

SOME GENDERED PRACTICES IN A ZULU FAMILY: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

BY

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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
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SOME GENDERED PRACTICES IN A ZULU FAMILY: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA.

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DECLARATION

I, Mdumiseni Langelihle Langa, declare that this short dissertation entitled “Some gendered practices in a Zulu family: A feminist perspective”, is a result of my own tireless effort, and it is submitted in accordance with the regulations of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It has not by any means, been previously submitted for any degree and all the sources and relevant literature have been duly acknowledged.

Candidate’s signature:

Date:

Supervisor’s signature:

Date.....

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I am forever indebted to the following people for their enormous contribution to this work:

My supervisor, Professor N.N. Mathonsi who has been involved in shaping my research skills since the days of my Honours degree. This work could not have been a success without his motivation, supervision, management and leadership. I feel proud to have been supervised by a man of his stature. Ngithi Mnquhe! Madondo! Dunga! Uze ukwenze nakwabanye.

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Last but not least, National Research Foundation (NRF) for providing me with much needed funds.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Sthulile, my two daughters, Nondumiso and Nomalanga, and my two sons, Aphelele and Ndalwenhle.

Abstract

This study on “**Some Gendered Practices in a Zulu Family: A Feminist Perspective**” investigated gender bias, gender inequality, and gender stereotypes as seen in daily gendered practices happening within the Zulu family. The practises examined are confined to the domain of the Zulu culture, particularly the Zulu marriage. The four main research questions put surveillance on how married women are restricted to move freely on the premises of their own homes; how women can unhappily find themselves in a polygamous marriage; how a wife’s dignity can be denigrated due to a man’s lack of understanding of her body anatomy; how she can be denied equal status with her husband due to certain cultural beliefs and conceptions.

In the face of inevitable change that influences human behaviour, this study sought to show that the Zulu nation, particularly men, find it difficult to easily and speedily accept that culture and tradition are subject to change. The study attempted to establish whether there is any improvement on gender transformation or not, especially within the context of the current endeavours by the South African government to ensure that there is no gender discrimination by having female representativeness in all spheres of government.

Progress has been made with regard to fair representation of women in political and decision-making positions in all spheres of government. The country is currently rated 7th in the world in terms of representation of women in legislature.
<http://www.buanews.gov.za/rss/08/08120715451006-5/11/2012>

Throughout the analysis and interpretation of both the statistical and qualitative data, I critiqued the data to establish whether the gender transformation ideal is being achieved in the Zulu family or not. Radical feminism, the theory through which this study was conducted, has helped to show that Zulu women are still disadvantaged and oppressed due to social machinations that are essentially invented by patriarchal men.

This study has also tapped into African feminism to show that even African women acknowledge that they are oppressed, but they choose to adopt a moderate stance that will accommodate the African traditional perspective on dealing with gender inequalities and biases.

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

This study investigates gendered Zulu culture. It used quantitative and qualitative data to ascertain how transformed Zulu husbands are in terms of gender equality. Some Zulu practices, particularly where women are concerned, are hypothetically gendered and oppressive. Employing a feminist theory, I looked at how wives and women in general are deprived of their rights and privileges because of cultural and traditional prescripts by focusing on Zulu marriage. My view is that the Zulu nation is one of the most patriarchal nations of the world. Rudwick and Shange (2006: 473) concur with this view when they state that one has to acknowledge that Zulu society continues to be highly patriarchal.

In the Zulu culture, as it happens in most African cultures, a husband and a wife do not have equal status. According to John (2006: 28):

The head of the household is the Zulu man. He is the authoritative figure at all times; everything in the *umuzi* or household belongs to him, and decisions are tendered illegitimate without his consent. A woman is rarely consulted and defers only to her husband.

The state of inequality is promoted in many ways, including gendered language. In the context of a wedding ceremony that is about to take place, a woman is referred to as coming to marry a man, *uyagana*, while a man is receiving a woman, *iyaganwa*. The emphasis that is put on using the correct term, popularly known as *ukushada* and *ukushadelwa*, shows that Zulu families are obsessed with the secondary role that a wife should play as she is the one who is seen as coming to the marriage.

In Zulu culture, where ancestors play an interceding role to God, the man is regarded as the sole communicator with the ancestral forefathers. Even the reference to ancestral foremothers connotes a secondary role. Msimang (1975:21) states that:

Men are stone-hearted, even after they have been called in a prayer, there is still a reservation that the prayer may not have reached them, then the women will be called once all men's names have been exhausted.

Zondi (2007: 21) supports Msimang's view (1975) by arguing that:

Ancient Zulu society saw marriages as essential for the continuation of a man's lineage so that he could achieve the status of an "ancestor", revered and remembered by his descendants for generations.

What is common among these writers is that, a man is the one who is seen as having the status of a revered ancestor and a woman ancestor will be consulted conditionally.

The practice in the Zulu culture, that a wife should not go to a designated ancestral place called *umsamo*, 'ancestral corner', and the kraal may be based on certain beliefs about women. Such beliefs give rise to socially constructed views about women. However, the recent South African political developments have shown a new trend by men beginning to consider women for serious party political leadership position. Here, the names of women leaders such as Nkosazane Zuma (African Union), Hellen Zille (DA) and Zanele Magwaza (NFP) come into mind. The Zulu men should follow suit in their small families and begin to treat women as equals. Consequently the main research questions to be asked are as follows:

- Why should a wife avoid certain designated areas of the homestead?
- How are women's bodies viewed by men?
- Why are married women not allowed to perform certain tasks during menstruation?
- Are there certain beliefs that give rise to polygamous marriages?

1.2 Reasons for choosing this topic and objectives of the study

In the context of dealing with sexism and gender inequalities, I wanted to investigate whether there are any improvements in the life of a Zulu wife. Is a Zulu wife still subservient to her husband? Is Zulu culture oppressive to women? Feminism, the approach with which the study is approached, is appropriate because it helped to channel my hypothesis. We may not see any improvements soon, if the world is still dominated by men, and that is exactly how feminists view their mission and struggle. They think that men as a group are the main enemy (Beasley,

1999: 55). If the chains of patriarchy are still holding a Zulu wife down, then we cannot even begin to talk about paradigm shift in terms of feminist ideals and objectives. Through the quantitative data, I hypothesized that if there is any shift, it is only minimal.

In the context of several South African institutions campaigning against gender inequality (Commission on Gender Equality) and abuse of women (People Opposing Women Abuse-POWA), this study investigates whether gendered practices happening within the Zulu family are oppressive to wives and whether they are influenced by the Zulu culture. Beatrice Ngcobo, acting chairperson of the Commission on Gender Equality in South Africa argues that:

We have women in Parliament and we have good laws to protect women, but they have not been properly publicized. When it comes to implementation, people at the frontline are mostly men. They won't give up power so easily.

This study, based on the hypothesis that Zulu wives are oppressed by the Zulu culture, argues that Zulu wives are silently suffering from oppression and are not even aware of it, because they respect their culture to the point of fearing the misfortunes that could befall them if they defy their culture and tradition.

The study has the following objectives:

- To investigate whether there is a connection between the denigration of women and menstruation.
- To investigate whether the prohibitions such as a wife not being able to have freedom of movement on the premises have anything to do with how men view women's bodies.
- To investigate whether Zulu husbands are willing to share their power with their wives or even to transform and become change agents for women's cause like fighting gender stereotypes, gender inequality, gender biases and domestic abuse, etc.
- To investigate whether wives have any power to decide on issues like polygamy and addressing the ancestors.

1.3 Definition of terms

1.3.1 Gender

Gender refers to a situation when the state of being sexually a boy or girl is used to prescribe the manner of behaviour, roles, what is acceptable and unacceptable for either sex. When marriage, instead of being a simple love relationship between a wife and a husband, mysteriously becomes a playground of conflicts about boundaries that can or cannot be skipped by either a wife or husband, it becomes gendered. Goodman (1996: viii) argues that:

Gender is a social or cultural category influenced by stereotypes about female and male behaviour that exists in our attitudes and beliefs. Such beliefs are often said to be culturally produced or constructed.

1.3.2 Culture

Culture is an embodiment of tradition, beliefs, rites and rituals, customs, and a generally expected and acceptable way of doing things. The Zulu culture is no exception. In the Zulu culture when things are done in a culturally acceptable way, blessings are expected to be showered from the Supernatural Being. On the negative side, if anything is done in a culturally unacceptable way, misfortunes are visited upon particular individuals, family groups and the nations at large. Mathonsi (2002:5-6) states that:

Culture is the way of life and a backbone that contains history of any nation. The Zulu nation believes that the ancestors are a bridge to the almighty God called uMvelinqangi.

Mathonsi (2002: 6) further quotes Nyembezi (1992: 475) to argue that culture is way of life for a nation. Mathonsi (2002) argues that Nyembezi's viewpoint proves that culture and life is one and the same thing and ancestral worship is the foundation of life and the Zulu culture.

Culture subsumes religion which encompasses all that is done by humankind to forge a relationship between the Supernatural Being, with the aim of preparing for the ultimate life after death. Most Western nations believe in the almighty God, the father of Jesus Christ while most

African nations such as the Zulus, believe in the ancestral God who culminates in the form of spirits, snakes, the green locust “*ugogo*” and in dreams. Most Zulus, Christian or non-Christian, generally believe in the ancestral God, also traditionally known as Mvelinqangi. Mathonsi (2002: 6) quotes Stuart (1903: 11) who states that:

The universal practice of worshipping [sic] *amadlozi* exerts great influence over boys and girls, and, as their parents religion is built up out of a belief in the perpetual presence of departed spirits.

The Zulu culture and the ancestral God are essentially interwoven. Elliot (1948: 28) states that:

Culture is more comprehensive than religion; that the latter is no more than an element, supplying ethical formation and some emotional colour, to culture which is the ultimate value.

1.3.3 Transformation

In the context of this study, transformation shall mean gender transformation whereby men, in particular, begin to treat women as equals. Men begin to accord women their birth right to dignity, to property ownership, to a monogamous marriage as opposed to polygamous marriage, to address ancestors, to freedom of movement on the premises and so on.

1.4 The plan and structure of the thesis

Chapter one: Introduction

This chapter presents the background and outline of research problem, the reasons for choosing the topic and objectives of the study, explanation of terms, and the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter two: Literature review

This chapter reviews published and unpublished work with an aim of establishing prior or current knowledge on the topic. Literature review is ultimately evaluated in order to establish similarities and differences between this study and reviewed work.

Chapter three: Theoretical framework, research design and paradigms

This chapter shows that the study uses the theory of radical feminism, provides a brief explanation of radical feminism and motivates why it has been chosen. This chapter also elaborates on how research was conducted, indicating why qualitative and, to a lesser extent, quantitative approaches were adopted. The chapter also expatiates on the composition of sampling, type of interviews and the data collection instruments.

Chapter four: Presentation of quantitative data

This chapter presents quantitative data and summary of findings and interpretation thereof.

Chapter five: Some gendered practices in the Zulu culture: presentation of qualitative data

This chapter shows what respondents understand to be their social life. Their responses are analysed against the reviewed literature and the used theory.

Chapter six: Conclusion

This chapter presents a summary of findings and conclusion as well as recommendations.

1.5 Summary

This chapter has provided the background and outline of the research problem which investigates the gendered practices in a Zulu family. The introduction focuses on the hypothesis, research questions, objectives of the study, plan and structure of the thesis, and definition of terms.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews published and unpublished work in the form of dissertations, thesis, books newspapers, journals and articles with the aim of establishing prior and current knowledge on the topic of gendered practices. Reviewed literature helps to ground the study and provides direction to the researcher. Gumede (2009: 21) asserts that literary works re-inform and re-inforce the study. Literature that has been reviewed in this chapter relates to Zulu marriage, customs and traditions, religion as well as rituals.

2.2 Literature review

Although Mathonsi (2002) is not dealing with traditional marriage and African religion per se, he touches on polygamy in a positive sense. He is not applying the theory of feminism, while this study does. This study focuses on how a polygamous marriage is gendered to the detriment of a wife. Mathonsi (2002: 51) quotes Mbiti (1975) who argues that:

The more wives the man has, the more children he is likely to have, and the more the children, the stronger the power of immortality in that family.

Nowadays, the practice of polygamy, as it happened in a traditional marriage and promoted through African religion, is risky due to the scourge of HIV and AIDS, hence the need not to promote such a practice.

Khumalo (1997) specifically deals with traditional marriage but does not apply any theory. He is only concerned with revealing different practices in a traditional marriage. He too seems to have succeeded in promoting a cultural way of doing things, particularly in a traditional marriage. In his conclusion, Khumalo (1997: 638) argues that:

Kulona lonke lolu cwaningo kuyahlaluka ngokusobala ukuthi udwendwe lomdabu lwakhelwe phezu kwesisekelo esiyisonasona. Yikho lokhu okuzinzisa kusimamise udwendwe lomdabu kuzona zonke izivunguvungu zomdabu

‘This research has clearly proven that traditional marriage is built on a solid foundation. Through this foundation a traditional marriage is able to stand all natural challenges.’

Khumalo (1997) believes that a customary wedding is able to stand the test of time because of a strong foundation. This study differs in the sense that it shows that not all is well in a traditional marriage due to the negative influence of patriarchy. I argue that customary marriages are only sustainable if the wife toes the line under the authority of her husband.

Gumede (2002:36), although not dealing with marriage and African religion per se, and is only including them in his analysis of portrayal of female characters, applies the feminist approach successfully. He alludes to the fact that in matriarchal societies, however, the situation would be reversed, and females of the group occupy the highest position in the social and religious hierarchy. Gumede (2002: 36) states that:

The concept of religious mediation in cultures where the ancestors are also the family tutelary spirits: The oldest male is also the family priest.

Hlophe’s (2005) study deals with how mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law relate. Her study is related to this in that she also applies gender theories to look through gendered practices in a Zulu family. She does not, however, follow the ideals of radical feminists. She addresses issues of patriarchy and gender roles. Her study is confined to a matriarchal corner because of the nature of her topic. Her sampling is not balanced as she interviews more women than men, but again, it may be the nature of her topic which sought to investigate women. I, on the other hand, decided to go for quota sampling and in the process interviewed both men and women and managed to get a balanced view.

Mathonsi and Gumede (2006), examining the content of *izigiyo* (war-like antics), wanted to find out how these are gendered. They wanted to establish how *izigiyo* harbour content on women oppression. Mathonsi et al (2006) applies gender theories, however they were not interested in exposing the oppressive nature of Zulu culture on women.

Most similar research by other researchers does not cover the area of sex, particularly the practice of staying away from specific domestic chores when a wife is menstruating. I explored this area in a very cautious manner because of certain limitations. Rubin and Rubin (1995:36) state that:

Some feminists argued that women should interview women, and that interviewer and interviewee should try to build a relationship in which they share responsibility for finding the words and concepts in which ideas could be expressed and lives described.

In terms of the subject of menstruation, I was more forthright with male interviewees than females because females might not be comfortable with the topic.

Govender (2007: 97), researching on the rituals and worship among Hindus and Zulus in South Africa, quotes Berglund (1976) who argues that:

However, despite the cultural diffusion of Western thought and religion among the Zulu people, traditional thinking is not only still very much present in Zulu society, but is receiving more and more attention especially by those who live in rural areas.

Govender's (2007) assertion forms the basis for an argument that if practices in a Zulu family are gendered, it may take longer for feminists to see the desired fulfilment of feminist ideals and objectives. Women themselves are not seen to be fighting for the quick realisation of the feminist ideals. Fouche (1994: 93) is quoted by Daymond (1996: xv) highlighting the lack of progress:

The prime example is the ANC's stipulation that one third of its MPs in the new government should be women. In itself this may not guarantee progress, as women delegates do not always feel themselves accountable to women.

Daymond (1996: xv) quotes Fiske (1989:77) in order to stress that giving women deserved rights is all talk and no action on the side of dominant men.

Therefore it is equally important that women's organisations have taken upon themselves the task of deciding the constitutional and other provisions that are needed for a feminist culture to be nurtured in what, until very recently, was a "state... so overtly male in its self-conception, representation, and control. That it is understandable that women are still silenced."

Research shows that while polygamy has merit, it is also viewed with utter discontentment as it results in unnecessary competition between wives, which itself is further degradation of women.

Writing about polygamy, Mair (1969: ix) states that:

Whatever may be said as to the material advantages accruing to a wife as a result of having co-wives to share her duties, it can hardly be denied that the institution of polygamy is normally associated with social system in which there is unchallenged male dominance. It may be added that it reflects, and at the same time intensifies, the fundamental inequality between the sexes which appears to be typical of African social systems, even in matrilineal societies.

How Zulu men view women's bodies is not different from the common view that is held by other nations. Patrica Vertinsky (1990), quoted by Mangan (2001:3) argues that:

The medical profession idealized women as reproductive vehicles and focused upon pathology, limitation and disability, portraying the female body as a malfunctioning organism that embodied society's ills. She suggested that the process by which a powerful alliance of males "experts" in medicine, science and education exercises control over the female body is central to the analysis of the social construction of gender and the body.

