

**“Face of Fertility: Migrant isiXhosa-speaking Women’s
Reproductive Experiences and Agency in the Cape 1950-1989”**

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degree of Master of Arts in Historical Studies

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the reproductive experiences and agency of a group of isiXhosa-speaking migrants in the Cape from the 1950s to the 1980s. It examines why they decided to use contraceptive methods provided at state health facilities from 1960-1989, when they had been raised in a cultural context where a woman's reproductive capacity (fertility) was highly prized. While there have been influential quantitative demographic studies documenting the decline in fertility in this period, more qualitative, oral history studies are needed to describe African migrant women's reproductive decision-making in relation to how many children they chose to have and which points in their lives to have them. The study is based on twenty in-depth interviews conducted in isiXhosa with women who migrated between rural areas in the Transkei and Ciskei and towns and cities in the Cape. Three main findings emerged from the research. Firstly, the women all emphasised the maintenance of virginity prior to marriage was a norm that was inculcated in them during their adolescence in the rural areas. Fertility within the context of marriage was normative. Secondly, after many of these women moved to urban areas such as Cape Town, Queenstown and Kimberley, they learnt about contraceptive methods and their decision-making was also influenced by their precarious incomes and status as migrants in an apartheid context. Thirdly, a further issue explored is the extent to which the women viewed apartheid oppression as having influenced their reproductive decision-making. Many of the women argued that their use of contraceptives was not influenced by apartheid oppression, despite the fact that they experienced it with particular intensity in Cape Town and other urban areas discussed. Instead they emphasized the importance of *ukuthwala* in their sexual and reproductive lives. Ultimately, the study adds to our understanding of African women migrants' reproductive experiences.

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Introduction: ‘Face of Fertility’: isiXhosa-speaking African Migrant Women’s Reproductive Experiences in the Cape, 1950-1989

Background and Context

This thesis focuses on the lives, reproductive experiences and agency of a group of isiXhosa-speaking women currently living in Cape Town, all of whom are migrants who were born and raised in various rural areas of what is the present-day Eastern Cape. At its core the thesis seeks to understand and unpack the reproductive experiences of a mobile group of ordinary African women through a socio-cultural and political lens. The history that is examined and highlighted throughout the thesis spans from the 1950s to the 1980s, a time that was quite significant in South African history for a variety of reasons that will be discussed below. The social histories of these women – their lives and experiences – have largely been under-researched. In this study, oral historical methods were used to document the reproductive stories of these women in their own words through interviews conducted in isiXhosa and translated into English. In this way the project created, and drew upon, vernacular language sources, thereby carrying the voices of a group of women who have often been silenced in history.

Deborah Potts and Shula Marks have argued that, amidst all the political upheaval that defined the second half of the twentieth century, a ‘silent revolution’ was occurring in Southern Africa.¹ This quiet revolution that would impact Southern Africa and continues to do so today. Fertility – and infertility — is at the centre of the growth of African families as understood in the ‘traditional’ and customary manner, an idea that is explored throughout this thesis. In this 2001

¹ Deborah Potts and Shula Marks, "Fertility in Southern Africa: the quiet revolution", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27, no. 2 (2001), 189. See also: Horace Campbell, *The Siege of Cuito Cuanavale*, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1990), 1; Rob Nixon, "Mandela, messianism, and the media", *Transition* 51 (1991), 42.

article Potts and Marks argued that there was hard evidence that fertility rates in Southern Africa had been significantly decreasing since the approximately the 1950s.² Demographic researchers Tom Moultrie and Ian Timæus dated the decline back to the 1960s.³ Moultrie and Timæus have defined fertility as “the number of births in the last year and deaths of children under the age of 1 in the last year”.⁴ Due to the scope of the thesis, I focus on the “number of births” aspect of fertility.

It is through this phenomenon that the heart of the thesis emerges, where I grapple with the reproductive decisions the women interviewed made (including, importantly, for the purposes of this thesis, their decisions to use contraceptives) and examine what it meant to be an ordinary woman having children during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.⁵ The 1970s and 1980s were particularly important in addressing issues around the women’s contraceptive use, and broader fertility decision-making across the period for two reasons. Firstly, 1974 saw the commencement of the apartheid government’s family planning programme which was created to combat growing fears by the state regarding the majority black African population.⁶ Secondly, Potts and Marks identified the 1980s as the period when the most significant shift happened among the African population of South Africa due to declines in fertility.⁷ A significance they, in agreement with Moultrie and Timæus, attributed to the South African

² *Ibid.*, 189.

³ Tom A. Moultrie and Ian M. Timæus, "The South African fertility decline: Evidence from two censuses and a Demographic and Health Survey", *Population studies* 57, no. 3 (2003), 278. Despite this discrepancy in their periodisation of the beginning of the decline, we can note that it was certainly underway by the 1960s.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 266. It was this definition and understanding of ‘fertility’ that Potts and Marks also used as they drew a lot of their work from Moultrie and Timæus.

⁵ The selection criteria for the interviewees included that they had to have had children and made reproductive decisions in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. As we shall see one of the women, Ida, had a child in the 1950s, however, I decided not to discuss her pregnancy and childbirth experiences in that decade at length because I could not weigh her experiences against those of other study participants because she was the only key informant who had experienced this at that time.

⁶ Carol E. Kaufman, "Reproductive control in apartheid South Africa", *Population Studies* 54, no. 1 (2000), 105. Hereafter, I use the term African as a shorthand for “black Africans”. I do this to acknowledge the Black Consciousness Movement’s more open definition of the identity “black” where it also denoted Coloureds and Indians in addition to Africans. The term ‘abantu abamnyama’ (black people) was frequently used by the interviewees to denote black Africans.

⁷ Deborah Potts and Shula Marks, "Fertility in Southern Africa: the quiet revolution", 189.

government's intense family planning programme.⁸ Historically, the South African government before the 1960s had very little interest in intervening with African fertility which is interesting because as early as the late nineteenth century many Western nations and empires had started to worry about maintaining white imperial rule in the face of their colonized subjects.⁹ Direct fertility interventions by South Africa's ruling elite were reserved for 'poor whites', any demographic transitions in relation to the African population was indirect -urban and rural migration of African men- and as a result of long-standing practices such as *ukuthwala* which will be discussed more in-depth later on in the chapter.

The main argument which emerges in this thesis is that isiXhosa-speaking African women's reproductive decision-making, and experiences more broadly, fundamentally changed following their migrations to towns and cities in the Cape across the period. It argues that this was the case in three ways. They were all raised in rural areas to respect the importance of remaining virgins until marriage and to maximise their fertility as wives. Despite this, when they moved to towns and cities they learnt about contraceptives and chose to use them for reasons linked to apartheid oppression such as their limited incomes and "right to the city" in the period.¹⁰ Although they experienced racial oppression during the period in ways which impacted upon their reproductive decision-making (including their decisions to use contraceptives), they did not, typically view *apartheid* as having significantly impacted on their experiences of sexual relationships, pregnancy and contraceptive use. Instead, they saw *ukuthwala* -the practice of a forced marriage through the abduction of the bride by the groom's family or friends- as much more significant in their sexual and reproductive life histories. Marriage status, in all its incarnations and all it entailed within Xhosa culture, was key to a

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Klausen, Susanne Maria. *Race, maternity, and the politics of birth control in South Africa, 1910-39* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 5.

¹⁰ Faranak Miraftab, "Governing post-apartheid spatiality: implementing city improvement districts in Cape Town", *Antipode* 39, no. 4 (2007), 602.

woman's identity and "reinforced women's place in patriarchal society" since men controlled matrimonial institutions such as *lobola* and were the ones who physically carried out practices such as *ukuthwala*.¹¹

Reproductive rights for women as defined and agreed upon by delegates at the 1994 United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo were "the right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence".¹² The legitimization of the phrase 'reproductive rights' was a victory for women's rights movements.¹³ Barbara Klugman noted that black women in Southern African countries faced the same issues.¹⁴ Using Botswana, South Africa and Swaziland as her main case studies she found similarities in what was considered traditional behaviour. For example, in regards to sexual rights in Southern Africa "men have the right to make all decisions regarding sexual relations", further explaining that women were products of this culture and that they had internalized these beliefs therefore accepting their own subjugation.¹⁵ The similarity between the experiences of women in Southern Africa was noteworthy because of the differences in the socio-political situations of the countries. The Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in Beijing where it was decided that sexual rights for women were human rights was in 1995 while Klugman's article was published in 2000. In the late 1990s, Botswana, South Africa and Swaziland were in very diverse socio-political situations as "Botswana [was] a long-standing democracy, South Africa [had] recently emerged from a human rights struggle, and Swaziland [was] a monarchy with government straddling traditional and parliamentary systems".¹⁶ Getting sexual rights on the agenda for the FWCW was a complex task, there were some

¹¹ Anne K. Mager, *Gender and the Making of a South African Bantustan : a Social History of the Ciskei, 1945-1959*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999), 175.

¹² Klugman, Barbara, "Sexual rights in Southern Africa: A Beijing discourse or a strategic necessity?", *Health and Human Rights* (2000), 149.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

African delegations, Benin and Morocco, who argued that such matters were not a priority for African countries as they were Western constructs detracting from what they considered to be more pressing issues such as poverty and in some cases were not relevant to their contexts.¹⁷ However, despite the pushback on putting sexual rights on the agenda the official position of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), decided on by African ministers before the conference, was in favour of sexual rights.¹⁸ While sexual rights and all that they entailed were discussed more openly in the 1990s the diverse socio-political foundations of African countries meant that the policymaking and implementation differed. It is important to note the significant role of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in getting African countries on board with discussing and eventually implementing policies in relation to sexual rights.¹⁹ In the South African context only a decade earlier political discourse regarding 'women's issues' was not a priority within the liberation movement because there was a strong fear that addressing gender inequality could "undermine the struggle for racial justice by creating division and rancor" and yet by the early 1990s during the negotiations 'women's issues' had become a central pillar in the transformation of South Africa.²⁰ To understand how this came to be we can look into the history of women in South Africa, focusing on the movement for women's rights. The earliest accounts of organizations or groups focusing on reproductive rights in South Africa appear to be in the 1910 to 1930s era where liberal segregationists were in alliance with British and American movements which were fighting for women to have access to the then newly existing fertility control technologies as they viewed "contraceptive technologies as part of a new liberatory moment for women".²¹ Catherine Burns stated that contraceptive technologies were

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁰ Gay W. Seidman, "Gendered citizenship: South Africa's democratic transition and the construction of a gendered state", *Gender & Society* 13, no. 3 (1999), 287.

²¹ Catherine Burns, "Controlling Birth: Johannesburg, 1920–1960", *South African historical journal* 50, no. 1 (2004), 181.

widely introduced in South Africa in 1930s but they were not the first attempts to control fertility as African women and men before 1920 had worked together in some capacity to control their fertility.²² A variety of contraceptive devices such as cervical caps, sponges, foaming tablets and spermicides were available in clinics after 1930, though they were directed at married working-class white women.²³ For African women, reproductive control and all it entailed had been present in some capacity from the late nineteenth century according to colonial travellers, missionaries, traders and researchers.²⁴ The work of self-described ‘midwife, healer, herbalist, diagnostician and innovator Louisa Mvemve is but one example of how Africans valued and paid attention to reproductive control in the early twentieth century.’²⁵ Burns argued that it was migration that changed how African women and men acted as “the rude and harsh world of Johannesburg’s early decades did violence to the intimate lives of men and women and new ideas about sexual propriety, negotiated with haste and in poverty and against difficult odds, left little space for progressive social movements built around control of sexuality and reproductive choices”.²⁶

The fight for reproductive rights in South Africa, interestingly, appears to have been centred around the abortion aspect of it all rather than contraceptives. Contraceptives in some capacity were available to white and African women from the early twentieth century.²⁷ During apartheid, contraceptives were not only legal but their use was particularly advocated by the government in relation to African women.²⁸ Abortion, unlike contraceptive use, was all but illegal in South Africa. The only legal grounds for abortion were that it was being done to save

²² *Ibid.*, 182.

²³ *Ibid.*, 184.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 177.

²⁵ Catherine Burns, "Louisa Mvemve: a woman's advice to the public on the cure of various diseases", *Kronos* (1996), 109.

²⁶ Burns, "Controlling Birth: Johannesburg, 1920–1960", 173.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 183.

²⁸ Barbara B. Brown, "Facing the ‘Black Peril’: The politics of population control in South Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 13, no. 2 (1987), 260.

the mother's life.²⁹ However, Helen Bradford's work indicated that women in South Africa were having abortions for a variety of other reasons long before the apartheid state came into existence in 1948 and during its existence despite what the law said.³⁰ The 1970s saw the South African government buck the liberal trend of loosening its abortions laws as others countries had and "instead the 1975 Act [on abortion reform in the country] was paternalistic and authoritarian. It sought to retain the criminalization of abortion".³¹ There was of course a disconnect between the law itself and implementation. Adherence to the law regarding abortion was more focused on white females with the state not particularly caring if African women procured abortions.³² The struggle for reproductive rights in South Africa was one which called for women to have ownership over their fertility. What this ownership entailed was different for the various reproductive options. For abortion it was legalization based on a variety of reasons beyond the narrow scope of having one to save the mother's life.³³ While the contention regarding contraceptives and contraceptive use was based on its politicization. From the very beginning the apartheid state was concerned with reproduction: advocating for the growth of the white population and the decline of the African population.³⁴ It was against this backdrop that the women interviewed had their fertility related experiences.

²⁹ Charles Ngwena, "An appraisal of abortion laws in southern Africa from a reproductive health rights perspective", *The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* 32, no. 4 (2004), 714.

³⁰ Helen Bradford, "Herbs, knives and plastic: 150 years of abortion in South Africa" in Teresa A. Meade and Mark Walker (eds.), *Science, medicine and cultural imperialism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), 121.

³¹ Rebecca Hodes, "The medical history of abortion in South Africa, c. 1970–2000", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 39, no. 3 (2013), 527 and Charles Ngwena, "An appraisal of abortion laws in southern Africa from a reproductive health rights perspective", 714.

³² Rebecca Hodes, "The medical history of abortion in South Africa, c. 1970–2000", 531.

³³ Charles Ngwena, "An appraisal of abortion laws in southern Africa from a reproductive health rights perspective", 715.

³⁴ Brown, "Facing the 'Black Peril': The politics of population control in South Africa", 42.

Fertility Norms in Girlhood: Xhosa Customs and Christian Morality

To fully understand the reproductive decisions of the women interviewed it is important to first look into their childhood and adolescent years (from the 1950s to the end of the 1980s). This period is one of particular importance for the thesis as the state family planning programme began in 1974. The initial focus of the research for the thesis was is the reproductive experiences of the interviewees during the 1970s and 1980s when the fertility decline observed by Potts and Marks and Moultrie and Timæus was most pronounced.³⁵ However, it became obvious early into the study that the women wanted to place their fertility experiences into the broader sweep of their reproductive lives, beginning with menarche. This meant that the scope of the research expanded to examine the beginning of their fertility journeys as young women in the 1950s (a decade also examined in chapter 1). Fertility and infertility – whether temporary or permanent, voluntary or involuntary — occupied a place of importance in the lives of ordinary South Africans separate to the importance it held to the apartheid government. According to Deborah Posel, the apartheid state had draconian laws regarding sexuality.³⁶ The government, Posel argued, was concerned with keeping white women's bodies pure and fruitful, while African female bodies were symbolic of not only the African masses but also the idea that through their reproductive capabilities, African women would increase a population which could 'swamp' the white population.³⁷ The pressing concern that the ruling elite had with the growth of the African population during the second half of the twentieth century was fairly new as the first half of the century had been spent worrying about the 'poor white problem', Afrikaans-speakers who "the middle classes had long perceived...as a threat

³⁵ Potts and Marks, "Fertility in Southern Africa: the quiet revolution", 189.

³⁶ Deborah Posel, "Sex, Death and the Fate of the Nation: Reflections on the Politicization of Sexuality in Post-Apartheid South", *Africa* 75, no. 2 (2005), 128.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 128.

to white supremacy because they displayed such a shocking lack of whiteness”.³⁸ The first birth control clinic in South Africa was opened in 1932 in Johannesburg by respected eugenicists of the Race Welfare Society.³⁹ The activities of the clinic were directed at those considered to be ‘unfit’ white women. In a chapter titled, ‘Fertility Control: Eugenics, Neo-Malthusianism and Feminism’ in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, Susanne Klausen and Alison Bashford explain that the rationale of the ruling elite in order to maintain white supremacy over the black majority- was to curb the population growth of the ‘poor whites’ as they undermined racial superiority.⁴⁰ Interestingly, the 1930s saw the eradication of ‘poor whites’ as a significant social group with worrying political implications.⁴¹ This can be attributed to a few factors such as large numbers of ‘poor whites’ gaining employment when the economy started booming around 1933 due to the departure from the gold standard.⁴² The Second World War also provided jobs, transforming the country’s economy as the industrial sector grew due to the demands of war.⁴³ As a result of the Second World War black people were allowed more access into the cities as a bigger labour force was needed, the influx of black people pushed the black ‘population explosion’ to the forefront of the ruling elites concerns. As a result by the 1940s “both emergent Afrikaner nationalism and South Africanism required rehabilitating poor whites rather than abandoning them to a fatalistic biological destiny” due to birth control, this time period saw a white unification of sorts between Afrikaans and English white people against black people.⁴⁴ There was a clear shift in the white anxiety population discourse, the ruling elite changing their “interventionist efforts from poor-white to black wombs”.⁴⁵ So,

³⁸ Klausen, *Race, maternity, and the politics of birth control in South Africa, 1910-39*, 19.

³⁹ Klausen, Susanne, and Alison Bashford. "Fertility control: Eugenics, neo-malthusianism, and feminism." *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (2010), 103.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Klausen, *Race, maternity, and the politics of birth control in South Africa, 1910-39*, 153.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

while the reproducing African female body was treated by the state as a threat that had to be neutralized, in African communities – particularly the Xhosa for the purposes of this work — the African female body was key to the sustainable economic and social growth of the family.

The importance of fertility to African families can be traced back to pre-colonial times where kinship, or family, constituted an early form of labour organisation.⁴⁶ African homesteads were gendered, “[m]ale power was located in the house at the head of the homestead, male political and religious spaces were associated with the cattle kraal...with women associated with agricultural production...from the earliest historical times”.⁴⁷ Pre-colonial homesteads were where power was developed and authority invested for men with cattle as the main currency, economically and ritually.⁴⁸ Pre-colonial African societies were built on the constant exchange and movement of women and cattle through marriage agreements between men.⁴⁹ *Lobola* (or bridewealth) has been a long-standing institution in the Xhosa cultural system when it comes to marriage. *Lobola* and what it represents has had various meanings throughout time. How it is understood is arguably constantly under negotiation from various parties: elders, newer generations, *abantu ababomvu* (red people) and *abantu basesikolweni* (educated people).⁵⁰ One of the most common and longstanding characterizations attached to *lobola* has been the idea that because of the transaction between the two families, men gain control over women’s sexual and reproductive rights. Children born of this union belong to the father more than the mother and the child takes the clan name of their paternal family.⁵¹ A common Nguni saying is ‘*ukuzala ukuzelula amadolo*’ literally translating to having children is a means to extend

⁴⁶ Jeff Guy, "Analysing pre-capitalist societies in Southern Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14, no. 1 (1987), 22.

⁴⁷ Jeff Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the forging of Natal: African autonomy and settler colonialism in the making of traditional authority* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2013), 29.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵⁰ Leo Kuper, "Religion and Urbanization in Africa" in A. H. Richmond (ed.), *Reading in Race and Ethnic Relations: The Commonwealth and International Library: Reading in Sociology* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2013), 138.

⁵¹ Janet Hinson Shope, "'Lobola is here to stay': rural black women and the contradictory meanings of lobolo in post-apartheid South Africa", *Agenda* 20, no. 68 (2006), 66.

yourself.⁵² The cultural significance of this saying can be traced back to a more lineage-based society where this type of thinking was dominant. Importantly noting that a woman was extending her husband's family, reproduction was the essence of her duty. To sum up lobola, "[w]hat was being exchanged, on what is called marriage, was labour power".⁵³ Labour power manifested in various ways: agricultural production and human reproduction. Colonial conquests would alter African societal dynamics, shifting financial and political authority from largely autonomous homesteads to the colonial government. This shift would ultimately be a factor in the demographic transition caused by the fertility decline.

The period where the steepest declines in fertility occurred –the 1970s and 1980s – was interesting one in South African history: a time when the struggle against apartheid was intensifying in its efforts to challenge a white minority government. A study of the attitudes of ordinary isiXhosa-speaking African migrant women in the Cape towards fertility is required, particularly when one considers that their voices have been the ones conspicuously absent from the literature on the phenomenon in this period. This has especially been the case in relation to demographic studies. In his paper, "Fertility transition in South Africa and its impact on the four major racial groups", Leon Swartz presents various characteristics and factors that have influenced the fertility rate decline highlighting the country's past population policies stating, "South Africa's family- planning programme was conceived and implemented by a minority white government intent on slowing the growth of the majority African population".⁵⁴ Secondly, Swartz argues that fertility and marriage are connected.⁵⁵ Negative or shameful social reactions and responses to non-marital fertility meant that contraceptive use increased

⁵² Herbert W. Vilakazi, "Unifying values and practice in child and youth care programmes". *Opening Address, NACCW Biennial Conference*, Cape Town, 1991.

⁵³ Guy, "Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal.", 30.

⁵⁴ Leon Swartz, "Fertility transition in South Africa and its impact on the four major population groups" in the Department of Social Development in collaboration with the Child, Youth and Family Development Research Programme of the HSRC, *Fertility: Current South African Issues of Poverty, HIV/AIDS & Youth Seminar Proceedings*. (Cape Town: HSRC Publishers, 2003), 11.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

among African women, jumping from 50.4% in 1990 to 58.6% in 1998 according to the South African Demographic and Health Survey (SADHS) Project Team.⁵⁶ So, with women getting married later in life and using contraceptives to safeguard against out-of-wedlock pregnancies, the fertility rates declined. The third reason that Swartz brings forward is the availability of contraceptives through family planning and health services.⁵⁷ These services gave women more agency and control over their reproductive labour as they could now space the births of their children as they wished. Since abortion was legalized on socio-economic grounds in South Africa, it has been another option available to women.⁵⁸

Similar factors, namely young women delaying marriage and by default their fertility in the age of contraceptives particularly in the 1980s, were mentioned in Charles F. Westoff's 1990 work in *Age at Marriage, Age at First Birth, and Fertility in Africa*.⁵⁹ In his opening paragraphs, he emphasized a shift within sub-Saharan African countries, where external factors such as women getting an education and therefore postponing marriage were central to the decreasing fertility rates.⁶⁰ The impact education has in a girl's life is huge as "[e]xposure to school is thought to broaden a girl's perspective on the world, increasing her aspirations; opening up alternative opportunities, for example, to work".⁶¹ Broadened perspectives and new opportunities result in young women having more agency in deciding when or if they will marry.⁶² Through the experiences of the women interviewed we see that marriage, fertility and education are interconnected. Educational attainment influenced a girls age of marriage which

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁹ Charles F. Westoff, *Age at marriage, age at first birth, and fertility in Africa* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1990), 5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶¹ National Research Council, and Committee on Population. *The changing transitions to adulthood in developing countries: Selected studies*. National Academies Press, (2006), 150.

⁶² *Ibid.*

in turn impacted her fecundity. The role education -or rather the lack of it- played in the lives of the interviewees will be obvious in future chapters as we unpack the women's stories.

Another aspect that has not been significantly discussed is black South African migrant women's own rationales for using contraceptives to limit their fertility. The spreading of Christian mores for example was also a significant factor. The twentieth century saw the gradual development of a new "African way of doing things" heavily influenced by Christianity.⁶³ Teenage or pre-marital pregnancies were highly taboo as they were seen as a breakdown in the values of *kwaXhosa*.⁶⁴ Ethnographic work done in the 1930s by Monica Hunter in Pondoland indicated that young people were able to freely discuss their sexual activities, namely *ukumetsha*, and that girls underwent virginity testing, practises which will be discussed further in chapter 1. A way of doing things meant to prevent premarital intercourse and pregnancy.⁶⁵ The second half of the twentieth century saw many of these practices falling away as Christian values called for total silence on such matters.⁶⁶ To talk about or discuss sex was seen as encouraging young people to partake in premarital sexual activities, even talking to pre-pubescent girls about menstruation was viewed as stripping away their innocence.⁶⁷ For many of the women I interviewed the "African way of doing things" was actually a combination of pre-colonial African practices and Christian values. Hence, Chapter one engages with the fertility ideas that the interviewees grew up with and whether they see them as founded in Xhosa culture, Christian morality or both. It ultimately, acknowledges the women's agency in having made reproductive decisions later in their lives, as migrants.

