father because he loved my mother the most but I did feel for my other siblings who were unlucky to not have been born from the favourite wife. I would view myself as the favourite child and my identity was intrinsically linked to my mother's favourable position.

Bhekezunu

I had no problem with polygyny as long as the man treated the women and children equally and did everything correct culturally. I think problems begin when favouritism is blatantly shown which naturally breeds jealousy and resentment.

My respondents did state that they observed incidents of favouritism shown by their father. These incidents naturally did affect them and how they constructed their gendered identity. If they were the favourite children they constructed their gender identity positively and confidently. If they were unfortunate and were not the favourite children this affected their constructed gender identity because some were resentful and bitter whilst others were motivated to prove to their father that they deserved to belong to the 'favourite children' group and would be high achievers in school, sport or work.

10.6.3. Age as a Factor

Aging does not affect the frequency of co-wife and co-operation. The results of this study showed that the older in age women were, the more pragmatic and supportive they became in their relationships. The study also showed sexual and emotional access was the cause of co-

wife conflict. This is usually evident in the early years of plural marriage (Jankowiak et al., 2005:87).

Age was also a factor in the competition between the wives. In various studies on different cultures the senior wives are reported to be overbearing and cruel to incoming wives. However, other studies have indicated that usually the older first wife would not undermine an incoming wife's access to their husband, but would foster a mother-daughter relationship with her in exchange for the younger wife caring for her in her old age. Therefore, this was a type of indigenous retirement system (Jankowiak et al., 2005:92).

10.6.4. Reasons Co-wives Unite

Some historical explanations of multiple concurrent partnerships are rooted in biology and polygyny. Informants in previous studies have referred to their own conceptions of the institution of polygyny as a means of making sense of a contemporary practice which they know to be morally non-normative. Using the language of tradition and of biology leads to the belief that some practices are 'meant to be', as they are based in biological realities and tradition. Concurrent partnerships are viewed as culturally-rooted social structures that have existed and continue to persist, despite social changes and changes in the health risks, such as HIV/AIDS, associated with such practices (Mah & Halperin, 2010:14).

Thuleleni

In the past men showed their wealth by having many cattle and marrying many wives and having many homesteads in the rural areas. Today multi-millionaires and powerful men showcase their wealth by also using polygyny but in today's age it is far more dangerous than in the past because one man can kill all his wives with HIV.

Thuleleni is conscious of the dangers involved in having multiple partners, especially in the current era where HIV/AIDS is so prevalent. In theory polygyny is supposed to protect women from such risks but in practice polygynous marriages may actually increasingly expose women to the disease.

Qondeni

I remember my mother saying that in this modern era there is HIV/AIDS and she no longer engaged sexually with my father when he took the second wife because she said she was afraid of contracting the disease.

Thalengabona

My mother was the second wife of three wives my father had. Funny how the first two wives did not like each other but were civil but as soon as the third wife came they became best friends and hated the third wife. My mother told me once she now understands how the first wife felt when she married my father, after the third wife came. So her once enemy had become her closest ally in the fight that is their marriage against this interloper (incoming third wife).

These above excerpts show that the participants' mothers were well aware of the dangers the polygynous family posed for them and took necessary precautions to protect themselves. It is interesting that Qondeni's mother had the temerity and courage to deny her husband his sexual rights, which he is entitled to according to Zulu culture. Thalengabona's mother realised that the second wife could become her ally and therefore changed the dynamics of their emotional relationship from aggression and indifference to friendship, in a show of defiance against the third wife.

10.7. Emotional Relations and Constructing Gendered Identity

Jankowiak et al. (2005) state that the arrival of an additional wife showcases feelings of fear, anger, sadness and loss for the old wife/wives. A factor contributing to reducing co-wife conflict is a woman's reproductive status. Barren women, in the study by Jankowiak et al. (2005), because of their marginal status, did not make great demands for spousal exclusivity. Reproductive status therefore influences whether the wife willingly enters in or avoids forming some kind of pragmatic cooperative relationship with another co-wife.

Financial independence was mentioned by many women as something that gives women power. A few women in a study by Pettifor et al. (2012) gave examples of Black females' role models who were financially independent and in positions of power. Women equated working and having their own money with being able to make their own decisions in

relationships and suggested that they might otherwise have felt trapped in a relationship due to being financially dependent on a partner (Pettifor et. al. 2012:483).

Phakimpi

I have a Masters degree in Political Science and I am going to continue and get a doctoral degree in ten years. I was never really into education but when I saw how my father treated my mother when I was younger, I realised I need to be very educated so I can get a good job when I am older. I wanted to have many degrees so I will always have different options for jobs and I will never have to be forced to married a man or agree to a polygynous marriage. If I am self-sufficient the man I marry will respect me more and will never treat me badly because he knows I can leave him any day I chose and I do not need him for anything. I am both a traditionalist and modernist. If I am independent and financially secure my identity is one of a modern independent woman. This independence and financial security gives me confidence and bargaining power in my relationships and no man will ever impose his will on me or force me to make decisions I do not want. It gives me power economically and emotionally.