However, in the course of this work, some literature is cited to show that there is a need to transform men in particular. The chapter on statistical data in this study shows that there is an inclination to accept inevitable changes that aim to fight gender imbalances. Mathonsi (2006: 44) states that:

Women have become, for example, Presidents and Chief Executive Officers. Whilst playing their new roles, they do not cease being food providers. They earn money to provide for their children. Money earned by women is used to support their children and families.

Mathonsi's (2006) assertion provides the need to advocate for gender transformation with the view of saying that though the Zulu culture and tradition may generally be seen to be oppressive to women, it is similarly true that there is a need for one to be optimistic if transformation of men, in particular, is to be attained. In other words, women do not essentially have to ignore their responsibilities, however socially transformed they are, but should instead educate these men and use them as change agents. Mathonsi (2006: 43) contends that:

I hope women take note of this so that they do not attack indiscriminately. To be stronger you need to enlist the help of some transformed men.

Mathonsi's (2006) ideal to improve the status of women is also shared by Collier et al (1981:275-6), as quoted by Moore (1988:29) who suggest that:

However, it should be noted here that there is some evidence from some small-scale societies to support the argument that when women are not exclusively defined as mothers and child-bearers, their status and cultural value appear to improve.

The status of women has indeed improved in various areas that nobody had ever thought it would. Polygamy which, for example, is viewed by some as a source of women oppression, is now protected in the South African constitution. By being enshrined in the constitution, it means women who are in a polygamous marriage can now enjoy certain rights that they otherwise would not have enjoyed in the past. Previously, it was always known that the second wife, '*iqadi*', and the following wives, '*amabibi*', served for and under the first wife in the same way that all the wives would serve for and under their shared husband. Now, women can safely marry a polygamous man knowing very well that they will get what is due to them as provided and protected by "The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act no 120 of 1998" which extends to the state's recognition and regulation of marriage to both monogamous and polygamous customary marriages.

While some traditional patriarchs (and some other men who are not necessarily considered traditional patriarchs) will be rather surprised to hear that their wife or wives enjoy equal status with them after marriage in terms of the law and might not always adhere to this provision of the law, the Act clearly aims to limit the harsh discriminatory effect of traditional patriarchal practices on married women.

<http://constitutionnallyspeaking.co.za/is-polygamy-unconstitutional>

Whereas the concept of an ultimate patriarchal man has been promoted since time immemorial, there are positive signs that a new transformed man is gradually taking his place in the new cultural, political and social dispensation. Morrel (2001), quoted by Nkani (2006:16), has this to say about a new transformed man:

Masculinities are constantly changing understandings of what it means to be a man. There are men; especially amongst middle class who engage in introspection and gender-

consciousness-raising, where females are not seen as objects who affirm male domination, but as equal partners who deserve respect same as males.

However good and ideal this status of a new transformed man is, the radical feminists may not think it is enough. Their struggle is aimed at making revolutionary gains on a man's territory with an ultimate goal to overpower man and in the process subvert men under women's rule. Shayo, in Mahmoud (1991: 14), recommends that:

There is an urgent need for a cultural revolution in traditions, norms, values, abolishing those which discriminate against women and promoting those which are positive.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has provided the literature review on gendered practices in a Zulu family and how these practices are infested with gender inequalities, sexism and gender bias that lead to women oppression. This chapter has also highlighted and cited literature that advocates the need for transformation of men in order to change the status quo in terms of combating gender inequalities and biases.

CHAPTER 3

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, RESEARCH DESIGN AND PARADIGMS

3.1 Theoretical framework

According to Nkani (2006:28) “Every researcher has to base her/his research study on a certain theoretical framework, which becomes an orientation or sweeping way of looking at the social world”. Nkani (2006), goes on to quote Neuman (2001:59) who argues that:

A theory provides an answer to puzzling questions because it links together different elements in a causal process, in order to produce an explanation of the particulars that have been explored.

My study is rooted on the feminist theories. Writing on feminist theories, Cole and McQuin (1992:3) argue that:

Feminist ethics display the ff. (sic) basic characteristics: they are grounded in a feminist perspective; they seek to challenge traditional, some would say “masculinist”, moral assumptions; they frequently seek to interpret the moral significance of women’s cultural experience as caregivers; strive to interpret moral agency, altruism, and other relevant concepts from a feminist perspective.

There are there mainstream forms of feminism, namely: liberal, radical and Marxist. This study follows the ideals of radical feminism which is premised on:

The revolutionary changes that women demand from men. It aims to challenge and to overthrow patriarchy by opposing standard gender roles and what they see as male oppression of women, and calls for a radical re-ordering of society.” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/feminist- 5/08/2010](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/feminist-5/08/2010))

The overthrow of patriarchy that these women demand is so radical that they anticipate a world where men are no longer a norm, a yard stick and a measure against which a woman exists. They want to be independent from men. Daly (1978: 79) supports this view by stating that:

Radical feminism is not reconciliation with the father. Rather it is affirming our original birth, our original source, movement and surges of living. This finding of our original integrity is remembering our “Selves”

What makes the radical feminism appeal to me is my assumption that, to a man’s eye, a female body is an instrument to be used for sex, to bear children and to exercise male power on. Defining body feminism, Bordo et al (1993) as quoted by Andermahr et al (2000:25) argue that:

Body feminism has a history of deep ambivalence towards the female body, which has figured alternately as the source of women’s oppression and as the locus of a specifically female power. Both approaches focus on the reproductive body; on female sexuality, menstruation, pregnancy, lactation and menopause.

Recently, there have been campaigns that sought and still seek to highlight the need for the freeing of a woman’s body. Women want freedom to wear what they like even if it is too short or too revealing. Zulu men are well known for their antiques in fighting for the full covering of a woman’s body in a respectable manner. It is, however, an international phenomenon. Gender Gap Report 2010 shows that:

In the West the female body is objectified to a point where a recent study shows that 8 out of 10 women are unhappy with their bodies. Opposing these types of violations of women’s equal rights is what feminism is about.
[\[http://www.msafropolitan.com/2010/11/african-feminist.html-09/12/2011\]](http://www.msafropolitan.com/2010/11/african-feminist.html-09/12/2011)

Unlike liberal feminists who want equal rights, radical feminists want superiority over men to the extent of wanting to deny men sex. Radicals think sex is a way of violating a woman’s body. They would rather initiate sex themselves to fight patriarchal male dominance. Bryson (1992:18) is quoted by Hlophe (2005: 47) to support patriarchal sex domination:

Radical feminist analysis insists that male power is not confined to the public worlds of politics and paid employment, but that it extends into private lives; this means that traditional concepts of power and politics are challenged and extended to such “personal” areas of life as the family and sexuality, both of which are seen as instruments of patriarchal domination.

To support male sex domination, Deckard (1979: 452), in Mpungose (2010: 21), states that “radicals also argue that the oppression of women is sustained by certain social institutions, such as marriage, motherhood, love and sexual intercourse”.

Bryson (1992: 208) further argues that it is not the biological fact of giving birth that oppresses women, but the fact that they reproduce in a patriarchal society in which motherhood is seldom freely chosen and is controlled by men. Writing on radical feminism Scott (1984: 15) supports the assertion that:

Political, legal and religious structures are dominated by men who ensure that they maintain those positions. Within the private domain of the family, marriage and reproduction, men have structured a system whereby women's reproductive capacity leaves her vulnerable and domestically exploited.

If radical feminists are really radical about how they want to attain their goals they need to be fighting all forms of oppression without compromise. Rubin (1981: 204) argues that:

I personally feel that the feminist movement must dream of even more than the elimination of the oppression of women. It must dream of the elimination of obligatory sexualities and sex roles. The dream I find most compelling is one of an androgynous and genderless (though not sexless) society in which one's sexual anatomy is irrelevant to who one is, what one does, and with whom one makes love.

African feminism is relevant to this study because the sample is African. There is a need to accommodate the African view given its transformative potential of African men if this study should also aspire to transform African men who are generally patriarchal. African culture and philosophy essentially differ from the dominant Western American culture and philosophy. The differences between Western feminism and African feminism manifest themselves in clear tensions.

Intellectual feminism is usually promoted by urban and educated African women. These intellectual feminists have often acquired their knowledge from abroad. As a result, they have a "tendency to export the debate on women's rights outside Africa" due to their access to the "easy option for ideological borrowing." The result of this is that African intellectual feminism seems to condemn aspects of African culture such as polygamy, excision and forced or early marriages, an attitude that echoes the paternalistic attitude and tone of Western women towards African women.

<http://www.ngopulse.org/article/african-feminism-driven-african-women> (15/12/2011)

The denunciation of “polygamy, excision and ...early marriages” by Western women as highlighted above, will definitely make Zulu men, whether urban or rural, feel insulted. In that case women would not be able to enlist their help as agents of change.

When so-called African feminism reflects condescending Western attitudes, it alienates the bulk of African women who are rooted in the cultures that form part of their lived experience.

[Hhttp://www.ngopulse.org/article/african-feminism-driven-african-women](http://www.ngopulse.org/article/african-feminism-driven-african-women) (15/12/2011).

Arndt (2000:33), as quoted by Nkani (2006: 32), asserts that “Transformative African feminists assume that men are capable of transformation, a change that could transform the whole society. If African feminists want to accommodate men by striking compromises, that is, adopt a moderate and diplomatic stance in dealing with rigid men, their stance cannot go un-criticized. Even though adopting an African approach seems to have the potential of yielding positive results in terms of persuading African men to adopt change, radical feminists would not buy into African feminists’ subtle approach as it defeats the very purpose of rooting out patriarchy. Bell et al (1996:11) argue that:

Radical feminism is created by women for women. Radical feminism stresses the ‘emancipation’ or ‘equality’ on male terms as not enough, but a total revolution of the social structures and the elimination of the process of patriarchy as essential.

Getting rid of patriarchy would automatically translate into women emancipation and an end to their ‘othering’ by men. This ‘othering’ and subsequent oppression of women is further highlighted by Pharr (1988: 53) who argues that:

To understand the connection among oppressions we must examine their common elements. The first is defined norm, a standard of rightness and often righteousness, wherein all others are judged in relation to it. It is important to know that the established norm does not necessarily represent the majority in terms of the numbers; it represents those who have the ability to exert power and control over others.

In the Zulu culture, it is a norm to have a man as the head of the household and the wife as the ‘other’. It is in this context that a woman cannot go to certain designated areas of the homestead because she is not the head of the household but the ‘other’. She is regarded as not physiologically perfect because she menstruates. In some cases she cannot even share the same

bed with her husband when she menstruates. At worst, she should avoid contact with common men and even with boys who are herding cattle in the pastures because she is menstruating which mysteriously is understood to be having the potential of bringing misfortunes and bad luck. The fact that she has to ask the services of her son to burn incense on her behalf because the Zulu culture does not allow the 'other' to address the ancestors relegates her to the position of a child. Basically, she is just a visitor, a foreigner on the premises whose sole presence in the household is to bear children and perform domestic tasks for which she was paid '*ilobolo*'. This unpalatable state of 'othering' resulting from the payment of *ilobolo* is supported by Zondi (2007) who states that:

Within the prevalent patriarchal system; polygamy and *ilobolo* are deeply rooted practices that still endure and are considered very important within African cultures. The custom, however, sometimes causes anguish for women because men tend to consider them 'paid for' or 'bought commodities' 'and to be used.'

What is even more ironical, as Pharr (1988:53) suggests, is that the 'norm', who is just one polygamous man fathering many children resulting in a big hamlet will wield power even though he is not the majority in the homestead. He is just a social norm or standard "representing those who have the ability to exert power and control over others".

The common concepts in Parr's (1988) concept of 'othering' are patriarchy, gender roles and lesbianism as a radical show of resistance to male dominance. In literature she cites women being depicted in bad light as opposed to male characters, and women earning less than men in the work environment. Pharr (1988), as a lesbian herself, believes in the radical approach to dealing with men. Pharr (1988: 8) has this to say about patriarchy:

Patriarchy- an enforced belief in male dominance and control is the ideology-sexism the system that holds it in place. The catechism goes like this: Who do gender roles serve? Men and the women who seek power from them. Who suffers from gender roles? Women most completely and women in part. How are gender roles maintained? By the weapons of sexism, economics, violence and homophobia.

Pharr (1988) highlights homophobia as one of the main causes of women oppression by men. She asserts that "Male violence is fed by their sense of their *right* to dominate and control, and their sense of superiority over a group of people who, because of gender, they consider inferior

to them”. The concept of ‘otherness’ is further supported by some scholars who have this to say about it:

As such, otherness has also been associated predominantly with marginalized people, those who by virtue of their difference from the dominant group, have been disempowered, robbed of a voice in the social, religious, and political world... So not only are they robbed of their voice, they are also robbed of their identity, their sense of self, and their sense of value.

[\[http://www.mcmaster.ca/mjtm/3-1d.htm\]](http://www.mcmaster.ca/mjtm/3-1d.htm) 5/9/2012

In summary, this section has provided the theoretical framework used in this study, which is mainly a radical feminist approach, with supporting evidence from African feminism and the concept of otherness. These three approaches are used as lenses through which gendered practices manifesting in a Zulu family are analyzed.

3.2 Research design and paradigms

A research design is:

A blueprint, or outline, for conducting the study in such a way that maximum control will be exercised over factors that could interfere with the validity of research results. The research design is the overall plan for obtaining answers to the research questions guiding the study. (Polit and Hungler, 1999:155 - <http://uir.unisa.ac.za>)

Guba and Lincoln (1994:107-108) state that:

A paradigm may be viewed as a set of *basic beliefs* ... that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a *worldview* that defines for its holder, the nature of the “world”, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts... The beliefs are basic in the sense that they must be accepted simply on faith (however well argued); there is no way to establish their ultimate truthfulness.

3.2.1 Data collection

Data was gathered through questionnaires and interviews. Structured and less structured interviews were employed. Rubin and Rubin (1995: 55) argue that:

Many qualitative interviews have both structured and less structured parts but vary in the balance between them. In the less structured parts the interviewee does most of the

talking, perhaps explaining what an idea, event, or bit of a background means; in the more structured portions of an interview, the interviewer poses specific questions to get detail, example, and context.

The interviews were mainly used in this study to ensure authenticity of the responses. Another advantage of conducting interviews is that it gives an opportunity for one to ask some probing questions (Mpungose, 2010:18). The interviews were structured and less structured but I prepared sub-questions as a means of probing, particularly to those respondents who only received questionnaires and were not going to be interviewed. Supporting the practice of probing, Mazibuko (2008: 81) asserts that:

The researcher can pose follow-up questions which crop up during the interview if they passionately feel that they want to know more about the subject in question.

All the interviews were conducted in Zulu irrespective of whether the respondents live in the urban or rural area. By conducting the interviews in Zulu, I was more likely to receive authentic responses and thus increase the validity of the study (Mpungose, 2010:18). Most of the interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed.

Questionnaires were distributed among the interviewees and other respondents who were asked to get them ready for collection in a week's time. This allowed the interviewees to prepare for the interviews and in the process it probably gave rise to valid and reliable responses since they might have done their own research in preparation for the big day.

For quantitative data, I used questionnaires because I wanted to cover a wider area within a reasonable space of time and consequently be able to have a broader base on which to develop my generalisations. Nhlumayo (2006:95) asserts that:

Questionnaires are distributed among many people and in the process enable the researcher to collect maximum data from a number of people in a short space of time.

Although using questionnaires helps to collect maximum data, usually, they do not elicit honest and true responses. However, since some of the issues in this study are sensitive and very private, for an example, the issue of menstruation, I thought that allowing the respondents to

respond in the privacy and the comfort of their homes would possibly give honest and true responses. Questionnaires have their downside though. Nhlumayo (2006: 96) contends that the responses become short and fail to reveal everything about the social life of the respondents. I found this to be true when I was processing the data from the questionnaires. Sometimes I had to call particular respondents to get confirmation about what they meant. Some respondents would not even bother motivating their *yes* or *no* responses.

3.2.2 Sampling

Quota sampling was applied whereby I interviewed two groups of rural and urban husbands and wives. I expected that rural wives would give me suitable data in terms of gendered practices that happen in a customary marriage where a Zulu wife is presumably having few or no rights. Relative to rural wives, urban wives, who are educated may be living the ideal of equal rights with their husbands due to their exposure to the rights and Western marriage. I interviewed twenty rural couples against twenty urban couples equalling eighty people. Conducting interviews took me eight weeks at an average of three interviewees a day. There was a mixture of newly married couples against old couples. Younger couples may demand modern ways of living and presumably be anti-Zulu culture while older couples might be conservative and leaning towards the appreciation of Zulu culture.

Rural husbands may still be enjoying patriarchal benefits over wives while the urban husbands may be unhappily having limited patriarchal muscle. Barbie (1999:175) maintains that whenever representativeness is desired, you should use quota sampling and interview both men and women, young people and old, and so forth. My sampling was also strategic as I selected men and women in the rural village of Mzinyathi in Ndwedwe district as well as women and men in the suburbs of Newlands West and New Germany in the city of Durban.