⁶³ Nolwazi Mkhwanazi, "'An African way of doing things': reproducing gender and generation", *Anthropology Southern Africa* 37, no. 1-2 (2014), 113.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Fertility Decision-making: Contraceptives and Migrancy

A key argument of this thesis is that over the course of a 30-year period (that of the fertility decline in the period from the 1960s to 1989) there were important cultural shifts which influenced increasing contraceptive use among isiXhosa-speaking women and that these changes were linked to their migration to towns and cities in the Cape. To begin with the decline in fertility and rising contraceptive use: subsequent to 1974, when the family planning programme was introduced, demographers used quantitative research methods to trace the gradual changes to the reproductive decision-making of African women. They showed that there was both qualitative and quantitative evidence of a paradigm shift in the fertility choices of African women.⁶⁸ In particular, one study analysed statistics spanning the 1987-1989 period, which were derived from: the South African Demographic and Health Survey (SADHS), which was conducted by the South African Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC); the government census for the Republic of South Africa; and, figures from the homelands gathered by the Development Bank of Southern Africa.⁶⁹

This study drew on a sample of 16 451 African South African women, 44.34% of whom indicated that they were using modern hormonal birth control and 55.66% of whom indicated that they were not.⁷⁰ A sample group of 2347 women from the Transkei and Ciskei (which now form part of the Eastern Cape in the post-apartheid era) were interviewed, with 1 900 of the women living in the Transkei and 447 of the women living in the Ciskei.⁷¹ In the Transkei, 27.60% reported using contraceptives, while in the Ciskei 54.70 % reported using

⁶⁸ Carol E. Kaufman, "Contraceptive use in South Africa under apartheid", *Demography* 35, no. 4 (1998), 424.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 427.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

contraceptives.⁷² There were also significant differences in contraceptive use in women based upon their age, as summarised in Table 1 below:

Summary of data derived from 1998 study on contraceptive use from 1987-9 on African women nationally (including ‘self-governing territories’ and ‘independent states’)⁷³

Age range of women interviewed	Total number of women interviewed	Number of women who reported using contraceptives
20-24 years of age	4 304	50.63%
25-29 years of age	3 603	51.85%
30-34 years of age	2 221	47.12%
35-39 years of age	1 594	45.25%
40-49 years of age	2 782	28.01%

This quantitative study indicates that, in terms of age, contraceptive use was especially common among women between the ages of 20-29. Between these statistics and the testimonies of the African women I interviewed, we can see that by 1987-1989 there was significant usage of contraceptives among women who were of reproductive age who lived in the Transkei and Ciskei. Here we must note how old the women I interviewed were in the period from 1987-1989. The findings of this study are relevant to this thesis because, of the 20 women I interviewed, there were three women who fell into 20-24 age range, one in the 25-29 age range, three in the 30-34 age range, four in the 35-39 age range and eight in the 40-49 age range.⁷⁴ Only one, Thandiwe, did not fall into the age brackets of the SADHS study in the

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

period examined and none were in the 15-19 age range. Interestingly, looking at statistics from 2012 we see that numbers have remained largely the same with 43.7% of women between the ages of 15-19, 50.3% of women between the ages of 20-34 and 48.3% of women between the ages of 35-49 stating that they had used contraceptives.⁷⁵ Of those women 3 982 were black, with 47.2% of them stating that they had used contraceptives.⁷⁶ The most popular method overwhelmingly being an injectable with 27.5% of the women stating that it was their contraceptive of choice versus 6.8% using oral contraceptives, 1.1% using IUDs and 6.3% choosing female sterilisation.⁷⁷ These figures show that despite South Africa having a long history with contraceptives there is still some distrust surrounding their use. Furthermore, the figures reflect how South Africa continues to be a country divided between conservative values and progressive ideology, a concept that will be explored in the experiences of the women interviewed themselves and how they later chose to raise the daughters. Sexuality, fertility and contraception have historically been ignored, even in women's rights focused spaces like the Women's Charter of 1954, or not discussed in an in-depth manner as seen in the Women's Charter of 1994 where it stated that women have autonomy of their own bodies and the right to make reproductive decisions yet failing to address how this would be achieved.⁷⁸ Findings from the Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender in 2017 have revealed that 25 years after the dismantlement of apartheid, after the shift from "population control" to "reproductive choice" in terms of legal policy, the social conditions to ensure that the law is effectively carried out have not been met.⁷⁹ The agency of women in deciding to use or not to use contraceptives continues to be challenged in the post-apartheid era as it was during the apartheid era.

⁷⁵ Chersich, M. F., N. Wabiri, K. Risher, O. Shisana, D. Celentano, T. Rehle, M. Evans, and H. Rees.

"Contraception coverage and methods used among women in South Africa: A national household survey", *South African Medical Journal* 107, no. 4 (2017), 310.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Crewe, Mary. *Gender-based Justice: Reflections on Social Justice and Social Change*. Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender, University of Pretoria, (2017), 29.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Comparative changes in total fertility rate in South Africa⁸⁰

<u>Date of census of survey</u>	<u>Total Fertility Rate</u> <u>(national)</u>	<u>Total Fertility Rate</u> <u>(African)</u>
1970	4.9 children per woman	6.3 children per women
1985	3.5 children per women	4.6 children per women
1996	3.3 children per women	3.7 children per women
1998	-	3.1 children per women

Total Fertility Rate: “the number of births in the last year and deaths of children under the age of 1 in the last year”.⁸¹

The above table is a summary of the overall changes in the total fertility rate of South Africa in both the apartheid and post-apartheid years as noted by Potts and Marks in their article. In discussing the overall decline in fertility rates in Southern Africa, as a whole, Potts and Marks remarked that in South Africa in the 1980s, the decline was the most significant and dramatic in comparison with its neighbouring states, namely: Zimbabwe; Botswana; Lesotho; Namibia; Swaziland; Mozambique, Zambia; Malawi; and, Angola.⁸² They attributed this to the fact that in relation to its neighbours, South Africa was at the forefront of the modernisation process, no matter how deeply unequal the distribution of its rewards.⁸³ Potts and Marks noted and were in agreement with demographers and development experts who had long presumed “that as women become increasingly involved in the temporal inflexibilities of the modern workplace

⁸⁰ Potts and Marks, "Fertility in Southern Africa: the quiet revolution", 191.

⁸¹ Tom A. Moultrie and Ian M. Timæus, "The South African fertility decline: Evidence from two censuses and a Demographic and Health Survey", *Population studies* 57, no. 3 (2003), 266.

⁸² Potts and Marks, "Fertility in Southern Africa: the quiet revolution", 191.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 192.

that make childcare so difficult, and as family incomes increase, so allowing and encouraging couples to trade-off children against higher consumption, fertility would inexorably fall”.⁸⁴

Demography itself relies on statistics, and it needs to be historicised and viewed through a critical lens. Studying the demography of nations has been of academic interest across multiple disciplines from economics to sociology to history and more. As a result of being a subject of study across multiple disciplines, numerous theories and schools of thought have been used to try to unpack the demography of a nation. For example, in the European context for over one thousand years until the 1800s a ‘natural’ economy sustained human life - “in the long run births had to equal deaths”.⁸⁵ However, according to Malthus, population growth, as the result of the industrial revolution, led to a shortage of resources, ultimately changing the schedule of the birth and death rates.⁸⁶ Malthus wrote of a widening disparity between the available resources, specifically the growth of the food supply being linear in comparison to the population growth which was exponential.⁸⁷ Through this observation, he called attention to “his humane concern for the sufferings caused by overpopulation arose his anxiety that the poor laws should not lead to a relaxation of moral restraint and large families” by which he meant for people to delay marriage or once married to be sexually abstinent until they could economically afford to have children.⁸⁸

A second key theory, initially formulated in 1944 by the Office of Population Research at Princeton University, tried to understand trends in the demography of western nations. Coined the “demographic transition theory”, at its simplest it argued that “societies that experience modernization progress from a pre-modern regime of high fertility and high mortality to a post-

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Gregory Clark, *A farewell to alms: a brief economic history of the world* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 20.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸⁷ Peter M. Dunn, "Thomas Malthus (1766–1834): population growth and birth control", *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition* 78, no. 1 (1998), 76.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

modern one in which both are low”.⁸⁹ The theory was developed in part to acquire theoretical insight into the study of demography as it is a science rich in quantification but short on theory. The development of the theory has used Europe as the model however this thesis will argue that essential elements of it can be applied to an African context, specifically South Africa.

Key in the definition of the theory is the concept of modernization which is actually “not defined, nor does it include the crucial questions about causation that form the subject of much modern demographic literature”, the relatively lax definition of the theory allows for a fluidity in its application.⁹⁰ Moultrie and Timæus have argued that in the South African context, between the years 1955 to 1996, a demographic transition can be observed as fertility levels have been falling since the 1960s, a transition that precedes the states family planning programme which was established in 1974.⁹¹ This means that we cannot attribute the fertility decline solely to the introduction of the governments fertility planning programme. The demographic transition theory is therefore a cornerstone in South African quantitative demographic scholarship aimed at explaining the decline in fertility in the period examined in this thesis.

Due to colonialism and later apartheid policies, the demographic data on South Africa’s population before 1994 was generally inadequate and, in some instances, possibly tainted data. Mistrust of official colonial and apartheid-era documents has been a mainstay of post-colonial scholarship. Peter Claus and John Marriott have argued that archives are contested and controversial – and not ‘innocent’— because they are not necessarily evidence of the truth, but rather offer a biased account of the state.⁹² In a South African context, Carolyn Hamilton has

⁸⁹ Dudley Kirk, "Demographic transition theory", *Population studies* 50, no. 3 (1996), 361.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 361.

⁹¹ Moultrie and Timæus, "The South African fertility decline: Evidence from two censuses and a Demographic and Health Survey", 265.

⁹² Peter Claus and John Marriott, *History: An introduction to theory, method and practice* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 388.

stated that “historians have been cautious about relying exclusively on public and more specifically government records, because of their colonial and later apartheid biases”.⁹³ Furthermore, for much of the twentieth century there was a back and forth effort in regards to bureaucracy as it related to black people in South Africa.⁹⁴ The civil registration of black people was a system that underwent a lot of changes. Even its introduction was contested with a proposed census and registration of African people as early as 1858 was rejected as ‘unnecessary interference’ in Shepstone’s ‘indirect rule’ system.⁹⁵ However, in 1896 a new registration law aimed at *Amakholwa*, Africans who had converted to Christianity, was introduced and passed in Natal.⁹⁶ While for much of the early years of the twentieth century a civil registration system was implemented and was working quite well before being abruptly halted in 1922.⁹⁷ Meanwhile the 1930s saw a centralized system of tax registration by the Native Affairs Department which was at the time the largest registration system of its kind though its application was weak especially in comparison to the systems in place before that had been abandoned.⁹⁸ In 1952 various bureaucratic systems relating to black people were officially restored due to the overarching patriarchal ideals and control driven mandate of the apartheid state.⁹⁹ Though again it was decidedly not as successful as the early twentieth century project due to: its smaller budget; chaos as a result of the social engineering effort of the late 1950s and finally it was completely undermined by the independence of the Bantustans in the 1960s, where black people were stripped of their South African citizenship.¹⁰⁰ The constant reimagining of the South African state under colonial rule, its independence from Britain, the

⁹³ Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and Graeme Reid, “Introduction” in Hamilton, Carolyn, Verne Harris, Michèle Pickover, Graeme Reid, Razia Saleh, and Jane Taylor (eds.), *Refiguring the archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 9.

⁹⁴ Keith Breckenridge, “14 No Will to Know: The Rise and Fall of African Civil Registration in Twentieth-Century South Africa”, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. 182 (2012), 357.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 362.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 357.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 360.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

formation of the apartheid state and later its downfall shows how the archive was a political tool. With these caveats we can, however, note that colonial and apartheid documents can be of some use to historians in some instances if scholars when working with the archival records “pay greater attention to the particular processes by which the record was produced and subsequently shaped, both before its entry into the archive, and increasingly as part of the archival record” as in using this approach one brings attention to alterations -gaps, omissions and excisions- which have happened over time to the record.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, Hamilton has then emphasized the importance of oral history, focusing on the voices of those who would have been omitted from official archives, as a way to overcome partialities in the official record.¹⁰²

According to Potts and Marks, “since the late 1970s and early 1980s, the countries of southern Africa have had at least one, and often more, internationally sponsored and published national demographic surveys (e.g. Demographic Health Surveys [DHS]”.¹⁰³ Surveys by international organizations and institutions such as the World Bank, United Nations and United States Agency-International Development (USAID) along with domestic censuses have been used as evidence of a fertility decline in apartheid South Africa. Researchers have utilized various tools such as reverse-survival method -a fertility estimation method based on population data by age and sex collected in one census or a single-round survey- in an effort to authenticate the fertility trends reported by apartheid-era censuses.¹⁰⁴ This thesis adds to the literature on trends in fertility, by analysing the reproductive decision-making of African migrant women themselves. This is valuable as qualitative descriptions of a social reality can augment those that are statistical in nature.

¹⁰¹Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and Graeme Reid, *Refiguring the archive*, 9.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁰³ Potts and Marks, "Fertility in Southern Africa: the quiet revolution", 190.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Spoorenberg, "Reverse survival method of fertility estimation: An evaluation", *Demographic Research* 31, no. 9 (2014), 217.

The use of numbers – statistics, for example — often implies impartiality and objectivity in relation to the subject matter examined, a complete truth if you will. However, scholars such as Joan Wallach Scott and Mary Poovey have engaged in theoretical debates regarding the status of numbers in society.¹⁰⁵ Scott has argued that numbers, just like words, have a history and emphasizes the importance in understanding the politics through which facts -like *La Statistique* in her example- are produced.¹⁰⁶ Poovey echoes Scott stating “numbers inevitably carry within them the traces of a certain kind of systematic knowledge: to assign numbers to observed particulars is to make them amenable to the kind of knowledge system that privileges quantity over quality and equivalence over difference”.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the results of the censuses and surveys used in the study of South Africa’s demography in the period discussed in the thesis cannot be taken as absolute fact. The conclusions and insights offered by current scholarship focusing on fertility, as it relates to South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, can be debated and analysed through multiple lenses and schools of thought.

It is in this context that qualitative research is of particular value in understanding the social factors driving changes in populations, such as fertility. In terms of this, an important element of the argument of this thesis is that over the course of a 30-year period or so there was a cultural shift regarding isiXhosa-speaking women’s contraceptive use. Scholar Catherine Burns has usefully emphasized women’s agency in using contraceptives, arguing that the driving force behind the steep drop in fertility was not merely the family planning programmes implemented by the state after 1965 which were geared towards African women, but, she rather contends that “the drive to alter fertility began before, was based on more complex, and even

¹⁰⁵ Joan Wallach Scott, “A Statistical Representation of Work: La Statistique de l’industrie à Paris, 1847-1848” in Joan Wallach Scott (ed.), *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 113 and Mary Poovey, *A history of the modern fact: Problems of knowledge in the sciences of wealth and society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 4.

¹⁰⁶ Joan Wallach Scott, “A Statistical Representation of Work: La Statistique de l’industrie à Paris, 1847-1848”, 133.

¹⁰⁷ Mary Poovey, *A history of the modern fact: Problems of knowledge in the sciences of wealth and society*, 4.

women-centred, impetuses, and lasted through the era of ‘grand apartheid’ fertility programmes”.¹⁰⁸ Here, we must also note that she does agree that the state family programmes of the 1960s -as I show later in the thesis at a regional level there were some state family planning clinics before 1974- and 1970-1990 era did have a huge impact and left a lasting legacy for African women.¹⁰⁹ The findings presented in this thesis echo those of Burns.

In discussing contraceptive use among African women and trying to understand the decisions that they made, it’s also important to acknowledge the options that were available to them. Of the twenty women I interviewed, many used injectables, specifically Depo-Provera. Other methods were also mentioned by interviewees such as the pill, IUDs, female sterilization and abstinence. The impact of contraceptives in the decision-making process of the women was twofold; firstly, the very availability of contraceptives meant that women had an option to use them. Secondly, the type of contraceptives available also impacted upon whether or not a woman chose to use them.

In general, in this period the contraceptive methods available to African women in South Africa were limited in range, yet those that were available were highly effective in preventing pregnancies. Here one must note that the government “promoted methods that required minimal education, little client involvement and few follow-up services”.¹¹⁰ A study of fertility and family-size preferences -where 2 290 women in the Transkei were interviewed between March and June 1994- was conducted by the Department of Welfare and Pensions of the former government of the Transkei in collaboration with the Central Statistical Office, the Department of Health and the Population Research Programme of the University of the Witwatersrand.¹¹¹ It looked into the patterns of contraceptive use in former homelands and identified that ten

¹⁰⁸ Burns, "Controlling Birth: Johannesburg, 1920–1960", 175.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Orieji Chimere-Dan, "Contraceptive prevalence in rural South Africa", *International Family Planning Perspectives* 22, no. 1 (1996), 6.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

different methods of contraceptives were available: the contraceptive pill; intrauterine devices (IUD); injectable contraceptives; spermicide; condoms; female sterilization; male sterilization; withdrawal; and, traditional and rhythm methods.¹¹² The study further revealed the popularity of the pill and injectables among African women, over 60% of women over the age of 30 admitted to using injectables while over 18% of women over the age 30 admitted to using the pill.¹¹³

This thesis makes a contribution to the literature on migrant women in the Cape. For long literature on the experiences of male migrants was prevalent with women often erased from the history. This erasure was largely attributed to the fact that from the nineteenth century to the 1940s the migrant labour system in South Africa specifically targeted black men for their labour.¹¹⁴ Women -especially black women- were not a state concern regarding the migrant labour system as they were largely relegated to the domestic sphere. This indifference was translated into the historiographies of the time. Gender was not a mainstream academic factor as discussed earlier in the chapter. In the South African context it was only in the 1980s and 1990s that a feminist agenda advocated in favour of women's historiography and making women's experiences mainstream.¹¹⁵ In giving a voice to those who had been voiceless new histories emerged. The male-migrant model of history was one that was popular but in factoring the experiences of black women previously untapped information emerged. Through the experiences of black women, for example, the impact of the migrant labour system on African families could be studied in terms of its role "in shaping whether and how people put down urban or rural roots".¹¹⁶ For the purposes of this thesis I argue that the decline in fertility was influenced by the migrant labour system. The migrant labour system underpinned the drive

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹⁴ Phillips, Laura, and Deborah James. "Labour, lodging and linkages: migrant women's experience in South Africa". *African Studies* 73, no. 3 (2014), 410.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 411.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

towards modernisation and can be linked to urbanisation and industrialization.¹¹⁷ The ramifications of urbanisation and migration this were felt across the Cape, and South Africa, in general, from the homelands such as Transkei, to smaller towns such as Queenstown, to cities such as East London and Cape Town. Migrant African women's reproductive experiences in the 1970s and 1980s – a period characterised by the introduction of state-led family planning and a heightened period in the fertility decline of the late twentieth century – must be considered in relation to the population control policies that were a vital focus of the apartheid government.

African migration from rural areas to towns and cities was a significant characteristic of twentieth century South Africa. Sir Theophilus Shepstone, a colonial administrator in Natal, introduced a wage labour system at the end of the 19th century where for almost three decades he had imposed an authoritarian system with little to no oversight from the colonial office.¹¹⁸ Natal unlike the Cape was governed in a very rudimentary 'indirect rule' manner due to its smaller settler community and "the refusal of the imperial authorities to finance an effective administration".¹¹⁹ Through 'indirect rule' Shepstone could control the Zulu using their own laws and chiefs to subjugate them, resulting in "the genesis of the colonial absolutism and bureaucratic authoritarianism that was to take root in Natal and spread from there to the rest of South Africa".¹²⁰ Initially the colonial expansion in the Cape was more volatile as the various Xhosa clans clashed the relatively large white settler communities resulting in many wars.¹²¹ Furthermore annexation of land in the Cape meant that all who lived there came under Roman-Dutch law unlike in Natal where the Zulu still fell under tribal law.¹²² Despite these different

¹¹⁷ Potts and Marks, "Fertility in Southern Africa: the quiet revolution", 192.

¹¹⁸ H. F. Morris, "African Women: their legal status in South Africa. By HJ Simons. London: C. Hurst and Co. 1968. 294 and (index), 5 pp. 84s", *Journal of African Law* 12, no. 2 (1968), 26.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 29. The thesis further discusses the Xhosa annexations later on in the chapter.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 28.

approaches to governing, both the white settler communities in Natal and the Cape grew and as they did more unskilled labour was needed.¹²³ Due to the relatively low labour population in Natal, Indian labourers were brought in.¹²⁴ In the Cape the various Xhosa clans allowed for “a steady stream labourers moving from reserves and farms to towns in search of work, and returning again to their homes after a longer or shorter period in a town”.¹²⁵ It was all this activity that laid the ground for the capitalist developments which would drive labour mobility during the twentieth century.¹²⁶

While the migrant labour system was directed at African males it also impacted upon their families, particularly their wives. It also forever altered pre-colonial familial dynamics and norms. Influx control was mandated through The Native Urban Areas Consolidation Act no 25 of 1945 (further amended in 1952 to encompass on influx control to all urban areas). This legislation meant that African families were separated for long periods of time.¹²⁷ This law reflected the ideals of the apartheid government: African men, providing cheap labour, would reside in the outskirts of the urban areas in cramped hostels which were deliberately hostile for family living.¹²⁸ It was particularly antagonistic towards African women in urban areas, especially those who were unemployed and who, therefore, according to government logic, had no reason to be in the cities.

However, for a multitude of reasons, many African women stubbornly circumvented the law, as shown in the lives of the women interviewed for this thesis. This was especially evident in the Western Cape where, interestingly enough, more women than men were arrested under pass

¹²³ Monica Hunter, *Reaction to conquest: Effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 3.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹²⁶ Peter Delius, “The Making and Changing of Migrant Worker’ Worlds 1800-2014”, *African Studies* 73, no. 3 (2014), 81.

¹²⁷ Martin West, “From pass courts to deportation: changing patterns of influx control in Cape Town”, *African Affairs* 81, no. 325 (1982), 465.

¹²⁸ Mamphela Ramphele, *A bed called home: Life in the migrant labour hostels of Cape Town*. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1993), 18.

laws: in this way it was exceptional in South Africa.¹²⁹ Mamphela Ramphele's book *A Bed called Home: Life in the Migrant Labour Hostels of Cape Town*, published in 1993, documented the lives of the women hostel dwellers in Cape Town and highlighted the attitudes of many African women in relation to the pass laws.¹³⁰ She showed that the migrant women would be "arrested, fined or imprisoned and, as a final desperate measure on the part of the authorities, men, women and children were 'bused' back to the Transkei and Ciskei".¹³¹ However, these acts were a temporary obstacle as most women migrants would pay their fines or take a bus right back to Cape Town within a few days.¹³² The very presence of black women in urban areas was an affront to white supremacy, whether the women themselves were aware of that or not. From 1911 to 1960 the number of black women and girls in urban areas increased from 97 981 to 1 448 151.¹³³ Towns and cities, even those in Bantustans, were considered to be 'white man's country' with black people only permitted in service of the white man's interest.¹³⁴ Most migrants were black men as labourers, with black women in much lower demand. A 1960 census showed that 15% of black women were economically active in comparison to 55.6% of black men.¹³⁵ Of course, the calculation or criteria of what consisted as 'economically active' largely excluded the unofficial activities of black women such as selling alcohol in townships or cultivating land in the Bantustans. This exclusion actually accentuated the loathing the colonial and later the apartheid state had for black women in urban areas. If black people were only allowed in the city because of their usefulness as unskilled

¹²⁹ Martin West, "From pass courts to deportation: changing patterns of influx control in Cape Town", 467.

¹³⁰ Helen Scanlon, *"Representation and Reality": Portraits of Women's lives in the Western Cape 1948-1976* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2007), 11.

¹³¹ Ramphele, *A bed called home: Life in the migrant labour hostels of Cape Town*, 17.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 17.

¹³³ Morris, "African Women: their legal status in South Africa. By HJ Simons. London: C. Hurst and Co. 1968. 294 and (index), 5 pp. 84s.", 278.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 271.

cheap labour in the pursuit of wealth for their white counterparts, then black women were unwelcome distractions.