Thalengabona

When I was young I saw how my mother struggled with money. She always used to tell all her children even my brother that we must be self-sufficient and not have to depend on anyone for your survival. My father was a good man and he did not treat my mother badly but he tried hard to support us and the other wives and their families but he was never educated and did not have a good stable job. After I witnessed how hard it was for my mother I decided I would never struggle or depend on anyone to support me. A man respects you and may even 'fear' you if you are independent and do not need his money. He will treat you well if you can treat yourself well. As African women I think we must become educated because it will place in better positions to negotiate gender dynamics within a relationship.

Dlabembalela

My father always encouraged me to get educated so I will never depend on a man for anything. I have opportunities to be educated that were previously prohibited for Blacks during apartheid to pursue. Although my father was a traditional man, he was liberal with his children and treated the boys and girls the same.

My participants stated that they viewed economic security also as a means of emotional security in their relationships. These women know that if they are financially protected they have bargaining power to even circumvent cultural practices and to fight male superiority imposed on them by their partners, family and society. The two excerpts above from Phakimpi and Thalengabona highlight that they inhabit a hybridised identity even if they do not fully realise it.

10.8. Distribution of Time

Previous studies (see Al-Krenawi, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2012 and 2014) on polygyny and the distribution of time have highlighted how equitable division of time for the husband is difficult to accomplish. The husbands in these studies stated that in the beginning they were as equitable as possible when it came to dividing their time between the different families but as time passed they admitted to spending most of their time with the wife they favoured the most. This was also true in my study because the participants did state that their father usually spent most of his time with the wife and family that he favoured the most.

Thalengabona

Father insisted on the entire family (including the other families) spending time together. At times this felt forced and he was just an exercise in showing how he as the head of the family can demand something and we all adhere to it. This made me see that as a woman I can never command such power.

Bhekezunu

There was an equal divide of the time and resources. Some fathers did try to be as equitable as possible by spending a week at a time at each family. I think Father tried his best to be as equal as possible in sharing his time but it was difficult. He suffered but as man he had to do it for his family.

Thuleleni

Father was blatantly obvious with which wife he favoured the most (the youngest and last wife to marry into the family, my mother) and he would spend the most time with her and give her the most money.

Sandelani

I was too young to remember if the time and resources were equally distributed. We spent such little time with their father that he always perceived time with him as never enough. It made me feel as a male child, neglected, unwanted and unnoticed. This was counterintuitive to how I was raised, to be a strong Zulu man who never showed emotion in public and never felt emotional hurt because that is a sign of a weak man. I realise now as an adult father had many things that needed his attention not just me and my brothers.

Phakimpi

My father did want us to spend time together as a family but we rarely did that. My mother would never attend any family gatherings because she was busy with a professional career and also she would say she did not care to see the other woman (wife number two). As children we did not care we were just happy to see our half siblings and play with them. Now as an adult and a married woman I understand why my mother did what she did. What woman would willingly go spend time with her husband's other wife.

Thalengabona noticed that the forced spending of time together of her father's families was an exercise in male superiority. It made her realise that she was powerless because she could not take the decision not to conform to her father's will, nor can she ever wield such patriarchal power during the course of her adult life because of her gender. Bhekezunu was perceptive in seeing how managing a polygynous family was not as easy or pleasurable as it appears to be, based on observing his father's experiences. There are many family dynamics at play and even as an African man he had to adhere to them. Sandelani raised a valid point in that as a young boy Zulu children are groomed to be strong Zulu men and not to feel emotional pain and not to express it publically. He felt sad because as a young boy he wanted to spend time with his father but his father had a large family who all needed his attention, and he could not express his desire to spend more time with his father.

The fathers in the families of the participants identified above insisted that their families spend time together as a complete family unit. It is interesting to note that the male respondents did not voice any opinions about how their mothers felt about the forced time spent with the entire family but the women did mention how their mothers were never happy at such occasions. One respondent stated that it was obvious whom her father favoured

because he would spend the most time with her (the third and last wife) and her family. She was fortunate in that her father favoured her mother the most because her mother was the third and last wife. However, in the purest Zulu translation the third wife should be the least favoured and the last one to receive anything whether it be resources, time spent and even in some cases affection. As has been highlighted in the literature, in many societies in which polygamous marriages are practiced the senior wives have higher status and they wield considerable influence over their husbands. In the Bedouin society however the first wife has lower status than the second wife. The husbands in Bedouin society usually marry the second wife without telling the first wife. The first marriage in Bedouin society is usually performed while the couple is young and is arranged by their parents. The second marriage in many cases is a result of free choice and out of love or manifestation of independence (Slonim-Nevo & Al-Krenawi, 2006:3). Other scholars (see Al-Krenawi, 1999) assert that it is the last wife in the polygynous family that is the most loved because the husband chose her out of love and not out of obligation.