In terms of age, religion, and type of marriage, the population in this study was eventually composed in the following manner:

Fig. 1 Religion

| | |
|--|----------|
| NBC [Shembe] | 14 [35%] |
| Zion | 3[7%] |
| Roman Catholic | 4[10%] |
| Christian centre | 7[18%] |
| Others | 12[30%] |
| [Christian-oriented] | |
| Total of all Christian-based religions | 26[65%] |
| Total | 100% |

Thirty five percent (35%) of the respondents came from the Nazareth Baptist Church popularly known as Shembe, while the remaining 65% is shared among the Christian-based churches. This means that Shembe views are most dominant in this study. Of the three independent Christian churches, Christian centre has the second most dominant views (18%) followed by the Roman Catholic (10%) and lastly Zion, popularly known as Amazayoni (4%). Shembe is essentially a South African indigenous and traditional church that was founded in KwaZulu-Natal, and has its headquarters in KwaZulu-Natal. It was, therefore, expected that they would strongly support the Zulu tradition and culture.

Christian centre is a relatively new church whose followers are basically converts from other churches. Being one of the recently founded spiritual churches, I am told they do not support African culture and tradition, let alone the Zulu culture. The Roman Catholic Church is still viewed as a “White” church whose Black followers are essentially not practicing African culture and tradition. Catholic followers worship God through Christ and are known for their dislike of practices and traditions like slaughtering goats and other beasts to communicate with the ancestors. Their views in this study can, therefore, be expected to be anti-Zulu tradition. The Zionists are more inclined towards the Shembe church and the only difference is that they are Christian-oriented, otherwise they practice African culture and tradition as they slaughter beasts

to communicate with ancestors. Their views on the issues of polygamy, menstruation, designated areas and equal status were bound to affirm Zulu tradition and culture.

The age bracket of the study population is comprised in the following manner:

Fig. 2 Age brackets [40 men vs 40 women]

| Age | Males | Females |
|--------|---------|---------|
| 50-60+ | 19[47%] | 10[25%] |
| 40-49 | 17[43%] | 20[50%] |
| 30-39 | 04[10%] | 8[20%] |
| 25-29 | - | 2[5%] |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Most of the female respondents (50%) occupy the age bracket of between 40 and 49 years. This means that their views are most likely to be anti-tradition and culture because these women, particularly the urban women, are the working class. These are the women who want equal rights, who want polygamy to be abolished, who do not want menstruation to be used as a reason to denigrate women. Most of the male respondents (47%) occupy the age bracket of between 50 and 60 years. This means that the majority of male respondents are elders followed by middle-aged men at 43%. The gap between the two age brackets is not too big but it can be safely said that this majority of older males can be expected to have views that show support of the Zulu culture and tradition. It is these older men who want to practice polygamy, who want to maintain superiority over women, who think that women's movements should be restricted on the premises. Men of age bracket 30-39 (4%) fare in very low on the table. The researcher failed to find younger married men of the age brackets of 25 to 29 (0%). These younger educated and westernised men can be expected to accommodate the plight of women. Similarly, younger women (25-29) fare in relatively low (5%) compared to the older ones. It could be expected that their views are anti-culture and tradition because they are educated and westernised and will most likely not support the Zulu culture and tradition. These younger women would expect their

men to have a stereotyped understanding of menstruation, polygamy, equal status and worshipping the Lord. Hence, they would not support the Zulu culture and tradition.

The percentages of the type of marriage looked like this:

Fig. 3 Type of marriage

| Urban couples | Rural couples | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Christian [in community] | Christian [in community] | Traditional [out of community] |
| 20[100%] | 5[25%] | 15[75%] |

Figure 3 shows that 63% of the couples [urban and rural combined] are married in-community of property. All the urban couples are married in community of property while the majority (75%) of the rural couples are married out of community of property. Very few of the rural couples (25%) are married in community of property. When the majority of the couples are married in community of property, it can be expected that their responses would say yes to equal status and would use, as motivation, that the marriage contract readily declares that they are equal partners. These are the respondents who would support that a woman has the ability to address the ancestors and who might say no to designated areas, to polygamy, and to the denigration of women of any form. It is probable that the majority of rural male respondents who are married out of community of property would say no to equal status with the wife, yes to designated areas, and to polygamy, and no to women who want to address the ancestors. These are men who are most likely to be oppressive to their wives.

The three tables are variables that form the mitigating factors. These factors influence the kind of responses that interviewees come up with. Firstly, the kind of religion from which the respondent comes would explain the stance that the respondent takes, for an example, a Shembe respondent would easily support polygamy as it is promoted in the church. Similarly, it can be expected that the Christian respondents may not support the existence of designated areas in the homestead because they do not believe in ancestral interceding. The age factor can be used to look at

patterns and trends. It can be expected that older couples who are more experienced and mature will be very accommodating of culture than their younger and modernised couples. The factor of the type of marriage can influence how an interviewee will respond to a certain question. For example, the question of equal rights and polygamy would divide couples/interviewees.

3.2.3 Paradigms

The research is mainly qualitative. Rubin (1995: 3) states that an “in-depth qualitative interviewing helps explain how and why culture is created, evolves and is maintained.” Through the interviews, I was able to interpret my respondents’ world view. The questions I asked began with a *yes* and *no* option, followed by a motivation. The aim of motivation is to get an in-depth qualitative response on how the subjects understand, support, approve or disapprove of their culture and religion.

The quantitative outcome is minimally used to support the qualitative outcome. The *yes* and *no* option on the questionnaires, *inter alia*, give a quantitative indication in respect of whether there is a possibility of the mind shift in terms of both women and men transformation towards the goals and ideals of feminism or not. I predicted that if there were too many *yes* responses it would mean that women continue to be oppressed. If there were more *no* responses (particularly by men), it would mean that there is transformation and women emancipation. I wanted to develop statistics on the problem. Mathonsi (2002: 38) states that “the choice of research method is vital because there are several methods available which could be suited for specific projects to ensure the desired results”. I was of the opinion that the *yes* and *no* option on my research questionnaire would help reinforce what qualitative results say if the hypothesis proved my expectation. Writing about research paradigms, Westmeyer (1994:17) argues that:

Quantitative data analysis and interpretation is primarily deductive, as a matter of proving or disproving the hypothesis or an assertion developed from a general statement.

The research methodology I used was informed by certain assumptions I have about Zulu life. My sampling reflects rural and urban Zulu culture and is leaning towards the Shembe church.

Being a Zulu, myself, makes me understand what falls within and outside the limits of legitimate research. I assumed that while the subject of menstruation can be easily tackled with urban women, on the contrary I had to be cautious when dealing with the traditional Shembe older women.

Khun (1970: 175) defines a paradigm as:

Standing for the entire constellation of beliefs, values and techniques, and so on shared by the members of a community.

Khun speaks about the state of mind of the interviewee as being influenced by the context within which a reality is viewed by the social community. His argument speaks to the very reason why many people employ qualitative research. I wanted to establish why a woman is denied the opportunity to address the ancestors at *umsamo*. I do have my own assumptions but I wanted to do an in-depth digging.

Burrell and Morgan (1979), commenting on the paradigms, state that:

At a philosophical level organisational theories contrast in five sets of assumptions namely: subjectivist and objectivist; ontological; epistemological; axiological; methodological assumptions and assumptions about human nature.

Since my study is both qualitative and quantitative, it encompasses elements of all the paradigms. The very people I have interviewed in the research have beliefs and values which make them view the world in a particular way. The research questions subsequently sought to find out about these people's socially constructed world. Hence, the qualitative approach is viewed as interpretive, subjectivist, and hermeneutic. The reason why my methodology has used interviews is that through them I am able to interpret the people's responses. The epistemological paradigm comes into my latter angle, that is, to the anti-positivist [interpretive & subjectivist] the social world can only be understood by occupying the frame of mind of the participant in action. The quantitative aspect embraces a positivist, objectivist and an experimental angle to research. Hence, the option of *yes* and *no* in my questionnaires enables me to generalise about what I hypothesize. Burrell and Morgan (1979) state that:

The positivist studies the parts to understand the whole, they look for regularities and causal relationships to understand and predict the social world.

Writing about positivism, Hassard (1993: 13) quotes Spencer (1893: 581) to argue that positivism aims to show how social phenomena are representations of the general laws of evolution.

In a way this study, through positivism, wants to show that Zulu women are oppressed. It is based on the general law of evolution in terms of even biblical representation of how men and women are created differently and subsequently are never equal. Even the fact that a woman is made from a man's rib is a strong argument against superiority of a woman over a man. According to Genesis 2 verse 18, it is not right for a man to be alone. The Lord said "I will create someone who will help him". A woman is, therefore, created to help a man. Verse 22 of the same chapter states that: "The Lord created a woman out of a man's rib and gave her to the man". Verse 23 states that: "The woman is now a bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She will be called a woman because she is created from a man". The sample uses the same Bible whether Christian or non-Christian, I expected the quantitative results to support my assumption that women are oppressed due to social and biblical representation of truth about human evolution.

To sum up, this chapter has dealt with the choice of design and the administration of the research instrument to elicit answers to the questions. As a means to elicit valid and reliable responses, I developed tables to mitigate the factors that could act as limitations to the study. Further, it has examined a variety of procedures that have been used in conducting and developing this research, which are the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

CHAPTER 4

4. PRESENTATION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the statistical data in the form of tables, which is subsequently analysed in chapter five in terms of the six questions which the respondents were asked. The aim of presenting this statistical data is to show how the numbers prove or disprove my hypothesis in terms of the possible generalisations that could be drawn. Three tables are presented in this section. Presented first is the table of combined forty rural and urban couples, followed by a separate table of twenty rural couples, and eventually the twenty urban couples separately. The aim of including the rural and urban tables separately is to make comparisons in order to get a balanced view. Through comparison, I was able to confidently generalise whether practices in Zulu families continue to be gendered irrespective of whether they are in urban or rural settlements. Questions that were asked appear on the table in the following order:

- 1.1. Do you ensure that your wife avoids certain designated areas of the homestead?
- 1.2. Do you support the existence of such designated areas?

- 2.1. Do you avoid domestic tasks during menstruation?
- 2.2. Do you support this practice?
- 2.3. Would you support a campaign to abolish this practice?

- 3.1. Do you support polygamy?
- 3.2. Do you think polygamy emanates from certain beliefs about women?

4. Do you think that Zulu culture (religion) is oppressive to wives?
5. Do you think that you should enjoy equal status with your wife?
6. Do you think women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men?

4.2 The tables and statistics

Fig.4 Percentages of 40 men and 40 women [rural & urban couples combined]

| Questions | Males Yes | Males No | Females Yes | Females No |
|-----------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Q.1 | | | | |
| 1.1. | 20[100%][rural M] | 0[0%] | 20[100%][rural F] | 0[0%] |
| 1.2. | 34[85%][R&U] | 6[15%] | 24[60%] [R&U] | 16[40%] |
| Q.2 | | | | |
| 2.1. | 24[60%] | 16[40%] | 18[45%] | 22[55%] |
| 2.2. | 27[67%] | 13[33%] | 18[45%] | 22[55%] |
| 2.3. | 12[30%] | 28[70%] | 21[53%] | 19[47%] |
| Q3 | | | | |
| 3.1. | 30[75%] | 10[25%] | 05[12%] | 35[88%] |
| 3.2. | 27[67%] | 13[33%] | 26[65%] | 14[35%] |
| Q4 | 12[30%] | 28[70%] | 28[70%] | 12[30%] |
| Q5 | 12[30%] | 28[70%] | 16[40%] | 24[60] |
| Q6 | 7[17%] | 33[83%] | 12[30%] | 28[70%] |

Key: Q: question Yes: agrees/supports No: disagrees/do not support

Fig.5 Percentages of 20 rural men and 20 rural women responses

| Totals | Yes Males | No Males | Yes Females | No Females |
|--------|--------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| Q.1 | | | | |
| 1.1. | 20[100%] | 0[0%] | 20[100] | 0[0%] |
| 1.2. | 19[95%] | 1[5%] | 16[80%] | 4[20%] |
| Q.2 | | | | |
| 2.1. | 19[95%] | 1[5%] | 17[85%] | 3[15%] |
| 2.2. | 18[90%] | 2[10%] | 16[60%] | 4[20%] |
| 2.3. | 2[10%] | 18[90%] | 7[35%] | 13[65%] |
| Q3 | | | | |
| 3.1. | 20[100%] | 0[0%] | 2[10%] | 18[90%] |
| 3.2. | 12[60%] | 8[40%] | 16[80%] | 4[20%] |
| Q4 | 3[15%] | 17[85%] | 12[60%] | 8[40%] |
| Q5 | 4[20%] | 16[80%] | 5[25%] | 15[75%] |
| Q6 | 0[0%] | 20[100%] | 3[15%] | 17[85%] |

Fig.6. Percentages of 20 urban men and 20 urban women responses

| Questions | Males Yes | Males No | Females Yes | Females No |
|-----------|--------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| Q.1 | | | | |
| 1.1. | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 1.2. | 15[75%] | 5[25%] | 8[40%] | 12[60%] |
| Q.2 | | | | |
| 2.1. | 5[25%] | 15[75%] | 1[5%] | 19[95%] |
| 2.2. | 9[45%] | 11[55%] | 2[10%] | 18[90%] |
| 2.3. | 10[50%] | 10[50%] | 14[70%] | 6[30%] |
| Q3 | | | | |
| 3.1. | 10[50%] | 10[50%] | 3[15%] | 17[85%] |
| 3.2. | 15[75%] | 5[25%] | 10[50%] | 10[50%] |
| Q4 | 9[45%] | 11[55%] | 16[80%] | 4[20%] |
| Q5 | 8[40%] | 12[60%] | 11[55%] | 9[45%] |
| Q6 | 7[35%] | 13[65%] | 9[45%] | 11[55%] |

4.3 Questions and analysis of statistics.

Question 1

1.1 Do you ensure that your wife avoids certain designated areas of the homestead?

All rural men (100%) ensure that the wife avoids certain designated areas. Similarly, all rural women (100%) avoid the designated areas of the homestead. Urban couples did not respond to this question, because of the “limiting” modern life style they live.

1.2 Do you support the existence of such designated areas?

Although the urban families do not have these designated areas, it was appropriate to ask them whether they would support the existence of such areas. 85% of the men, rural and urban combined, support the existence of designated areas against fifteen percent who do not. Sixty percent females, rural and urban combined, support the existence of designated areas against 40% who do not. However, it is interesting to note that 95% percent rural males compared to 75% urban males support this practice. 80% rural females compared to 40% urban females support this practice.

Question 2

2.1 Do you make sure that your wife avoids domestic tasks during menstruation?

60% males [rural and urban combined] ensure that their wives avoid domestic tasks during menstruation against forty percent who do not. 45% females maintain this practice against 55% who do not. However, it is interesting to note that 95% rural males ensure that their wives avoid domestic tasks during menstruation compared to 25% urban males who do. 85% rural females maintain this practice compared to 5% urban females who practice it.

2.2 Do you support this practice?

67% males [rural and urban combined] support this practice against 33% who do not. 45% females support this practice against 55% who do not. However it is interesting to note that 90% rural males support this practice compared to 45% urban males. 60% rural females support this practice compared to 10% urban females who do not support it.

2.3 Would you support a campaign to abolish this practice?

30% males [rural and urban combined] would support the abolishment of this practice against 70% who would like to see it maintained. 53% females would support the abolishment of this practice against 47% who would like to see it maintained. However, it is interesting to note that ninety percent rural males would not support a campaign to abolish this practice compared to 50% urban males who would also not support a campaign to do so. 35% rural females would support a campaign to abolish this practice compared to 70% urban females who would also follow suit.

Question 3

3.1 Do you support polygamy?

75% males [rural and urban combined] support polygamy against 25% who do not. 12% females support polygamy against 80% who do not. It is, however, interesting to note that 100% rural males support polygamy compared to 50% urban males who do. 10% rural females support polygamy and 15% urban females concur.

3.2 Do you think polygamy emanates from certain beliefs about women?

67% males think that polygamy emanates from certain beliefs about women against 33% who do not think so. 65% females think that polygamy emanates from certain beliefs about women against 35% who do not think so. It is, however, interesting to note that 60% rural males compared to 75% urban males think that polygamy emanates from certain beliefs about women. 80% rural females compared to 50% urban females think that polygamy emanates from certain beliefs about women.

Question 4

Do you think that the Zulu culture is oppressive to wives?

30% males [rural and urban combined] think that the Zulu culture and religion are oppressive to wives against 70% who do not think so. 70% females think that the Zulu culture and religion are oppressive to wives against 30% who do not think so. However it is interesting to note that 15% rural males compared to 45% percent urban males think that the Zulu culture is oppressive to wives. Sixty percent rural females compared to 80% urban females think that the Zulu culture is oppressive to wives.

Question 5

Do you think that you should enjoy an equal status with your wife?

30% males [rural and urban combined] think they should enjoy equal status with their wives against seventy percent who do not think so. 40% females think that they should enjoy an equal status with their husbands against sixty percent who do not think so. It is, however, interesting to note that twenty percent rural males compared to forty percent urban males think that they should enjoy equal status with their wives. 25% percent rural females compared to fifty five percent urban females think they should enjoy equal status with their husbands.

Question 6

Do you think women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men?