Women were seen as homemakers, their presence lead “to the growth of permanent, stable communities” of black people in the ‘white man’s country’.¹³⁶ Black women in cities and towns undermined the policies and ideologies of an obsessive and paternalistic state. For the women I interviewed the reasons for their presence in the cities might have been personal -family planning- but due to the context of the society in which they lived, their presence was in many ways inherently political. Furthermore, as Ramphele explained even when caught and sent back to the Bantustans women would not be deterred and return to the city relatively fast.¹³⁷ Influx control was a constant issue for the apartheid state. As a result of an investigation by the President’s Council, the Abolition of Influx Control Act was affected in June 1986 and it abolished the pass laws. The President’s Council report “was stated to have ‘discovered that influx control was being applied in a discriminatory fashion and had a severely detrimental effect on the quality of life of Africans’”.¹³⁸ Furthermore, according to Ramphele, it is of significance to acknowledge that this so-called ‘discovery’ by the Council can largely be attributed to “the resistance and resilience of women, in the face of considerable odds”.¹³⁹ Therefore, it is clear that African women migrants were significant actors in the socio-economic and cultural history of Cape Town and the Western Cape, more broadly.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 281.

¹³⁷ Ramphele, *A bed called home: Life in the migrant labour hostels of Cape Town*, 17.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

Politics and Women's Reproductive Decision Making

Many African women decided to limit their fertility during the apartheid era where family planning policies and programmes were aimed at racist population control. One question the research explored was the extent to which the women perceived of family planning as an example of apartheid control. A dominant narrative of South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s is that apartheid was an all-consuming negative factor in the lives of African people. There are, however, nuances that must be acknowledged: the women interviewed argued that there were other factors that were present in their lives that contributed far more heavily to their reproductive decision-making. In this sense, women's experiences must be at the centre of any discussion of the history of fertility in South Africa.

In order to document them, it is important to identify effective approaches which have been developed in writing the history of women in South Africa. In Cherryl Walker's book, *Women and gender in Southern Africa to 1945* a key observation was the lack of women's experiences, particularly African women, in recorded history where the "documentary silence [of the majority of the women was] erroneously equated with historical passivity or, even worse, with historical insignificance, so that women simply disappear[ed] from our view of the past".¹⁴⁰ Walker further observed that women were typically only acknowledged in social research within the ideological contexts of reproduction, oppression and gender thereby limiting their historical agency and reducing their rich life stories into predetermined categories.¹⁴¹

In *Representation & reality: Portraits of Women's Lives in the Western Cape 1948-1976*, Helen Scanlon concurred with Walker's observations as she argued that "literature on women's

¹⁴⁰ Cherryl Walker, "Women and gender in Southern Africa to 1945: an overview" in Cherryl Walker (eds.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), 3.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

history in South Africa has...been fraught with stereotypes” with women often having been depicted “either as valiant resisters, surpassing men in their tenacity in the struggle, or as victims of apartheid”.¹⁴² It was only in the 1980s that social research began to reflect the voices of South African women and their experiences. This led to a surge in scholarship regarding women’s histories – particularly those of African women— that continued into the post-apartheid era. The works and research of scholars like Walker and Belinda Bozzoli were pivotal in finally giving a voice to African South African women’s experiences within the discipline of history, Bozzoli spoke to the substantially different experiences women in South Africa had in regards to their experiences of sexism due their race and gender.¹⁴³

We must, however, also consider the reproductive experiences of African women in the period: one marked by the political goals of apartheid-era family planning and the state of women’s organisations in the country. National population control was central to apartheid policy. According to Barbara Brown, this programme had three distinct elements: “limitation on women’s fertility, change in human mortality rates and control of immigration”.¹⁴⁴ In 1974 the South African family planning programme was launched at a time where there was chronic underfunding of African hospitals and clinics. Though officially geared towards all women, regardless of race “the link between the family planning programme and white fears of growing African numbers was widely acknowledged” by both the state and detractors of the programme.¹⁴⁵ The curtailing of African women’s fertility was so important to the National Party government that even in the regime’s twilight years, the family planning programme’s budget was steady and increasing.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Helen Scanlon, *"Representation and Reality": Portraits of Women's lives in the Western Cape 1948-1976*, 7.

¹⁴³ Bozzoli, Belinda, "Marxism, feminism and South African studies", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9, no. 2 (1983), 140.

¹⁴⁴ Brown, "Facing the 'Black Peril': The politics of population control in South Africa", 256.

¹⁴⁵ Kaufman, "Reproductive control in apartheid South Africa", 105.

¹⁴⁶ Orijei Chimere-Dan, "Population policy in South Africa", *Studies in family planning* (1993), 31.

The politics surrounding African women's reproductive capacities were multi-layered and complex. In South Africa "debates about 'fertility' in have often been highly politicised and emotionally charged", especially considering the nature of the country's past.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, the reputation of the Depo-Provera injection – the most popular form of birth control among African women in South Africa — was a cause for concern.¹⁴⁸ Depo-Provera, banned in some countries as a result of its dangerous and long lasting, and sometimes permanent, effects on women's fertility was a controversial drug.¹⁴⁹ In the late 1980s, it was highly prevalent and the contraception of choice among many African women (as we have seen in section 1 above) and because it was provided as a result of the government family planning programme, some of its harshest critics argued that the government was committing – or advocating for – an anti-African genocide of sorts.¹⁵⁰ The apartheid government did use the family planning programmes to try control the African population at a time when they were also being actively stripped of their South African citizenship while equally actively encouraging white women to have children to grow the white population.¹⁵¹

At the same time, motherhood provided political legitimacy to women across racial lines and ideological beliefs most Afrikaner and African nationalist women involved in politics utilized their traditional maternal identities to legitimize their roles in politics.¹⁵² Such women were fighting "to save the nation 'for their children'" and many of them -African and white-

¹⁴⁷ Swartz, "Fertility transition in South Africa and its impact on the four major population groups", xv.

¹⁴⁸ Kaufman, "Reproductive control in apartheid South Africa", 110.

¹⁴⁹ Jill Rakusen, "Depo-provera: the extent of the problem--a case study in the politics of birth control" in H Roberts (eds.), *Women, Health and Reproduction* (London: Routledge, 1981), 75.

¹⁵⁰ Kaufman, "Reproductive control in apartheid South Africa", 110.

¹⁵¹ Rebecca Hodes, "The Culture of Illegal Abortion in South Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 1 (2016), 81 and Henry J. Richardson III, "Self-determination, international law and the South African Bantustan policy", *Colum. J. Transnat'l L.* 17 (1978), 186. Black people were stripped of their South African citizenship through a series of laws such as the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act No. 46 of 1959 and the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act No. 26 of 1970.

¹⁵² Hannah Britton and Jennifer Fish, "Engendering Civil Society in Democratic South Africa" in Hannah Britton, Jennifer Fish and Sheila Meintjes (eds.), *Women's activism in South Africa: working across divides*. (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 6.

“embraced the ideal of becoming the ‘mothers of the nation’ for nationalistic struggles”.¹⁵³

Motherhood, as a social and political identity for women, cut across various races, opposing political ideologies and different classes in South Africa’s past.¹⁵⁴

In South African history, women’s political authority and legitimacy often only existed because they were mothers, wives, daughters and sisters of politically powerful men, an understanding that was noted and critiqued at the 1990 Malibongwe conference – where women from different organisations met for the first time and ‘women united for a unitary, non-racial, democratic South Africa- in Amsterdam, Holland.’¹⁵⁵

The interviews conducted for this thesis provided personal insights and experience as a filter or lens for a highly politicized topic: fertility and reproductive rights. In so doing, it shows a different perspective – from a few ordinary South African women. Fertility has often been discussed in relation to anti-apartheid women’s political history in a limited way and it is deserving of further research. *Women’s Activism in South Africa: Working Across Divides* is an example of a thorough examination of women’s contribution to the anti-apartheid movement however it makes no mention of fertility.¹⁵⁶ While Shireen Hassim’s *Women’s Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority*, similarly discusses women’s contribution to the liberation movement and mentions that “women members of MK were forbidden to become pregnant. Women deployed to the Angolan camps had IUDs inserted as a matter of policy”.¹⁵⁷ However, this observation is deserving of further investigation. An observation from the two books which perhaps requires more analysis is the duality in the

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁵⁴ Hannah Britton and Jennifer Fish, “Engendering Civil Society in Democratic South Africa”, 6; Shireen Hassim, *Women’s Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: contesting authority* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006), 113 and Cheryl Walker, “Conceptualising motherhood in twentieth century South Africa”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no. 3 (1995), 420.

¹⁵⁵ Cheryl Walker, “Conceptualising motherhood in twentieth century South Africa”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no. 3 (1995), 420 and Shireen Hassim, *Women’s Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: contesting authority* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006), 113.

¹⁵⁶ Hannah Britton and Jennifer Fish, “Engendering Civil Society in Democratic South Africa”, 6.

¹⁵⁷ Shireen Hassim, *Women’s Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: contesting authority*, 89.

attitudes and policies regarding women and fertility within the struggle in particular. The ‘motherist’ ideology as described by Britton and Fish was central to the organization of some women in politics while at the same time motherhood was seen to limit women’s engagement within the struggle.¹⁵⁸

During the apartheid period, there were also many other African women who were not politically involved who used contraceptives (obtained through state family planning programmes) and became pregnant at various points in their reproductive lives (from menarche-to-menopause). Their experiences of, and agency in, using and limiting their reproductive ability is deserving of further study of the kind described in this thesis. While apartheid was largely viewed as irrelevant to their reproductive lives, the interviewees heavily emphasised *ukuthwala* as a practice which had been important to them.

Katherine Rice has argued that *ukuthwala* which literally translates to ‘carry on the head’ is a “form of marriage that takes place in rural communities in South Africa, most especially in the Eastern Cape...*ukuthwala* can take place either with or without the knowledge and consent of a young women’s parents”.¹⁵⁹ Rice characterises women’s experiences of being forced to undergo *ukuthwala* in a nuanced way: in her research, she found that while some accepted it as normative (i.e. the way things were done) in Xhosa culture, others said they had experienced it in a negative way.¹⁶⁰ In particular, those who viewed it as having been traumatic, said that they had objected to it then because they had been taken against their will by an unknown man who they did not love and this deprived them of their freedom.¹⁶¹ The migrant labour system and its effect on the lives of black people in the twentieth century is a continuous theme in the lives of

¹⁵⁸ Hannah Britton and Jennifer Fish, “Engendering Civil Society in Democratic South Africa”, 6 and Shireen Hassim, *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: contesting authority*, 89.

¹⁵⁹ Kate Rice, "Ukuthwala in rural South Africa: Abduction marriage as a site of negotiation about gender, rights and generational authority among the Xhosa", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40, no. 2 (2014), 381.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 390.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

the women, including in relation to *ukuthwala*. Anne Mager has stated that the popularity of *ukuthwala* rose in the 1950s due to men not being able to afford lobola or a wedding feast due to the changing socio-economic conditions brought on by the migrant labour system.¹⁶² This thesis would also like to further suggest that *ukuthwala* allowed for power dynamics during lobola negotiations to shift in favour of the husband to be. One could argue that typically in a lobola negotiation the man's family negotiated from below, the woman's family named their price and could refuse to release their daughter if they felt that the lobola amount was too little. However, with *ukuthwala* the man's family now had an upper hand as they physically already had the woman and she was possibly no longer pure. Her family could not risk rejecting an offer even if they felt it was too low. This advantage would have been appealing to men seeking to marry but struggling financially hence resorting to *ukuthwala*. It's important to note though that regardless of whether a woman's family was involved in her being taken or not, the women themselves often lacked power and agency within this system. Feelings of helplessness, confusion and anger often consumed the women who underwent *ukuthwala*.

As we shall see in chapter three, some of the interviewees described *ukuthwala* as but one Xhosa cultural institution which involved the subjugation of women in the past. There was also *ukulalwa* – the custom of wives sleeping with male family members, typically brother or father-in-law for reproductive purposes if the husband was unable to impregnate their wife. Furthermore, there was also *ukungenwa*, the practice whereby a widowed woman would automatically become her brother-in-law's wife as she was regarded as his property or inheritance.¹⁶³ These cultural institutions emphasized and naturalized paternal and spousal rights to control women's sexuality and their reproductive capacities. This mindset was not

¹⁶² Mager, "Gender and the making of a South African Bantustan: A social history of the Ciskei, 1945-1959", 177.

¹⁶³ The practices of *ukulalwa* and *ukungenwa* were mentioned by the interviewees alongside *ukuthwala*, however, none of the women had experienced either practice which is why this thesis focuses on *ukuthwala* as that is the practice that the interviewees had experienced.

limited to the relationship between black women and black men but was also reflected in wider society in the twentieth century, where white women were subservient to their fathers and husbands and white people as a whole in turn were deemed superior to black people.¹⁶⁴ There was a social, political and economic hierarchy and black women were at the bottom. Black men were expected to handle and control black women by the state as “several centuries of Western thought premised on an indefatigable belief in the inferiority of both women and ‘natives’”.¹⁶⁵ As mentioned earlier in the chapter black women were unwelcome in urban areas with their presence being viewed as a disturbance to the urbanisation project. The state largely ignored black women in the first half of the twentieth century, focusing on black men when discussing black people in a political sense.¹⁶⁶ Black women were invisible and when they were acknowledged it was as an extension of black men. Furthermore, an inherent bias against black women in the city was that they were immoral and required black men to regulate their sexuality, so white people would not get involved in these matters.¹⁶⁷ Every aspect of society emphasized black women’s lack of agency and control with patriarchy being one of the state’s strongest weapons.¹⁶⁸

The women interviewed for the thesis who had experienced *ukuthwala* were divided on whether they found being subjected to the practice to have been negative or positive. Three of them agreed with the practice because it was part of the Xhosa way of life and a source of pride for them. Two of the women also agreed with the practice in theory, however, they found having been subjected the practice frightening. The other three of the women who underwent it found it traumatising because they felt that they had been betrayed by their families and these women all escaped from these forced relationships. Here we can note that the women linked

¹⁶⁴ Ena Jansen, *Like Family: Domestic Workers in South African History and Literature* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2019), 54.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

their broader reproductive histories to their sexual histories (in terms of courtship, relationships and marriage).

Methodology: Oral History Interviews on the Women's Reproductive Experiences in the Cape

The use of oral history was quite central to meeting the overall aims of the thesis: to hear and understand the lives of ordinary African women in their own words, in their mother-tongue. An oral history methodology was used, whereby I conducted in-depth interviews with twenty-two participants though only twenty of the interviews were used to write this thesis. The two interviews that were disqualified were unusable. One of the interviewees was inebriated during the interview while the second interview was unusable because the son of the interviewee constantly interrupted the interview, answering in his mother's place.

The definition of oral history is quite fluid. Linda Shopes acknowledges that "'Oral history' is a maddeningly imprecise term".¹⁶⁹ Donald A. Ritchie has documented the evolution and growth of oral history.¹⁷⁰ His work emphasizes the difficulty in producing a single definition of oral history. It is through oral history that the power dynamic of knowledge is shifted: the interviewees are the experts on their own experiences. In his book *The Voices of the Past*, Paul Thompson argues that "in Africa especially, for both political and social history, oral sources play a crucial role" because although written documents are available and do exist, their depth and knowledge regarding Africa, its people and the rhythm of life, is limited.¹⁷¹ Firstly, documentation comparable to Western archives only started in the colonial period, meaning that entire histories would be lost without oral sources. Secondly, the dominant gatekeepers of

¹⁶⁹ Linda Shopes, "What is Oral History", *Making Sense of Evidence series, History Matters: the US Survey on the Web* (2005), 1.

¹⁷⁰ Donald A. Ritchie, *The Oxford handbook of oral history*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.

¹⁷¹ Paul Thompson, *The voice of the past: Oral history*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 158.

written documents were initially colonial and missionary administrators. Their writing was only a part of the story of the people they were writing about and their perspectives were often biased in favour of their missions. Oral history changes the perspective as it creates a shift in the power dynamic which can initially be quite startling and uncomfortable because the knowledge of the researcher is considered as secondary to that of those interviewed.

At its core, oral history advocates that “the person who knows the most about their life stories and their community is not the interviewer/researcher but the interviewee”.¹⁷² It is through this method that the lives and fertility experiences of the interviewed women have been documented and interpreted in this thesis. Women have been historically silenced, however, through oral history, a categorical refusal to be quiet is implicitly issued with traditional concepts and methods being challenged.¹⁷³ In the introduction of her magisterial book, *The Unwomanly Face of War*, Nobel Literature Prize laureate Svetlana Alexievich stated that her reasons for writing the book were because women had not stood up for their history despite having stories to tell.¹⁷⁴ Alexievich’s work focused on Russian women’s experiences during the Second World War. She recalled how growing up in the post-war years books she read and even stories she heard from female relatives about the war were androcentric, “[e]verything we know about war we know with “a man’s voice.” We are all captives of “men’s” notions and “men’s” sense of war. “Men’s” words. Women are silent”.¹⁷⁵ Alexievich’s sentiments are echoed in the opening lines of *Interpreting Women’s Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives* by The Personal Narratives Group¹⁷⁶ where they state, “[t]raditionally, knowledge, truth, and reality have been

¹⁷² Sean Field, *Oral history methodology*, South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development, (2007), 1.

¹⁷³ Sherna Gluck, "What's so special about women? Women's oral history", *Frontiers: A journal of women studies* 2, no. 2 (1977), 3.

¹⁷⁴ Svetlana Aleksievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War* (London: Penguin Books, 2017), xiv.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, xiii.

¹⁷⁶ The Personal Narratives Group is comprised of Joy Webster Barbre, Amy Farrell, Shirley Nelson Garner, Susan Geiger, Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres, Susan M-A Lyons, Mary Jo Maynes, Pamela Mittlefehldt, Riv-Ellen Prell and Virginia Steinhagen.

constructed as if men's experiences were normative, as if being human meant being male".¹⁷⁷ The book works to undermine and challenge what for so long was the norm in academia. The importance of such works and hopefully this thesis is expanding the conceptions of our collective social realities. Through using "oral tradition, (which is as old as human memory), we [women] are reconstructing our own past".¹⁷⁸ Through oral history the women interviewed for this thesis were able to tell their stories in their own historical contexts rather than be forced into a patriarchal framework. Oral testimony was incredibly important in producing this thesis, as hearing the experiences of the individual women directly from them generated invaluable information on their intersecting histories of migration and reproductive labour.

To return to the present study: the women I interviewed all grew up in villages in the Transkei and Ciskei homelands and moved to towns (such as Queenstown) and cities (such as Cape Town, East London and Kimberley) in the Cape Province. In terms of their childhood homes, eleven interviewees grew up in the Transkei while nine grew up in the Ciskei. The ideological foundation of the homelands was a legacy of the country's colonial past with the segregation of African and white people becoming legalized and further entrenched within the country upon the election of the National Party into government.¹⁷⁹ The creation of the homeland system was shaped by a series of apartheid acts such as: the Population Registration Act of 1950; the Group Areas Act of 1950; the Black Authorities Act of 1951; the Pass Laws Act of 1952 and the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953. The Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970 officially established ten homelands.¹⁸⁰ Four homelands – Transkei,

¹⁷⁷ Joy Webster Barbre, *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 3.

¹⁷⁸ Sherna Gluck, "What's so special about women? Women's oral history", *Frontiers: A journal of women studies* 2, no. 2 (1977), 3.

¹⁷⁹ Eliphas G. Mukonoweshuro, "Between Verwoerd and the ANC: Profiles of Contemporary Repression, Deprivation, and Poverty in South Africa's Bantustans", *Social Justice* 18, no. ½ (1991), 174.

¹⁸⁰ Act, Bantu Homelands Citizenship, "Act No. 26 (1970), explained in." *Annual Survey of South African Law* 1970 [1971] 1971.

Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei- out of the ten were then declared ‘independent’, the first was the Transkei in 1976 and the Ciskei was the last in 1981.¹⁸¹

The Transkei and Ciskei were the homelands created for the isiXhosa-speaking African people. Historical literature regarding these two regions is mostly confined to its political history, tending to focus on the dynamics and evolution of the relationship between the colonial government and apartheid state and the institution of chieftainship.¹⁸² However, anthropological work examining the day-to-day life of African people does exist, most notably for this thesis the work of Monica Hunter.¹⁸³ In her 1936 seminal work *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, the everyday lives of the Pondo – an ethnic group within the Xhosa people — were explored.¹⁸⁴

The ethnographic works of Philip and Iona Mayer in the 1950s and 1960s are also important in understanding the lives of Xhosa people in the East London area, where they conducted their research.¹⁸⁵ The focus of their work though was the migrant culture and its impact on Xhosa culture, a factor that Hunter acknowledges in the introduction of the second edition where she stated that in the twenty-five years since she did her study a lot had changed due to the migrant labour system and urbanization of African people.¹⁸⁶ In 1963, a mere two years after the publication of the Hunter’s second edition, Pondoland was annexed following a revolt against the implementation of Apartheid laws and assimilated into the Transkei.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸¹ Mukonoweshuro, "Between Verwoerd and the ANC: Profiles of Contemporary Repression, Deprivation, and Poverty in South Africa's" Bantustans", 172.

¹⁸² R. J. Haines, C. P. Tapscott, S. B. Solinjani, and P. Tyali, "The silence of poverty: Networks of control in rural Transkei", *Carnegie Conference Paper* No. 48 (1984), 2.

¹⁸³ Hunter, *Reaction to conquest: Effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, xii.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, x.

¹⁸⁵ Philip Mayer, *Townsmen Or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 1.

¹⁸⁶ Hunter, *Reaction to conquest: Effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, x.

¹⁸⁷ Haines, Tapscott, Solinjani, and Tyali, "The silence of poverty: Networks of control in rural Transkei", 10.

Interestingly, in talking about the villages that they grew up in, the interviewees provided very similar description to the studies mentioned above. I attributed the minor differences that emerged to those between the ethnic groups of the Xhosa nation, the unequal nature of colonial impact and the proximity of a village to an urban area. Much of the layout of the rural Eastern Cape countryside can be attributed to the colonial conquest. It was the site of some of the fiercest and defining battles between the European colonists and African people for nearly a century through the nine frontier wars which the Europeans ultimately won thereby shaping the land as they wished.¹⁸⁸ Through dividing the land into farms and quitrent units, the area had a definite colonial order in place.¹⁸⁹ The annexation of the entire present-day Eastern Cape was complete by 1879 with the fall of Gcalekaland, the last independent Xhosa state, which meant that the Xhosa, the African people who lived on the land prior to the colonists, were forced to adjust the new norm.¹⁹⁰ It is then, through acknowledging this historical context, that I suggest that a key reason of why the villages, towns and settlements that the interviewees grew up in were so similar was because of their collective colonial history.

The childhood homes of many of the interviewees were the traditional rondavels with thatched roofs, though this would change as by the 1970s families began to opt for square houses with tin roofs.¹⁹¹ The daily lives of the interviewees, particularly during adolescence, were also quite similar with household chores having been the most central aspect of their lives. While interviewees grew up in different villages, towns and settlements spread out across the former

¹⁸⁸ Luvuyo Wotshela, "Quitrent tenure and the village system in the former Ciskei region of the eastern Cape: implications for contemporary land reform of a century of social change", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40, no. 4 (2014), 729.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 729.

¹⁹⁰ Jongikhaya Mvenene, "A social and economic history of the African people of Gcalekaland, 1830-1913", *Historia* 59, no. 1 (2014), 66.

¹⁹¹ See also: Leslie Bank, "Beyond red and school: Gender, tradition and identity in the rural Eastern Cape", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002), 637.

Transkei and Ciskei homelands at their core they could all be seen in a “patchwork landscape of fields, gardens, scattered homesteads and villages”.¹⁹²

In addition to having grown up in the present-day Eastern Cape, the women interviewed were also chosen because they lived in Cape Town at the times of the interviews. In studying the lives of the women and analysing how they came to make the decisions that they did regarding their reproductive capacities, the Western Cape-Eastern Cape circulatory migrant system is a factor that cannot be overlooked. The migrant experiences of African women have historically been under-studied, something that feminist scholars such as Belinda Bozzoli, Deborah Posel and Cherryl Walker have been critical of and have strived to acknowledge in their own works.¹⁹³ In *Women of Phokeng*, Bozzoli and Mmantho Nkotsie work to uncover the life experiences of ordinary migrant black women beyond the popular ideology that characterized them as “somewhat pathetic objects of colonialism, racism, oppression, poverty, patriarchy, and capitalism” or the converse which romanticized the notion of strong black women.¹⁹⁴ What comes through in Bozzoli and Nkotsie’s work is that black women’s under-representation did not just mean that they were ignored but involved a failure to provide a full picture of the women, relying on caricatures and not acknowledging any nuances in their lives and experiences. What Bozzoli and Nkotsie do, what this thesis hopes to do, is emphasize the nuances and show the agency the women had. We see the women “asserting their dignity, class capacity, cultural patterns, and gender identity”, being shown as fully rounded people.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Leslie Bank and Gary Minkley, "Going nowhere slowly? Land, livelihoods and rural development in the Eastern Cape", *Social Dynamics* 31, no. 1 (2005), 2.