Mpiyezulu

I witnessed my father struggle to provide for his family. I do not wish to ever burden myself in that way. It is very difficult in this modern time when everything is expensive to be able to support one family completely let alone two families. This is why polygynous right now for me is unappealing. I would consider marrying polygynous later in life but only when I retire to my rural home and we live a simpler life. If I do take a second wife she would not have children because my children will be adults by that time I will not want any more children.

Thuluzufe

Polygyny is very expensive and only people living in the rural areas can manage such an expensive institution. I am happy with one wife and one family and my wife and I share the expenses which is a great help because I could not completely support the family alone and send our children to university. I understand why some men and even some women want to have a polygynous family, I grew up in a polygynous family, but for myself I will not marry polygynously.

Soneni,

I am against polygyny completely. If by some mistake I end up in a polygynous marriage I would never help support the man financially and/or otherwise, he will pay for everything. He wants to display his macho Zuluhood then he can be a real man and provide everything I want and need for my family and his other family as well. If he could not support us sufficiently I am educated and financially able to support myself and any future children I may have.

Mpiyezulu and Thuluzufe both acknowledged the realities of polygyny in the modern era and argue that it is an expensive and difficult lifestyle to maintain if living in the city and educating children to tertiary levels. Thuluzufe was grateful that his wife and he are partners and that they share the family finances and they support the family together. Soneni highlights that she is independent and can support herself and her future family but argues that she would never support her husband if he decided to take a second wife. By taking a second wife she says that he is showcasing his ability to support two families therefore as the man he should not need or want her financial assistance. Soneni shows an African female empowerment viewpoint in that she uses the man's 'cultural right' (polygyny) against him by saying she will not support him because he should be able to support the family as tradition states the man of the family should be able to do.

10.9. Culture and Identity

When people incorporate cultural meanings into their own psyches then gender becomes part of their identities. Individuals understand themselves in relation to the feminine and masculine meanings culturally attached to men and women in their societies and they may think and act according to these gendered aspects of their selves (Wood & Eagly, 2010: 2012).

Self-categorisation as a woman or man produces self-stereotyping, which involves the ascription of typical gender in-group attributes to the self, along with accentuation of differences from the gender out-groups (Wood & Eagly, 2015:3). Some people are chronically more likely than others to identify with their gender group. Specifically, the four items in the importance of identity subscale can be phrased to capture descriptive gender self-

categorisation⁵³, for example, “being a woman is an important reflection of who I am”. For these individuals, gender self-categorisation is a stable attribute that is evident in most contexts. For instance, Italian women typically have a stronger identification with their gender group than do Italian men (Wood & Eagly, 2015:3). In my study some of my female respondents did suggest that they identify themselves as first Zulu and then as women, and not as women who happen to be Zulu. The men did not have such inclinations as they all self-identified as Zulu men.

10.10. Conclusion

Feminist accounts describe ‘gender’ as an unstable category that is constantly produced and reproduced (Cronin, 2015:1). Foucault (1997) argued that friendships are less tightly scripted than sexual or family relationships because they are far less institutionalised or legally regulated (legal attribution of ‘next of kin’) (Cronin, 2015:2). Couple relations are prioritised and normative couple culture in Cronin’s (2015) study was reinforced by the participants’ perception that friend and couple relationships are emotional equations to be balanced.

Butler (1993) argues that gender is created through performance and suggests that gender is not a fixed identity or a given sense of different acts. Instead, gender is an identity constructed through time and space through an iteration of stylised acts. The new modern public face of polygyny features independent, strong-willed women who work outside the home and who voluntarily choose to live a polygynous lifestyle (Park, 2013:239). According to Connell (1987), there is an emotional and erotic dimension to all social relationships. The ‘sexual social relationships’ are relationships organised around one person’s emotional attachment to another, which is termed the ‘cathexis’.

In this chapter I have highlighted how my participants witnessed the ways in which their mothers navigated their emotional feelings and their husband’s taking of a second wife. I also highlighted how these emotional feelings are different depending on the number of wife their mother was in the polygynous family. I also illustrated how co-wife conflict has a bearing on how the participants constructed their gender identity, how they dealt with the conflicts in

⁵³ When people self-regulate, they guide their behaviour to bring it in line with gender standards, whether these standards reflect gender-stereotypical personal attributes or the normative standards associated with gender categories (Wood & Eagly, 2015:6).

their families and how it affected the participants as children. The participants highlighted that being raised in a polygynous family made them aware of the difficulties of maintaining such a family in these modern times. They expressed opinions of not wishing to follow in their parents' footsteps of having a polygynous family. Some female respondents voiced a sense of female empowerment which disinclined them from involving themselves in polygynous marriages. I also discussed how the participants constructed their gendered identity in their emotional relations with their partners. In the next chapter I provide a summation of the entire thesis.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

11. Introduction

This study was an attempt to explore the gendered narratives of adults who were raised in polygynous families and how they negotiated and constructed their identities. In this study I used the qualitative research method for data collection by situating the study within an interpretivist paradigm. This method highlighted how the communal process of the views and perceptions of my participants and my multidimensional personality intersected to produce knowledge.