17% males [rural and urban combined] think that women can play an interceding role to God against 83% who do not think so. 30% females think that they can play an interceding role to God against seventy percent who do not think so. However, it is interesting to note that no rural male compared to thirty five percent urban males think that a woman can burn incense and address ancestors as men do. 15% rural females compared to 45 percent urban females think that a woman can play an interceding role to God as men do.

4.4 Summary of the findings

Generally, rural men ensure that wives do not go to designated areas of the homestead. Equally so, rural wives understand the need for not going to these areas hence they uphold this practice. On the sub-question of whether they support this practice, the majority of males support the existence of these areas. Equally so, the majority of women support this practice because they understand the need. Fewer urban women support this practice than rural women. More rural men support this practice than urban men.

On the second question of menstruation, the majority of males ensure that their wives avoid domestic tasks during menstruation. The majority of women do not believe that they should avoid domestic tasks during menstruation. There are few urban males who ensure that a wife avoids domestic tasks during menstruation. There are even fewer urban females who avoid domestic tasks during menstruation. On the first sub-question of whether men support this practice, the majority of men do. On the contrary, the majority of females do not support this practice. There are more rural males who support this practice than urban males in the same way that there are more rural females who support this practice than urban females. On the second sub-question of whether they would support a campaign to abolish this practice, the majority of males would not support a campaign to abolish this practice while the majority of women would support it. There are more urban females who would support a campaign to abolish this practice

as opposed to fewer rural females. Half of the interviewed urban males would support the campaign while half of them would not support it.

On the third question of polygamy, the majority of males support it against the majority of women who do not. There are fewer rural females who support polygamy than the urban females. All the interviewed rural males support polygamy while very few urban males do. On the sub-question of whether they think that polygamy emanates from certain beliefs about women, the majority of both males and females think that polygamy emanates from certain beliefs about women. More urban males than rural males think that polygamy emanates from certain beliefs about women. On the other hand, there are more rural females than urban females who think that polygamy emanates from certain beliefs about women.

On the question of whether the Zulu culture is oppressive to wives, the majority of males do not think that the Zulu culture is oppressive while the majority of women think so. A majority of urban males and females thinks that the Zulu culture is oppressive to wives. Fewer rural males and females think that the Zulu culture is oppressive to wives.

On the question of whether a husband and wife should enjoy equal status, the majority of males do not think so while the majority of females also do not think so. More urban males than rural males think they should enjoy equal status with their wives. More urban females than rural females think they should enjoy equal status with their husbands.

On the question of whether they think women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men, the majority of men and women do not think so. All the rural males do not think that a woman can play an interceding role to God. Few urban males think than a woman can play the same role. More urban females than rural females think that a woman can play an interceding role to God.

Chapter 5

5. SOME GENDERED PRACTICES IN A ZULU FAMILY: PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

5.1 Introduction

Since these were semi-structured interviews, I had three questions at hand, namely: Do you feel that the prescription of a dress code, for example, is oppressive? Do you think that you have freedom of expression on the premises? Do you think that the prescription of your movement is oppressive? The respondents themselves came up with a lot of responses on the general practices that they view as oppressive which include *inter alia*: being required to bear a male child, being under the control of the mother-in-law, having to show respect to everyone in the homestead, having to perform all household chores and being forced into a polygamous marriage.

The six questions around which the following analysis is structured fall under culture. The aim is to show how specific gendered practices, whether religious or political, perpetrate gender biases and gender stereotypes in a Zulu family. The core of the Zulu culture is held by observing certain practices as defined by patriarchal forefathers. Subsequently, the Zulu religion is based on ancestral intercession by predominantly patriarchal ancestors.

5.2 Questioning the nature of Zulu culture in terms of gender transformation

Elliot (1948: 28) argues that:

Culture is more comprehensive than religion; that the latter is no more than an element, supplying ethical formation and some emotional colour, to culture which is the ultimate value.

The first question on whether Zulu culture is oppressive embraces the following questions as its sub-themes, namely: Do you support polygamy? Do you think that you should enjoy equal status with your spouse? Religion embraces the following questions as its sub-themes, namely: Do you

think that women can play an interceding role to God? Do you avoid certain designated areas of the homestead? Do you avoid domestic tasks during menstruation?

The main questions investigate whether the practice is upheld while the sub-questions sought to find out whether the respondents personally support the practice. In case they support it, it means that the fight against gender bias, oppression of women and the existence of a patriarchal society is not easy to win. Where they do not personally support the practice and only doing it *willy nilly*, there is a chance that they would embrace transformation for the realisation of radical feminist goals.

It is to be noted that:

Fe1: stands for first female interviewee/respondent while Ma1: stands for first male interviewee/respondent. Fe 1 or Ma 1 is followed by second and third interviewees/ respondents respectively.

5.2.1 Do you think that Zulu culture is oppressive to wives?

80%: Urban females who think Zulu culture is oppressive to wives:

Fe 1: *Yes I do: As wives we end up not moving freely on the premises*

Fe 2: *Yes I do: Because we cannot wear what we like. Another thing is that when the family holds meetings, the wife is not invited because she is regarded as a child.*

Fe 3: *Yes I do: Wearing a scarf, long dresses, not to show my shoulders and to be told not to wear pants is not fair. I feel discriminated.*

The second and third respondents simply want to wear what they like but cannot because of the prescriptive nature of the Zulu culture. Such prescription is based on the “conceptualisation of dress according to gender, social roles and community expectations” (Magwaza 2006: 103). Mudaly et al (2008:116) affirm that the oppression of a woman is socially engineered even where men prescribe the dress code for women.

There is awareness of how the production and maintenance of gender inequality by identifiable social processes (for an example, how a girl is expected to dress) is built into the general social structure as well as into the individual identities of boys and girls.

For these working urban women, I would contend that the need to wear trousers is even greater for them than their rural counterparts. During menstruation, these women prefer to wear trousers. In winter these women prefer to wear trousers to keep themselves warmer, in the same way that they prefer trousers on a night out to make it difficult for the potential rapists to rape them. To be told like a child that you cannot walk on certain designated areas of the homestead, as the first respondent stated, is the worst form of discrimination and oppression. The secondary role of the 'other' is further perpetrated when, according to the second respondent, "*the family holds meetings, the wife is not invited to participate because she is regarded as a child*".

Moore (1988: 14) has this to say about women's "secondary role":

The secondary status of women in society is one of the true universals, a pan-cultural fact. Yet within that universal fact, the specific cultural conceptions and symbolisations of women are extraordinarily diverse and initially contradictory.

Nothing is as contradictory and ironical as having women create men and women and have her subjected to oppressive practices by the same people they brought on earth. The status of a woman, in my view, should actually be primary as opposed to secondary but because of the patriarchal society, women remain subjugated.

20%: Urban females who do not think that Zulu culture is oppressive responded:

Fe 4: *All the things that women are told to do or not to do are actually not difficult.*

Fe 5: *It makes things easier when there are boundaries. You cannot have a situation where women can do everything they like. The whole household would fall apart.*

Fe 6: *It is only tradition. Tradition is beautiful. It needs to be carried on to the generations. There is nothing wrong with having women do things different from men. It is no oppression.*

These women support anything that is done in the name of culture. To them tradition is beautiful and, as a legacy, it needs to be carried on to the next generations. Maybe their optimism can be attributed to the fact that they live in the urban areas where these oppressive practices are no longer imposed on them. Claiming as the second respondent does, that the whole homestead would fall apart if there were no boundaries, smacks of propaganda. It is the very boundaries that

lead to separation and division of labour. This is one of the revolutionary changes that the radical feminists seek to dismantle. Writing on the tenets of radical feminism, Andermahr et al (2002:222) state that:

Women are oppressed as women and their oppressors are men. Male POWER had to be recognised and understood, and was not to be reduced to anything else, for an example, the power of capital over labour.

The novelist Chimamanda Adichie, who calls herself a feminist who likes lip gloss, says:

From the dating stage when a man offers to put on your coat to the stage where you're delegating house chores it can be difficult to defy social patterns that place a woman as subordinate to a man.

Social patterns, as Chimamanda argues above, are not so easy to obliterate but if transformation were to be achieved then even simple things as patronising "tender care" courtesy that is shown by men in the early stages of a relationship would have to be dealt away with as well. She is casually suggesting that if men would at least do certain socially defined female tasks such as washing outer wear, could break the stereotypical division of labour.

60%: Rural females who think that Zulu culture is oppressive responded:

Fe 7: *Mother-in law may end up dying because I cannot enter her bedroom.*

Fe 8: *Taking more wives in the name of trying to find an heir is oppressive. The first wife gradually loses the love of her husband after the arrival of the second and new bride. He even stops to maintain the first wife. That is oppression.*

Fe 9: *Because we cannot do everything we want to do. We always have to ask permission from a husband. Even when one wants to do a hairstyle, one still has to cover the head to show respect to the husband. We cannot wear pants because they are men's clothing.*

The Godly and untouchable status that is accorded the father-in-law and the mother-in-law is also a great inconvenience that hinders the provision of help where it is mostly needed. It is for this very reason that one of the bridesmaids, 'umakotshana', remains with the new bride after the bride's group, 'umthimba', has left. She goes to all restricted areas of the homestead on behalf of the bride. Khumalo (1997: 561) confirms this practice by saying:

Umlobokazi uphuma ngakho ukugega emva kwezindlu kanye nezimpelesi zakhe. Baze bahlangane esangweni lomuzi nezintombi zonke zalapha ekhaya.

‘The new bride can only walk behind the huts at the back of the homestead until she meets her bridesmaids and other girls at the gate.’

This, in my view, is somewhat uncivil as any restriction of a decent, adult and mature human being, can only be considered discriminatory and oppressive. The sense of oppression is further confirmed by Msimang (1975: 296-297) who states that:

Yena kungumgomo belu ukuba atheze inyanda eyedlula zonke ezinye. Useyopheka namhla ekhathele, apheke namhla egula. Uma eke watetema kuyothiwa izinkomo zimuke namanzi ngoba umakoti akuvila inyoka.

‘It is policy that she has to come back home with the biggest bundle of firewood. She will also cook even if she is tired and sick. If she complains they will say that the cows ‘*amalobolo*’ have gone down the drain because the bride is lazy as a snake.’

40%: Rural females who do not think that Zulu culture is oppressive responded:

Fe 10: *No. Because it is tradition*

Fe 11: *No. Because as a bride you belong to a new family and you should abide by the rules and tradition of the family. It is not oppression.*

Fe 12: *No. What needs to be done or not to be done is meant at maintaining respect particularly towards the head of the family and culture is a beautiful thing.*

All the above respondents believe that tradition is a way of life. They think that rules and procedures are only aimed at maintaining respect, particularly to a man. They sound like African feminists who are at peace with their state of being African women. Their attitude is not helping to achieve transformation because while it is understandable for the African feminist to fight their struggle within an African context, it may not be a quick and effective way of realising the ideals of feminism.

Popular feminism, on the other hand, is rooted in the lived experiences and cultural beliefs of African women; however there are instances where it fails to mobilize against cultural practices that can be oppressive.

<http://www.ngopulse.org/article/african-feminism-driven-african-women>

15%: Rural men who think that Zulu culture is oppressive responded:

Ma 1: Yes. *Because women do not like to do the things that our culture requires.*

Ma 2: Yes. *To working women it is oppressive because they have to wear in an acceptable way even if they do not want to. They cannot wear pants or short dresses.*

Ma 3: Yes. *If my wife cannot do as she pleases. She is afraid of her mother-in law. She is afraid of what the church will say if she does not respect tradition.*

The third respondent thinks that Zulu culture makes wives live in fear in that “One becomes a woman under the cultural compulsion to become one” (Butler, 1999:12). Compulsion to follow the norm and the standard set by patriarchal men and matriarchal women including the church and mosque only reduces a wife to a nonentity. When women are even afraid of other women as the third respondent suggests that wives are even afraid of their mothers-in-law, it is an unfortunate thing. Butler (1999) continues to state that:

Cultural representations guard the boundary lines between genders and ensure that what is expected and what is permitted for people in each gender, is well known and practiced by all.

One can sense that these respondents would rather have women live happily as opposed to living in constant fear of cultural prescripts and boundaries. These are willing and transformable men. As a starting point the very negative teachings about a man having superiority over a wife can be turned into positive teaching that superiority over a wife should be used constructively and in a caring sense. Nkosi (2005) argues that “It is their duty to look after their women once they are married”. Superiority of not caring and taking responsibility and accountability for your wife is useless superiority.

85%: Rural men who do not think that Zulu culture is oppressive responded:

Ma 4: *I don't think so: How a woman is supposed to wear is meant to distinguish between a married woman and a girl. It is not discrimination. The bible even speaks about covering a married woman's hair.*

Ma 5: *I don't think so: Women understand that being unclean during menstruation is natural. Being asked not to do domestic chores is not oppression but a necessity.*

Ma 6: *I don't think so: Polygamy cannot be oppression because every woman needs help. It is tradition. It also prevents a man from having extra marital affairs. Anyway a man*

asks permission from his wife who in turn will bless it. If she does not want to it will not happen.

Contrary to their counterparts thinking that boundaries are a sign of oppression, these men think that boundaries and distinctions between people are there to fulfil a certain purpose. The first respondent believes that a married woman cannot dress like an unmarried woman. The Zulu dress code is socially defined by both the patriarchs and the matriarchs in the same way that most of their rights to anything are defined. Deborah Ewing (2008:2) has this to say about girls and women's rights:

Yet the rights of girls and women to choose whether and when to become sexually active and whether and when to have children, are routinely denied, particularly in patriarchal societies.

It cannot be denied that these oppressive norms and standards that the girls and women are subjected to are meant to inculcate discipline whereby girls will not fall pregnant easily, whereby married women will arguably look more respectable in "covering" long robes than body-exposing clothing, and the benefit of extra hands in a polygamous marriage. But due to the changing times it should be left in the hands of these women and girls to decide on their human right to dignity and freedom of choice as enshrined in the South African constitution:

The Bill of rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom (chapter 7.1). Everyone has an inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected (chapter 10). <http://www.westerncape.gov.za/eng/pubs/constitution>

45%: Urban men who think that Zulu culture is oppressive responded:

Ma 7: *Yes. Women were generally slaves in the family. The payment of lobolo exacerbated the problem. Men thought lobolo was for payment in exchange for getting a slave. Kneeling when bringing food for the husband is oppressive.*

Ma 8: *Yes. But other practices were meant to maintain respect among the sexes and also to ensure that a family has a director and manager. There should be an endeavour to negotiate things rather than what we see happening. Zulu men are generally dictators in their families.*

Ma 9: *Yes. For an example, when a husband has passed on, the wife has to wear black clothes even if the sun is extremely hot. If she does not wear as such, she will be the*

talk of the town.

When these urban men think that Zulu men are generally dictators one can only hope that they themselves no longer subject their wives to practices like making their wives kneel when bringing food. *Ilobolo* and enslaving of a woman should not be synonymous anymore. A woman cannot be regarded as a tool anymore. Nkosi (2005:144) states that “the main duty of a woman is giving birth and child rearing, thus sustaining her husband’s name and that of his kinship clan.”

The society is putting so much pressure on a woman. Such great demands on a woman can only be oppressive. Confirming that a woman is living under constant pressure due to oppressive expectations, Nkosi (2005) further states that “a good woman is one who gives respect to her husband and his family. She is not talkative and does not backchat to her husband”. In the name of culture, the society dictates that a widow should wear a black garb as an indication that she is mourning the death of her husband?

Within the Zulu culture for a husband a women will have to wear the clothes that symbolizes the death of her for four seasons and one season for anybody else.

http://wiki.ulwazi.org/index.php5?title=Ukuzila_Ngendlela_Yesintu

55%: Urban men who do not think that Zulu culture is oppressive responded:

Ma 10: *It was always known that brides are caregivers. They look after the whole family by performing all household chores including building houses. It is no oppression.*

Ma 11: *All things done by men over women are culturally acceptable. A man has a right to demand certain things from his wife.*

Ma 12: *If women could be given powers to decide on what they want or do not want to do there will be chaos. We will end up doing all the chores they were given by God to do. Adams punishment was to wake up in the morning to go to work for his wife while Eve had to remain at home taking care of her household chores. It is no oppression.*

Prejudice emanating from cultural stereotypes and gender bias can only lead to oppression where, according to the first respondent, even contributing to building houses is regarded as women’s responsibility. Mathonsi et al (2006) in Zondi (2008) confirm that:

These story-telling and poetry sessions take place while women are working on chores, such as tilling the soil, collecting firewood and repairing their homesteads.

Building a house is arguably a man's job where his physical power is a critical prerequisite. The religious and biblical perspective regarding gender roles also plays an important role whereby, according to the third respondent, Adam was allocated outdoor tasks as opposed to indoor tasks that were allocated to Eve. The respondents, who are predominantly Christians, believe and use the Bible as a reference for spiritual answers, and are adamant that the superiority over women is God planned and inspired and cannot be regarded as oppression. For these respondents the Bible was inspired by God and hence cannot be easily dispensed with. Bullough (1988: 86) quotes the bible in (Peter 3:1-7) to argue that:

Though there was recognition that women were equal in spirit to men, this was relegated to the background and the emphasis was to keep them in their place here on earth. Thus while women were recognised as "joint heirs of the grace of life," they were called the weaker vessel who were to remain in subjugation to their men folk.