¹⁹³ Dorrit Posel, "Have migration patterns in post-apartheid South Africa changed?", *Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics* 15, no. 3-4 (2004), 278 referencing Bozzoli, Belinda, "Marxism, feminism and South African studies", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9, no. 2 (1983), Deborah Posel, 'Women Wait, Men Migrate: Gender Inequality and Migration Decisions in South Africa', in P. Webb and K. Weinberger (eds), *Women Farmers. Enhancing Rights, Recognition and Productivity*, (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2001), 91–117 and Cherryl Walker, 'Gender and the Development of the Migrant Labour System c.1850–1930: An Overview' in Cherryl Walker (eds.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), 168-196.

¹⁹⁴ Belinda Bozzoli and Mmantho Nkotsie, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991), 239.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

Furthermore, noting the women's migrancy status acknowledges them as active participants of history rather than passive bystanders.

Beyond being geographical neighbours, the present-day Eastern Cape and Western Cape have a long history of interconnectedness due to the circulatory migrant labour system between the two regions.¹⁹⁶ At the time of the interviews, all but two of the interviewees lived in Cape Town on a full-time basis and the other two lived in Cape Town part-time going back and forth between the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape. Of the eighteen interviewees that lived in Cape Town full-time, by the time of writing two had since moved permanently back to the Eastern Cape, something that quite a few of the interviewees also mentioned that they wanted to do too during the interviews. In Cape Town, of the women I interviewed, four lived in Lwandle, fifteen lived in Khayelitsha and one lived in the suburb of Panorama in her daughters house, an outlier from all the other interviewees who lived in the townships.

As far back as the mid-1800s, isiXhosa-speaking African people were the dominant African-Nguni people in the Western Cape.¹⁹⁷ They were not recognized as the original occupants of the area by the colonial government or the subsequent apartheid government because the Portuguese settlers first encountered the Xhosa people in the present-day Eastern Cape in the sixteenth century, permanently marking that area as their homeland in the colonial narrative.¹⁹⁸ However, colonial expansion marked the beginnings of the migrant labour system in the Western Cape as early the 1840s when Xhosa men worked on the roads in the region.¹⁹⁹ For much of the twentieth century African people, men and women, flooded to the Cape Town area in search of jobs.²⁰⁰ The influx of African people into Cape Town was so great that by the time

¹⁹⁶ Simon Bekker, "Diminishing returns: circulatory migration linking Cape Town to the Eastern Cape", *Southern African journal of demography* (2001), 1.

¹⁹⁷ Monica Wilson and Archie Mafeje. *Langa: a study of social groups in an African township* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1963), 1.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Ramphele, *A bed called home: Life in the migrant labour hostels of Cape Town*, 31.

the National Party came to power in 1948 they found it necessary to impose influx control measures.²⁰¹ Early in the twentieth century, African labourers generally lived in compounds on their employer's property but a 1902 plague outbreak made the government decide to confine African labourers in the outskirts of the city, establishing the first township Ndabeni, then referred to as a government reserve.²⁰² Despite government policy, the migration of African people to Cape Town did not abate and over the course of the twentieth century more townships were established on the outskirts of Cape Town.²⁰³

Lwandle, "situated in the Helderberg area just outside Somerset West, next to the N2 highway, approximately an hour's drive from Cape Town", was established 17 January 1958 when the Government Notice No 71 declared that land which was previously farmland would be converted into housing – i.e. hostels — for migrant labourers, specifically African men from the present-day Eastern Cape.²⁰⁴ However, quite early on in the township's development, the wives of the hostel dwellers followed their husbands to Cape Town.²⁰⁵ One of the women interviewed recalled how she first came to the area in the early 1960s and how there was much uncertainty during that period as police were patrolling the streets looking for people – specifically women — who were there illegally, while the government was also not fully committing to permanent housing, resulting in people being moved around every few months by the local magistrate.

Meanwhile the decision to build Khayelitsha was announced 30 March 1983 in response to inadequate housing for African people which had led to the formation of squatter camps in the

²⁰¹ Dot Cleminshaw, "From Crossroads to Khayelitsha to...?", *Reality: A Journal of Liberal and Radical Opinion* 18, no. 2 (1985), 331.

²⁰² Monica Wilson and Archie Mafeje. *Langa: a study of social groups in an African township*, 3.

²⁰³ Cleminshaw, "From Crossroads to Khayelitsha to...?", 331.

²⁰⁴ Institute for Justice and Reconciliation [IJR] and Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum. *A Community of the Move: Belonging and Migrancy in the Cape* (2008), 27.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

face of overcrowding.²⁰⁶ As discussed in previous paragraphs black people in the city were only wanted there in a labour capacity with the demarcated townships: Gugulethu, Nyanga and Langa being made up mostly of bachelor quarters or hostel dwellings.²⁰⁷ Despite the efforts of the government to bar or limit entry to the city for black folks who were not legally participating in the migrant labour system through various legislation there was a huge influx of black people. The establishment of Crossroads for example illustrates the situation clearly, the first shacks were erected by squatters in 1975 and within four years in 1979 there were 20 000 people, mostly Xhosa ‘citizens’ of the so-called ‘independent states’ of Transkei and later Ciskei, living in approximately 3000 shacks.²⁰⁸ The housing crises resulted in violent clashes between government authorities and African people.²⁰⁹ It was in the midst of all of this that Khayelitsha, approximately 35 kilometres from Cape Town, was conceived as a ‘new home’ for Africans and it was situated “between the sea (False Bay) to the south, a no-go area of “wetland’ (the Kuil’s River flood zone) to the east, the SADF Cape Corps Training Centre to the North, and the Armscor land northwest, the place [had] an uncomfortable camp-like or enclave atmosphere”.²¹⁰ Today, Khayelitsha is a township that is still growing with six of the interviewees living in the Kuyasa (at the time of the interviews), an area of Khayelitsha which only started development in the early 2000s, as low-income housing.²¹¹ Having been conceived within the framework of grand apartheid, both Lwandle and Khayelitsha were built with a single entrance/exit road. Lwandle was only accessible through the N2 highway with a railway line blocking access from the sea for which it was named and ‘white’ areas such Strand,

²⁰⁶ Cleminshaw, "From Crossroads to Khayelitsha to...?", 332.

²⁰⁷ Pamela Reynolds, *Childhood in Crossroads: cognition and society in South Africa*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989), 15.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁰⁹ Cleminshaw, "From Crossroads to Khayelitsha to...?", 332.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 333.

²¹¹ Goldman, Michael, "Kuyasa CDM Project: Renewable energy efficient technology for the poor", *Growing Inclusive Markets*, available at: <http://cases.growinginclusivemarkets.org/documents/112> (accessed 10 October 2019) (2010), 1.

Somerset West and Gordan's Bay.²¹² Khayelitsha meanwhile had no direct access to the N2 highway.²¹³

The sample of interviewees was found and chosen through snowball sampling. The parameters for the subjects were migrant isiXhosa-speaking women whose prime reproductive years were during the 1970s and 1980s, meaning that they experienced pregnancy or had children during that period. The earliest of the interviewees to have a child was in 1958 while the latest was in 2002. All the interviewees went through pregnancy, had a child or attempted to become pregnant in the 1970s and 1980s which is why they were chosen for the study. Upon interviewing the women, I discovered that a number had, had children in the 1960s and so I decided to also explore these women's reproductive histories in that decade. Of the women interviewed, six had never used contraceptives for a variety of reasons. One did not live with her husband full-time as he was a migrant labour and when he was home she was expected to get pregnant. Another woman experienced involuntary infertility so she had no need for contraceptives. Yet another woman was not in any long-term relationships, therefore, never felt the need to use contraceptives. Three of the women made no mention of alternative birth control methods, with one in that three stating that she was not allowed to use contraceptives as a Xhosa wife.

The twenty interviews that I did successfully complete were all between an hour and two hours long. Between 2016 and 2018, I conducted the interviews. They were all done in single sessions save for four where I went back for follow up questions resulting in a second part to those interviews. I conducted the interviews in isiXhosa, which is my mother tongue and that of the women. They were also recorded with a voice recorder and I subsequently typed up

²¹² Institute for Justice and Reconciliation [IJR] and Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, 28.

²¹³ Cleminshaw, "From Crossroads to Khayelitsha to...?", 333.

transcriptions of the interviews which were translated from isiXhosa to English.²¹⁴ The interviews were recorded, after which I translated and transcribed them. Upon completing the final version of the thesis, the recordings in isiXhosa will be deposited in the archives at the Special Collections at the African Studies Library at the University of Cape Town to allow scholars, going forward the opportunity to access the interview recordings in their original language. The process of translating and transcribing twenty interviews took about ten months. One of the challenges I experienced is that language changes and evolves, so the way that my interviews spoke was at times difficult for me to comprehend as a person younger than the women interviewed for the thesis. I overcame this through asking older isiXhosa speaking women, such as the interviewees and my grandmother, for help with translating the words and phrases I did not understand.

With each interview, I was introduced to the interviewee by a key interlocutor. In the case of the women from Lwandle, introductions were made by my grandmother and aunt. The interviewee from Panorama was introduced to me by a friend. The women from Litha Park in Khayelitsha were introduced to me by my hairdresser. Those from H Block in Khayelitsha were introduced to me by my grandmother. Finally, the women from Kuyasa in Khayelitsha were introduced to me by my uncle. Finding key informants through my kinship and friendship networks was especially helpful in generating trust, which was particularly important, given the deeply gendered and personal nature of some of the topics discussed (such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, contraception, infertility and sexual experiences and relationships, some of which were forced or coerced). Despite this approach to making contact with the interviewees, due to the sensitive and intimate nature of the focus of the study, they were at

²¹⁴ Appendix 1- Translated transcripts of the interviews.

times unwilling to talk about certain topics. The age and generational gap also hindered open dialogue in some cases. These were all factors that I had to work around.

In terms of how the interviews were conducted, there was an interview guide that I created to assist me through the interviews, though it was barely used as the interviews ended up being fairly open-ended and conversation on the topic typically flowed relatively freely after initial introductions were made.²¹⁵ All but eight of the interviewees were conducted one-on-one. While the initial goal of the interviews had been to merely focus on women's reproductive experiences in the period from 1970-1989, the women wanted to describe them in relation the general sweep of their lives, as women. This meant that the narratives presented and analysed in the thesis extended to an earlier period where the women were girls, as discussed in the first chapter.

Of the eight interviews that were not one-on-one, two of the interviewees chose to be interviewed together while during the other six the key interlocuter who had introduced me to the woman was present at the request of the interviewee. The interviews took place in the homes of the women that were interviewed. I was introduced to the women by my key interlocutors after which I explained my project to them and asked for their consent to be interviewed and recorded. Once they agreed, I started the recorder and conducted the interview. The interviews were done mostly in isiXhosa with a few English words and phrases sprinkled in. After the interview was completed, I thanked the women and they all signed a University of Cape Town (UCT) release form.²¹⁶

The project was approved by the Department of Historical Studies at UCT and it followed the guidelines of the institution's Humanities Faculty Ethics Guidebook. I gave all the women an option to be anonymous and use pseudonyms to protect their names, however, they all

²¹⁵ Appendix 2- Interview guide

²¹⁶ Appendix 3- Oral History Release

consented to the use of their real first name or clan name within the thesis. The dignity and rights of all the participants were of paramount importance to me during the entire research process, from the interviews to how I have written about them in this thesis. There was no financial remuneration from either my side or the participants side. All participation in the project was entirely voluntary.

A point of clarification that must be noted is that over the course of the thesis I use the words/phrases '*kwaXhosa*', '*isiXhosa*' and Xhosa culture or customs somewhat interchangeably. The prefix *isi-* when used by isiXhosa speakers refers to the language and the practices of a group of people, in this case isiXhosa speaking people from the present-day Eastern Cape where my interviewees come from. While the *kwa-* prefix is a locative prefix referring to 'the home of/ the place of' so the understanding of living life according to *kwaXhosa* is how life was lived in the place which was considered the home of the Xhosa people; the present-day Eastern Cape. Xhosa culture and Xhosa customs also speak to the way in which isiXhosa was practiced or how one lived according to *kwaXhosa*.

Findings of the thesis

This thesis chronicles the reproductive biographies of ordinary South African isiXhosa speaking women and examines how migrancy played a role in their reproductive decision making. Chapter 1 looks into the childhood and adolescent years of the interviewees. ‘Purity’ and virginity maintenance were heavily emphasized to the interviewees while growing up, in many ways informing their identities as women be it in agreement or opposition to the values that they grew up with. The chapter traces the reproductive histories of the women from when they first began menarche and its cultural relevance to their lives as a whole. Upon menarche the interviewees were expected to uphold various traditional isiXhosa values meant to ensure ‘purity’ and maintenance of one’s virginity. In examining the childhood and adolescent years of the women, from the 1950s onwards, chapter 1 further notes the departures from tradition that began to emerge as Xhosa culture clashed with Christianity and how this impacted the reproductive decisions of the women.

Chapter 2 focuses on the reproductive journeys of the women as they became mothers. With special focus on their experiences in the 1970s and 1980s as they navigated migrancy life between the rural Eastern Cape and urban areas such as Cape Town, and those in the greater Western Cape area and other towns in the then Cape Province. The chapter provides an in-depth look into the decision-making processes of the women when they had children, comparing and contrasting life in the homelands and in the city. Key in their urban experiences was the presence and availability of contraceptives. Learning about or using contraceptives in the urban areas often meant that there was a change in how their lives were lived. With contraceptives came new understandings of what it meant to be a wife and how they utilized their reproductive capabilities.

Lastly, Chapter 3 explores how the women interviewed interacted and reacted to the apartheid state. In recounting their reproductive biographies the influence of the apartheid government could not be ignored. From the migrancy to the family planning programme of 1974 the apartheid government was an omnipotent presence in the lives of the interviewees though what the findings reveal is that almost all the women were emphatic in emphasising their own reproductive agency, denying state influence. For the women there were alternate sources of influence such as Xhosa culture that they recognized as having impacted their reproductive decision-making. In terms of this, *ukuthwala* emerged as a critical event in their reproductive histories.

Chapter One: Girlhood: Norms and Traditions Regarding Fertility

To account for the decline that occurred in the fertility rates of African women in South Africa from the 1960s to the 1980s, one must unpack Xhosa norms and principles in relation to girls and to how they interacted with the interviewees reproductive decisions.²¹⁷ I argue that, fundamentally, there was a disconnect between what Xhosa culture dictated and the manner in which Xhosa people -in this case females- actually lived their lives. The discrepancy in what was expected of girls and women within Xhosa culture and how they actually lived their lives is the core of what will be discussed in this chapter. In order to understand the reasons for the decline in the fertility rate among African women, we have to understand fertility norms and practices, in general. In exploring the lives of the 20 women who were interviewed for this project I identified two major factors that had an impact on the fertility journeys of the interviewees, firstly, the enormous social pressure girls were under to remain pure and virginal and secondly, the introduction of Christian values to Xhosa culture. In unpacking these two factors within the context of the women's lives the genesis of the decline is made clear. The interviewees were raised observing Xhosa cultural norms so with that understanding this chapter will explore how a fertility decline happened.

²¹⁷ I use the term 'girls' to discuss female children.

What were Xhosa Cultural Norms?

Before we go further, it is best to breakdown what was meant by Xhosa culture especially in relation to girls. To better understand the reproductive decision-making of the women, I will first look into a norm understood and explained to me by the interviewees, namely, '*intombi yityatyambho yekhaya*', which is a saying which in English can be translated into 'a girl is the flower of the home'. This saying- and by default all the ideology that it encompasses- is one that was unanimously communicated to me during the interviews with my key informants. Some were raised according to this principle, while for others it is how they thought or wished they had been raised, indicating that in those cases that they saw their childhoods as having been lacking and not proper. The idea of a 'proper childhood' or a 'proper' way to grow up as a girl born into the Xhosa culture is one that is very much entwined within the overall concept of girls being regarded as the flowers of the home. Though one must note that in many ways black females were perpetual children both legally and socially until 1994 where political equality was achieved for all constitutionally. In colonial South Africa, like in many other western societies, the distinction between childhood, youth and adulthood was not clear or simple because factors such as race, age, gender and class influenced how one was defined or viewed societally.²¹⁸ During the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in South Africa the age of majority was determined to be 21, girls could legally marry at age 12 and boys at 14, in the eyes of the law only white men were ever recognized as full adults.²¹⁹ While married white women were legally subjugated to their husbands they were in a more privileged legal position in comparison with black men and women who were always deemed by white people

²¹⁸ Sarah E. Duff, *Changing Childhoods in the Cape Colony: Dutch Reformed Church Evangelicalism and Colonial Childhood, 1860-1895* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 15.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

to be boys and girls.²²⁰ This hierarchy is one that was socially entrenched from the colonial era to the apartheid years only changing in a legal sense upon the introduction of the Bill of Rights.

While the focus of this thesis is on fertility as a political instrument and the experiences of ordinary African South African women, I started most of the interviews by asking the women to give a general background of their lives and how they grew up. It was in how they talked about their childhood and adolescent years that it became apparent how ingrained the flower allegory was in their lives.

One interlocutor said that:

...as a female child is known as the flower of her home. You don't leave your flowers in the sun to burn, you don't put them somewhere where they won't get water that it is if you want your child, your flower not to be burnt by the sun you protect. You cover your plant; you protect your girl child. You love your girl child. You give your plant water and soil. You protect your child so that they don't want 'outside' things, that they see them as unimportant because they are getting what they need at home. You love them so that they don't go searching for love 'outside' and lose their virginity...
(Thandie, 54)

The above is a quote from Thandie discussing her childhood and what she felt her value was to her family. Thandie was born in 1964 in Lusikisiki, a small rural town in the former Transkei named by its local inhabitants (the AmaMpondo people), where she spent a majority of her childhood. Thandie was the only child for her parents who separated while she was still young. Her father re-married when she was three months' old while her mother got married again when she was 14 years old in 1980. As a result, she was raised by various relatives growing up, starting with her maternal grandparents. In talking about her childhood, she constantly

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

defaulted to her grandmother as a parental figure. Her grandfather, while physically present was not a parental figure according to Thandie. She describes her grandfather as having been a bully who did not give her the platform to be a child. Her childhood was tense and strict, from a young age Thandie knew to keep quiet and just listen. This type of environment would foster Thandie's distrust of not only males, but her family is general.

Repeatedly throughout the interview she referred to her grandparents, and later her aunts, as *abantu endihleli pakhathi kwabo* which can simply be translated as just people she lived amongst. Thandie recalled how as a child she was conditioned not to question adults or their motives, she talked vaguely of how the man next door made her feel uncomfortable growing up alluding to his inappropriate behaviour towards her as a young girl through comments he would make and how he would touch her. Thandie further remembers how she was told to keep quiet by adults in her family when she eventually told them about the interactions with the neighbour. She remembered how she was shamed and repeatedly told she was making her neighbour out to be a bad person unjustly. These events, the situation with the neighbour and how her family reacted to it, shaped Thandie's life. In understanding herself as a flower, she made it clear that she felt like her family failed her as she drew parallels between her childhood and a neglected plant that was left to be burnt by the sun and not watered adequately. Thandie described a childhood and adolescence where she was not given the platform to have open and honest dialogues with her mother, grandmother or aunts about her body which again emphasises the idea of one being a flower with little to no self-autonomy or expression allowed. Looking back at how she grew up, she made the point that the way she was raised was meant to instil respect within her and that was just how children were raised back then. For Thandie, though while in hindsight she understands why she grew up how she did she, still ultimately believes that it is because of how she was raised that she ended up pregnant and unmarried at 17 years old in 1982.

So, what was this ‘proper’ way to raise a girl? How was a daughter raised as the flower of her home? Central to growing up as a ‘flower’ was innocence or at the very least perceived innocence because the worth of a girl was determined by her ‘pureness’, reproductive abilities and thirdly, though not as important as the first two, but also a strong factor, was her domestic prowess. The resolve to ensure that girls remained pure was quite strong, so much so that it extended to the knowledge -or rather lack of- girls had regarding their bodies. A running theme through the early lives of the women interviewed was that they had little knowledge about their bodies and when they did get information, they were taught to be ashamed of it. In a society that was fixated on keeping their girls innocent and naïve for as long as possible in the name of protecting them, adolescent Xhosa girls were often left in the dark about sex or anything related, including their own menstrual periods until they started and mothers -or other females relatives- were forced to address the situation. Nomakosazana, for example, was born in 1944 in the Tsomo area of the former Transkei in the village of Ntsume. As the youngest of four children – one brother and two sisters- Nomakosazana was raised by her mother who she described as ‘*umntu obomvu*’ and her older brother after her father passed away while she was still an infant. Nomakosazana spent her first fourteen years in the rural areas before moving to Steenberg in Cape Town in 1958 to live with her older brother and his wife because she was having problems with her asthma and her mother thought she would get better treatment in Cape Town. Her older sister who was married also lived in Steenberg with her husband. It was during her year in Cape Town that Nomakosazana had her first menstrual period. She remembered the confusion and anxiety that engulfed her when she first noticed her soiled underwear as menstruation was something her mother had never talked to her about and she was completely blindsided.

...I was so shocked when it happened, it was in the morning or maybe in the evening?

I no longer know, anyway I saw it and I immediately ran to my sister’s house and told

her. Well actually, when it first happened, I didn't say anything, I just kept changing my underwear and hiding the soiled panties but eventually I bundled them up and ran to my sisters. I went to her, I explained that something was going on even though I didn't remember cutting myself. (Nomakosazana, 74)

During the interview Nomakosazana humorously recalled her naivety when she was having her first menstrual period. She remembered her sister laughing at her when she was explaining that, not only did she not remember cutting herself she was not even sure about the source of the bleed. Despite now finding humour in her naivety regarding when she first started menstruating, Nomakosazana's experience was quite scary for her at the time. After her sister calmed Nomakosazana down and explained what was happening she sent her back to their brothers' house, telling her she would come by later that evening to talk to their brother about her situation. Yet, despite being reassured by her sister, Nomakosazana was still worried and talked about how the moment her brother arrived home from work that evening she went to him and insisted she needed to be taken to the hospital because something was wrong with her. Her brother was confused, not quite understanding what was going on because as Nomakosazana recalls the experience she was not coherent in explaining what was going on with her. Her sister eventually arrived as she had promised and talked to their brother before sitting Nomakosazana down and reassuring her again.

The distress that accompanied the women's first menstrual cycle developed as a constant theme throughout the interviews. As young women, their lack of understanding regarding what exactly was happening to them biologically and emotionally during menstruation was something that repeatedly emerged throughout the interviews. Parents, specifically mothers, did not talk to their daughters about menarche and this was not seen as odd because of an apparent "long-standing cultural taboo against mother-daughter communication about matters concerning sexuality and fertility..." within African culture but of course this was not uniform

to all.²²¹ Menarche was a distressing experience for all of the women, from the physical perspective where they were blindsided by soiled underwear and from the emotional perspective where without any warning, they were suddenly considered women instead of children. The talks the interviewees received from their mothers, sisters and other female relatives upon starting their menstrual periods were all quite similar. In the midst of their fear about the onset of menarche, the women were coming to terms with no longer being viewed as children as a result of something that was explained to them in the vaguest terms.

We were told that, as girls, we weren't supposed to play with boys and that we had to be home before the sunset... [My mother] said I had reached a certain stage in my life, that I was grown up. It was made very clear that I was grown up and that because I had started my periods, I now could not talk to boys anymore...I had no idea what she was talking about. (Nomangesi, 54)

The two major talking points that emerged in relation to the talks a girl received when she had her first period were that she was now a young woman and to stay away from boys. Adults (most likely female relatives) seldom ever went into more detail. While biologically speaking the onset of “menarche is a milestone in a woman’s life as it denotes the start of reproductive capacity” but the emotional repercussions are not as clear cut.²²² Just because a girl’s body was ready for reproductive labour it rarely meant they were emotionally ready and yet the core message in the speeches given to the interviewees emphatically emphasized the literal overnight transition from girl to woman. For these women their first periods signified the end of their childhoods, all that they had known about their bodies changed and they were expected to adapt almost instantly. Almost all the women stated that they had limited knowledge of what

²²¹ Fiona Scorgie, Jennifer Foster, Jonathan Stadler, Thokozile Phiri, Laura Hoppenjans, Helen Rees and Nancy Muller, ““Bitten By Shyness”: Menstrual Hygiene Management, Sanitation, and the Quest for Privacy in South Africa”, *Medical anthropology* 35, no. 2 (2016), 166.