The starting point of this study was the paucity of research on the social angle such as gender relations and gender identities. The sparse literature on gender relations focused on the conventional comparative approach, which involves males versus females and their corresponding gender “roles” with limited attention being given to a more dynamic and flexible conceptualisation of gender as relational and situational.

This study was intended to fill the gaps in literature on the gendered narratives of adults who were raised in polygynous families. Gender identity as conceptualised in this study was seen as a fluid and contextualised process of ‘unfolding’ and ‘reconstitution’. The uniqueness of this research was that it applied Connell’s Gender Relations Approach framework to the African context so as to broaden the geographical range in which one could study gender in such a setting. The setting of this study in Hammarsdale which is a peri-urban area.

The study participants comprised of twenty men and women (ten men and ten women). Being of qualitative nature, the study employed an interpretivist framework within which presenting the reality of the participants from their own views intersected with my role as a researcher in creating meaning. Being self-reflexive during the process of data collection enabled me to generate critical insights concerning the interaction of gender with qualitative research methods.

The themes presented in this study revealed that gender identity construction was related to the struggle over socialization or cultural socialization and modern individual rights. From the onset, the study established that gender was a principle factor in influencing how my

participants constructed their narratives. The men and some women highlighted their gender role socialization in how they viewed their cultural defined roles and modern human rights. The study also highlighted the relationship between religion and identity; it was interesting how religion informed my participants and their experiences of social life. My respondents noted that religion and culture were in unison and that one mirrored the other in terms of their stance on women submission and subordination.

11.1. Summary of the findings

The literature I reviewed highlighted that adults who were raised in polygynous families have been largely ignored in previous studies conducted on polygyny. Studies done on polygyny by various scholars have focused on how polygyny affects women from a clinical psychological standpoint and how polygyny is conducted from an anthropological and sociological perspective. I also reviewed various international and national laws views on polygyny and there is a glaring contradiction in our Bill of Rights enshrined in our constitution. I also explained the theoretical frameworks; gender relations approach, social construction and African feminism, which I have used to inform my study and from a different African context.

One of the themes that originated from the data was, gender role socialization. This established that gender is central to socialisation and it highlighted that men drew from their gender role socialisation in constructing their masculinity. The western scholars discuss socialisation as if it is an early indoctrination of the genders to recognize the hierarchal gender order. African feminism recognizes that seniority was also an important indicator of who yielded the most power. I also illustrated how household dynamics helped shape gender identities.

The subsequent theme that came to light was how naming had an impact on the construction of gender identity. A person's name is an identifier is from birth until death unless there are situations that demand that a name change occur such as; when one finds that one's name has negative connotations which may result in negative experiences in life (Ngubane, 2013:168). There has been a shift in naming practices in that women can be name-givers. This change emphasizes that women in the Zulu culture are not positioned the same because only certain women can be name-givers. A name can either confirm a masculine identity or contradict it. Although some female participants did not have glaring contradictory names

that affected their feminine identity but their negative names affected them more personally than publically.

Family relations and impact on gender identity was the next theme that I discussed in my study. Some respondents stated they looked to their parents as well as their older siblings as role models on how to construct their gendered identity. Women were influenced by their mother's identity in constructing their identity and men were influenced by their father's identity whether it was positive or not. According to Chodorow (1995) individuals may think they have formed their own identity but in essence are mirroring their parents and grandparents of generations past. Chodorow speaks from a nuclear western family perspective. My findings refuted some of Chodorow's claims specifically the one about how mothers treat their children based on their gender. In my study some mothers from polygynous families consciously treated the children the same irrespective of gender and even made the boys do chores that are traditional viewed as 'girl' chores. Some participants went as far as to state they were 'gender blind' and that a sign of a modern, progressive, independent individual is that they are able to do everything on their own regardless of their gender. Some male respondents were ambivalent to their co-mothers this is where Chodorow's theory was not applicable to the African context. African feminists believe in the principle of seniority is more important than biology or gender because some of my male respondents voiced that they loved their biological mothers more than their co-mothers but they respected them as elder women. So they could not fully state that their co-mothers did not have an influence on their gendered identity and there appeared to be contradictions in that regard.

The following theme I interrogated was, negotiating customary law against the background of constitutional rights. There appears to be a contradiction in the law. The constitution guarantees individual rights but customary law prohibits gender equality and the constitution recognizes customary law as a legal indigenous system. The law cannot completely enforce individual rights, such as gender equality, because customary law was not respected or recognized by the apartheid law of the past. This constant balancing act at times made my participants had to navigate between their traditional and modern identities which resulted in them having a hybrid gendered identity of being modern and traditional men and women. Some female respondents voiced how they inhabit a sort of hybridity in that they are educated empowered women but at the same time they have to be subservient. This shows

that gender construction according to Liberal feminists is not enough. Liberal feminists attest that if women are empowered they will be free from patriarchal oppression but my respondents show that being empowered is not enough there needs to be a social-cultural change.