5.2.2 Do you think that you should enjoy equal status with your wife?

20%: Rural males who think that they should enjoy equal status with their wives responded:

Ma 1: *Nowadays women have a lot of rights. These rights have automatically made them our equals. I personally do not think it is a bad idea.*

Ma 2: *Life has changed. In a case of polygamy the older wife is not treated fairly. It is therefore good to protect her with an equal status with her husband. Men are thieves who will dump their women easily, so it is better to give rights to women so that they do not remain helpless when the thief of a man neglects her.*

Ma 3: *Democracy was there even with the Zulu nation. Women were accorded what was due to them. Some cows would be allocated to wives so they can feel equally important and not just a man's child.*

These responses show that it will be easy to transform these men who already think that Zulu culture afforded women a significant position in the family. The second respondent feels that women need to be protected because they are ill-treated by their husbands, particularly in a polygamous marriage. He thinks that women need to own property to be able to sustain their lives when the husband neglects them and gives more attention to the latest 'acquisition' and usually a younger wife. Zondi (2008: 125) argues that co-wives can be very jealous of *intandokazi* (a woman who is most loved by the husband). On the other hand the life of

isaliwakazi (a woman who is most unloved) can be worse. It is, therefore, ideal that all women should own property for such rainy days as those of *isaliwakazi* are imminent. Mair (1969: 139) supports the view that women can have equitable rights and subsequently own property:

A woman owns any objects that she makes herself or acquires by the fruit of her own labour. Women's property includes sleeping mats, clothes, household utensils, and sometimes livestock.

80%: Rural males who do not think they should enjoy equal status with their wives responded:

Ma 4: *No. A man should always have his place at home to show that he is the man.*

Ma 5: *No. The man is the head of the family. The mother is the pillar. The Lord did not make them equal. There is one bull in the kraal*

Ma 6: *A man and a woman can never be equal. It is human nature. If we enjoy an equal status no one will listen to the other.*

These responses show that Zulu men think that it is only natural that a man is superior over a woman. To these men the idea of equality between a wife and husband is not practical as there cannot be two bulls in one kraal, as the second respondent asserts. John (2006: 40) argues that:

Zulu culture both traditional and modern is reinforced by respectful behaviour where age and gender play a crucial role. Women walk a respectful distance behind their husbands. A woman serves the meal she has cooked to her men folk first, often kneeling in respect and she will avert eyes from theirs during conversation, holding contact for a few moments only. This is a sign that she respects those she acknowledges as superior.

40%: Urban males who think they should enjoy equal status with their wives responded:

Ma 7: *Nowadays everyone works and therefore we might as well be equal. We share a lot of responsibilities as we speak.*

Ma 8: *Rights are just human rights or for the people. People are just equal in the eyes of the law and constitution but people confuse rights with household chores and tradition. Equal status does not mean that a man should wash dishes, cook, wash and change nappy.*

Ma 9: *Nowadays there is no need for sexes to discriminate one another in terms of rights*

Like their rural counterparts, these men chose to be practical and as such they go with the social changes. They believe that the old days are gone and it is time to 'get with the flow'. Mathonsi et al (2006), state that any nation's culture changes with the times.

60%: Urban males who do not think they should enjoy equal status with their wives responded:

Ma 10: *No. The man is the head of the family. The wife is the pillar of the home. God did not make them equal. There is one bull in the kraal.*

Ma 11: *No. A bride price was paid for her. She is the one who comes to marry me. That makes her number two.*

Ma 12: *No. If we are equal no one will respect the other. A man remains the head of the family.*

Concurring with their rural counterparts, these men refuse to change the status quo. On the contrary, they fight to maintain the stereotypes, bias and propaganda against women independence. Pharr (1988:117) argues that:

The enforcement of gender roles and designations is vital to the control of people, especially women, lesbians, gay men, transgendered, bisexual, questioning people, and ultimately, everyone.

Pharr (1988: 119) further states that:

Homophobia has worked very effectively to keep women and men frightened of stepping out of the gender roles and identities that imprison us. And these are the roles that underpin male power and control.

So, these men in fear of loss of control over women will deliberately enforce gender stereotypes and gender biases. Robbin (1992) confirms that:

These norms create stereotyped gender-role definition in which males are encouraged to exercise control and authority aggressively over females.

25%: Rural females who think they should enjoy equal status with their husbands responded:

Fe 1: *Just like money. It should be allocated equally and be used equally. As a woman I can say that the house is mine in the same way that my husband does. Same applies to the rest of the property and our children. We should enjoy an equal status.*

Fe 2: *There are a lot of things that women can do as much as men can. Even when the husband has passed on, a woman raises her children. The cattle and other property also belong to me.*

Fe 3: *Children are mine. My husband's cattle are mine. We should enjoy an equal status.*

Economic power is one of the missions that the radical feminists fight to achieve. The above respondents are an illustration of that struggle. They want to be equal owners of the house, the children, the cattle and the money. In a study published in the February 2012 issue of *Gender & Society*, Karen Christopher, a professor of Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology at the University of Louisville, found that the majority of interviewed 40 mothers reported feeling more fulfillment from paid work than from parenting. She wrote:

Most employed mothers justified their paid work by saying it made them more fulfilled people, in addition to better mothers. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/shenegotiates/2012/02/20/brainwashed-by-radical-feminists-working-mothers-claim-happiness/>

The second respondent argues that there are lots of things that women can do in the similar way as men. The main aim of the radical feminists is to fight patriarchy which breeds bad practices as the defining gender roles that confine women into the proverbial kitchen. Nkani (2005:14) states that:

From birth, males and females are translated into exclusive gender roles in which males and females are expected to perform their respective roles where masculine roles are given power and status over feminine roles and masculinity must always maintain its power or hegemony by forming boundaries.

This is the time of transformation whereby men should start counting on their spouses for more financial support. The situation in rural Black families is even more interesting where the very heads of families are not even working. The mother becomes the breadwinner. "In 'black' culture,

the father is still strongly regarded as the authority figure of the family even if he does not bring any income to the family” (Msimang, 2002:13).

75%: Rural females who do not think that they should enjoy equal status with their husbands responded:

Fe 4: *The new ways of living are not good. A woman can never be a man’s equal. There is no reason to fight for equality because the Lord knows why women are second to men.*

Fe 5: *My husband is unnumzane “the head of the family” so shall he be respected. Our culture does not allow a woman to say that property such as cars, houses and children are hers. They belong to a man. She can say they are hers when talking with her friends.*

Fe 6: *The man is the one who pays lobola. There is no equality in our culture. The husband is senior to his wife.*

It is very interesting to note that a high percentage of women think that they themselves cannot assume equal status with men. The acceptance of a clearly discriminating practice by these women can be attributed to the African feminists’ conviction that:

African feminism also rejects stereotypical homogeneity and acknowledges that woman's lives have been diverse and differentiated on the basis of range of factors such as culture and custom, class and citizenship status, socio-economic context, and historical period (Kuumba, 2003).

These feminists refuse to be boxed into the Western philosophy which has its own cultures, and customs. They accept their status quo as influenced by their own African conditions. These respondents see nothing wrong with their subservient role as long as it is acceptable by African standards. In other words, these women would rather subject themselves to a low level of submissiveness, whereby, according to Magwaza (2006:107):

When addressing them or in their presence, women adopt a particular attitude and behave in a particular manner (avoiding their eyes face down, be on their knees and never be in a seating and customs or standing position that is higher than the men). Therefore clothing, gestures, attitudes and behaviour are all restrictions honed to convey a belief that only men are important and have authority in the home.

These African feminists do not want to be accorded equal status with their men because culture dictates that a man is a superior being. For a woman, to try to be superior over a man could be deemed 'un-African'. The kind of a wife who fights for equal status may even receive some form of disapproval from the entire society. A woman who steps outside the rules of patriarchy and threatens its authority expects to be hated and feared by men and those women who find their source of power in men (Pharr, 1988:27).

55%: Urban females who think they should enjoy equal status with their husbands responded:

Fe 7: *Yes. Because we are both working. We should do the budget together. The house also belongs to me as we are in community of property.*

Fe 8: *Yes. As much as we are different physically I believe that we are also the same and we should be treated equally. The time and constitution allows it. We should be equal.*

Fe 9: *There are many things that we can do in the same way that men can do. I deserve to have some cows in my name.*

Like their rural counterparts, these women want to be given a chance to participate in the economic world. They think that their freedom is meaningless without the economic muscle to sustain it. Bryson (1992:46) argues that:

Women therefore must be given the same opportunities as men; only then will we know their true abilities, and only then will the society reap the full benefit from the talents of all its members.

45%: Urban females who do not think they should enjoy equal status with their husbands responded:

Fe 10: *The man is the head of the family. Men only have to protect their families and stop abusing their families and in that way earn respect.*

Fe 11: *The father of the family should always be superior to a wife otherwise there won't be any mutual respect at home.*

Fe 12: *Naturally, we do not have the same powers as men. There are things I cannot do as a woman.*

These are the moderate women who would subscribe to liberal feminist views as opposed to radical feminist views. They are content with the state of a superior man, and by saying that the powers between men and women are “naturally” different, the third respondent is suggesting that God deliberately made one inferior and the other superior hence the need not to fight socially constructed gender imbalances because they are derived from the indisputable biological and sex differences. Brooks (1883) in Moi (2005:17) argues:

The positions which woman already occupy in society and the duties which they perform are in the main what they should be if our view is correct; and any attempt to improve the condition of women by ignoring or obliterating the intellectual differences between them and men must result in disaster to the race.

But of course Brooks, above, was an anti-feminist whose views can easily be seen to be bigoted. His view though, in this study, is relevant as it provides evidence to the effect that men are intellectually regarded as more brilliant than women, hence leadership roles are still reserved for them whether in the home environment and elsewhere.

5.2.3 Do you support polygamy? Do you think polygamy emanates from certain beliefs about women?

100%: Rural men who support polygamy responded:

Ma 1: *Yes I do. My late brother who died a bachelor might force me into taking another wife on his behalf. Polygamy helps when one wife is menstruating, the other will do household chores.*

Ma 2: *Yes I do. When the one wife has given birth, she is not clean. Another wife will cook and be available for sexual activity.*

Ma 3: *Yes I do. I won't survive with one wife. One wife is troublesome. Many wives compete and there is less noise in the homestead. One wife may bear baby girls which would leave me without an heir.*

These responses, once again, give an indication of how much influence the social construct has on its people. Polygamy is a tradition held in high regard by those who practice and support it. John (2006: 44) states that in Zulu society, women are subordinate and polygamy is the norm. This tradition is so influential in the lives of Zulu men in that a dead brother would ask the living brother to take a wife on his behalf. This response smacks of gender bias as it creates an

impression that women are so insignificant that their dying unmarried is not as problematic as it is the case with men. A dead woman will not require her sister to marry someone on her behalf. According to the second respondent polygamy will rescue him from sexual appetite as the other wife who has just given birth should be avoided. Again, it gives the impression that marriage only benefits a man. Zondi (2007: 21) argues that the woman was brought in as a kind of borrowing 'to do the job' of producing the children for the man and his clan. By implication other wives are brought in as a kind of borrowing to do the job of satisfying their husband's great sexual urge when one of them has just given birth. The third respondent even perpetrates the idea that a woman is only good for what a man desires. Where a man desires an heir, monogamy is a potential threat to his dream because she might only bear female children, hence the need for polygamy to ensure that the heir will be secured. This is exactly Pharr's assertion (1988:58) that men are a norm and women are just the other humans who can easily be used. She argues that:

Those who seek their rights, who seek inclusion, who seek to control their own lives instead of having their lives controlled are the people who fall outside the norm. They are defined in relation to the norm and are found lacking. They are *the Other*. If they are not part of the norm, they are seen as abnormal, deviant, inferior, marginalized, not "right"

0%: Rural men who do not support polygamy

All the interviewed rural men support polygamy.

However, these men will promote polygamy based on the man's ability to manage and lead his homestead. They argue that a man must have a head [brains] for it. These are some of the ideals for a man who wants to practice polygamy:

The first wife will initiate the acquisition of further wives as they are a help around the house. She along with the grandmother exerts a powerful influence in the family. Each wife has her own hut located in order of standing from the husband's hut. She also has her own fields, herd and cooks only for her immediate family.

<http://www.zulu-culture.co.za/zulu-family.php>

Based on the above conditions the supporters of polygamy will argue that it is a beautiful practice to engage in.

50%: Urban men who do not support polygamy responded:

Ma 4: *I do not support it. It is just pure lust and selfishness of men. To show a man's prowess. Sometimes it is just in the name of tradition which only a few understand.*

Ma 5: *I do not support it. Nowadays it can empty your pockets. It is also based on greed and jealousy.*

Ma 6: *I do not support it. It was relevant then but not now. Nowadays it is economically challenging to maintain a polygamous marriage.*

These urban men, though they argue that polygamy is based on lust and selfish reasons, possibly referring to sexual needs, they too, like their rural counterparts believe that a man is a first citizen who wields more power than women. The first respondent talks about a man's prowess which he would occasionally show and flaunt, if the need arises. This is egotism and chauvinism at play. Prowess for a Zulu man will be achieved and flaunted in different forms. Having many wives, many children and a big hamlet called *inxulumu* elevates the status of an average man into that of a senior man, '*umnumzane*'. Mathonsi (2002: 51) quoting Mbiti (1975) observes that:

The more wives the man has, the more children he is likely to have, and the more the children, the stronger the power of immortality in that family.

Zulu men will then do everything to achieve that powerful status of being '*umnumzane osuthayo*', and polygamy is one of those opportunities to show off that status. Egotism leads to greed and jealousy as the second respondent suggests. The third respondent argues that polygamy is irrelevant in the modern world where it is even economically challenging to maintain it.

50%: Urban men who support polygamy responded:

Ma 7: *Yes I do. When I am cross with the other wife I can go to another to get some fresh air. I also support it in order to have a big family.*

Ma 8: *Yes I do. One wife can be troublesome. One wife is sometimes not courteous. More wives means a bigger family and we, Black men like bigger families.*

Ma 9: *Yes I do. When my wife is menstruating, I have to stay away from her until she is done. As Black people we shy away from a woman who has just given birth until she is cleansed. More wives mean then you can move to another during these times.*

These urban men share the same sentiments with their rural counterparts who support polygamy. The third respondent from the rural male who support polygamy believes that women are troublesome and should consequently be forced into polygamy so that they can compete. He believes that competing women will presumably toe the line as each one fights to be the man's favourite. The first respondent above says almost the same thing when he has to get fresh air from another wife when he is cross with her. This suggests that men should not often find themselves in the company of their wives because they are troublesome. Even the second respondent above says that women are sometimes not courteous. But men themselves are not courteous sometimes. They are troublesome too. Women should also go to other men to catch a breath of fresh air. Unfortunately, Zulu culture is so gendered that the society does not allow women to enjoy the same right to chose or in this case, the right to practice polygamy in the same way as men because as it is socially unacceptable for a woman to be a polygamist. This is the very reason for feminists to demand equal rights with men. We need to build a society where wrong is wrong whether done by men or women; a society where the same standards and norms will be applied to all regardless of the gender and sex of a person. This is a further perpetration of patriarchy and male hegemony which Bleier (1984: 162) defines as:

The historic system of male dominance; a system committed to the maintenance and reinforcement of male hegemony in all aspects of life-personal and private privilege and power as well as public privilege and power. Its institutions direct and protect the distribution of power and privilege to those who are male, apportioned however, according to social and economic class and race.

Polygamy is definitely a breeding ground for what Bleier, above, deems institutional direction, protection and distribution of power to those who are male.

10%: Rural women who support polygamy responded:

Fe 1: *Yes I do. If one wife dies, her children will get homage and comfort from another wife.*

If one wife is menstruating, the other will do domestic chores.

Fe 2: *Yes I do. If I do not get an heir for my husband the other wives will.*

Fe 3: *Yes I do. I like a big extended family. It does not look good to have a small family.*

When the first respondent thinks about her children and the fact that they will not be orphans once she passes on, it is a clear indication of how a woman will compromise her longings and

principles in favour of becoming a real woman, *umfazi*, as opposed to an average “inkosikazi”. Pharr (1988) quotes Phyllis Schiafly who has this to say about a real woman:

A “real woman,” defined in sexist terms, is submissive, puts ~.the needs of others before her own, is driven by emotions, is indirect, spiritual and innately moral, biologically determined and glad of it.

Instead of being negative about polygamy, Schiafly, above, sees a good benefit for her children who will be looked after. The second respondent is only preoccupied with bearing an heir for her man “putting the needs of others before her” and “biologically determined” to bear children as she is made to accept that that is all what she is good for in a marriage. If she cannot bear an heir or even worse becomes barren “inyumba” she will be treated as a piece of cloth only good for mopping the floors. Talking about women’s productive functions, Ortner (1974:77) quoted by Moore (1988: 14) states that:

While women’s creativity is naturally fulfilled through the process of giving birth, men are associated more directly with culture and with creative power of culture as opposed to nature. Women creates naturally from within her own being, whereas a man is free to or forced to create artificially, that is through cultural means and in such a manner as to sustain culture.