²²² Olga Karapanou and Anastasios Papadimitriou, “Determinants of menarche”, *Reproductive Biology and Endocrinology* 8, no. 1 (2010), 1.

was meant when told to stay away from boys. The vague nature of the warnings built on the foundation of silence and deflection regarding sex by parents meant that some of the interviewees understood very little about their bodies.

We see that despite being physically deemed as ready for reproductive labour the women were not emotionally and mentally ready, in many ways they still saw themselves as children not the young women they were expected to be quite suddenly. Furthermore, the distress that accompanied one's menarche was further compounded by the fact that the women had to hide that they were menstruating. Some instances where this was mentioned in the interviews included the following:

You needed to learn how to sit properly and avoid sitting with your legs open. The thing with periods is that they were very embarrassing, you had to make sure that men or boys didn't see anything. You had to keep it to yourself and be very private about it, no one needed to know you were on your periods. (Sheila, 73)

It must not be obvious to just anyone because that would be embarrassing. It's not something you want to be seen. You can't as a girl be seen walking around with red stains on you, some people would know what's going on while others would not know. You need to hide things like this. They mustn't be seen. (Thandiwe, 81)

[My mother] told me to hide it when I had my period because it wasn't something that men were supposed know. Even my own father was not supposed to know when I had my period. Only my mother would know. (Nontobeko, 68)

You would feel ashamed; your period wasn't something that was meant to be just seen by anyone. (Nomangesi, 54)

Menstruation, a natural biological event in the life of females, was stigmatized for the women which is quite interesting when one considers the value placed upon fertility within Xhosa

culture. In Zulu culture for example girls were celebrated through a ritual which consisted of “the girl hiding away when she experienced her first period and being sought by her friends. Her discovery was followed by a period of seclusion which was in turn followed by incorporation into a new group of marriageable girls”.²²³ Through this sequence of events the whole community would be aware that a girl was now menstruating though it was never outwardly discussed, whereas, according to my Xhosa interviewees, their own experiences with menarche were not as open. Instead they were shamed into hiding that they were menstruating. Upon questioning all the women further about why hiding one’s period was so emphasized they all received variations of the same answer: that they were raised to never questioned “why?” when given instructions by an adult and that was their way of life. Their answers were symptomatic of the entire environment in which they grew up, for these women they were children expected to assimilate and become young women overnight with very limited support.

The women described how, beyond the distress of not knowing about menarche until it happened, the transition from child to woman and the responsibility that came with one hiding that they were menstruating a girl’s menstrual period also had cultural implications *kwaXhosa* and specific protocols had to be adhered to:

I was taught to wash a certain way as a girl. And to stay away from *amasi* when it’s that time of the month... For as long as you have your period. You would count down the days until you finished. You’d see the cows getting milked and the milk would look so good but you would have to wait and only have milk-based food a few days after your period finished. (Ntombi, 78)

²²³ Peter Delius and Clive Glaser, "Sexual socialisation in South Africa: a historical perspective", *African studies* 61, no. 1 (2002), 31.

[My mother] never said what would happen just that I couldn't even drink tea with milk when I was on my period. No tea with milk or *amasi* and I couldn't go into the kraal. I was told those things by my mother. (Nomakosazane, 74)

Once you've started you are told you cannot eat *amasi*. You can't be out in the street; you must be at home. And you must make sure no one sees what's happening, you must hide it because this concerns your life. (Thandiwe, 81)

Once girls started menstruating, they were instructed to stay away from dairy products during the days that were on their menstrual periods. One interlocutor mentioned that:

It's the family's cow, it stayed in the kraal and you also aren't allowed to go there. In fact, don't go anywhere near there. You see? You must have that respect and not go to the kraal. You don't go there, you don't drink *amasi*. You aren't even allowed to touch the *selwa* that carries the milk. You see? You must stay away from all milk products.” (Sheila, 73)

Cows – and by default the kraals in which they live — have occupied a sacred place within Xhosa traditions. The cultural connection between cows and the Xhosa people is long and storied; from the events of the cattle-killing movement in 1856-7 due to Nongqawuse's prophecy in an attempt to get rid of the British settlers, to cows being used as currency during lobola negotiations (more will be discussed in chapter two) to how cows were used as a medium to talk to one's ancestors in rituals that were commonly performed in the kraal.²²⁴ Cows were used as a food source, either as meat, or for their milk which could be used as is or turned into items such as *amasi* or *amarhewu*. In answering why girls were warned away from dairy

²²⁴ Jeffrey B. Peires, *The dead will arise: Nongqawuse and the great Xhosa cattle-killing movement of 1856-7*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 310 and Manton Hirst, "Dreams and medicines: The perspective of Xhosa diviners and novices in the Eastern Cape, South Africa", *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* 5, no. 2 (2005), 3.

products during menstruation Shiela talked about one of the most entrenched beliefs. According to her, if a girl drank or ate dairy products, touched the *selwa* (the bucket one milked into) or went into the kraal it would cause the cow's milk to dry up, therefore, no longer producing milk for the family. So strong was this belief that as a child Nomakosazana used it as an excuse to get her mother to do her chores for her.

I wouldn't have to milk the cows or have to go get cow dung for cleaning the floor. My mother would have to be the one to not only get the cow dung but then actually be the one to smear it on the floor. When she would try to make me do it, I would remind her that I was not supposed to touch anything that had come from the kraal so she had to do it herself. (Nomakosazana, 74)

The intertwinement of cows, women, reproduction and fertility within Xhosa culture was both complex and interesting. It was believed that a girl's period hindered cows from fulfilling their own reproductive functions: in this case it would have been milk production. Also, when a woman got married Xhosa culture required cattle from the groom's family to be given to the bride's family as part of lobola, generally understood as an exchange for the woman's reproductive capabilities. The relationship between cows and the Xhosa was one of respect and reverence, in many ways deeply spiritual, though that relationship added another layer of pressure on girls, believing that if they defaulted from the instructions they were given when they had their first period, they would be responsible for effectively starving their families since they would have interfered with the cow's milk production.

The ban on dairy products and entering the kraal during one's menstrual period was an example of the stringent culturally induced protocols that girls, now seen as women, had to adjust to and live their lives accordingly. Ultimately, I would argue that the manner in which girls were taught about menstruation was a traumatic and confusing one. Menarche represented a lot of

change, change that was thrust upon adolescent girls who had not been prepared for it. The fact that some of the women thought that they were sick or that they had injured themselves when they experienced their first period speaks to their emotional and mental levels at the time that they were told that they were now grown up and fertile.

Nomzana was an interviewee whose life story, upon analysis, appeared to be a good model of the ‘proper’ way for a girl to be raised and how to live her life as an adult in accordance with Xhosa culture. Born in 1940 and raised in Mount Fletcher, a small rural town in the former Transkei, Nomzana was the fifth of eight children. Nomzana grew up in a farming family and talked extensively about her chores. Her chores included duties like harvesting corn, grinding the corn into maize and harnessing cows to the manual hand guided plough in preparation to planting crops which she then did. Nomzana recalled with great pride how she was very good at milking cows, explaining that sometimes cows did not like to be milked but she would be tenacious and eventually the cows would get used to her and accept her. Nomzana grew up going to school though her duties at home were a higher priority and she ultimately did not complete her schooling because she got married. In 1959, Nomzana was 19 years old, she told me the story of how she and her husband met in church, describing both of them as church goers. Having seen each other in church, Nomzana’s then future husband went to her family to ask for her hand in marriage. After Nomzana’s family accepted his request, he paid lobola which according to Nomzana was twelve cows.

He and Nomzana then had a white wedding. This was an era in which white weddings amongst African people were gaining cultural significance as the traditions and patterns of life followed by African people in the pre-colonial era had changed and evolved in in what Terence Ranger referred to as the ‘invention of tradition in Colonial Africa’: by using this concept he was referring to the ways in which “European invented traditions offered Africans a series of clearly

defined points of entry into the colonial world”.²²⁵ The methodological evangelism of African people through missionary projects was evident in how “black brides took evident pleasure in marrying in white dresses based on Anglo-American and European models”.²²⁶ These weddings were an indication of two cultures merging, “the fusion of Bantu and European ideas”.²²⁷ Though the objectives of Christian missionary project were to convert black people completely this did not happen as African people, like the Pondo as observed by Monica Hunter, still clung to some African traditions like lobola while culturally assimilating with Christianity.²²⁸ This statement was validated to me when I asked Nomzana to give a general overview of her life at the beginning of the interview, she first mentioned that she grew up in the rural areas of Mount Fletcher. Then almost immediately talked about how she not only got married but that it was a white wedding indicating the importance placed on marriage and the cultural significance of a white wedding, which was a public declaration of one’s purity when entering marriage in addition to the lobola that was paid. Once married, Nomzana explained that her main duty was to provide children as she stated:

You had to have children. You were a real wife when you had children... I was lucky to have children because it's what you supposed to do as a woman. You're there [marital home] to have children. You are in there to have children and grow that family.

(Nomzana, 78)

Between 1960 and 1984 Nomzana had eight children though only four survived into adulthood with two being alive at the time of the interview. In addition to bearing children Nomzana also fulfilled her domestic duties in cooking and taking care of the home, explaining to me that she

²²⁵ Terence Ranger, "The invention of tradition in colonial Africa" in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 227.

²²⁶ Natasha Erlank, "The white wedding: Affect and economy in South Africa in the early twentieth century", *African Studies Review* 57, no. 2 (2014), 31.

²²⁷ Hunter, *Reaction to conquest: Effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, 213.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

and her contemporaries did not work outside the home. Nomzana did further tell me that due to coming from a farming family and because of the type of chores she performed growing up she surprised her in-law family and impressed them by working alongside her husband in the fields. Throughout the interview it was clear that Nomzana found purpose in fulfilling her duties as a wife and was a good model for the Xhosa cultural system as it related to females through keeping 'pure' while waiting for marriage and ultimately using her reproductive capabilities in a legitimate manner.

Fertility among the Xhosa went beyond the biological production of offspring by females, the Xhosa cultural system required that one's fertility or reproductive capabilities be legitimate. How can 'legitimate fertility' be defined and understood? The ability to produce offspring was one that was central to a woman's identity and, in many cases, was the principal form of self-expression. In 1989, anthropologist Emily Martin noted that "every society has its own set of complex belief systems surrounding events such as puberty, menstruation, sexuality, pregnancy and childbearing".²²⁹ While fertility was expected of women, pregnancy was generally only welcomed and celebrated depending on the woman's marital status because it was within marriage that the marital contract existed. Furthermore, built into the marital contract were cultural systems and institutions designed to ensure fertility the 'correct' way and at the 'correct' time. Getting married in Xhosa society was a process that had to be sanctioned by elders in the families of both the prospective bride and groom.

The marital institution would not be accepted or recognized if Xhosa principles were not adhered to which would ultimately lead to illegitimate use of one's reproductive capabilities because key within the Xhosa cultural system was the institution of lobola. Lobola- also known

²²⁹ Abigail Harrison and Elizabeth Montgomery, "Life histories, reproductive histories: rural South African women's narratives of fertility, reproductive health and illness", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27, no. 2 (2001), 312.

as a bride wealth or a dowry- was quite central within the marital contract. Lobola was traditionally negotiated in terms of cattle as that was the measure of wealth within most African ethnic groups and communities. Generally, three pillars constituted the institution of lobola: firstly, the virginity of a girl before marriage; secondly, a woman being a source of pride and not shame to her family; and, perhaps most importantly, the “agreement that she will produce children for her husband and his family”.²³⁰ Imbedded within logic of lobola and overall ideology of a girl being ‘the flower of the home’ was the understanding that a woman’s body (her sexuality and fertility) belonged to her family, specifically her father, until he could legitimately give it to her husband. This was a belief that was ingrained from childhood and we see how closely Nomzana followed it.

We just had no business with boys... [my grandmother] talked to me when she noticed in church that I had talked to a boy. We had to stay away from boys because as a girl you couldn't have a baby outside of wedlock. That was not something that happened, it was a huge disgrace...For me, the first time I was with a man was when I got married because he had asked for my hand. (Nomzana, 78)

Normatively speaking, women had to be given permission to exercise both their sexuality and reproductive capabilities. All the women were quite unanimous in their answers about the foremost duties and expectations of a wife, repeatedly throughout the interviews the women explained to me that there was high value in legitimate fertility and children. The legitimacy was emphasized because in patriarchal Xhosa society payment of lobola meant children belonged to their fathers as “cattle beget children” in accordance to cultural principles for three vital reasons: firstly, the continuation of one’s marital family’s bloodline; the second reason

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

was to have caretakers in old age and thirdly, to maintain a relationship with the ancestors.²³¹ While the first two reasons are self-explanatory the third one begs the question on why ancestors would want children? According to Eleanor Preston-Whyte, children were deemed important to the ancestors because it was through them that the ancestors would be remembered and honoured through rituals.²³² The relationship between the living and the dead was symbiotic. The living performed rituals where they not only honoured those who had passed away but remembered them ensuring that they lived forever through future generations.²³³ The ancestors meanwhile blessed the living through giving them children who would take care of them in life and eventually honour them when they too became ancestors. Through unpacking Nomzana's fertility experience which was in many ways a model one as she adhered to the Xhosa cultural principles that were ingrained into her as a child it became clear that cultural systems such as lobola and public ceremonies such as white weddings were in place to ensure culturally sanctioned use of a woman's reproductive capabilities. Preston-Whyte described it as "mental blueprints which give rise to action".²³⁴

Another aspect within the girl being 'the flower of the home' ideology was what can be termed the 'innocence-factor'. Earlier in the chapter, innocence in terms of the physical virginal purity which was expected of girls before marriage was discussed. It is, however, important to note that expected innocence went beyond the physical because according to all the interviewees, in their experiences, they largely remained mentally and emotionally ignorant of matters of sex until marriage, though this was not always the case. The topic of sex and sexuality among African people is a complex one. In their article "Sexual Socialisation in South Africa: A Historical Perspective" Peter Delius and Clive Glaser made the point that up until the time they

²³¹ Eleanor Preston-Whyte, "Culture, context and behaviour: anthropological perspectives on fertility in Southern Africa", *Southern African Journal of Demography* 2, no. 1 (1988), 18.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

wrote their article which was published in 2002, there was little historical research on the topic of youth sexuality.²³⁵

Anthropological studies undertaken in the first half of the twentieth century about African societies came close to describing Africans' experiences of sexual socialisation. According to Delius and Glaser, "students of South Africa's past have remained mute on issues of sexuality despite their centrality to human experience and endeavour" though there were some notable exceptions such as Isaac Schapera, Godfrey Pitje and Monica Hunter.²³⁶ In discussing sexual openness in African society, Delius and Glaser characterise Schapera as having looked into the Kgafela-Kgatla people of the Mochudi area in Botswana. In his findings, conducted in the 1930s, Schapera noted that in Kgatla society there was little reserve regarding matters of sex and sexuality.²³⁷ Sexual matters were not hidden: instead they were spoken about freely even in the company of young people. Schapera observed that while ignorance in relation to sexual matters before marriage was highly regarded in European society for girls, it was a non-factor for Kgatla girls.²³⁸ Pitje meanwhile had grown up in the 1920s and 1930s in Sekhukhuneland, an area in north east of South Africa in the former Transvaal Province, and he returned there in the 1940s for anthropological research he made many of the same observations about the Pedi people of the area as Schapera had of the Kgatla.²³⁹ Pitje explained that children generally slept in the same room as their parents and as such they were educated quite early on matters relating to sex. There was little to no secrecy in matters relating to sex and Pitje observed that children engaged in sexual play that was mostly ignored by parents.²⁴⁰

²³⁵ Delius and Glaser, "Sexual socialisation in South Africa: a historical perspective", 27.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

²³⁷ Isaac Schapera, *Married Life in an African Tribe* (Michigan: Sheridan House, 1941), 180.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ Delius and Glaser, "Sexual socialisation in South Africa: a historical perspective", 30.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Monica Hunter's own anthropological research focused on the Pondo people, a subsection of the Xhosa ethnic group, who came from Pondoland which is located along the coast of what is today the Eastern Cape province, echoed a lot of the same findings as Schapera and Pitje. Hunter concurred with Schapera and Pitje regarding awareness of the facts of sex by children due to open discussions in their presence by adults.²⁴¹ Though according to Hunter, married couples had their own hut and children commonly slept with an elder female such as a grandmother in the great hut.²⁴² This differentiates the Pondo from the Pedi, where children slept in the same room as their parents and most likely observed sexual encounters.²⁴³ The findings of all three anthropological studies, while possessing minor differences, as they focus on three separate ethnic groups, point to the same overall freedom concerning matters of youth, sex and sexuality within African societies. However, a shift started to happen at the end of the nineteenth century and throughout much of the first half of the twentieth century where more open sexual expressions were abandoned in favour of repression.²⁴⁴ During their adolescent years there was a constant reimagining of what was proper and what was not regarding sexual awareness and other teachings thought to be fundamental like those around menstruation and the importance of white weddings for young women. Of the women I interviewed, the oldest was Thandiwe who was born in 1937, making her 81 years old at the time of the interview while the youngest was Ntombiyenani who was born in 1965 making her 53 years old during the interview. Using Thandiwe and Ntombiyenani as the age brackets and assuming that most girls become sexually aware at 13 years old, the time period in which my interviewees were adolescents and young adults was between 1950 and 1978. It was in this span of time that fundamental changes within African -specifically Xhosa- culture were underway.

²⁴¹ Hunter, *Reaction to conquest: Effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, 180.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ Delius and Glaser, "Sexual socialisation in South Africa: a historical perspective", 28.

²⁴⁴ Catherine Burns, "Sex lessons from the Post?." *Agenda* 12, no. 29 (1996), 79.

Each decade introduced new beliefs like the importance of a white wedding.²⁴⁵ Missionary projects and the migrant labour system were two of the biggest factors in changing African culture. For example, according to Delius and Glaser, in observing Xhosa culture in the 1960s and 1970s, anthropologists Philip and Iona Mayer saw that sexual gratification was esteemed by all, regardless of age and, in fact, adolescence was looked upon as the time that sex should be practiced.²⁴⁶ However, what became problematic was how to acknowledge and accept burgeoning adolescent sexuality without disrupting the proper social order which forbade premarital pregnancy.²⁴⁷ Limited forms of sexual release that did not include any form of penetrative sex, sometimes referred to as *ukumetsha* in Xhosa or *hlobonga* in Zulu, were allowed under strict monitoring or management.²⁴⁸ However due to Christian influence the long-standing tradition of *ukumetsha* was heavily condemned and girls who participated were stigmatized, it was in this time period where silence and shame came to define premarital sexual activities.²⁴⁹ Christian morality led to the creation of a culture of repression and ignorance surrounding anything to do with sex, further adding to the changes was the growth of the migrant labour system which “ensured that fathers were often absent figures, and the threat that this represented to parental authority was deepened by the increasing absence of mothers, who in many areas had little option but to search for employment or income in the towns”.²⁵⁰

So, the shift in Xhosa morality regarding sexual matters happened and the experiences of my interviewees confirmed this. Those who grew up without their parents because they were away working stated that:

²⁴⁵ Natasha Erlank, "The white wedding: Affect and economy in South Africa in the early twentieth century", 32.

²⁴⁶ Delius and Glaser, "Sexual socialisation in South Africa: a historical perspective", 31.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁴⁹ Mayer, *Townsmen Or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City*, 254.

²⁵⁰ Delius and Glaser, "Sexual socialisation in South Africa: a historical perspective", 38.

I grew up without my mother, I only saw her when I was 13 years old. I stayed here [in Cape Town with her] until I was three years old before being sent to grow up in the Eastern Cape. She worked in Observatory. (Nokresmes, 65)

I grew up living with my grandfather, my mother's father and my grandmother, my mother's mother. I was the first grandchild; I was the oldest. So, I lived with them in the rural areas. First, we lived in Kwelera then we moved to Tsholomnqa. My mother was working in East London. (Sheila, 73)

On the topic of the silence that defined sexual socialization in their adolescents and how they were encourage to remain ignorant to anything related to marriage until marriage, my interlocutors relayed that:

We were not encouraged to talk to our parents about things like sex or pregnancy, it was a matter for the adults and that is all it was. It was adult's business. (Rebecca, 70)

We were not told anything; all I knew was that I had to keep myself pure. That I had to keep myself as a girl and that I couldn't just have a random boyfriend. (Ida, 80)

There was also the idea that one's innocence (both physically and mentally) remained until marriage because a girl's value was in her purity. One informant stated that:

Virginity was very important, especially to our parents. You were only supposed to break your virginity within marriage. You were only supposed to have children when you were married. (Ntombiyenani, 53)

Ultimately, through breaking down the childhoods and adolescent years of some of the interviewees, we get a clear understanding of what they meant when they talked about being raised as 'flowers of the home'. The adolescent and early adulthood sexual socialisation experiences of the women are representative of the Xhosa cultural norms that they were

expected to follow though of course not all of them did and, as such, some felt guilty for what they perceived as their failures. For girls maintaining their innocence was paramount until they were given the official go ahead through lobola and marriage to utilize their reproductive capabilities because it was culturally sanctioned.

Girls under Cultural and Societal Pressure

The social environment which the interviewees navigated during their adolescent and young adult years was one that required strict adherence to remaining pure, girls were under a lot of pressure. Purity, or at the very least the image of it was very important. In discussing the Zulu, Harriet Ngubane found that mystical experiences such as the concepts of purity and impurity were often associated with women rather than men.²⁵¹ Additionally, ‘daughters or sisters’ were often viewed as having what Ngubane termed more positive mystical forces compared to mothers or wives who were commonly linked to negative mystical forces.²⁵² The Zulu and the Xhosa are two closely related ethnic groups within the Nguni linguistic group.²⁵³ Due to this closeness they share a lot of the same beliefs which is why one is able to utilize some of Ngubane’s observations of the Zulu to the Xhosa. Ngubane noted that when both a birth and a death occurred women had to undergo certain procedures because they were viewed as sources of pollution.²⁵⁴ A woman who had just had a baby was “considered to be highly polluted, and her pollution [was] contagious...” and was forced to withdraw from society until she was

²⁵¹ Harriet Ngubane, "Some notions of ‘purity’ and ‘impurity’ among the Zulu", *Africa* 46, no. 3 (1976), 274.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 274.

²⁵³ Rachel K. Jewkes and Katharine Wood, "Problematizing pollution: dirty wombs, ritual pollution, and pathological processes", *Medical Anthropology* 18, no. 2 (1999), 168.

²⁵⁴ Ngubane, "Some notions of ‘purity’ and ‘impurity’ among the Zulu", 274.

‘clean’ meaning she stopped post-partum emissions like lactating.²⁵⁵ These ideas of purity and pollution were very much present among the Xhosa.

The lives and bodies of young girls and women were not their own, they were their family’s daughters. How one was perceived in the community reflected on their family and so, ideally, they would be expected to only engage in intercourse upon marriage. Parents tried to enforce this through various ways such as girls being encouraged to stay at home. The home, therefore, became one of -if not the only- site of safety and protection for them. The key method that parents used to try keep their daughter’s virginal was virginity testing which had a long-storied history within Xhosa culture. Interviewee, MaDlamini explained that elders in a girl’s family were generally very concerned with her virginity, when asked her about premarital sex, she was quick to say that not only was it forbidden but due to virginity testing girls were under constant surveillance.

...if you were suspected [of having sex] you would be examined by adults. Your legs would be opened and you would be checked. And the adults will know if you've slept with a man. (MaDlamini, 60)

In 2002, in her article “Virginity Testing and the Politics of Sexual Responsibility: Implications for AIDS Intervention”, Fiona Scorgie provided a historical perspective on the practice of virginity testing and its cultural roots.²⁵⁶ Scorgie noted that there was evidence of girls having had their virginity inspected as early as the nineteenth century among the isiZulu and isiXhosa-speaking people but the practice was most likely in place long before. Seeking to understand the process, Scorgie found that “often, the testing of all girls of a particular area would be carried out at the behest of the local chief, who would call them to his homestead and appoint

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 275.

²⁵⁶ Fiona Scorgie, "Virginity testing and the politics of sexual responsibility: Implications for AIDS intervention", *African Studies* 61, no. 1 (2002), 55.

a local elderly woman to perform the testing. Alongside this, the girls would also be tested by their mothers and grandmothers in their own homes”.²⁵⁷ According to Scorgie’s work virginity testing was because parents -and the family at large- saw “their primary responsibility as helping to guide children into adulthood, a process that [was] ensured through the preservation of children's (assumed) sexual innocence for as long as possible”.²⁵⁸

MaDlamini was born in Nqamakwe a town in the rural Transkei in 1958 into a family that she herself described as *abantu abaBomvu* (red people) and not *abantu abafundileyo* (educated people). The mid twentieth century saw Xhosa people generally divided into two categories; *abantu abaBomvu* and *abantu abafundileyo*. This divide happened due to colonial influence as while *abantu abafundileyo* were those who got a Western education through missionary schools and converted to Christianity, *abantu abafundileyo* rejected all Xhosa cultural beliefs and traditions in favour of European culture and they even began dressing in clothing rather than loin cloth. Meanwhile *abantu abaBomvu*, a name that literally translates to ‘caked in mud’ because of the red mud that they used to cover their bodies, held on to the pre-colonial way of life.²⁵⁹ They rejected the church and formal education while they continued to believe in ancestors and follow age old beliefs. In describing her formative years MaDlamini explained that she grew up ‘practicing isiXhosa’, stating that growing up in a ‘red family’ it was stricter and more restrictive than those who grew up in Christian families. She explained that the differences in the lifestyle were very much ingrained and it was something she never needed to question.