The next theme that was revealed in the data was economic resources and power relations within the family and how it had a bearing on gender identity. The father in a nuclear family as well as in a polygynous family is the one who controls his families and is responsible for their well-being and protection. The father's role as the head of the family shifts in a polygynous family to the wife because the father cannot physically be present at all his wives' homes at the same time. The father usually made decisions on major situations and although the wives could be asked to add their suggestions but the father took the final decision. The line became blurred when the biological mother would make a 'major' decision' for their child and pay for it with or without the father's consent or if the father had decided against something due to the fact that he cannot pay for it. This is where a social cultural empowerment would be applicable.

The next theme that appeared in the research was Religion's impact on polygynous family and identity formation. The combination of Zulu cultural traditions and Christianity sort of resulted in a hybridity of an African traditional religion. Some respondents stated that they were against polygyny and sometimes religion was used to justify it but they also acknowledged that their traditional practices were entrenched before the missionaries came to Africa. It does become opaque in the African Zulu culture because the worship of ancestors resembles a sort of worship of God. The participants combined religion with culture and it was important to them that their spouses or future spouses respect religion even if they are not as religious as them but they must believe in some sort of religion. Religion and culture seemed to mix well in affirming traditional Zulu gender roles.

The last theme I examined was the emotional relations and gender identity construction. Butler (1993) argues that gender is created through performance and suggests that gender is not a fixed identity or a given sense of different acts. Rather it is an identity constructed through time and space through an iteration of stylized acts. The new modern public face of polygyny features independent, strong-willed women who work outside the home and who voluntarily choose to live a polygynous lifestyle (Park, 2013:239). According to Connell

(1987) the 'sexual social relationships' are relationships organized around one person's emotional attachment to another which is what he calls the cathexis.

In this chapter I highlighted how my participants witnessed their mother's navigation of their emotional feelings and their husband's taking of a second wife. I also highlighted how these emotional feelings are different depending on the number of wife they mother was in the polygynous family. I also illustrated how co-wife conflict has a bearing on how they constructed their identity and how they dealt with the conflicts and how it affect my participants as children. The participants highlighted that their being raised in a polygynous family made them aware of the difficulties of maintaining such a family in these modern times. They expressed opinions of not wishing to follow in their parents footsteps of having a polygynous family. Some female respondents voiced a sense of female empowerment I also discussed how they constructed their gendered identity in their emotional relations with their partner. In the Zulu culture men speak louder and usually are more opinionated than women but I do think there was an equal balance of the voices that were narrated in my study.

My hypothesis of my study was that when one is raised in a polygynous family they will grow up in support of the practice, be against it or be ambivalent. My respondents both men and women did voice how they were against the practice. One older male participant voiced how he understands why his father married a second wife. He says it was actually his mother who convinced his father to take a second wife because there were certain activities she had no desire to continue to do and the help around the rural home would be welcome. So that polygynous relationship was amicable and peaceful because it was the first wife who wanted her husband to take a second wife. I think this also may be because the parents were advanced in age and realised a marriage changes as the couple matures.

One respondent stated he is monogamous now but maybe in the future could picture himself with a second wife. He stated that of course his first wife would have to agree and give her blessing otherwise he would not do it. He said he wanted a second wife when he was old and retired to the rural life because he believes it would appease his ancestors that he followed a truly Zulu lifestyle. This seems to confirm what they literature says, Kilbride (2006) states that Zulu men specifically as they age they become more traditional. They may likely choose a polygynous lifestyle because it may be seen as pleasing the ancestors (Kilbride, 2006:210).

All but one woman participant was against the idea of marrying polygynously or allowing their husband to take a second wife. The one woman, who was mature in age, was not completely for the polygynous marriage but she said she would understand if her husband wanted a second younger wife. The reasons would not be because she could not produce a male child because she has male children she believes the reasons could possibly be when she becomes a grandmother it is taboo in the Zulu culture to continue to engage in sexual activity therefore she would allow her husband to take a second wife. She would rather he marry her instead of bring shame to her and her family by having a mistress and illegitimate children.

The younger women unsurprisingly were against polygyny and voiced how they would never willingly marry into such a union which is degrading, humiliating and demeaning to women.

11.2. Contributions of the study

This study makes the following significant contributions;

1. It has established that seniority in the African context is crucial to gender relations in the traditional Zulu family.
2. It also adds to the literature in showing that a name, particularly a negative name given in a family has a significant bearing on how the bearer of the name constructs and deconstructs their gendered identity.
3. My study also contributes to a growing literature on hybridized identities. My participants created a hybridised Zulu identity in which they had to navigate their traditional cultural roles as well as being educated, empowered and independent individuals.