The third respondent, above, is only happy to have a big extended family and “is driven by emotions” not realising that the bigger the family the bigger the problems. These are the women who are the casualties of patriarchal dominance resulting in them being too submissive. Polygamy is more of an imposition than a negotiated settlement. Even where negotiations took place between the husband and the senior wife, as culturally prescribed, the motive was always to persuade and convince rather than to reach a consensus. Stuart (1903:9) argues that:

Marriage, under king Shaka-as in the ancient days of Sparta-became distinctly subordinate to the general interests of the state. There was, of course, no question as to whether it should take place on the polygamistic or monogamistic principle.

90%: Rural women who do not support polygamy responded:

Fe 4: *No. I don’t: Men are just greedy. If it is the issue of a woman who bears girls, it may happen even with the next wife.*

Fe 5: *No I don’t: Men just want to have big families. Men just want to enjoy different women*

in bed. It is no longer relevant financially and in terms of these pandemic diseases.
Fe 6: *No I don't: Men are not sexually satisfied. They need variety. I think men are just plain evil and selfish.*

The common view among the three respondents is that men are greedy, sexually unsatisfied, evil and selfish. The second respondent is even concerned with the scourge of pandemic diseases that result from polygamy. Zondi (2008: 120) dealt with women's silent suffering as a result of an oppressive African culture. She asserts that:

In the face of sickness resulting from HIV and AIDS, women could only speak indirectly through *ukushoza*, which are viewed as a "licence" for women, especially older women to voice their concerns within a culture that denies them such rights.

Zondi's study (2008) highlights the plight of women suffering in the hands of traditional men who refuse to use condoms. Their silence also emanates from a culture of dominance that is exerted by men who are shaped by the patriarchal society.

15%: Urban women who support polygamy responded:

Fe 7: *Some women are plain lazy. They need competition.*

Fe 8: *There are not enough men. Polygamy ensures that more women get partners.*

Fe 9: *Polygamy helps to prevent cheating by men. It is good to know who your husband is sleeping with rather than unknown girlfriends especially during these times of HIV and AIDS.*

The first respondent does not seem to support women's struggle although she is an urban woman. Perhaps it is because she knows that the chances of being in a polygamous marriage are very slim. But what is interesting with the second response is the considerate and accommodating sentiment that there are few men hence polygamy will be correcting such scarcity. In other words, all women will get a share. The third respondent brings into the fold the question of dealing with cheating men by suggesting that official cheating in polygamy is better than unofficial cheating with unknown girls. Many South Africans who support polygamy also use this reason to argue that polygamy is a deterrent for cheating and promiscuity. I do not subscribe to this view because some polygamists are occasionally caught cheating.

By allowing themselves to accept polygamy at the peril of losing individual attention from one man, these women may be showing signs of being submissive. Being submissive would make a woman readily accept polygamy. After all they are women, second citizens, the ones who came to marry. Ntshangase, a cultural expert at the University of Kwazulu Natal, responding to President Zuma's Sonono Khoza's extra marital affair stated that:

The married man may not need permission from wives to start the process of ukushela [courting, wooing, dating]. Once he does, and the wives are keen to know about it, then he may reveal it [the relationship]. But if then the man wants to marry the woman he is having an extra marital affair with, his wives must agree to it first.

<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/Don't-blame-zulu-experts-20100203>

This is condescending at its best as they are left with no choice but to subscribe to the culture by agreeing. Women conveniently used to promote men's interest in the name of culture. After all, the man is a norm and the woman is the other. Talking about stereotyping Pharr (1988:59) argues that:

This distortion and lack of knowledge of the Other expresses itself in *stereotyping*, that subtle and effective way of limiting lives. It is through stereotyping that people are denied their individual characteristics and behaviour and are dehumanized. The dehumanizing process is necessary to feed the oppressor's sense of being justified and to alleviate the feeling of guilt.

Polygamy is dehumanizing women who will only discover about their husbands' romantic dealings in the news if the husband is a public figure. These women who support this practice are called gold diggers because they are seen to be interested in the wealth of these usually wealthy polygamous men.

85%: Urban women who do not support polygamy responded:

Fe 10: *Because it is based on a belief that women are sexually different.*

Polygamy promotes women denigration. Polygamous men are hypocrites.

Fe 11: *Because men are not sexually satisfied. That itself impacts negatively on the image of a woman. A woman begins to think that she is worthless. She cannot even satisfy her j man. Can we ever say that there is one Eve for one Adam?*

Fe 12: *Nowadays a bigger family needs more money to sustain its activities.*

One of the reasons for urban women to abhor polygamy is the concept of ‘true love’ that is brought into question. Even women in a monogamous relationship always want to be certain that their men love them truly. Polygamy then makes the concept of ‘true love’ even more of a fantasy than an attainable value because the man is openly declaring that he is in love with more than one woman. Among other things, true love embraces, “It is at the first place trust, because without trust, every relationship is fated and can’t survive a long time. Your partner must be the man from who you can ask for advice and who you can say your secrets, because he will not say to no one else this things, he wouldn’t betray you” (<http://www.love-sessions.com/true-love.php>). It cannot therefore be easy for a wife to trust that her shared husband will not share her secrets with the rest of his wives. This lack of trust then breaks the marriage. In a traditional polygamous marriage it is when wives will start consulting witchdoctors as they begin to lose trust in their men and fellow wives. There is no guarantee that the husband will not betray each of his wives by disclosing secrets. Polygamy to women is an insult and just another way that proves that men are self-serving. The first and second respondents state that it is hypocrisy and impacts negatively on their image and self-worth. They refer to the biblical version of the evolution of men where God created Eve from Adam’s ribs and begin to question if the second and third wife’s ribs are also extracted from the same husband. To them polygamy is an abomination. I also support these women’s stance but arguably speaking, any man who wants to practice polygamy should do so if he can manage the whole polygamous homestead. It is not about managing the wives per se, but their children and distributing wealth and other accessories equally.

5.2.4 Do you think women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men?

0%: Rural men who think women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men responded:

There are no rural men who think so. Two males, however, alluded to the fact that a woman can only play this role on condition that:

Ma 1: *It can happen under extreme desperate circumstances like, if she is at the stage*

where she does not menstruate or bear children, she is cleansed and has a status equal to that of a man.

Ma 2: *When she is a granny, she already knows the history of the family. The ancestors are already with her. She does not undergo menstruation and not bearing children anymore.*

These male responses are based on male bigotry that gives rise to women denigration. It is a perpetration of Pharr's theory of the "norm" and the "other", the norm being men and the other being women. These men think the only ideal status is that of a man as opposed to that of a woman. Only when a woman reaches the stage where she does not menstruate and no longer bearing children is she regarded as spiritually clean to address the ancestors. These responses reveal that men only think that God only listens to men than women. The sins and sorts of abominations committed by men also make a man spiritually unclean to communicate with God. What gives men a right to decide who is perfect or imperfect to communicate with the Ancestral God? This gives an impression that the African culture is gender biased. Msimang (2002: 11) confirms the argument that:

In black culture it is only males who can conduct cultural rituals. This indicates that according to black culture females are always regarded as subordinates to men.

Supporting the view that an old woman can address the ancestors, Mair (1969: 18) concurs that, "By the time a wife was a grandmother she would be treated with great respect and would probably be the senior woman in the *umuzi*".

100%: Rural men who do not think women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men responded:

Ma 3: *No. A woman can ask the services of her husband's brother should the husband be absent for whatever reasons. She can even ask her oldest son to address the ancestors. A woman does not go anywhere near the ancestral corner.*

Ma 4: *No. Ancestors can only be addressed by a person of the same bloodline and the wife is not of the same bloodline.*

Ma 5: *No. The wife respects the ancestors because even when they were alive she had to shy away from them as a sign of respect.*

The commonality among all these responses is the continued discrimination of women based on the socially constructed understanding of her body anatomy. The second respondent is even

homophobic in that he even regards a wife as a foreigner whose blood is not of the family's blood line. Her body does not go anywhere near the ancestors who are supposed to be respected. These responses confirm that women are used by men to achieve their selfish interests. The family should not allow a foreign body to cook and wash for them. Ironically, the man sleeps in the same bed with a foreigner who is only good for sex and giving him an heir? "According to males, females are sex objects only to be used to satisfy their sexual needs. In the process females are forced to do what is asked of them by males", comments Nkani (2005: 58).

35%: Urban men who think women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men responded:

Ma 6: *Yes. Some families are left without a man. Communication with ancestors needs to go on.*

Ma 7: *Yes. When the woman is at the stage of being a granny she becomes the root.*

Ma 8: *Yes. Ancestors actually lend more ear to the women than men, the case in point is that of Dinuzulu who got into the kraal with her mother, later won the battle against his brother Zibhebhu kaMaphitha.*

What the third respondent says is very interesting. It provides evidence that a woman can address the ancestors. Winning the battle is proof that the ancestors did not have qualms about having a woman setting foot in their kraal. Had the ancestors not been happy about her coming into the kraal some bad luck or dark cloud might have hung over the regiment to the effect that they would lose the battle. But one might argue that the queen is not an average woman. She possesses some power because of the position she holds. The first respondent cautions that people need to be realistic about situations. She says that a woman can address the ancestors if the family is left without a man.

65%: Urban men who do not think women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men responded:

Ma 9: *She does not go anywhere near umsamu. If the situation is compelling, she has to kneel near the fireplace and talk from there.*

Ma 10: *Because she is a child. She is not fit to address ancestors. She is too light to address the ancestors as she sometimes menstruates.*

Ma 11: *The ancestors must be addressed by a person of the same bloodline.*

Being urbanised obviously does not change people's beliefs and philosophy. Even these urban men believe that a woman is a child who cannot go anywhere near the ancestral corner because it is sacred. "In many instances, the mother at home is regarded as the eldest child of the family, who should always consult with the father" (Msimang, 2002: 13). Considering that most of these urban families do not have a Zulu hut that has a proper ancestral corner, one wonders if a woman gets restricted to these 'corners' where they burn incense. It cannot be permissible to burn incense in the bedroom because it is not an ideal place for that. Burning it in the dining room or the lounge is also not permissible since both these places are not so private either. *Umsamo* must always be a private and secluded area where only the man, the head of the household, can go.

The *umsamo* is a sacred place inside a Zulu homestead where the family conducts ceremonies to communicate with the ancestors. These ceremonies would normally involve burning *impepho* (incense), offering food, or slaughtering animals
https://www.google.co.za/search?sourceid=navclient&ie=UTF8&rlz=1T4ADFA_enZA473ZA473&q=zulu+women+and+burning+of+incense

Should limitations and prohibitions continue to be imposed on women (when it is not even feasible to do so)? These urban homes do not have proper *umsamo*. Neither do they have "amalawu" which could be used for burning incense. Maybe men need to reconsider their position and begin to transform.

15%: Rural women who think women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men responded:

Fe 1: *Yes. If the child is too sick to a point of possible death she can. If she has a son she can tell him to do it on her behalf.*

Fe 2: *Yes. It depends on the various situations. She can ask her husband's brother or even her own son. If they are all unavailable she can do it herself especially if the situation is dire.*

Fe 3: *Yes. If she is old enough to have stopped menstruating, having sex and bearing children.*

Even these rural women are adamant that a woman can only address ancestors conditionally. It is the same conditions that are mentioned by their urban counterparts. What is interestingly new though is the third respondent's assertion that a woman must have stopped having sex at this

stage of her life. So, even if a woman has stopped menstruating and bearing children, as long as she is still having sex she cannot address the ancestors.

85%: Rural women who do not think that women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men responded:

Fe 4: *No. A young wife is still like a girl. She can still go to marry another man. She has no right to address the ancestors. She will have to wait until she is mature.*

Fe 5: *No. The ancestral corner needs to be respected. It is only a granny who can address the ancestors because she is at the level of an ancestor. She does not bear children anymore.*

Fe 6: *No. Because she still menstruates. She is still sexually active. She must ask her eldest son to burn incense and address the ancestors.*

These respondents affirm what their rural and urban counterparts say about the state of a woman who can address the ancestors. The position of an eldest son is elevated above his own mother who will ask the son to address the ancestors if no one else is available. This explains the reason for special treatment of the eldest son, ‘*inkosana*’, in the family. ”The eldest son must stay in the homestead, so he can take over from his parents” (<https://www.google.co.za/search?zulu+women+and+burning+of+incense>).

The continuous attempt by patriarchy to discriminate against women is aimed at protecting men’s interests. Men do not want to lose their hold on the leadership of the family and by extension the clan and the entire society and ultimately the whole nation. Hadebe (2010:6) argues that:

In the reactive or defensive response, men have attempted to turn back social changes in order to reassert their power... One way of maintaining their power is to resist change by holding fast to traditionally constructed values that subordinate other men and women.

45%: Urban women who think that women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men responded:

Fe 7: *Grannies burn incense if men are not available.*

Fe 8: *Nowadays we are equal. She has a right to address ancestors if her husband is not available.*

Fe 9: *If you live alone as a woman and you need to communicate with the ancestors.*

These women, too, affirm what their counterparts say about the grandmothers and their right to burn incense and address ancestors.

55%: Urban women who do not think women can play an interceding role to God in the same way as men responded:

Fe 10: *No. A bride is actually a foreigner in the family. She is a complete stranger who cannot address the ancestors she does not know.*

Fe 11: *Never. It makes more sense to ancestors if it is a man who addresses them.*

Fe 12: *It has always been a man's task since we were born. We respect that.*

Strangely 55% (percent) of these women think that they themselves should be treated as strangers and foreigners who are not in any way related to the deceased. Do these women not understand that their children inherit genes from both parents? The ancestors should actually love the woman who is an asset to the family. She is giving them children and in that way ensuring that their legacy of an extended family and a clan name is carried on. The same woman brews the traditional beer which will be consumed by the ancestors. Why would they not listen to her then? It is a pity that even the scriptures perpetrate the same prejudice. Aristotle, in Cudd et al (2005: 28), quotes the Bible:

St Thomas for his part pronounced a woman to be an “imperfect man” an “incidental” being. This is symbolised in Genesis where Eve is depicted as made from what Bossuet called a supernumerary bone” of Adam.

Perhaps the response by the first respondent is based on such prejudiced scripture. Who are we to question the Bible? Such a sense of a prejudiced scripture is confirmed by Hadebe (2010: 76):

In religious institutions men do not completely discard their traditional beliefs and practices. This is reinforced by religious beliefs and understandings of scripture and thus activist work with men needs to engage religious leaders. Religious leaders influence the interpretation of scripture significantly.

5.2.5 Do you avoid domestic tasks during menstruation? Do you support this practice? Would you support a campaign to abolish this practice?

85%: Rural females who avoid domestic tasks during menstruation and would not support the abolishment of the practice responded:

Fe 1: *According to our religion a menstruating woman is not allowed to even to go pick chillies because the chillies tree will wilt and die. I would not support its abolishment because there will be consequences.*

Fe 2: *A man loses his power and manhood. Even during the olden days during stick-fighting, he will be easily beaten if he does so much as eating food and have his washing done by a menstruating woman. I would not support its abolishment. We are told that if she walks through a herd of cattle, they will become weak.*

Fe 3: *Customary law does not allow it. A man does not even touch anything that has been touched by a menstruating woman. He cannot have sex with her. A man becomes weak. He begins to have misfortunes. I would not support its abolishment.*

Clearly, the above respondents think of themselves as unclean and having a negative effect on anything that they touch when they are menstruating. The first and the third respondents think that Zulu customs and Zulu religion, in particular, do not allow physical contact between a menstruating woman and her husband. This is in line with most cultures of the world. Olupona (1991:6) states that:

Menstruation taboos are common in several African societies. It should not be forgotten, however, that almost all cultures throughout the world have elaborate beliefs and practices about menstruation; and African practices no doubt are part of this larger tradition.

In African societies, it is observed that, when a girl reaches puberty and menstruates for the first time, this stage is acknowledged, praised, and ritualized (Olupona (1991:6). The second respondent differs in that she believes that physical contact with a husband is detrimental to his spiritual and physical power. This picture perpetrates the belief that a man is Godly and holier than a woman who should not contaminate him during sex and any form of physical contact. The high percentage of these rural women (85%) happens to be traditional, rural, Christian and Shembe followers. This would explain such a belief in avoiding certain household duties during menstruation. Barnes (2006) argues that:

Conservative/Traditionalist members of the Orthodox Church observe the ancient practice of abstaining from Holy Communion during menstruation. This is a fairly common practice throughout Greece and Russia and other historically Orthodox Christian countries.

The conservative stance that these rural women adopt, where their culture is concerned, could also be an indication that they value (perhaps romanticise it) their culture and would not question it. They still believe in ancestral spirits and ancestral God. Carter, (1996:11) writing on African feminism maintains that:

A power unites the daughters throughout the world-a power that is drawn from the spirits of the ancestors. Through the centuries, this power has fuelled Africa's daughters, creating in them the will to survive, and to thrive in the face of obstacles.