You couldn't just do whatever...you couldn't sleep on a bed until you were about my age. I grew up not sleeping in a bed. Why? Because of *ububomvu*, because at home we

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

²⁵⁸ Fiona Scorgie, "A battle won? The prohibition of virginity testing in the Children's Bill", *Agenda* 20, no. 68 (2006), 26.

²⁵⁹ Leslie Bank, "Beyond red and school: Gender, tradition and identity in the rural Eastern Cape", 632.

practiced isiXhosa. You understanding this...We didn't eat eggs as a girl child.
(MaDlamini, 60)

MaDlamini talked to the obedience that was instilled in her as a child because of Xhosa culture and how, as a girl, she was raised to be a proud representative of her family, so much so that practices like virginity testing were normalized for girls growing up.

If it was found out that a girl was not a virgin or, even worse, that they had become pregnant outside of marriage, then they would be socially ostracized.

MaDlamini said that:

It was a source of shame to us. That was very shameful to us. We didn't even really talk about it. And if you had given birth you couldn't walk with girls (virgins) and you couldn't talk to them...There was no conversation between us (MaDlamini, 60)

Faith, another interviewee, was born in Kensington, Cape Town, in 1947. Like all the other interviewees she emphasized the importance of purity in a young girl's life and the shame one felt if they went against the teachings of *kwaXhosa*. After Faith was born, she was taken to Tsomo village in the rural former Transkei where she was raised by her grandmother along with her siblings and cousins as their parents were away working in Cape Town and Johannesburg, and would send money home. In recalling her childhood, Faith recounted that because she grew up in the rural areas as a girl she generally stayed in her own yard as visiting friends was not permitted because their chores at home came first. They would only see their friends if they happened to be going to the river to collect water at the same time or if they happened see each other on the way to gather wood. Growing up in such a strict environment meant that by the time Faith reached adolescence, she was aware that she was meant to remain virginal but did not know what that really meant because she was not allowed to pose any questions or discuss anything relating to sex with adults. In particular she stated that, "...our

parents never talked to us about anything, you couldn't talk to them about boys or sex or all those things. You never did that at all.”

Faith recalled that how she only learnt about sex when she got married because it was in marriage that a girl was supposed to be introduced to sex. However, as the interview went on, perhaps because she got more comfortable with being interviewed, she explained that she had not been completely naïve about matters of a sexual nature before marriage. She said that her early knowledge about sex came from a combination of talking to friends at school and observing older girls in the community, particularly her older sisters, with boyfriends. Then, despite having claimed to have entered her marriage a virgin, earlier in the interview Faith admitted that she actually became pregnant with her first boyfriend’s child while she was still a teenager. Faith recalled how she was away at school when she got sick and taken to a doctor who told her that she was pregnant, she explained that the news staggered her because at the time she was still so naïve. Faith never suspected that she would be pregnant because she had only just started menstruating and recalled how at the time, she did not even understand that because she had started menstruating it meant she could get pregnant. Already feeling shocked because of the pregnancy, Faith’s feelings were compounded by guilt because, as she described it, she had failed her family in getting pregnant while still a girl. She said that “It was a bad situation because I was still a girl...it was not a nice experience for me too.”

Faith’s unintended pregnancy ended in miscarriage though a key finding which emerged from the interviews was how truly taboo it was discussing sex and sexuality for the interviewees because of how they were raised. When asked about the freedom to discuss and potentially learn about sex from parents –or adults in their lives— they all unequivocally denied even the possibility of bringing it up in discussions or even being present during conversations about it. The phrase *uqgaqqadekile* –which can be translated to being overly curious about matters that were not one’s concern or deemed inappropriate by adults— was often used as a warning when

as children one would even attempt to ask questions. Curiosity was not welcomed. One of the biggest indicators of the taboo nature of discussing sex and sexuality in childhood and the adolescent years of the interviewees was in their awkwardness in answering some of the questions posed.

At times during the interviews, instead of answering questions in relation to their sexual lives and experiences, they would shrug while avoiding eye contact with me. Faith was contradictory in originally telling me that she had sex for the first time within the bounds of marriage, yet she later admitted that she had not only had sex with her first boyfriend but that she also ended up becoming pregnant as a result. Faith's contradiction about her premarital pregnancy was not due to her being an unreliable narrator, but rather a woman determined to uphold the image of herself as a 'flower of the home' during her youth. Approximately 50 years after her premarital pregnancy, Faith was still intent on upholding the values that had been instilled in her while growing up and the shame, she felt then was still very much present. The pressure to remain innocent was very much present because it was dictated to the interviewees by adults in their lives as Xhosa law. However, we see in Faith's experience and in Thandie's experience where she actively blamed the way in which she was raised -in accordance to Xhosa laws and traditions- as the reason she was pregnant at 17 years old that there was a disconnect between what was expected of girls and the reality of their situations.

Out of the twenty women interviewed, twelve entered their marriages as virgins, with ten in that twelve having had children within their marriages. One had children after she and her husband divorced, while the other had multiple miscarriages and stillbirths. Eight of the twenty women I interviewed had children outside of marriage and four of them eventually got married despite entering their marriages while no longer being virgins. Although twelve of my interviewees were 'pure' when they got married and only began to utilize their fertility because it was sanctioned within Xhosa law, eight of the interviewees did not. While twelve is the

majority we cannot ignore that eight of the women did not live up to Xhosa cultural standards which means that there was a discrepancy between the theoretical understanding of Xhosa customs and what happened in practice in their lives. Therefore, understanding that such a huge discrepancy existed between the women's experiences and Xhosa cultural norms, I put forth the idea that the high value placed on fertility inside of marriage was often more theoretical rather than actual, as we can see from the twenty women interviewed for the thesis. While the majority of the women still followed the ways of *kwaXhosa* in relation to their reproductive capacities, it is in looking at the eight who did not that we can begin to see the introduction of new values.

Introduction of Christian Morality *kwaXhosa*

The governing approach that was taken by the colonial powers in their conquest of South Africa was one of indirect rule, through this policy they purported that it was a way to preserve pre-colonial structures.²⁶⁰ Ironically, the missionary project was able to exist because of colonial conquest but with a different agenda which required direct contact with the people of South Africa in an effort to convert them. At the time of the interviews, all twenty interviewees were Christians. For some, Christianity was all they knew growing up, some remembered their family converting, while others were first generation believers. Christianity meant a shift in the values and beliefs of the women, beliefs that sometimes were in contradiction to those espoused by the Xhosa way of life.

Born in 1956 in Mqaba Village near the rural town of Debe in the former Ciskei, Nozipho was one of ten children – two boys and eight girls— born to her parents. She described her

²⁶⁰ Lungisile Ntsebeza, "The Resurgence of Chiefs: Retribalization & Modernity in Post-1994 South Africa", *Readings in Modernity in Africa*, edited by Peter Geschiere, Birgit Meyer, and Peter Pels (2008), 73.

childhood as full of love but also difficult as her family was poor. Nozipho's whole family, parents included, lived in one rondavel. Nozipho's education was cut short in standard two (grade four at the time of writing) when she had to stay home and help with herding cattle because there were only two boys. In addition to herding cattle with her brothers, Nozipho also helped milk cows and worked in the garden, which she credited with saving her family from total poverty. She explained that while her father worked in Johannesburg, he earned very little and the reason why Nozipho and her siblings never went hungry was because they had a garden full of vegetables. Like many of her contemporaries, Nozipho was raised in ignorance of matters relating to sex, so when she got a boyfriend at fourteen, she did not quite understand when he would repeatedly try and sleep with her. Nozipho recalled her boyfriend saying, "let's do evil things" when they caught two friends of theirs having sex behind a bush which was a common place for trysts which were unsanctioned by marriage to happen. She stated that she did not want to have sex, but ultimately capitulated and she ended up becoming pregnant.

Similarly, to all the other women who had children while they were still girls, Nozipho did not realize she was pregnant until her aunt noticed her protruded stomach while she was changing. Nozipho talked about the fear she felt when she realized what had happened and knowing that she had done something wrong. However, in discussing her 'fall' which was how an out of wedlock pregnancy was described *kwaXhosa*, Nozipho said that the fallout, while bad, was relatively manageable. She explained that her father had a forgiving heart and despite the fact that she had utilized her reproductive abilities without his permission, in accordance to Xhosa law, he never shouted at her. Nozipho admitted that while her mother did shout at her as her child, she was never made to feel out of place as her mother believed that children were a gift from God, and having being raised in a Christian family, Nozipho, for all her fear at having had a 'fall', also believed in God's will being done. In her interview she said that:

You know, children are important. It's not good to...the bible says that a child is God's will no matter how they came to be. The book of Jeremiah Chapter one, verse four and five says 'I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb' so for there to be a child in your uterus is through God's will. No matter how it happens...it's God's will. So, once someone abuses you about a child or treats you badly because of a child, God will make them suffer. (Nozipho, 62)

Nozipho's experience regarding her family's reaction to her pregnancy was one that was echoed by quite a few of the women who had also had premarital pregnancies. Becoming pregnant while still a girl was still very much considered a taboo but once she was pregnant there was an acceptance of what had happened because there was a belief in not only God himself, but his plan. This is not to say that premarital pregnancy was taken lightly or that every girl had an experience similar to Nozipho's. Thandie, for example, despite coming from a Christian family, was shamed for having a child outside marriage as was dictated by Xhosa cultural norms: she said that:

When you're told no sex before marriage it's because there are consequences that you can't reverse. You can't undo it...having a child. Being left alone with a child. Expanding an already poor family. Having a child that is not welcome. Having a child that was a burden to my parents because of my negligence... (Thandie, 54)

However, the existence of experiences like Nozipho's show that Christianity and its values had a significant impact on the everyday lives of Xhosa people. As a result of Christian beliefs such as 'God's will', premarital pregnancy, which was one of the biggest taboos within Xhosa culture, was made more palatable for some of the families who had converted to Christianity and wholeheartedly believed in its teachings.

Many of the interviewees tended to lean towards conservatism, as many of the churches they attended growing up were Catholic or an African initiated church (AIC), most notably the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), which was officially registered as a church in 1942 though it had been founded approximately two decades earlier was the largest AIC in southern Africa.²⁶¹ Nozipho's mother was a prophet within the ZCC so her reaction to her daughter's pregnancy was very influenced by the teachings of the church. The influence of the churches – both mainline and AICs— was so great that as we saw with Nomzana's experience, a white wedding in the church was viewed as a priority. The white wedding became so popular and ingrained in Xhosa culture as a measure of having been raised the 'correct' way that while growing up, the threat of not having one was often used by adults to guide young girls into behaving in an approved manner.

Nokresmes, a key informant, described the importance of a white wedding while she was growing up, was born in 1953 in Cala or as she calls it emaMfengweni because of the strong Mfengu population: a group within the Xhosa people. Nokresmes was raised in the rural areas away from her parents who worked in Cape Town, as the youngest of many siblings with over ten-year age differences between some of them and her. As a result, her older sisters were mother figures to her and, as such, they saw fit to discipline her.

In disciplining Nokresmes, her sisters sold the idea of leaving home in a white dress as the ultimate goal. To get a white wedding and wear a white dress a woman had to be pure, it was in pursuit of the goal –which was very much founded in Christian morality— that girls felt the pressure to be virginal, even when they were not, and so abortion became an option.

²⁶¹ Allan H. Anderson, "The Lekganyanes and Prophecy in the Zion Christian Church", *Journal of Religion in Africa/Religion en Afrique* 29, no. 3 (1999), 290.

Nokremes's mention of the importance of a white wedding was echoed in other key informant interviews. In particular, Thandi said that

I grew up around adults mostly. I would hear about people my age that had an abortion. Adults would talk about how unmarried girls were having abortions because they wanted white weddings. They'd talk about how so and so was not having babies and attribute it to their pasts where they had abortions because they wanted white weddings. (Thandie, 54)

Abortion was a taboo topic and practice consigned to the private realm as a result of the shame and stigma attached to the practice: this was also true among Africans.²⁶² In the interviews, only one of the women claimed to have attempted to have an abortion (Ntombiyenani, whose story of teenage pregnancy is described in more detail in Chapter 3.). However, a number, like Thandie, knew about the practice and claimed it to be very popular among unmarried girls who wanted to protect the image of their innocence. Six interviewees discussed or mentioned abortion to me. I never brought the topic up as it was not the focus of the study but for some of the women it related to the discussions we were having regarding their sexuality and girlhood. Interestingly of the six interviewees that did discuss abortion with me they were divided about the commonality or lack thereof of abortions when they were growing up. Three of the women, including Thandie and Ntombiyenani, stated that abortions were common in the 1970s and 1980s and were an open secret of sorts while two of the women acknowledged that abortions happened but were rare stating that they had become more popular in the post-apartheid era. While one woman argued that abortions did not happen when she was growing up in the 1970s and 1980s and instead were a new phenomenon.

²⁶² Rebecca Hodes, "The medical history of abortion in South Africa, c. 1970–2000", 527.

“I never heard about abortions...we never had abortions back then. Which actually further emphasizes my point when I say that things today are really bad. Today you'll just be walking down the street and you'll see a dead baby stuffed in a drain.” (Nomangesi, 54)

While the sample size of only six women is too little to make definitive conclusions it does bring focus to nuances between the women themselves and the women and their culture which underlie this thesis as a whole. In a culture obsessed with girls preserving their virginity until marriage where then they were expected to utilize their reproductive abilities to their maximum capability –i.e. to have as many children as they could— it is quite ironic that abortion became an option for girls in an effort to measure up both to Christian values and those of *kwaXhosa*. Since girls were a reflection of their family values it was not their own innocence or lack thereof that was important but rather the image of the family within the community. Abortion presented an interesting case within Xhosa culture. Amongst white South Africans the biggest objections to legalizing abortion were religion and racial ideology in relation to white women.²⁶³ The 1970s saw illegal abortions reach “epidemic proportions” among black women but regulatory authorities largely ignored this.²⁶⁴ From the discussions of the six women regarding abortions we see that the practice was also largely ignored within Xhosa culture, not because of the indifference to black bodies or the goal to curb black population growth that motivated the state; it was rather because to acknowledge abortion, in favour or against, would be to acknowledge that a girl was no longer pure. The taboo nature of abortion *kwaXhosa* appeared not to be founded in objection about the act itself but rather what the act represented.

Abortion as a popular practice meant that not only were less children being born but the illegal nature of abortion in apartheid South Africa meant that there were health consequences. For example, between 1965 and 1972 records from Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town showed

²⁶³ Rebecca Hodes, "The medical history of abortion in South Africa, c. 1970–2000", 531.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

that 13 681 women came in due to incomplete abortions.²⁶⁵ In trying to measure up to the pressure that they were under and have a white wedding, some girls who thought that they had found a way to circumvent the rules and avoid the consequences of their premarital activities, ended up destroying any chance of having children in the future due to unsafe abortions. The pressure to have a white wedding was equivalent to that of being ‘a flower of the home’ so much so that the image of innocence became more important than actually living a life aligned with the Christian-Xhosa values that were preached. The fact that interviewees spoke about the active practice of abortions by Xhosa girls in the 1970s and 1980s validated the reality that women’s reproductive experiences did not always follow dominant cultural norms.

Christian Morality versus Xhosa Morality: Involuntary Infertility

Nontobeko, one of my interviewees, was born in 1950 - in the rural village of Mount Fletcher in the Transkei though was not sure of her exact date of birth stating that a mistake had been made with her identity document (ID) – Nontobeko was the oldest of her siblings and, like many of the interviewees, she grew up with the ideology that as a girl she was ‘the flower of the home’. She was expected to obey her parents without question and it was made clear that her place was in the home: the home she was born in and the one into which she would eventually marry. As a young woman, Nontobeko had an arranged marriage, her husband saw her and went to ask for her hand in marriage. Nontobeko did not know him before their marriage but she explained that was how it was done and she in fact felt flattered that someone was willing to pay lobola for her. Nontobeko went through *ukuthwalwa* which will be discussed

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 532.

in Chapter 3. When I asked Nontobeko about what was expected of her as a wife her answer was in line with the teachings of *kwaXhosa*.

You had to grow the family...you were expected to help grow that family. You were not a daughter in that family, you were a means to expand that family. I had to cook, wash children, do the laundry and cook. (Nontobeko, 68)

The importance of having children is something that was reiterated to me throughout the interviews by all the interviewees in agreement with Nontobeko, women –specifically wives— were expected to have children.

Once you are married, you are *umfazi* and as such you must do things that wives do...Yes, by having children you're fulfilling your wifely duties because as a wife you're supposed to have children. (Sheila, 73)

Because we as Xhosa people believed that in marriage you needed to have children to make sure that your husband's family did not die off. For example, my child died but because I had other children the legacy and bloodline of my husband's family has been able to continue...it's very important...at least it was to us at that time. That's what we believed in. (Nomawethu, 64)

When you are married you are told you must have children. If you do not have children it is like you are not married, it is like you are not a wife. (Ntombiyenani, 53)

In researching the impact of coerced and forced sterilization on HIV-positive women in South Africa academics, Zaynab Essack and Ann Strode, looked into what motherhood -and subsequently the absence of it when the ability was taken away- meant to African South African women.²⁶⁶ Essack and Strode identified twenty-seven women who had undergone involuntary

²⁶⁶ Zaynab Essack and Ann Strode, "'I feel like half a woman all the time': The impacts of coerced and forced sterilisations on HIV-positive women in South Africa", *Agenda* 26, no. 2 (2012), 24.

sterilization to interview and their answers in relation to not having the ability to have children reflected the societal pressure women were under to bear children with one woman stating, “I feel like half a woman all the time...” while another said, “It makes me feel incomplete that I am not a proper woman.”²⁶⁷ Essack and Strode’s interviewees were echoed a lot in sentiment expressed by the women interviewed for this project as we can see from the earlier quotes. To be involuntarily infertile was painful to the women who experienced it.

In Vishanthie Sewpaul’s study entitled “Culture Religion and Infertility: A South African Perspective” she talked to South African couples and religious leaders coming from all the major ethnic groups -African, Indian, Coloured and White who belonged to different religious groups from the Hindu faith to various Christian denominations (Methodist, Catholic, Rhema, Zionist, and Full Gospel) about the value of fertility.²⁶⁸ In the Indian, White and Coloured community, women stated that their status socially was not diminished if they were infertile despite the societal pressure and decreased self-esteem.²⁶⁹ This was the opposite experience for African women who according to Sewpaul “indicated that they were labelled *inyumba*, an extremely derogatory term meaning barren or empty”.²⁷⁰ The public shaming and derogatory name calling to women who were infertile was a subject on which all my interviewees were well-versed. The words ‘*inyumba*’, ‘*inkabi yenkomo*’ and ‘*idlolo*’ came up repeatedly in relation to women who were unable to have children.

Because in our culture [Xhosa] when you don't have children you are given a name. You are called '*inyumba*'. When you are called '*inyumba*' it means you can't have kids, '*ulidlolo*' (Thandie, 54)

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁶⁸ Vishanthie Sewpaul, "Culture religion and infertility: A South African perspective", *The British Journal of Social Work* 29, no. 5 (1999), 742.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 743.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Idlolo was a name given to someone who could not have children no matter what they did...No, it was not nice because if you were '*idlolo*', it was not because you did not want children. It was because you could not have them for whatever reason. That title was a smear, it was ugly and it was offensive. To call someone '*idlolo*' was swearing at them and it was not like the woman you were insulting asked to be infertile. They wanted to have a child but they could not. (Sheila, 73)

Perhaps the most insulting and dehumanizing of the insults was infertile women being referred to as '*inkabi yenkomo*' -or simply '*inkabi*'- a word meaning an ox. One woman, Nomakosazane, explained that growing up in the rural areas there was a lot of farming and often oxen would be harnessed to plough the fields. If a wife was infertile then as she would hear shouts of "*mayikutshwe lankaba isedlini!*" or "*ingalityalwa lankaba isedlini!*" when oxen were being harnessed for ploughing the fields from her husband's relatives who wanted a child for their son. The phrases '*mayikutshwe lankaba isedlini*' and '*ingalityalwa lankaba isedlini*' were awfully dehumanizing as they not only labelled an infertile woman as a male cow, but also emphasized that without children, she was useless as a wife and would better serve the family as one of the ox ploughing the fields since oxen were males and could not become pregnant or give birth. This harsh attitude towards infertile women was an indication of the high value placed on fertility and its importance within Xhosa culture. When pressed deeper on how these women were treated, interviewees who had just mentioned the horrible name calling of infertile women and all it entailed stated that, ultimately, an infertile woman was blameless and insulting her was unnecessary. Nomakosazana, for example, who had had three children explained that while she had not experienced infertility, she was aware of life around her and the often-negative experiences infertile women endured. For Nomakosazana her reaction to women who were infertile was that of empathy.

It certainly was not a nice thing. You are a human but you were being called '*inkabi yenkomo*'....It's impossible not to feel horrible about yourself even if no one ever says anything to your face...can you imagine? Would you feel good about being called a cow? (Nomakosazana, 74)

The source of the grace and understanding extended towards infertile women by a lot of interviewees was based in their Christian beliefs. This is similar to how acceptance regarding out of wedlock pregnancies eventually came because there was a belief in God's will so it was extended to infertility. A woman could not be blamed for her lack of children if it was God's will for her to have none. This is a further example of the ways in which Christianity implement further change into the way of life of the Xhosa people. Practices such as '*ukulalwa*' whereby a wife would sleep with a male member of her husband's family in an effort to become pregnant began to go extinct as many of the interviewees spoke about it as no longer -or seldom- happening in the 1970s and 1980s. Unfortunately for Nontobeko, she was one of the women who suffered through involuntary infertility. Nontobeko could not fulfil the most important of her duties -having children- as she suffered multiple miscarriages and the times, she did manage to carry a baby to term it would die at birth or soon after. In Nontobeko's experience as a woman who for all intents and purposes was involuntarily infertile due to her miscarriages and stillbirths, she was not treated badly in her marriage due to not having children. Again, the disparity between women's fertility experiences and practices is in evidence. In relation to infertility, there was a huge disconnect in the stigmatising language used in relation to it and how infertile women were actually treated by other women.

Conclusion

A woman's childhood and adolescent years were used as foundations in moulding them to who they were supposed to be, every lesson they were taught was a precursor to the rest of their lives. Through careful conditioning all aspects of their lives revolved around their eventual fertility. Their innocence and naivety regarding sexual matters was meant to be kept until fertility was allowed within marriage. But pre-colonial Xhosa values were changing, especially with the rise of Christianity among the Xhosa people. We can see that there was a departure from fertility norms such how out of wedlock pregnancies and involuntary infertility were handled. The fertility experiences of the women interviewed for this study were spread across four decades, 1950 to 1989. The timeframe was particularly interesting as it was a time of social and political upheaval. The traditional way of life was under pressure from factors such as: the migrant labour system in the lives of Africans; Christianity, and, education for girls. A new hybrid society was emerging throughout the second half of the twentieth century that the interviewees had not necessarily been prepared for within the Xhosa teachings with which they had been raised.

This chapter has shown the complexities of how women navigated contradictions between the belief systems they were raised with during girlhood and their actual fertility experiences as young women and adults. What was normative was in conflict with what occurred in practice, a theme that is further will be discussed over the next chapters. The experiences of the women, how they navigated life as young adults were also shaped by political and socio-economic changes. The options available to the women were to hold on to the teachings of *kwaXhosa*, completely abandon them or adjust the teachings in some manner where they abided by the ways of *kwaXhosa* while being applicable a changing context. The thesis will now examine

the ways in which women's contraceptive decision-making as adults was influenced by their migration between different parts of the Cape over the period.