My research also illustrated that role of co-mothers in gender identity construction in an African polygynous family

4. The study also highlighted sibling's relations as a contributing factor to gender identity construction.

11.3. Suggestions for further research

It would be interesting to view such narratives and compare them to other adults who were not educated but were raised in polygynous families. It would be remarkable to see if their

responses would mirror my respondents who are educated. Literature has shown that when it comes to culture people regardless of class or socio-economic circumstance feel the same about it but it would be fascinating to see if education or lack of education has any bearing on how people feel about their cultural practices.

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TV/ DOCUMENTARIES

Sister wives on the Oprah Winfrey Talk Show. CBS. SABC 3. March 16, 2011. 9:30pm

Appendix I: English Informed consent form to participate in the study.



I am Zamambo Mkhize and I am a Phd Student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am doing research on adults who were raised in polygamous families and their experiences. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. You have been invited to be a part of my study because you fit the requirements of the participants I would like to interview for my study. I hope to learn about the experiences of growing up in a polygamous family. You have been invited to take part in this research because you were raised in a polygamous family and your knowledge and experiences will contribute immensely in the study.

If at any time you do not understand any word/s on the consent or questionnaire please ask me to stop and go through the information again.

Procedures

The research will involve a questionnaire which will be read to you individually and you will answer and the researcher will write down the answers. If you do not wish to any questions included in the questionnaire you may skip them. The information recorded will remain confidential. The interview should last minimum of 45 minutes to the maximum of 90 minutes. In the interview the researcher will ask you questions and you are free to answer them to the best of your knowledge. In these interview sessions you are also free to add information that maybe was not asked directly. The interview is a one-time event and there are no foreseeable future interviews to be conducted. The interview will not be recorded by any audio equipment.

Risks

The questions on the questionnaire are sensitive and personal in nature. I am asking you to share some very personal and confidential information and you may feel uncomfortable talking about some questions. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the

study if you do not wish to do so. Your participation in this study will help give a voice to a group that has been largely ignored in literature. If you decide not to continue your participation in this study it will not disadvantage you in any way and your information will not be used in the study.

Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain strictly confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. If you decide to participate you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your participation at anytime you wish. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. The information collected will remain with the researcher and the information will remain under lock and key. The information will not be shared with anyone nor will it be given to anyone. The information will be kept for 3 years after the study and then subsequently destroyed.

If you have any further questions please contact Zamambo Mkhize on 0827350518 AND my e-mail is Mkhizez1@ukzn.ac.za.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE AND BY SIGNING THIS CONSENT FORM YOU ARE AGREEING TO VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM AT LIBERTY TO WITHDRAW FROM THE RESEARCH PROJECT AT ANY TIME SHOULD I SO DESIRE.

Name: _____.

Signature: _____.

Date: _____.

Signature of Witness: _____.

Signature of Researcher: _____.

Appendix II: IsiZulu Informed consent form to participate in the study.



INCAZELO NGOCWANINGO LWAMAKHOSIKAZI ASHADE ESITHENJINI

NginguZamambo Mkhize. Ngifundela iziqu zemfundo ephakeme e Nyuvesi yakwa-Zulu Natal. Ngenza ucwaningo kubantu asebekhulile abakhulele emndenini eyisithembu—nalokho okwaba nomthelela empilweni yabo ngenxa yalokhu. Ngizokunika incazelo bese ngikucela ukuthi ubambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo. Ngethemba ukuthi ngizofunda ukuthi ngabe kunjani ukukhulela emndenini wesithembu. Uyacelwa ukuba ubambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo ngoba wakhulela emndenini onesithembu. Ulwazi lwakho lungaba usizo olukhulu kulolucwaningo.

Uma kwenzeka kube khona ongakuzwisi kahle kulokho engikushoyo ngamalungelo akho kulolucwaningo kumbe ngemibuzo uqobo lwayo, ngicela ungitshele ngikuchazele uze uzwe kahle.

Inqubo okuzosetshenzwa ngayo.

Ucwaningo luzoba nemibuzo ozoyifundelwa bese uyiphendula. Umcwaningi yena uzobhala konke okushoyo. Uma kukhona imibuzo ongathandi ukuyiphendula ungayeqa ungayiphenduli. Konke okushilo kwabhalwa phansi kuyohlala kuyimfihlo yakho nomcwaningi.

Okungase kube nobungozi kulolucwaningo.

Eminye yemibuzo kulolucwaningo ibucayi futhi ithinta wena uqobo lwakho. Ngizokucela ukuthi ukhulume ngezinto ezikuthinta kakhulu okungase kwenze ungakhululeki kahle ukukhuluma ngazo. Awuphoqiwe ukuphendula imibuzo ekuphatha kabi futhi awuphoqiwe ukubamba iqhaza kulolucwaningo uyacelwa nje.