15%: Rural females who do not avoid domestic tasks during menstruation and will support its abolishment responded:

Fe 4: *Times have changed. Who will cook if I do not?*

Fe 5: *It is not like I will cook in an unhygienic way. There are sanitary pads mind you.*

Fe 6: *Because nothing wrong will happen. It is only a myth that my husband will be affected.*

Even those who claim that they do not, how will the husband know if at a particular time they are menstruating or not?

A small percentage (15%) of these respondents thinks that women need to be practical about menstruation. It seems though that their argument is mostly based on the issue of cooking which further perpetrates the stereotype that women should be confined to domestic “kitchen” tasks. It can be disputed that cooking and washing are physical chores that should not have a bearing on the spirituality of a human being. If there was a strong spiritual argument to suggest that a man would really lose power, become weak, or even suffer misfortunes, then menstruation can be viewed in a bad light. The third respondent even points out that it is not always easy for a man to know if the wife is menstruating. In other words, those men who do not maintain the practice in their homes should be suffering from all manner of misfortunes because after all a wife may not tell her husband and silently performs her household tasks during menstruation. All this is based on the belief that the menstrual blood is unclean. Replying to objections that it was unhygienic for women to go swimming during the period, Prof'e (1911:230), as quoted by Mangan (2001: 112), declares that those few drops of blood were no problem at all.

5%: Urban females who avoid domestic tasks during menstruation and would not support its abolishment responded:

Fe 7: *Because of a man's dignity that needs to be protected.*

Fe 8: *Because you are unclean and when you are unclean you cannot handle certain kinds of food.*

Fe 9: *Because menstruation has a negative effect on men. I do not really understand how, but as a woman I know that it is not right to cook during this period. I actually even do not like myself during this time.*

These women are adamant that menstruation affects a man. They too, just like their rural counterparts believe that a man is the first citizen and a woman is second to a man. It is also interesting to note that they, too, have no evidence to suggest that menstruation has a profound negative spiritual effect on men. The third respondent does not even really understand the essential need to avoid these tasks during menstruation but knows that she should not cook. Again, saying that she does not even like herself during this period suggests that menstruation is more about physical disapproval of the state of the body than the spiritual protection of a man. It may as well be that the forefathers were just manipulatively devising a way to repel unhygienic sex. It should, therefore, be easy to transform men on the bases that as long as women use sanitary pads, there is no reason to avoid all sorts of physical contacts except sex. That also implies that there is no reason to avoid cooking and washing if avoidance is based on hygienic reasons because as the first respondent, who does not support this practice, suggests, "times have changed". Mathonsi (2006: 44) supports the fact that "Images change with times: new identities emerge with the change in times. There is a need to build a better future for our generations".

95%: Urban females who do not avoid domestic tasks during menstruation and would support its abolishment responded:

Fe 10: *No I don't. The use of sanitary pads takes care of all what males are afraid of. I would support that this practice is abolished because it would frustrate not only my husband if I don't cook. I am the only woman of the house.*

Fe 11: *No I don't. It is not necessary. Anyway time has moved on. Even things that men are afraid of are no longer happening. No man goes to fighting anymore. It is not like my blood will spill into his food or clothing. It is actually discriminating. I would support its abolishment.*

Fe 12: *No I don't. The type of life we live nowadays does not allow it. I would not support its*

abolishment however because as a woman I understand the reason behind this practice.

These women agree with their rural counterparts. They too think that it is high time that people became realistic and abolish this practice because “time has moved on”. The second respondent even mentions the fact that men no longer do stick fighting. If stick fighting is always used as evidence to suggest that a man who comes into physical contact with a menstruating woman is tainted, then some other evidence should be produced by men in this present time as proof that a man can really suffer from certain misfortunes. Similarly, the reason to disallow menstruating women from ploughing the fields can no longer be used to illustrate that menstruation has a negative effect because urban women are professionals and do not even have these fields to plough in the first place. The third respondent also adopts a pragmatist approach by alluding to the fact that contemporary life does not provide conditions for discriminating against menstruating women. However, she says she would not support its abolishment because women understand the reason behind it. This woman has accepted that biological differences between sexes should not be disputed. By implication she says there are things that cannot be changed and women should just stop fighting such things as sexual differences. Her response supports the basic conviction of all forms of feminism that women are “oppressed because of their sex” (Beasley, 1995: 209). It is in this context that the radical feminists hate men and would fight for the extinction of the male fraternity if they had their way. Some lesbians, who are mostly radical feminists, even go to the extent of removing the fallopian tubes (a biological and sex organ) in order to stop menstruating and in that way will feel like the ultimate, perfect man who does not undergo menstruation. Naidu (2008:78) supports this view that a woman’s body is unfairly discriminated. Researching on the anthropology of the female body in the context of the AIDS discourse he finds that:

Culture acts to prescribe behaviour and comes to construct the body as a social and cultural phenomenon. The article works from a premise that “choices” such as wanting to be a virgin or not, being able to condomize or not, are made for, or done to the body, in this instance through “cultural” mechanisms.

It is also notable that urban women [95%] are more radical against this practice as they would like to see it abolished.

95%: Rural males who ensure that their wives avoid domestic tasks during menstruation and would not support the abolishment of the practice:

Ma 1: *Yes I do: A woman is not clean at this time. She does not even eat sour milk.*

She cannot even go to collect cow dung. I would not support its abolishment.

Ma 2: *Yes I do: A man can be easily attacked and have his head beaten during stick-fighting if he eats food that has been cooked by a menstruating woman. I would not support its abolishment . I do not want to be mocked by other men who will see that I am lighter.*

Ma 3: *Yes I do: A menstruating woman weakens her husband. She has to stay indoors because she is destructive. She cannot pass through a herd of cattle because they will be weakened. The ancestors run away from a man who sleeps with a menstruating woman.*

Like their rural female counterparts, these men think that a woman is unclean even to do the very domestic chores that the patriarchal men define as women's duties. Again, there is no evidence to suggest that the spirituality of a man is ever affected. This is all based on socially constructed assumptions. Moore (1988: 16) argues that:

Behavioural taboos and restrictions, like those which many women experience after child birth and menstruation; provide clues as to how people categorize one another and thus structure their social worlds. Discrimination based on menstruation is unfortunately another way to depict women as cursed human beings.

Again, these men are not aware that this is about the physical or bodily disapproval of menstruation than the spiritual destruction of a man. They should accept that the use of sanitary pads is solely meant to keep this essential biological process as sanitized and hygienic as possible.

5%: Rural males who do not ensure that their wives avoid domestic tasks during menstruation and would support campaign to abolish this practice:

The only rural male who does not practice this responded:

I do not want to discriminate my wife. It is absolutely barbaric to do that to a wife. A woman is not an animal. There is a need to leave certain women staff to them. Menstruation is their private affair.

This is a transformed man who does not want to be discriminatory. This man, young and educated, thinks that it is barbaric to treat a woman in this disgraceful manner. This is a man who knows that a woman is as perfect as a man is, unlike most patriarchies who think that a woman is contaminated. Cudd et al (2005: 49) argue that:

Nearly all patriarchies enforce taboos against women touching ritual objects (those of war or religion) or food. Some of the inspiration of such customs appears to lie in fears of contamination.

Zulu religion, being predominantly ancestral and patriarchal, perpetrates the biblical perception that a woman is a product of a man's creation. She then becomes the "other". Aristotle, the philosopher, quoted by Cudd (2005: 28) disgustingly asserts that:

The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities. We should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness.

75%: Urban males who do not ensure that their wives avoid domestic tasks during menstruation and would support the abolishment of this practice responded:

Ma 4: *I would. We live in a democratic state where women have rights to their privacy. It is discriminating women.*

Ma 5: *I would. Because we are Christians now. There are things that do not matter anymore. This is one of them. Menstruating should not make a woman differ from other human beings.*

Ma 6: *I would. It should be her secret. It should not bother other members of the family. What one does not know should not bother him.*

The urban men share the same sentiments with their rural counterparts. They argue that women's rights and the fact that people are Christians should be strong reasons for abolishing this practice.

25%: Urban males who ensure that their wives avoid domestic tasks during menstruation and would not support a campaign to abolish this practice:

Ma 7: *I would not. Our fore-fathers knew what they were doing.*

Ma 8: *I would not. It is tradition.*

Ma 9: *I would not. It is essential to protect the power of a man.*

The third respondent believes that a man is superior to a woman and subsequently a man's power should be protected against this polluting female person. His obsession with male power shows that men regard themselves as the custodians of rightness and righteousness and basically the paragons of virtue. Even the first response suggests that the male persons, "the fore-fathers", had all the answers and right to give direction on the matters pertaining to life as opposed to the fore-mothers who are not even worth mentioning. This is the norm, "the man" versus the other, "the woman". Pharr (1988: 37) has this to say about female power versus male power:

A real woman, defined in sexist terms, is submissive, not fully capable, dependent, physically weak, and wisely subordinate to the greater power and wisdom of men.

This is men's bigotry and chauvinism at its best. When even urban, educated men, think that a woman is physically weak and therefore should not be in the presence of the fully capable, physically strong and wise men during menstruation as this will make men powerless. It is interesting to know that only 25% urban men maintain this practice. The very 75% of them could be counted in as potential change agents who will advocate the promotion of feminist principles.

**5.2.6 Do you ensure that your wife avoids certain designated areas of the homestead?
Which areas are those? Do you support the existence of such areas? Motivate.**

100%: Rural females who avoid designated areas of the homestead responded:

Fe 1: *Yes I do. The kraal, my father-in-law's bedroom, isinini sabesilisa. If I have to set foot on isinini sobaba a coin should be thrown so that I can go there. A woman can get into the kraal after exchanging gifts[umabo] during the wedding day.*

Fe 2: *Yes I do. Isinini of the big house. The kraal. I do not walk on the left side of the premises as I enter the home. For a woman to be able to get into the father-in-law's bedroom she needs to be reported to the ancestors through slaughtering of a chicken or goat.*

Fe 3: *Yes I do. If a woman should enter these ancestral places, she would fall down or start menstruating instantly or fall sick.*

The above responses show that rural women have a common understanding that Zulu tradition is very appropriate. They believe that restriction to these areas is nothing to complain about because it is a tradition. They are adamant that there are implications if one defied the tradition.

Responding on the sub-question on whether they personally support this practice, other rural females responded:

Fe 4: Yes, because it is tradition. A wife could even just fall down and get hurt if she were to set foot on these places.

Fe 5: Yes. It is a way to show respect to the parents-in law particularly the father-in-law.

Fe 6: Yes. The bride could get sick.

The first and third respondents argue that a woman who sets foot on these ancestral places will suffer some form of sickness like fainting or beginning to menstruate. These women seem to share the sentiments of African feminists who want African women to be portrayed as strong, assertive and deserve to have their own identity away from the Western identity. African feminists look at women's rights within the context of African tradition and culture. These Zulu women apparently do not have a problem with being restricted to certain places of the homestead because they subscribe to Zulu religion and culture.

A distinctively African feminism will portray women as strong, innovative agents and decision-makers in their specific contexts. It should empower African women and work for them in ways that they want it to.

<http://www.ngopulse.org/article/african-feminism-driven-african-women>

These women's responses show that their stance is more aligned to liberal feminism, which is an individualistic form and theory which focuses on women's ability to show and maintain their equality through their actions and choices. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/feminist>). The radical feminist stance would not support these rural women's stance as it perpetrates women oppression and gender bias. According the radical feminist view these women should be questioning and fighting against culture and tradition which makes them inferior partners to their husbands.

20%: Rural females who do not support the avoidance of designated areas of the homestead responded:

Fe 7: No. *If my mother-in-law is sick in the bedroom I would not be able to help her.*

Fe 8: No. *It does not matter if I am not allowed in the incense house because even if I am there I am not allowed to say anything anyway.*

Fe 9: No. *It does not make sense. What if there is no male child to go into the kraal to*

milk the cows. Should we die of hunger?

However small the percentage (4%) of these women is, the above responses show that these women are practical about life. The first and third respondent think it is absurd not to help a sick person in the same way that there is absurdity in having to die of hunger because only a male figure can get into the kraal to milk the cows. A second respondent is so demoralised that she has lost hope with Zulu culture which does not afford her the opportunity to have a say in the affairs of the household. To her, it would not matter if she is allowed to be present in the ancestral hut if she is not going to be allowed to speak. This is endorsed by Mathonsi and Gumede (2006:484) who maintain that:

Culturally a Zulu woman is not expected to directly and publicly voice her concerns and experiences, especially those that relate to the in-laws (inclusive of the extended clan.)

The above respondents are a few women who would subscribe to radical feminism as they are angry at the restrictions unleashed by the patriarchal men.

40%: Urban females who support the avoidance of designated areas of the homestead responded:

Fe 10: *I support it because it is part of our culture. Our culture should not diminish.*

Generations should see and practice our culture. Our grandchildren should know where we come from, who we are. We should be proud of our culture.

Fe 11: *A bride should show respect at home and should not do as she pleases.*

Fe 12: *I support it because it is tradition.*

The above responses show that the respondents are sentimental about their culture, hence the preoccupation with maintenance of the status quo. They think that every nation should identify with its culture (essentialist approach) and pass it on to the generations to come. It is good to see that there are fewer urban (40%) women who support this practice because it means that more women realise that they need to be freed from the chains of patriarchy that comes with tradition. The conservative women do not realise that tradition can be a stumbling block in certain situations. As recent as July 2010, a mother of six children, five days after she had been presented with a fully furnished house by President Zuma, could not move into her new house in Kanana park, South of Johannesburg, because she had not yet given ritual thanks to her

ancestors, (The Times, 9 July 2010: 5). This is the irony of any tradition. This woman cannot enjoy her gift because of fear of the misfortunes that could be visited upon her by the very ancestors that she believes blessed her with the house. It is situations like this one which depict African culture as very oppressive, particularly to women.

60%: Urban females who do not support the avoidance of designated areas of the homestead responded:

Fe 13: *I do not support it in any way possible because a wife is also a human being who also wants to be taken care of and respected as a living being.*

Fe 14: *I do not support it on the grounds that when the elders are sick I cannot enter their bedroom to clean and even take care of them.*

Fe 15: *I do not support it because as a bride I need to do household chores. It would be ridiculous when I cannot enter all the places I need to.*

These women share the same sentiments with the rural counterparts who do not support this practice. They, too, think that it is absurd not to gain access to a room to help a sick person. The first respondent, however, brings in a new angle to this question. She argues that women want to be respected and taken care of in the same way as men want to. This is one of the radical feminists' conviction which is supported by Cole (1992: 3) that radical feminists frequently seek to interpret the moral significance of women's cultural experience as caregivers. These women also want to be taken care of by their men and in the process fight gender roles that are a breeding ground for sexism and inequalities.

100%: Rural males who ensure that their wives avoid designated areas of the homestead responded:

Ma 1: *Yes I do. The kraal, ancestral corner, isinini sabesilisa, and the graveside. The kraal is a place of the ancestors and my wife respects them. My wife sometimes menstruates and cannot be in the kraal and the ancestral corner.*

Ma 2: *Yes I do. The hut where we burn incense, the kraal and ancestral corner. The kraal is a pillar of the home where the ancestral spirits stay. My wife cannot go there.*

Ma 3: *Yes I do. My father's room. My wife respects my father. It is tradition. She only*

got in the kraal on the wedding day when bile was sprinkled on her to introduce her to the ancestors.

The above responses show that rural males believe that a woman is spiritually inadequate to be able to set her foot in places that are traditionally regarded as holy. The first respondent goes as far as specifically mentioning menstruation as the cause of this inadequacy. John (2006: 25) asserts that:

Women are keepers of the house and women who are not a “child of the *umuzi*” and those who are menstruating are strictly forbidden entry into the *isibaya*, because they are deemed “unclean”

Common among the first and the second respondents is the argument that a wife must respect the husband’s father. By implication, this means that she also has to respect her own husband as she also calls him father. It also implies that once the husband’s father passes on and transforms into an ancestor, there is no doubt that she will continue respecting him by not setting foot in places where the father is said to be spiritually lying. Mair (1969: 17) argues that:

The status of a wife was such that she was required to observe strictly formal behaviour towards her husband’s relations; the rules of avoidance, characteristic of all the Nguni group, of certain parts of the *umuzi* actually greatly increased the distance she might have to walk when carrying heavy loads.

This is further supported by some scholars who argue that:

A bride doesn’t speak to the father-in-law until a certain period. She doesn’t call her in-laws (sisters, brothers etc) by their names, and she must use an alternative name even for her husband this is easier when they already have children because she can address him by their child’s name. She is not allowed to eat in front of the father-in-law.

(<http://wiki.ulwazi.org/differentstagesofrespectinZuluculture>)

These responses also indicate that to rural men the ancestral spirits are almost physically touchable. A menstruating woman cannot enter the kraal because the ancestors who stay there will be really offended as it would happen if she entered the in-laws’ bedroom or overstepped onto *isinini sabesilisa*. When the third respondent also argues that wives cannot visit these places because it is tradition, it means that Zulu tradition continues to be patriarchal. Rudwick and

Shange (2006: 473) concur when they state that “one has to acknowledge that Zulu society continues to be highly patriarchal”. Male dominance begins with the husband himself, then the father of the husband and eventually the dominance by male ancestral spirits. Msimang (1975:21) states that:

Men are stone-hearted, even after they have been called in a prayer, there is still a reservation that the prayer may not have reached them, then the women will be called once all men’s names have been exhausted.