Chapter Two: Women's Contraception Use, Fertility and Migrancy in the Cape

The fertility decline in South Africa as noted and observed by Pott's and Marks was most pronounced in the 1980s though they identify the 1960s as the beginning point for this demographic transition.²⁷¹ They stated that demographic journals on the subject were generally very quantitative and most attributed the decline to the adoption of contraceptives, the increasing importance of education, transition to dual household incomes and other general socio-economic factors.²⁷² This chapter offers an in-depth discussion of the experiences of the interviewees during this period, especially in relation to factors mentioned in these demographic studies. As we know, the pressure to have children was there and as seen in chapter 1, there was a lot of cultural significance placed on having children, which raises the question of how African women's migration experiences shaped their reproductive decision-making. What we do know is that the migrant experiences of African women have been under-documented in social history.²⁷³ Furthermore, more research is required in relation to the connection between migration and African women's fertility patterns, a lacuna both this chapter and the subsequent chapter of this thesis aim to address.

Cities, such as Cape Town, an important geographic focus of this thesis, were unwelcoming to African women. African men were only tolerated in the outskirts of the city as labourers -in mines, farms and factories- until the mid-1980s due to influx control and the pass laws, which were in full force.²⁷⁴ The spatial planning of hostels in townships was quite strategic as from

²⁷¹ Deborah Potts and Shula Marks, "Fertility in Southern Africa: the quiet revolution", 189.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ Laura Phillips and Deborah James, "Labour, lodging and linkages: migrant women's experience in South Africa", *African Studies* 73, no. 3 (2014), 411.

²⁷⁴ Dudley Horner, "Labour preference, influx control and squatters: Cape Town entering the 1980s", *Saldrú Working Paper* no. 50 (1983), 15.

their conception they were built as unofficial extensions of the work environment of African males.²⁷⁵ For approximately a 10-year period beginning in the mid-60s, official state policy dictated the construction of male-only housing for migrant workers, with no family housing being built at that time.²⁷⁶ As we have seen, the migrant labour system is one that forever changed the dynamics of the African family, as husbands and fathers were often away for months, and sometimes even years, working in the urban areas while their families -wives and children- remained behind in the rural Bantustans. The policy of building male-only housing added further strain on already fraught situations. Husbands travelling back to the rural areas to visit their families would either only have a few days of leave from work per year, or sometimes go home for a visit with nothing but hope that their job would be waiting for them when they returned. Because of this, it, should have, hypothetically, been easier for the wives to be the ones to make the trips to towns and cities visit their husbands. However, due to the antagonistic policies towards African women in the city, their stays in urban areas like Cape Town were incredibly unpleasant. This was often expressed by the women in the interviews.

Ida who was 80 at the time of the interview recalled coming to visit her husband in Cape Town (where he worked) as a young bride in the 1960s. This was a time where the laws and policies of the state regarding African population control in urban areas such as the Blacks Consolidation Act of 1945 along with the Native Amendment addition of 1952 were firmly entrenched in the daily lives of African people.²⁷⁷ When asked about her overall experience in Cape Town, she replied:

Oh Lord, I have led a very painful life here in Cape Town. You see Cape Town and *amabhulu...yho...* [Afrikaans people] (Ida, 80)

²⁷⁵ Ramphele, *A bed called home: Life in the migrant labour hostels of Cape Town*, 4.

²⁷⁶ Clemminshaw, "From Crossroads to Khayelitsha to...?", 331.

²⁷⁷ David Simon, "Crisis and change in South Africa: implications for the apartheid city", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 14, no. 2 (1989), 191.

Ida was born in 1938 in a small village called Nonyikila near Qumbu in the former Transkei. She was born to two parents though her mother passed away while she was still young. As a result, the key female figures in Ida's life were her older sister and an aunt. Ida described her childhood as traditional and her transition into adolescence as the same. She was quite emphatic in explaining that the place of a girl in the home was being a 'flower', a common phrase among the Xhosa. As such, Ida's purpose in life was to get married and have children, an undertaking in which she took great pride. Ida was a teenager when she met her husband, an older man who lived in the same village. She recalled how her husband pursued her and, after seeing her around in the village, he eventually went up to her where he informed her that he would be marrying her and taking her to his home. Ida explained that she did not initially believe him as it was common for men to make such declarations and not follow through, possibly ruining a girl's innocence in the process. However, Ida's then future husband upheld his promise and at the age of eighteen or nineteen, they married. Immediately after marriage, Ida started to try become pregnant, as having children was her duty as a wife. With her husband working in Cape Town, Ida could only try and conceive when he was home for a visit. In the five years following her marriage, Ida became pregnant twice but, unfortunately, both children -sons- died in infancy, her first son died at birth and her second son when he was approximately a year old.

It was after the death of her sons that Ida was told by elders to come to Cape Town to be with her husband in 1965 and try conceive, as her husband's visits to the Eastern Cape were short and infrequent with Ida failing to conceive during those times. She described how horrible her first experience with Cape Town was, to the point that she almost immediately requested to go back home.

I came...uh...I came when the fighting was just starting. When it started, I was already here. When the political unrest started, I couldn't handle it and asked to go back home. My great uncle who was also here agreed because I was getting sick from the stress so

I went back home...it was all around the time this whole thing was starting, it was the time of Sobukwe. I was so scared which was why I went home. I was just scared of everything that was happening because it wasn't nice. We were being treated so badly by white people. Our husbands were working long hours, I didn't know what was going on. I really didn't like any of it so I went back home. (Ida, 80)

Despite her unhappiness in Cape Town, Ida did not stay home for long as she returned to be with her husband. She explained that as a wife it her was duty to conceive and bear children for her husband and his family so despite her misgivings about Cape Town, she had to return to try and fulfil her duty. Ida described life in Cape Town as one defined by fear and constant harassment by the police. For Ida, the biggest difference between Cape Town and rural Eastern Cape was the ever-present threat of being arrested at any moment, which was further compounded by the knowledge that there was little guarantee her husband would make it home each night due to increasingly violent political upheaval. Ida told me the story of one of her arrests soon after she first arrived in Cape Town in the late 1960s, she and some of the other wives who were also visiting their husbands in Cape Town made the journey from the hostels to Killarney where there were clothing factories and one could buy leftover scraps of fabric at reasonable prices. Ida talked about how the police arrived as they were in the midst of buying the scraps of fabric and asked for their pass books. When Ida and the other women tried to say they had left their pass books at home the police arrested them.

Ida and the other women ended up having to stay overnight in prison before being transported to the Langa police station where her husband had to pay R75.00 for her release. For context Ida explained how it used to cost between R14.00 and R20.00 for the journey from Cape Town to the rural areas so R75.00 for bail was approximately a month's worth of income as her husband earned between R10.00 and R20.00 a week. Ida stated how much situations such as her arrest made her detest Cape Town even more, recalling how, during her bail hearing, she

wished the magistrate would just send her back home because she did not want to be in Cape Town and was very unhappy.

It was in this environment – emotionally and mentally stressed as a result of the socio-political climate -- that Ida was expected to conceive and have children. Ida eventually became pregnant and gave birth to a daughter in 1965 followed by sons in 1969 and 1973. She became pregnant and gave birth while staying in Cape Town with her husband. When Ida talked about her pregnancies she said:

Cape Town was not fun at all; I was really unhappy. I was actually very lucky in getting pregnant and having my children while here because I was so unhappy. I could not be happy because of the situation we were in here in Cape Town. (Ida, 80)

It was after the birth of her daughter in 1965 that Ida was first introduced to contraceptives by nurses in the hospital. Ida's description of her experience in giving birth at a hospital was quite impersonal. She, along with all the other interviewees who went to a hospital or a clinic during their pregnancies, mentioned nothing in relation to their nurses or doctors beyond trusting their medical training and following their advice which was in favour of contraceptive use. Ida explained that they (contraceptives) were still new and she did not know anything about them.

She had never heard about or used contraceptives, when she was told she had start using them when she was still in the hospital after giving birth to her daughter in 1965. Ida said that she was initially unsure of the contraceptives and suspicious of the motives behind their use. Another interviewee, Nozipiwo who first came to Cape Town in 1972 from Corhane village in Mthatha in the former Transkei Bantustan to be with her husband, explained that knowledge regarding contraceptives was very limited back in the Bantustans. She also said that contraceptives were received with a lot of scepticism there, with elders claiming that '*abelungu*

bazobulala inzala yethu’ which described the worry among African people that contraceptives were a method utilized by white people to try kill off the future of the African population.

Furthermore, contraception and contraceptive use was something the women interviewed for the study heard about in the clinic and in hospital. Homebirths were the dominant practice in the rural areas. When asked about her pre-natal care when she was pregnant with her first child, in 1971, Nozipiwo told me that back then it was not common for one to go to a clinic or see a medical professional like a doctor or a nurse, instead she said that “Our mothers were the nurses...it was passed down generation to generation”. Furthermore, she explained the way life was lived back then was very community-based and that other women, who were most likely older, married and already having had their own children, would help a woman when she became pregnant and when it was time for her to deliver. She recalled that women in the community would sometimes even know when a woman was pregnant before they themselves realized.

Nozipiwo said the following about her experience when she gave birth to her first child:

I gave birth to my first child at home. I didn’t even realize that I was in labour because I never had contractions. What happened was that a woman from church came to visit me. She arrived while I was busy grinding corn into maize and she was laughing very loudly telling me about something that had happened. I remember not liking her loud cackling laugh and wishing she would be quieter. *Yho!* I remember stopping what I was doing and running to the garden. I was there for a while before realizing that I was not feeling quite alright. I had very minor contractions. You see? And then I gave birth soon after...everything went well because the elder women knew what they were doing. They knew and did everything...I gave birth in the rural areas so I only just heard about

what I was supposed to do. I didn't have time for contraceptives, I didn't care.

(Nozipiwo, 70)

Nozipiwo's answer and experience, three years later in 1974 when she had her second child was significantly different. Having come to Cape Town in 1972 Nozipiwo said that she witnessed a cultural shift that she described as African people becoming more enlightened. It was in Cape Town that she discovered that other women used contraceptives, she recalled that it was not something that was talked about publicly but it was something people knew about unlike in Corhane village where it was dismissed and unacknowledged. Nozipiwo went through her second pregnancy in Cape Town as opposed to the rural Eastern Cape. She talked about how she started going to the clinic for pre-natal check-up appointments and it was there that nurses first started talking to her about contraceptives. After Nozipiwo gave birth to her daughter, she decided to start using contraceptives, choosing the Depo-Provera injection over the pill. When asked why she chose to start using contraceptives when she had been so unsure only three years earlier, Nozipiwo explained that the changes in her life since then necessitated its use. There were two main factors that Nozipiwo relied upon when she made her decision. Firstly, she had come to live with her husband in Cape Town. Nozipiwo explained that women's family planning was heavily shaped by the migrant labour system.

We didn't always have contraceptives. In the rural areas contraceptives weren't even really important because once you were married and you got pregnant your husband would leave for Johannesburg or any other big city...he had to go work now. You would stay behind and have the child. You would nurture and raise your child for about two or three years while your husband was away. While he was away, he needed to send money back home. He would then come home when your child is about two or three years' old and impregnate you again. So, as you can see there was no need for contraceptives. (Nozipiwo, 70)

In moving to Cape Town to live with her husband, this family planning method was disrupted, Nozipiwo realized that she would most likely not get the three-year age gap she had between her two children with a potential third since she was living with her husband and the chance of becoming pregnant again was high. Not only would a gap between future children be potentially non-existent, the number of potential children was also uncontrollable. The second factor that Nozipiwo realized was that since she too was now living in Cape Town, there were financial constraints and she could not expect her husband to be the sole breadwinner. Recognizing that since she would also have to work and contribute to the family costs, she decided that she needed control over her fertility in order to get a job outside of the home.

Ida's initial exposure to contraceptives was similar to Nozipiwo's except it occurred some five-to ten years earlier in 1965. She also first learned of contraceptives properly in Cape Town. Her experiences with her first pregnancy and half of her second pregnancy in kwaQumbu in the Eastern Cape did not include clinic or hospital check-ups and all they entailed. In Cape Town, however, Ida went to the clinic and eventually gave birth to her daughter in a hospital. This is where Ida and Nozipiwo's contraceptive journeys diverge because where Nozipiwo was given the *option* of using contraceptives Ida was *medically advised* by doctors to use birth control because of her health. Having lost two children in infancy and suffered a few miscarriages, doctors told Ida that if she became pregnant again without giving her body time to heal after the birth of her daughter, she could die. Ida made the decision to get 'the loop' (IUD) inserted so that she would not get pregnant again anytime soon. Her husband, while worried about her health, was also suspicious of her using birth control, she said that:

He was genuinely worried but he questioned what I was preparing for by getting the loop inserted and I told him that it wasn't my decision, and if he had any questions, he should have asked the doctors. He didn't really believe...He was worried about the reasons behind my insertion of the loop. He was questioning what I was going to be up

to when he was away...you know I immediately realized that he had it in his head that I was going to be up to something. Because now I wouldn't get pregnant if I were doing something. My husband really questioned me about why all of a sudden, I felt the need to get the loop inserted. (Ida, 80)

Here, it is worth exploring further the women's experiences of some common negative social attitudes towards contraceptive-use in this period. Firstly, there was the belief by elders in rural communities that contraceptives were a way for the white government to kill off African people. While contraceptives were a part of the state's policy to reduce the fertility rate of African women and ultimately slow down the growth of the African population, as discussed earlier in the chapter, the reaction of the elders to contraceptives in rural communities was viewed by the interviewees as having been more an example of fear-mongering conspiracy theory rather than fact. A second reason that caused women's feelings of shame and actively fostered a culture of secrecy around contraceptives was a more personal one referred to by Ida who described her husband as having questioned why she needed to use contraceptives. In addition to the apartheid government's agenda in providing contraceptives and its overall socio-political implications the issue played out on the human level and it needs to be viewed through the lens of intimacy. Understanding that family planning occurred in a context where the women's husbands left the rural areas for big cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town, these absences meant that the need for hormonal birth control was non-existent and if one used it suspicions would be aroused in the home and in the community. Men leaving for big cities while women were left behind in the rural areas also factored in post-partum traditions. Interestingly, only Nontobeko (mentioned in Chapter 1) made any mention of post-partum traditions *kwaXhosa* recalling that if a woman had sex with their husband while still nursing it was not a good thing as it would cause a woman's child to be sick referring to this taboo as '*utsiba iziko*' which translated to 'jumping over the hearth'. Though Nomangesi (whose

experiences will be discussed in Chapter 3) did mention how she was told by her mother that if she had sex while her child was still young he would die, though she understood this warning to be as a result of her unmarried status rather than the general post-partum tradition as Nontobeko mentioned it as. None of the other women brought up post-partum taboos and I did not ask, although one has to wonder if husbands being away from their wives while they were nursing and the rise of contraceptive use when spouses were living together negated the topic. Nozipiwo, in describing the impact she witnessed contraceptives have in her rural village once they were introduced, stated that they created a culture of dishonesty. In particular, she said that:

Using contraceptives was something to be ashamed of in the rural areas because everyone knew that it meant you were cheating on your husband. (Nozipiwo, 70)

When asked about the socio-political aspect of contraceptive use, most of the women interviewed were unaware of it or simply did not care. However, they all unanimously agreed about the type of environment that contraceptives fostered at a community level. The knowledge that a woman's actions had consequences was a long standing basic, but effective, checks-and-balances type of system aimed at ensuring marital faithfulness -at least on the part of the wife which was important in the *kwaXhosa* patriarchal system: Nozipiwo explained that before contraceptives were introduced, if a woman cheated on her husband while he was away in the city working and she remained at home in the rural areas, she would most likely be caught as there was a high chance that there would be consequences to her actions through a pregnancy. The introduction and use of contraceptives were often linked to mistrust and uncertainty because, if a woman was having an affair and using contraceptives, the likelihood of her becoming pregnant was significantly low; there would most likely not be any consequences to her actions. Nozipiwo stated that within the community there would maybe

be suspicions based on whenever a woman was seen with a man who was not her husband but with no actual evidence of wrongdoing in the form of a pregnancy, the suspicions would remain just that.

Understanding that this was the type of attitude regarding contraceptive use within the Xhosa communities of the women I interviewed -specifically in the rural areas- one can begin to understand Ida's husband's reaction to her using contraceptives. The reputation of contraception and contraceptive use was one of wrongdoing. So prevalent was this belief that Ida immediately understood why her husband was not comfortable with her using birth control. Ida recalled repeatedly telling her husband to talk to the doctors about why they wanted her to start using contraceptives and insisting that she was not getting the loop inserted because she wanted to but because it was best for her health. Her husband eventually conceded, understanding that his wife's health was in danger and she could not afford to become pregnant again until after her body had had time to heal. However, his initial reluctance and Ida having emphasized that she was not choosing to use birth control because she wanted it indicated how deeply ingrained the negative information and beliefs often were regarding contraceptives. A study conducted to determine the association between contraceptive use and intimate partner violence between 2003 and 2006 in six Sub-Saharan African countries, excluding South Africa, revealed similar thoughts regarding contraceptive use, "any covert use of contraception (e.g. hormone pills) may raise the partner's suspicion of infidelity".²⁷⁸ Another study looking into factors that influenced contraceptive use conducted between 2005 and 2015 in twelve Sub-Saharan African countries, including South Africa, revealed comparable thoughts where even the mention of using a condom meant there was infidelity in the relationship.²⁷⁹ These findings

²⁷⁸ Amina P. Alio, Ellen M. Daley, Philip N. Nana, Jingyi Duan, and Hamisu M. Salihu, "Intimate partner violence and contraception use among women in Sub-Saharan Africa", *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* 107, no. 1 (2009), 35.

²⁷⁹ Blackstone, Sarah R., Ucheoma Nwaozuru, and Juliet Iwelunmor. "Factors influencing contraceptive use in sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review", *International quarterly of community health education* 37, no. 2 (2017), 85.

reinforce ideas of African patriarchy, barring women from using contraceptives was another way to control their fertility and an attempt to ensure a faithfulness in the relationship. Ida's husband eventually conceded and let her use contraceptives not because he trusted her but because he was convinced by medical professionals that having the loop inserted was in her best interest health wise.

Four years later in 1969, Ida became pregnant while she still had the loop inserted, as with her previous pregnancies it was a difficult one. She suffered from extreme nausea and had fainting spells, and would have to be rushed to the hospital often. Though Ida ultimately characterized the loop as having not worked for her because she became pregnant while on it, she acknowledged the benefit of the four-year gap between children that she received as a result of it. Living in Cape Town with her husband exposed Ida to a different way of life and thinking than she had lived by in Nonyikila village. Despite having being indoctrinated from a young age that her duty as a wife was to have a lot of children to grow her husband's family there was a somewhat forced change in Ida's priorities because of her health issues.

I had been a wife for a really long time, I was quite grown when I... we were told in the clinics that we needed to change the way we had always done things and do what we were told by the nurses. We were told to start using contraceptives... (Ida, 80)

It was in Cape Town that Ida was given her husband's permission to prioritize her health over her duty as a wife. In the Transkei, Ida had had multiple difficult pregnancies that ended in two of her children dying in infancy or in miscarriages in the span of five years, her life was in constant danger with every pregnancy but her overall duty in producing children for her husband prevailed. In moving to Cape Town Ida was able to circumvent getting pregnant through the use of contraceptives.

I ended up going along with the whole thing [the use of hormonal birth control] because I was living with my husband so I had to make sure I was protected and I wouldn't accidentally get pregnant. (Ida, 80)

Despite the apparent apathy bordering on hostility regarding contraceptives, Ida's eventual acquiescence is quite significant and represents a change in the fabric of life in *kwaXhosa* culture.

Sheila was born in 1945 in a small rural village in Kwelera in the former Ciskei to a single mother. As a result of being the child of an unwed mother Sheila, according to Xhosa tradition, belonged to her maternal family, she was '*umtana ozalelwe ekhaya*' (a child born to an unmarried girl) with her grandparents having fulfilled parental roles for much of her childhood. Sheila and her family then moved to another small village, less than 100 kilometres away called Tsholomnqa where she spent much of her childhood. As the oldest and – for nearly a decade — only grandchild, Sheila's upbringing circumvented a lot of the cultural norms, her chores consisted of those traditionally thought to be male, in addition to those she was expected to perform as a girl. Sheila explained that farming was a way of life growing up, her chores consisted of collecting water from the river, laundry, cooking and taking food to those labouring in the fields. Additional tasks she performed -which would have traditionally been performed by a boy- were helping with steering and driving calves in order to help with planting crops and herding cattle. However, as she reached adolescence gender roles became more enforced. Sheila recalled how her grandmother would tell her that as a girl she was expected to be a homebody, a virginal well-mannered representation of her family's values to potential husbands. At the age of nineteen, however, Sheila became pregnant, she described her out-of-wedlock pregnancy as embarrassing, shameful and a breaking of the rules she had been taught at home. Sheila talked a lot about her fears and lack of knowledge regarding sex and pregnancy during this period, despite her own premarital pregnancy. She gave birth to her son a few

months before her twentieth birthday, and gave him a name that was an apology to the elders for her 'unlawful' pregnancy. Sheila then became pregnant and had a second child in 1967, again out-of- wedlock. Sheila then met her husband and got married in 1968, with her lobola value impacted as a result of her two previous pregnancies.

Once married, Sheila became pregnant again and gave birth to her third child in 1969. It was during this third pregnancy that Sheila first had formal pre-natal care at a hospital with medical staff while living in East London's Ziphunzana township. It was at this time that Sheila was first introduced to contraceptives. Giving birth to her third child at a hospital, was another first for Sheila, who had given birth to her two previous children at home with help from her mother and other women from the community. It was after this birth that she began using contraceptives. Sheila's husband was aware of her usage and according to her he was quite supportive.

We discussed [my contraceptive use] because...we did discuss it even to stop when we...needed another child, you know. So, we did discuss it [because] marriage is about two people who have to work together as partners, you have to share the major decisions. Marriage is a partnership...when you're married you are supposed to do things together. You're supposed to work together. (Sheila, 73)

Sheila chose the Depo-Provera injection as her contraceptive method. When asked why she chose to use contraceptives, she explained that in 1969 after giving birth to her daughter the realization of having three children under the age of five hit her; if the tools of family planning existed, she decided that would take advantage of them to create a bigger time-gap between her children to give her body time to rest and to gain the chance to raise the children she already had before potentially having another. Most importantly for Sheila, she chose to start using contraceptives because she needed to work. Growing up, Sheila was educated through high

school and then started her first paying job in a candle-making factory in East London at the age of seventeen. As an adolescent girl, it was ingrained in her that she was supposed to get married and have children. However, for Sheila living in a city as a migrant woman, the nature of the socio-political and economic environment in which she found herself largely made those expectations unrealistic. This was a sentiment shared by a lot of the interviewees who spent more time in urban areas as compared to rural ones.

While still living in East London, Sheila left the candle-making factory and worked at a blanket manufacturing factory after her first child was born. She then moved onto a curtain accessory making factory between her second and third child. These back-to-back pregnancies meant that Sheila could not get a steady job, hence, she changed factories multiple times in a short space of time, so when Sheila was offered contraceptives she said yes because she believed that it would give her more control of her life. In fact, she wished contraceptives had been around earlier.

I realized that contraceptives would have prevented me from having a child before marriage, if they had been around earlier. Or I would have at least not had two children back-to-back because there's only two years between my first and second born. I could have planned it like I did my last two, one was born in 1969 and the other 1974. You see? Contraceptives would have given me the chance to plan. (Sheila, 73)

Fellow interviewee Nozipiwo justified her decision to use contraceptives as 'valid' because she was a working woman. She too, like Sheila, made the decision to use contraceptives after talking to her husband.

It was my decision if I wanted to use contraceptives or not. I wanted...I loved my husband and that was really what it came down too. It depended if you loved your husband enough after having a child. Do you two respect each other? Are you

understanding me? If you choose to use contraceptives why are you using them? Do you understand? You both need to agree on why you are using contraceptives? Is it because you want to have an affair? Or are you using contraceptives because you're a working woman? Do you understand? Do you have valid reasons? I just wanted to work...that was the main reason. (Nozipiwo, 70)

The 1960s and 1970s were the start of a new era for women *kwaXhosa* as many began to step away from the home and into the workplace, the consequences of women working were seen in the increased use of contraceptives while fertility rates dropped. In examining the fertility and contraceptive experiences of Ida, Nozipiwo and Sheila, there are similar resonances. They chose to start using contraceptives for similar reasons though they had different priorities specific to each of them and their life once they had moved to urban areas: Ida because of her health and the fact of living with her husband in Cape Town; Nozipiwo because of living with her husband in Cape Town and needing to work; and, Sheila because of needing to work too in East London and having three children under five years' old. In all their experiences, they had a desire to exercise their agency and bodily autonomy. All three of these women were able to circumvent pregnancy and control their fertility through the use of contraceptives with both Sheila and Nozipiwo having used the Depo-Provera injection, while Ida had the loop inserted. Sheila had the experience of two premarital pregnancies and then immediately becoming pregnant after she got married and was anxious for some measure of control and she said that

Before there were people getting babies not because they want to. It was because they're having sex so obviously you are going to get a baby. You are not prepared, you know so now this was a good thing, you know. It was changing lives, in a way, you know. You, know you get a baby because you want one...to have a baby. There's no...mistake. (Sheila, 73)

After all Ida had been through in suffering miscarriages, the death of her sons and just overall poor health she stated that using contraceptives was necessary because:

It was to protect me so that when I did sleep with my husband there would be no mistake of me falling pregnant...so that I would not fall pregnant with a young child. My daughter, Thabisa was still a baby. (Ida, 80)

Nozipiwo explained that there was a difference in living in Cape Town versus in the rural areas. Women in Cape Town were more open about their contraceptive use and she recalled that they -as women- would sometimes discuss contraceptives at the clinic.