Ukubaluleka kokugcina lolucwaningo luyimfihlo

Konke ozosithela kona kulolucwaningo kuzophathwa njengemfihlo kungadalulwa uma kuvuma wena. Uma uvuma ukubamba iqhaza kulolucwaningo kufanele wazi ukuthi unelungelo lokuyeka noma kunini uma uzwa ukuthi awusathandi. Ukubamba kwakho iqhaza kulolucwaningo akuphoqelekile nakancane. Kukuwe ukuthi ube ingxenye yalolucwaningo kumbe ungabi yingxenye nakancane. Ulwazi esilutholile sizolugcina endaweni ephephile lwaziwe yilabo abenza ucwaningo kuphela. Ulwazi esilutholile ngeke silunikeze abanye abangeyona ingxenye yalolucwaningo.

Uma kukhona imibuzo ofuna ukuyibuza, ungathintana no Zamambo Mkhize kulenombolo yocingo: 0827350518.

NJENGOBA USUFUNDILE KONKE OKUBHALWE NGENHLA WASAYINA ISIVUMELWANO LOKHO KUSHO UKUTHI UYAVUMA UKUBAMBA IQHAZA KULOLUCWANINGO NGAPHANDLE KOKUPHOQELELWA.

Igama_____

Ukusayina_____

Usuku_____

Ukusayina kukafakazi_____.

Ukusayina komcwaningi_____.

Appendix III: Interview guide in English and IsiZulu translation.

ENGLISH/ZULU

Polygyny and Gender: The Gendered narratives of adults who were raised in polygynous families in Hammersdale, KwaZulu-Natal

PARTICULARS OF RESPONDENT/ IMININGWANE YALOWO OPHEMDULA IMIBUZO

Name/Igama:	
Age/ Iminyaka yobudala:	
Gender/ Izinga lemfundo:	
Education/ Imfundo:	
Qualification/ Izinga lemfundo:	
Income/ Imali ayitholayo:	

PARTICULARS ABOUT RESPONDENT'S FAMILY

Are your parents legally married? Abazali bakho bashade ngokusemthethweni?	
How many wives does your father have? Ubaba wakho unamakhosikazi amangakhi?	
What number wife is your mother? Umama wakho uyinkosikazi yesingakhi?	
How many siblings did you have from your mother? Nibangakhi kumama wakho?	
What number child are you? Wena ungowesingakhi?	
How many siblings did you have including the children from other wives? Nibangakhi uma niphelile nihlangene nabazalwa nabazalwa abanye omama bakho?	
Did your 'family' with your biological mother have their own house to live in or did you share with other wives? Umama wakho nezingane zakhe babenomuzi wabo noma wayehlala namanye amakhozikzai?	
Did you ever feel like your family was different to other families? Wawuke uzwe sengathi umndeni wakho uhluke kweminye	

imindenini?	
When did you realize your family was 'different'? At what age? Waqala nini ukubona ukuthi nehlukile? Wawuneminyaka emingaki?	

EXPERIENCES GROWING UP IN A POLYGAMOUS FAMILY

1. What were the roles assigned to boys and girls in your family? Yini eyayifanele yenziwe abafana namantombazane ngokwehlukana emndenini wakho?

2. Were the males close to their father or mothers? Abantwana babafana babesondelene kakhulu kubaba noma kumama?

3. Who are/were you closest to, your mother(s) and/or father? Wena wawusondele kubani? Kumama noma kubaba?

4. Who were your brothers closest to? Abafowenu bona babesondele kubani kakhulu emndenini?

5. Who were your sisters closest to? Odadewenu bona babesondele kubani kakhulu emndenini?

6. Was sibling rivalry present in the polygynous family? And how was it resolved?

Ngabe umbango wezelamani wawukhona emndenini wesithembu? Uma wawukhona wawuqedwa kanjani?

7. Did the co-wives or father resolve the conflict? Or did other siblings resolve it? Ngabe umbango wezingane wawuqedwa yiwo wonke amakhosikazi kumbe wawuqedwa ezinye izingane zomndeni?

8. How did the other wives treat you? Ngabe babekuphethe kanjani omama abangeyena umama wakho?

9. How did your mother treat the children from the other wives? Umama wakho uziphethe kanjani izingane ezizalwa amanye amakhosikazi endoda yakhe?

10. Was there love and affection shown to you and the other children by your mother, other wives and your father? Ngabe lukhona uthando olukhonjiswa umama wakho mamanye amakhosikazi kababa wakhonaye ubaba wakho uqobo kuwena nakwezinye

izingane zakini?

11. How were major decisions made?

Izinqumo ezimqoka emndenini zazithathwa kanjani?

12. How were financial resources distributed within the family? Who made the decisions pertaining to the distribution of the financial resources?

Imali yayihlukaniswa kanjani emndenini? Ubani owayethatha izinqumo ngokwehlukaniswa kwezimali?

13. Was there equal distribution of resources and time spent with your father? Who decided how time and resources were distributed? (each wife for her family? Or the father?)