If this is what rural men think of their wives as the “other persons” who are only important when it suits men, then the radical feminists are not to blame for believing that their lives should not be dependent on men. Radicals advocate a revolutionary model of social change. They think that men, as a group, are the main enemy (Beasley 1999: 55).

75%: Urban men who support the avoidance of designated areas of a homestead responded:

Ma 4: *Because it is a tradition for the Black people.*

Ma 5: *So that our culture is practiced and respected.*

Ma 6: *To promote our Zulu culture, we need to do certain things and guard against its extinction.*

The above responses are also shared by rural male counterparts who support the avoidance of certain designated areas in a homestead. Common among their responses is the need for preserving tradition at all costs. The third respondent even warns that Zulu culture cannot go into extinction. This is further upholding the status quo. If this is how even urban men think, the road we still have to travel in order to realise feminist ideals is a long and dusty one, particularly because 75% of urban men support it in the same way that 95% of rural men do. When even urban men, who are presumably relatively educated and modernised, still think like this, it means the Zulu families will continue to be patriarchal. Govender (2007: 97) researching on the rituals and worship among Hindus and Zulus in South Africa, quotes Berglund (1976) who argues that:

However, despite the cultural diffusion of Western thought and religion among the Zulu people, traditional thinking is not only still very much present in Zulu society, but is receiving more and more attention especially by those who live in rural areas.

25%: Urban men who do not support the avoidance of designated areas responded:

Ma 7: *I do not support it. Why was my wife sprinkled with bile during the wedding ceremony if she is not going to enter certain places?*

Ma 8: *There are other traditions that should be kept but I do not think that a woman should be treated like a child. Times have changed.*

Ma 9: *The conditions we live in do not allow for a wife to respect certain places of the household. I personally think that a woman should be as free as we are.*

The above responses show that these few (5%) urban men see the need to adapt rather than resist change. The first respondent practices the tradition but does not support it because it leads to restriction of his wife. The second and third respondents, as much as they believe in tradition, also believe that culture is dynamic, thus the movement of women in the household should not be restricted anymore. These are transformed men whom the radical feminists could count on and use to support their course. Eisenstein (1983: xiv), warning radical feminists against maintaining separatism against men, argues that erecting a doctrine of female superiority to men by virtue of some essential quality of biology or spirit, is a dangerous step backwards.

CHAPTER 6

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Concluding remarks

The respondents' views on whether Zulu culture is oppressive coincidentally touched on all the questions that underpin this study, that is, the question of menstruation, restricted areas, polygamy, equal status and ancestral intercession to God. The quantitative (statistical) and qualitative findings point to the fact that men and women generally think that Zulu culture is oppressive. It is time that Zulu men start questioning whether putting so many restrictions on women is still worthwhile. Clinging to the past and guarding culture so jealously makes it static rather than dynamic. Tyrell in Ngaloshe (2000:71), quoted by Nkosi (2005:146) argues "that culture is dynamic". He further argues that:

The heritage of Black people of Southern Africa, almost unaltered in the rural areas, it is, however, undergoing rapid change in cities in reaction to contact with Western cultures and is fast disappearing.

To prevent the Zulu culture from falling into oblivion, Zulu men, in particular, would better start embracing change, that is, begin to accommodate women. If that were to happen it would be easy for women to adopt a less radical stance as they take their struggle and mission forward. Similarly, if women think that bulldozing their way into the male domain was the best option, they will not achieve anything worthwhile. Daymond (1996: 98) argues that:

For many black and working-class women, "freedom" to enter the male domain is frequently oppressive, and can entrench rather than challenge patriarchy. To inhabit the masculine arena is not necessarily an index of liberation.

On the question of equal status between wives and husbands, statistically, the small number for both men [30%] and women [40%] who think sexes should be equal gives the impression that there is a general resistance to gender transformation. However, despite the number being small, the reasons they put forward for wanting to be equal to men, carry much weight. They argue that nowadays women also go to work in order to earn a living. Idike (1991:15) in Mahmood (1991) contends that:

Working women, in addition take care of their husbands, children and aged and disabled members of the family. It appears to be clear that women have more tasks than men. They work without rest from sunrise to sunset.

The high number of men [70%] and women [60%] who do not think sexes should be equal points to the continued social stereotyping of gender roles for the benefit of a patriarchal, controlling man.

Polygamy, no matter how one looks at it, is arguably outdated and is just another act of women denigration and total disregard for the concept of true love. While Mathonsi's assertion (2006: 44) that it is important that society does not leave its traditions behind, because they are a source of inspiration, it is arguably true that polygamy is one of those traditions that the society can do without. Love relationship means a pair of equal partners where asymmetries seesaw, and not where they are the order of the day.

In a loving relationship no part is subordinate because of their gender, no part is the neck or the head or none of that crap. Both parts are themselves, feminine, masculine, extrovert, introvert, tidy, messy, caring, selfish – whatever they might be, but always equal.
<http://www.msafropolitan.com/2010/11/african-feminist.html-09/12/2011>

As regards the act of interceding, the number of both men [17%] and women [30%] who think that a woman can play an interceding role to the ancestral God is small. The impression we get from this is that there is a general resistance to gender transformation on this matter. However less the number, the reasons for wanting to burn incense that women put forward carry much weight. Popular among the reasons is the argument that most men are not there to burn incense to address the ancestors. If men abandon their responsibilities, why do they blame women for breaking the taboos and boundaries in order to achieve a peaceful stay in the homestead? To this end, Shayo (1991: 14) in Mahmood (1991) recommends that:

There is an urgent need for a cultural revolution in traditions/norms/values, abolishing those which discriminate against women and promoting those which are positive.

What could be negative about women burning incense and addressing ancestors if it were for the good of sick children whose fathers are conspicuously absent in the homestead?

Through the secondary sources, this study shows that it is a general practice across many cultures that menstruating women are isolated in one way or another. On the question of menstruation and its related restrictions, the study has shown that Zulu men need to be educated about the woman body anatomy. The issue of menstruation comes out as one of the reasons that influence men to control, restrict women. The findings have revealed that even women themselves [70%] do not think that a woman can address the ancestors, citing menstruation as the main reason. Menstruation also comes up as a reason for practising polygamy. It features substantially as an influencing factor, particularly with Shembe worshippers. Shembe men do not want to eat food that has been prepared by a menstruating woman, hence the need to have a “spare” cook and a “spare” sex partner.

Menstrual restrictive practices have a substantial bearing on the “othering” of women and the objectification of their bodies. Unfortunately, all these othering tactics have forced her to become a virtual stranger to her own body (Schutte, 2012: 8-<http://www.sacsis.org.za/site/article/1389>). Even women themselves believe that it is necessary to avoid domestic tasks during menstruation. The state of the present knowledge suggests that women continue to be obsessed with the beautification of their bodies as their bodies are stereotypically subjected to men’s social conception of how a woman’s body should benefit men.

As women we receive the same message from our mothers, our peers, our employers and the media-a social mantra that consistently tells us that we are worthwhile only if heterosexual males find us beautiful or want to have sex with us.
(Schutte, 2012:8 - <http://www.sacsis.org.za/site/article/1389>)

And so, women stop being beautiful and lovable when they are menstruating. This obviously shows that there is something wrong with the Zulu world view.

On the question of restriction to designated areas, the practice in the Zulu culture that a wife should not go to designated ancestral places like *umsamo* “ancestral corner” and the kraal, is based on certain beliefs about women. Such beliefs give rise to socially constructed views about women. Common among the reasons for ensuring that a wife keeps away from the designated areas is menstruation. The Zulu stereotypes, attitudes and beliefs that manifest themselves in the interviewees’ responses, which ironically include 60% of women who support this practice, give

rise to gendered practices in the Zulu family. Zulu men think women cannot freely get into the fields, the very same fields which were ploughed by women, while possibly menstruating at that particular time. All these prohibitions in the name of respecting and protecting the ancestral God against a weak, delicate, and unclean woman can only be regarded as sexist and gender biased.

Given this situation I doubt that there is a need to track down if organisations that are fighting for gender equality are making any progress. There is enough evidence in support of my hypothesis that if there was any paradigm shift in terms of realising the goals and objectives of feminism, it will be minimal. The study almost balanced quantitative research with qualitative research. Probably, where it fell short, it would have been in accessing government documentation, approaching the commission for gender equality, POWA and the general populace which would be much bigger than my sample of eighty people.

6.2 Recommendations

There is a need to educate the church to play an active role in addressing issues of gender inequality by way of discouraging sexism and gender stereotypes even though the bible perpetrates such gender stereotypes. Pastors and ministers should endeavour to contextualise their sermons and scriptures within a new dispensation of promoting gender equality.

There is also a need to promote women traditional leadership in the same way that there is promotion of women political leadership. Rural women are the most affected by patriarchy. South Africa is probably one of the countries which boasts a high percentage of women representation in political structures, namely, provincial premiers, municipal counsellors, school principals, superintendents, commissioners etc. It is high time that we promote female priests, pastors, reverends and chiefs if we aspire to change the status quo.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

GLOSSARY OF ZULU TERMS AND CONCEPTS

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>amabibi</i> | : the fourth set of wives after <i>iqadi</i> in a polygamous marriage |
| <i>amadlozi</i> | : ancestors |
| <i>amalawu</i> | : rooms; particularly Zulu huts |
| <i>ilobolo</i> | : bride price |
| <i>impepho</i> | : incense |
| <i>inkosana</i> | : the eldest boy |
| <i>inkosikazi</i> | : wife |
| <i>isaliwakazi</i> | : the most unloved wife |
| <i>intandokazi</i> | : the most loved wife |
| <i>inxuluma</i> | : referring to a big homestead, usually with many huts/rondavels |
| <i>inyumba</i> | : barren woman |
| <i>iqadi</i> | : the third wife, located on the right of the homestead. She comes after <i>ikhohlwa</i> - a second wife located on the left. |
| <i>isibaya</i> | : the kraal |
| <i>isinini sabesilisa</i> | : the right side of a hut where only men sit as opposed to <i>isinini sabesifazane</i> the left side where women sit. |
| <i>izigiyo</i> | : specified personified solo dance songs |
| <i>ubuntu</i> | : humanity |
| <i>ugogo</i> | : the green locust that is assumed to be a female ancestor. If somebody sees it at home especially after a traditional ceremony it means the ancestors have heard the message that was sent through the ceremony. |
| <i>ukushoza</i> | : a specific solo dance poetry |
| <i>uyagana</i> | : a woman is regarded as marrying a man as opposed to <i>uyaganwa</i> . |
| <i>uyaganwa</i> | : a man is being married by a woman as opposed to <i>uyagana</i> . |
| <i>uyashada</i> | : synonym of <i>uyagana</i> [check <i>uyagana</i> above] |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>uyashadelwa</i> | : synonym of <i>uyaganwa</i> [check <i>uyaganwa</i> above] |
| <i>umakotshana</i> | : one of the a brides maids who will remain with the bride at the end of the wedding ceremony. She performs duties on behalf of the new bride. |
| <i>umfazi</i> | : a wife; this noun is used to refer to a very active wife as opposed to an average wife, <i>unkosikazi</i> . |
| <i>umnumzane</i> | : the man who is the head of the household as opposed to an average man indoda, |
| <i>umnumzane osuthayo</i> | : a very rich man especially one who owns a lot of cows and a polygamist. |
| <i>umthimba</i> | : the bride's group as opposed to <i>ikhetho</i> -the groom's group during a wedding ceremony |
| <i>umsamo</i> | : the ancestral corner |
| <i>umuzi</i> | : the homestead |
| <i>uMvelinqangi</i> | : God |

APPENDIX TWO

THE RESPONDENTS

| | Name | Age | Sex | Type of marriage | Place | Religion |
|-----|--------------------------|-----|-----|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. | Malusi Zwane Zwane | 41 | M | Western[in community]] | New west | UCC |
| | Mantombi | 38 | F | Ditto | ditto | ditto |
| 2. | Makhathini SM | 45 | M | Western[in] | New west | Roma Catholic |
| | Makhathini N | 38 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 3. | Xola M | 48 | M | Western[in] | New West | Christian |
| | Xola GN | 44 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 4. | Jali ZM | 50 | M | Western[in] | New Germany | Christian |
| | Jali NP | 43 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 5. | Sangweni AJ | 53 | M | Christian[in] | New West | Roman Catholic |
| | Sangweni MB | 45 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 6. | Gumede Ndul | 44 | M | Western[in] | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Gumede TY | 31 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 7. | Ngcobo B | 65 | M | Traditional[polygamy] | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Ngcobo Khethekile | 61 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 8. | Luthuli Muntukazane | 62 | M | Traditional[polygamy] | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Luthuli Thandekile | 55 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 9. | Maphumulo | 57 | M | Western[in] | Mzinyathi | UCC |
| | Maphumulo Ziphi | 54 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 10. | Jali HS | 43 | M | Western[in] | New west | UCC |
| | JaliNP | 35 | F | Ditto | ditto | ditto |
| 11. | Lubhede SH | 45 | M | Western[in] | New west | Roman Catholic |
| | Lubhede TG | 40 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|----------------------|----|---|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 12. | Ngubo Victor | 55 | M | Western[in] | New west | Reformed |
| | Ngubo Fikile | 47 | F | Ditto | ditto | ditto |
| 13. | Sangweni MB | 41 | M | Western[in] | New west | Christian |
| | Sangweni SB | 40 | F | Ditto | ditto | ditto |
| 14. | Yeni Dumsani | 52 | M | Western[in] | Newlands West | Weseli |
| | Yeni Sbongile | 48 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 15. | Khumalo Gugu | 44 | M | Western[in] | New German | Christian |
| | His wife [anonymous] | 43 | F | Ditto | ditto | ditto |
| 16. | Ngcobo LM | 46 | M | Western[in] | Newlands West | Roman Catholic |
| | Ngcobo Zanele | 41 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 17. | Bhengu Skhumbuzo | 42 | M | Western[in] | Newlands West | Christianity |
| | Bhengu Sthabile | 35 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 18. | Cele Khulekani | 38 | M | Western[in] | Newlands west | Baptist |
| | Cele Siziwe | 28 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 19. | Mazibuko B | 44 | F | Weseli | New Germany | Weseli |
| | Mazibuko A | 53 | M | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 20. | Anonymous | 51 | M | Western[in] | New Germany | ECC |
| | Anonymous | 42 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 21. | Mwelase V. | 35 | M | Traditional[polygamy] | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Mwelase N. | 22 | F | Ditto | ditto | ditto |
| 22. | Mbhele Fana | 59 | M | Traditional | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Mbhele Zitusile | 56 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 23. | Mtshali Thami | 40 | M | Traditional[polygamy] | Mzinyathi | Christian |
| | Mtshali J | 38 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 24. | Dlamini M | 52 | M | Traditional | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Dlamini Mary | 49 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 25. | Phewa M | 38 | M | Traditional | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Phewa | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|----|---|-------------|------------|--------------------|
| | Thembsile | 31 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 26. | Qwabe T | 45 | F | Western[in] | New German | Christian |
| | Qwabe B | 42 | M | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 27. | Ngcobo Sbongiseni | 55 | M | Western[in] | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Ngcobo Busisiwe | 54 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 28. | Gabela B | 58 | M | Traditional | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Gabela Ntombizethu | 56 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 29. | Nzama Ntombezi | 40 | F | Western | Mzinyathi | Assemble of God |
| | Nzama Siyabonga | 44 | M | Ditto | ditto | ditto |
| 30. | Khumalo Thoko | 43 | F | Western | Mzinyathi | Zion |
| | Khumalo Dumsani | 46 | M | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 31. | Khumalo Thembi | 30 | F | Western | Mzinyathi | Zion |
| | Khumalo Senzo | 39 | M | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 32. | Ngcamu Funaziphi | 55 | F | Traditional | Mzinyathi | Zion |
| | Ngcamu Sipho | 62 | M | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 33. | Mazibuko Elijah | 56 | M | Traditional | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Mazibuko Reginah | 54 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 34. | Ngidi Michael | 45 | M | Traditional | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Ngidi Nosipho | 40 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 35. | Gwensa Mjabulelwa | 40 | M | Western | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Gwensa Hlobsile | 29 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 36. | Khumalo Mzwandile | 61 | M | Traditional | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Khumalo Zethu | 50 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 37. | Khumalo Mzwakhe | 59 | M | Traditional | Mzinyathi | NBC |
| | Khumalo Zuziwe | 49 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----|---|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 38. | Mswane Sbusiso Mswane Sindisiwe | 51 | M | Christian[in] | Newlands West | Presbyterian |
| | | 44 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 39. | Ncwane Chris Ncwane Futhi | 55 | M | Christian | Newlands West | Roman Catholic |
| | | 45 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |
| 40. | Dlamini Sphiwe Dlamini Gugu | 45 | M | Christian | New West | Zion |
| | | 43 | F | Ditto | ditto | Ditto |