Ngabe imali yayehlukaniswa ngokulinganayo Phakathi kwamakhosikazi? Ngabe isikhathi ayesichitha nemindenini yakhe ubaba wakho sasilingana? Ubani owayethatha isinqumongukuthi imali nesikhathisikababa wakhokuzohlukaniswa kanjani

14. How was decision making negotiated in their family? How does this inform relations within a polygamous family?

Ngabe ubani owayeyisithandwa kulomndenini? Kulandele bani- ngichazele ukuthi imuphi unkosikazi owayehlonishwa kulandelemuphi?

15. How labour in the household divided and carried out?

Imisebenzi efanele yenziwe ekhaya yayihlukaniswa futhi yenziwe kanjani?

16. What was the hierarchical structure in the family?

Ngabe ubani owayeyikhand kulomndeni? – kulandele bani- ngichazele ukuthi umuphi unkosikazi owayehlonishwa kulandele muphi.

17. How was your mother’s experience within the polygymous family?

Ngabe umama wakho wayephatheke kanjani kulomndeni wesithembu?

18. How have your mother’(s) experiences affected your perceptions towards polygyny?

Ngabe lokho okwakuzwiwa umama wakho kulomndeni oyilenhlobo lukwenze wena wawubona unjani umndeni wesithembu?

19. How was your father’s experience within your family?

Ngabe ubaba wakho yena wayezwa kunjani kulomndeni wakhe?

20.How has your father’s experiences affected your perceptions of polygyny?

Ngabe ukuzwa kumbe ukuphatheka kukababa wakho kulenhlobo yomndeni kukwenze wawubuka kanjani umndeni onesithembu?

--

21. Did being raised in a polygynous family affected you in school? Your job?

Ngabe ukukhuliswa emndenini onesithembu kwayithinta indlela owawuqhuba ngayo esikoleni kumbe emsebenzini wakho?

22. Did you tell people you are a part of a polygynous family? If so did that change their perception of you?

Wabatshela abantu ohlangana nabo ukuthi uzalwa esithenjini? Uma wabatshela - lokhu kwayishintsha yini indlela ababekuthatha ngayo?

GENDER AND IDENTITY

23. Did you see a difference in how boys and girls were treated within your polygynous family? If so what did you think about the different treatment?

Kukhona umehluko owawubona ekuphathweni kwabantwana babafana nabamantombazana kulomndenini wesithembu? Uma ukhona wawucabangani ngendlela ababephethwe ngayo engafani?

24. Was it difficult forming an individual identity within such a large family as a polygamous family?

Kwakungekukhuni yini ukuba ube yilento ofuna ukuba yiyona engafani nezinye izingane zakini emndenini omkhulu kangaka wesithembu?

25. How did growing up in a polygamous household shape your identity as man/woman?

Ngabe ukukhula kwakho emndenini omkhulu wesithembu kwaba namiphi imithelela ekwakheni ubuwena njengomuntu wesilisa / owesifazane?

26. How having grown up in polygynous family did you negotiate your gender identity (masculinity / femininity) in a polygynous family?

Njengoba wakhulela emzini onesithembu wenze kanjani ukuthi wakhe ubuwena njengomuntu wesilisa kumbe owesifazane emndenini wesithembu?

27. How did you construct your individual gender identity within your family?

Wabakha kanjani ubuwena ngokobuhle emndenini wakho?

28. How did being raised in a polygynous family affect your perceptions of emotional relations for polygynous partners? Should they be consensual or coercive?

Njengoba ukhulele emzini wesithembu lokhu kwenze wabona kufanele bubenjani ubudlelwano Phakathi kwabantu abashadile – engabe kufanele kuboniswane kumbe omunye aphoqeleke ukubona izinto ngeliso lomunye

29. In what way did growing up in a polygynous family shape your understanding of production relation sexual division of labour within the family?

Ngabe ukukhulela kwakho emzini wesithembu kwenze ubone kungehlukaniseka kanjani imisebenzi eletha usizo ekhaya ngokobulili – Phakathi emndenini

30. How did growing up in a polygynous family inform your current / future relationship?

Ngabe ukukhulela kwakho esithenjini kub namuphi umthelela ebudlelwaneni bakho nabanye

manje noma esikhathini esizayo

31. How do you perceive / interpret customary laws and your individual rights within a polygynous family?

Uwubona unjani umthetho ophathelene namasiko uma uwuqhathanisa namalungelo awo wonke umuntu emndenini onesithembu

32. How did being raised in a polygynous family influence your relationships with your parents as adults?

Ukukhulela kwakho emndenini onesithembu kwaba namuphi umthelela ebudlelwaneni bakho nabazali bakho kumbe nabantu abadala nje noma yibaphi

33. Do you think if you grew up in a nuclear family your sense of identity would be different?

Uma ucabanga ngabe ukuba wawungakhulelanga esithenjini ngabe ukuzibona kwakho kwehlukile kulendlela ozibona ngayo.