No one was hiding anything. We all knew that the other was using contraceptives for various reasons. Maybe you felt like you already had too many children. Most mothers came here to the city to work and we were introduced to contraceptives for the first time. So, you came here to work and you didn't want children. (Nozipiwo, 70)

In the city, these migrant women were able to resist the pressure of having a lot of children and back-to-back pregnancies because their urban environment allowed it. Women in rural areas were still subject to the beliefs and ways of old with less reproductive agency.

Nomhle, another of these migrant women, was born in Kamastone Village, Wittlesea in the outskirts of Queenstown in the now Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Growing up Nomhle had similar experiences as Ida, Nozipiwo and Sheila in that she too was raised believing the place of a girl was in the home and spoke about her girlhood with reverence and pride about how one had to be '*intombi*' when they got married. Getting married in 1965 when she was 23 years old Nomhle explained how she not only remained a virgin until marriage but also maintained her innocence by upholding Xhosa customs of no longer being friends with girls who had sex outside of marriage thereby being labelled as 'dirty' and a bad influence to fellow '*intombi*'.

Nomhle met her husband in her village and she remembered that he would always greet her when he saw in the street, eventually they talked and started dating. Her marriage was a love match and she was quite emphatic in emphasizing that she chose to get married. Though she also added that despite choosing to get married she was still nervous about what her new life as a wife would be, she was especially anxious because she would be living with her parents-in-law in the rural areas while her husband worked in Queenstown. Nomhle and her husband lived apart for the first ten years of their marriage, she in the rural areas with his parents, and he in Queenstown where he worked. She explained that she would go visit him in Queenstown when he needed his house in the township cleaned and he would come visit in the rural areas when he was on holiday from work. From the beginning of her marriage in 1965, Nomhle was pregnant almost consistently for twelve years, starting in 1966 to 1977. Nomhle went through six pregnancies and in total had seven children as her 1974 pregnancy resulted in twins. Nomhle gave birth to her first 6 children at home though there was a nurse present as they used to do home visits.

She had her last child in 1977 in a hospital in Queenstown having only moved to live with her husband the previous year. It was during this first and only stay in the hospital's maternity ward that Nomhle was introduced to contraceptives. She remembered nurses telling her that they were going to inject her with Depo-Provera because she had just given birth and because she already had a lot of children.

I was told I had too many children already so I was being given the injection...And I was honestly coming to the same realization myself, I had a lot of children. (Nomhle, 76)

So Nomhle welcomed the use of contraceptives and was even thankful because she was the one who was mainly parenting the children. She described the time period in which she learned

about contraceptives as an era of enlightenment *kwaXhosa*. However, despite being in favour of contraceptives, Nomhle's own experience with them was very brief because she only ever had Depo-Provera injected immediately after birth and never went back for a follow up as her husband found the clinic card and forbade her from using contraceptives.

Because she did not want any more children, Nomhle had hidden the card away and her husband found it by accident. Nomhle's experiences in this regard were far from exceptional due to the controversies surrounding contraceptives and their use. Contemporary studies similarly show that in many communities across the sub-Saharan women preferred to use the injection when on birth control because it allowed for privacy, they could go to the clinic once every three months and receive their injection with no evidence that they were on birth control, this "secret-use hypothesis posits that many women who use injectables do so because they are able to hide their contraceptives practices from their spouses, and perhaps from other family members who may frown on their use of contraception".²⁸⁰ Upon questioning Nomhle further about why she not talk to her husband about her desire not to have more children, she explained to me that it was just not done.

My husband was very tribal. I could not tell him anything. No, he was educated but also very tribal. He used isiXhosa to govern our lives. (Nomhle, 76)

Nomhle told me that her husband's word was law in their household. For example, Nomhle never had a job outside of the home because her job, according to her husband, was to be a wife and mother keeping the home. She told me that after her husband found her clinic card, she did momentarily consider getting a second one and hiding it better, but she ultimately said that she respected her husband too much to deceive him and so she never used hormonal contraceptives again. Ironically, Nomhle's husband received a promotion to Port Elizabeth

²⁸⁰ Jacob A. Adetunji, "Rising popularity of injectable contraceptives in sub-Saharan Africa", *African Population Studies* 25, no. 2 (2011), 590.

soon after and she stayed back in Queenstown with the children and because he was seldom home, she never became pregnant again.

The decision-making of the three women -Ida, Nozipiwo and Sheila- was not based on not wanting children, but rather in reaction to their reality which was a mix of living in urban areas together with their husbands, health concerns and the women themselves participating in the labour force, thereby transitioning their homes to dual-income households. Through the reproductive experiences of the four women focused on in this chapter, three key socio-economic factors were identified as being influential to whether or not they used contraceptives. Firstly, the women all became aware of contraceptives after moving to urban areas. All four interviewees had limited and poor formal education but as a result of the state family planning services in towns and cities they received a reproductive education to which they had not been previously privy. Ida, for example, despite having been sickly, was encouraged to get pregnant by her marital family in order to fulfil her duties as a wife, but it was in Cape Town that she was educated on the dangers of back-to-back pregnancies and advised on letting her body rest between pregnancies. While it was not formal education, the family planning programme provided a form of information to the women about their bodies. It's important to note, however, that the provision of a reproductive and contraceptive information to African women was not an altruistic action by the government, but rather another indication of their agenda: decreasing the fertility rate among African women.

The second factor that was influential in the decision-making process of whether or not to adopt contraceptive use was work status of the women. In both Nozipiwo and Sheila's experiences the most vital aspect of their decision to use contraceptives was economic. Both women lived in an urban setting with their husbands and worked outside the home to help contribute to the household income, which meant that they could not afford to be constantly pregnant as job security was not guaranteed. Alternatively, Nomhle was a housewife in the rural areas had little

contraceptive agency since she was not a direct participant of the migrant labour system. Nomhle only learnt about contraceptives after having her seventh child in 1977 and was subsequently banned from using them by her husband, an experience that spoke to her rural surroundings, this concurs with Sarah Bugard's observation that "[l]iving in a rural area significantly [reduced] the likelihood of using modern contraceptives".²⁸¹ As a housewife living in the rural areas, Nomhle was largely removed from the economic concerns that Nozipiwo and Sheila dealt with living and working in urban spaces.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the migration status -or lack thereof- of the interviewees influenced their contraceptive decisions. I argue *most importantly* because the two previously mentioned factors: women's contraceptive-awareness and access to the working world were based on their being migrants. Access to contraceptives was unequal and uneven as a whole from the rural areas to the urban areas. From 1963 onwards both the East Cape Family Planning Association and the West Cape Association agreed for contraceptive distribution to be handled by the national health system which operated in urban areas.²⁸² The experiences of Ida, Nozipiwo and Sheila speak to these early interventions as the first time they used contraceptives was during this period. Ida first had an IUD inserted in 1965 living in Cape Town, Nozipiwo started using Depo-Provera in 1974 also living in Cape Town and Sheila also started using Depo-Provera in 1969 while she lived in East London. All three women lived in an urban setting and were recipients of the government's early involvement in the reproductive and contraceptive experiences of women. Meanwhile, Nomhle who had six of her kids while living in the rural outskirts of Queenstown was only introduced to contraceptives in 1977 with

²⁸¹ Sarah Burgard, "Factors associated with contraceptive use in late-and post-apartheid South Africa", *Studies in family planning* 35, no. 2 (2004), 100.

²⁸² John C., Caldwell and Pat Caldwell, "The South African fertility decline", *Population and development review* (1993), 237.

her seventh child when she finally moved to the actual town of Queenstown which was urban and a part of the Cape Province.

In unpacking the fertility experiences of Ida, Nozipiwo, Sheila and Nomhle we see that living in a city- Cape Town and East London- versus in the rural areas influenced their decisions. It must be acknowledged that not all the women used contraceptives. Of the twenty women that were interviewed, six of them never used contraceptives. Of the six, two of the interviewees knew of contraceptives but chose not to use them, one believed she was too old and the other, Nontobeko, as discussed in chapter one suffered through involuntary infertility so she never needed contraceptives because she was trying to become pregnant. Four of the women stated that they only found out about contraceptives later in life and so they never used them.

Rebecca is one of these women. She was born in 1948 in the rural village of Tsholomnqa in the Eastern Cape. She underwent *ukuthwala* in 1966 when she was eighteen years old. Rebecca first came to Cape Town in the 1960s to visit family and eventually her husband. She would stay in Cape Town depending on the political climate, sometimes for a month or two, and other times for one year. Despite going back and forth between Cape Town and the rural Eastern Cape for approximately 30 years until permanently moving to Cape Town in the 1990s, Rebecca had all eight her children in the rural Eastern Cape between 1968 and 1977. When asked about contraceptives Rebecca stated that she did not hear or know about them until she had finished having children and so she never used them. MaDlamini, mentioned in chapter one, also never used contraceptives because she did not know about them. When asked about contraceptives MaDlamini who had four of her five children while living in the rural areas between 1976 and 1983 stated that she was categorically against the use of contraceptives by wives.

For me, it was not allowed for you as a wife to use contraceptives. It was not allowed...[y]ou're a wife! You're there [in your marriage] to have children. Do you think you're there to be fed and taken care of? It's quite recent that wives now use contraceptives. For us you just gave birth to as many children as you could...[b]ut it wasn't allowed. For any reason, you were not allowed to use contraceptives as a wife...[t]here was none of that. Telling your husband that you thought you had enough children? No, that never happened...[o]nly God could stop you from having children...Yes. We had a lot of children back then. (MaDlamini, 60)

Not only did MaDlamini not use contraceptives but she was against contraceptive use for wives since using contraceptives meant one was not fulfilling their wifely duties. Having been raised in the rural areas and lived most of her life according to *ubuBomvu*, MaDlamini did not recognize any need for contraceptive use within the experience of her life particularly in the rural areas.

Conclusion

The experiences of the women focused on in this chapter showed the connection between their reproductive decision-making and their migrant statuses. Due to living in urban areas the decisions of Ida, Nozipiwo and Sheila to use contraceptives were a result of the socio-economic factors that were present in their lives. For Ida living in Cape Town allowed her to prioritize her health in a way that was previously not available to her when she had the loop inserted thereby resting her body from back-to-back pregnancies. Nozipiwo and Sheila meanwhile recognized that they needed to work outside of the home and contraceptives allowed them to do so since the risk of pregnancy had been significantly decreased. Women in urban areas were

able to counter the pressure of fulfilling their traditional wifely duties in having a lot of children due to their environment. In the urban settings, a woman fulfilling her wifely duties also meant contributing financially to the household.

Alternatively, women who lived in rural areas were still very much subject to the beliefs of old and so they had less reproductive agency. Nomhle was completely dependent on her husband and very much abided to Xhosa culture, where she had a lot of children and when she wished to use contraceptives to stop having children her husband prevented her from doing so. MaDlamini, who also lived in the rural areas, strongly subscribed to the ideals and beliefs of *kwaXhosa* and saw no use for contraceptives. Furthermore, women's contraceptive awareness was related to their migrant statuses as access to contraceptives in rural areas and urban areas was unequal. Ida, Nozipiwo and Sheila lived in urban areas and as such were able to be recipients of the government's family planning programmes. By contrast, the six women who had never used contraceptives, all lived in rural areas and stated that they only heard about contraceptives later in life. This meant that the migrant statuses of the women were an important factor in shaping their decision-making in relation to their fertility.

Chapter Three: The significance of apartheid and *ukuthwala* in women's sexual and reproductive experiences

Understanding that the women that were interviewed lived through the second half of the twentieth century up until the end of the 1980s and utilized their reproductive capabilities by having children a question emerges; did the dominant political backdrop of apartheid and the fight against it impact the reproductive decisions of the interviewees? How much, if at all was apartheid a factor in their lives? Building on chapters one and two where it was shown that Xhosa norms and contraceptives were central in the reproductive decisions made by the women this chapter will demonstrate that despite apartheid having been such a dominant presence in the lives of Africans, it was in fact not viewed by the women interviewed as central in their reproductive decision-making and experiences. Xhosa norms like those mentioned in previous chapters and long-established practices like *ukuthwala* were seen by the women as having had a more significant impact in their lives and their reproductive decisions and experiences.

Ukuthwala is the practice of a forced marriage among the Xhosa, although it can be found in other ethnic groups such as the Zulu.²⁸³ It has come under immense scrutiny in the post-apartheid era, due to its vital reliance on force and abduction in its execution.²⁸⁴ *Ukuthwala*, as defined by the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Commission), is the agreement between a man and a woman to get married by forcing the woman's family into lobola negotiations, which have most likely broken down, through the abduction of their daughter.²⁸⁵ The woman is taken

²⁸³ Kathleen Rice, "Understanding ukuthwala: Bride abduction in the rural Eastern Cape, South Africa", *African Studies* 77, no. 3 (2018), 395.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ CRL Rights Commission 2014, 'Public hearings and research on ukuthwala: Views and perspectives emerging from South African communities' <<http://www.crlcommission.org.za/docs/ukuthwala-booklet.pdf>> (accessed 19 December 2019), 10. I argue that this contemporary definition is relevant to the histories I describe.

by the man who hoped to marry her with the help of his friends to his homestead.²⁸⁶ The abduction is public and the woman pretends to fight the abduction so as to maintain her dignity in front of observers.²⁸⁷ Upon arrival at the home of the perspective groom, the woman is handed over to the man's female relatives while a delegation is sent to the woman's family to inform them that their daughter had been taken.²⁸⁸ Then the family of the woman sends their own delegation to the homestead of the prospective groom to, firstly, look over their daughter making sure she is fine before secondly, asking her if she wants to marry the man that has taken her.²⁸⁹ If the woman states that she does not want to marry the man, her family takes her home and a fine -specified by the traditional leader in the village- is paid by the woman's family.²⁹⁰ If the woman states that she does in fact want to marry the man, the lobola negotiations resume.²⁹¹ The CRL Commission's definition of *ukuthwala* was the result of public hearings held in four provinces (Free State, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo), interviews with those -women and girls- who had undergone *ukuthwala*, and, consultation with stakeholders in the communities in which the CRL Commission did its research.²⁹²

The definition of *ukuthwala* produced by the CRL Commission dates back to 2014. Another definition that must be considered is that of Hunter from her seminal work *Reaction to Conquest* in 1961. The mechanics of the practice in 2014 were similar to those in 1961 where a girl is thought to be acting at resisting being taken for the sake of her dignity, however, Hunter did acknowledge that there were cases where the resistance was genuine.²⁹³ For example, the father of the girl would agree to marry his daughter off without telling her -sometimes other women in the family such as her mother and sisters would also not be told for fear that they

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁹³ Hunter, *Reaction to conquest: Effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, 188.

would interfere- and then send her off on an errand letting the groom know where his daughter would be so that he could abduct her.²⁹⁴ According to Hunter, the reasoning behind this was so that the father would not hear his daughter cry as she was being taken.²⁹⁵

In asking the women I interviewed about *ukuthwala*, all of them were aware of it, with six of them having actually undergone the process with varying degrees of completion. Unlike the CRL Commission and Hunter, all of the interviewees (those who did not go through it and those who did) spoke to the genuineness of the abductions. Two of the women who underwent *ukuthwala* were dating their future husbands while one had him come up to her and in their first -and only- conversation before marriage he told her that he would be marrying her. All three of these women were as shocked as the other three who did not know the men they were marrying. Of the two that were dating their husbands before marriage, one even talked about how while she loved her husband and was happy to discover that it was him who had taken her, she was still scared of the whole process.

You would be really scared and crying when you were taken to your new home. You would really cry, unlike today where it is fun and you are laughing...I was scared that first day when I was arriving...the thing was that you did not know what to expect or how you would be treated because it was not your family. You did not know all the rules... (Nomhle, 76)

The differences in the definitions and understandings of *ukuthwala* between Hunter, the CRL Commission and the interviewees can be attributed to quite a few factors. Firstly, with regards to the CRL Commission's findings there is a huge generational gap between *ukuthwala* in the post-apartheid era and how it was for the interviewees who went through it during apartheid in the years 1956 to 1981. Secondly, all the women acknowledged that the practice was no longer

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

feasible in the 2010s agreeing with the South African Constitution that *ukuthwala* was an illegal practice in regards to minors and women who did not desire to marry their abductors.²⁹⁶ For example, in her interview Nomawethu stated that:

I guess you would get arrested today. And it is rape too. You cannot go around forcibly taking people. You try that and you will be arrested, especially if you do not know them. Things have really changed. Back in my day, we did not have that...It was very good because it was based on respect. (Nomawethu, 64)

Unlike the data of the CRL Commission which was mined in the early 2010s, Hunter's findings were from two long term fieldwork assignments – seven months and four months- in the region of Pondoland which was annexed and became part of the Cape Colony in 1894.²⁹⁷ Her research was conducted in the early to mid-1930s so again there is a generational gap with her findings and the experiences of my interviewees. Another possible reason for the discrepancy would be that Hunter's research was based in Pondoland and was about the Mpondo people, an ethnic group within the with the Xhosa nation, while the women I interviewed came from various other ethnic groups with the Xhosa nation. The six interviewees who underwent *ukuthwalwa* belonged to Xhosa ethnic groups like the *AmaGcina*, *AmaFengu*, *AmaGqunukhwebe* and *AmaFengu* who are their own Bantu-speaking group having fled Zulu king Shaka's reign and resettled among the Xhosa.²⁹⁸ All the ethnic groups -including the AmaFengu, by default of having lived among the Xhosa for generations, fall within the Xhosa nation. There are, however, subtle differences in their understandings of various practices, such as *ukuthwala*.

The marriages of the women -whether it was through *ukuthwala* or not- were seen by the women as more central and impactful in their reproductive decision-making processes than

²⁹⁶ Rice, "Understanding ukuthwala: Bride abduction in the rural Eastern Cape, South Africa", 395.

²⁹⁷ Hunter, *Reaction to conquest: Effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, 10.

²⁹⁸ Jongikhaya Mvenene, "A social and economic history of the African people of Gcalekaland, 1830-1913", 62.

apartheid. Even the introduction and use of contraceptives (which was a political initiative by the state) was ultimately depoliticized in the decision-making processes of the interviewees who chose to use contraceptives as discussed in chapter two. Despite the obvious intentions of the government in introducing the Family Planning Programme in 1974, a lot of the women who used contraceptives did so for personal reasons, which they mostly divorced from the political aspect of contraceptive use.

This chapter focuses on the lives of six of the interviewees, studying their lives from their childhoods to when they had their last child and looks at the factors which were in play when they made their reproductive choices ultimately showing the impact -or lack thereof- of apartheid in their lives. *Ukuthwala* and its place in the lives of the women are also analysed. The women were divided in their opinions regarding *ukuthwala*. Of the twenty women interviewed nine of them underwent *ukuthwala* or an attempt of it in some form. In that group of nine, six of the women viewed *ukuthwala* as a part of Xhosa culture and were proud to have been taken while three of the women hated it and were traumatized by the experience. It is also important to note that of the six women who were supportive of *ukuthwala* three of them did state in their interviews that the practice no longer had a place in post-1994 South Africa, acknowledging that times had changed from the period of the 1960s-1980s (the time centrally examined by the thesis), where the practice had been more acceptable. Furthermore, it must also be noted that the three women who were traumatized by *ukuthwala*, or the attempt of it, did not stay in the marriages that had been arranged for them. The six women who were supportive of *ukuthwala* all stayed in their marriages, having undergone the practice in the years between 1956 and 1974. These forced marriages were the defining features of these women's lives because it was through marriage that one's pregnancy would be either be legitimized or delegitimized. In examining the lives of the women we see that marital status

determined a lot in their lives; the status of their pregnancy, their position in the community, whether they worked outside the home or not and much more.

The chapter highlights the perspectives of six different women with various experiences of the practice. Of the six women focused on in the chapter four of them underwent it or an attempt was made for them to undergo the practice. From that four, three of them were against the practice with one being in favour of it. The two other women were in favour of *ukuthwala* despite never undergoing it themselves, one accepted it as a part of Xhosa culture which she was a proponent of, while the other helped organize the abductions of women into marriages through the *ukuthwala* practice. This chapter is a review of the impact of two external factors, apartheid and Xhosa culture (specifically *ukuthwala*) in the fertility decisions and experiences of the women from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Case Study 1: Ntombi

Ntombi was born in 1940 to a single mother and raised in the settlement rural town of Lady Frere near Queenstown (in the current day Eastern Cape) by her maternal relatives as her mother was away working as a farm labourer. Ntombi described her childhood as difficult and unpleasant, she recalled how she felt more like a manual servant rather than a child of the family. When I asked about her about the ‘flower of the home’ ideology in relation to girls within Xhosa culture she stated that she was unfamiliar with that idea due to the way she grew up.

I did not have a good upbringing my child. I was not raised the way it's supposed to be like how it is the school books. I wasn't raised like that...I wasn't encouraged to go to school or anything like how things are done. My aunts' husbands would make me do

their washing, telling me to avoid the dangerous forest areas on the way to the river. The wives would tell me to take care of the younger children. It was things like that...I had to do the laundry, herd the cattle, take care of the chickens and watch over the children of my aunts and their families...I didn't grow up normally, I used to watch other kids going and coming from school looking dressed up. (Ntombi, 78)

Despite the difficult childhood as an adolescent Ntombi became aware of the importance of marriage for girls. An awareness that she would carry into motherhood, having had her one, and only, child in 1973, she said that she raised her daughter correctly unlike how she was raised.

I raised my daughter right. I comforted her...I would tell her that when she was on her period she couldn't drink milk...I would tell her to act like a young lady and be respectful so she could get a white wedding with a white wedding dress... (Ntombi, 78)

The importance of marriage was an ideal that Ntombi wholly believed in as she stated that it was only through marriage that a family could grow and not die out. As a result of this belief Ntombi organized approximately three marriages through *ukuthwala* for her male cousins throughout the late 1950s and most of the 1960s, marriages she helped organize for the sake of her family despite how she had been treated in her childhood because for her;

Home is home. Home is home, life can be bad but home is always there. (Ntombi, 78)

With this motto and living in the rural community she lived in, where *ukuthwala* was popular, Ntombi participated in the practice in a scout capacity. The Xhosa culture is one of diversity compromising of multiple ethnic groups, however patterns and commonalities are shared.²⁹⁹ An example of this diversity was the nomenclature used for certain practices such as *ukuthwala*.

²⁹⁹ Nyasha Karimakwenda, "'Today it would be called rape': a historical and contextual examination of forced marriage and violence in the Eastern Cape", *Acta Juridica* 2013, no. 1 (2013): 343.

In talking to Ntombi she referred to *ukuthwala* as *ukutsalwa*, which had a more violent connotation. The direct translation of *ukuthwala* into English is 'to carry' while the translation of *ukutsalwa* is 'to be pulled', the action of pulling versus carrying conjures more violent imagery of what happened to girls during their abductions into marriage. Ntombi described the cultural practice she participated in as *ukutsalwa* and her reasoning at the time was that she was helping her family.

I remember I chose my cousin's wife; she went through the process of '*ukutsalwa*'. They didn't even know each other...I chose wives for my male cousins. I would see a nice girl, go talk to the men and direct them towards her family where they would enter negotiations for lobola ask for the girl's hand in marriage...I was telling people in my family about all the eligible girls that I thought my cousins would like...I would pick them and the girls didn't know. (Ntombi, 78)

Ntombi herself was never married. She had wanted to get married but it never happened for her. When asked about the reason behind her non-marital status, she theorized that perhaps no men had been interested in her and so none ever tried to ask for her hand in marriage or have her abducted into marriage. For Ntombi, her pride was in the marriage matches she helped create proudly stating her successes.

It more than worked. My family grew... [I helped arrange] quite a few...I worked very hard. There are some who still talk about it today, one of the wives always preaches about how she didn't know her husband before she was taken in her [church] testimonies. (Ntombi, 78)

Ironically, despite her pride in talking about the marriages she helped arrange, Ntombi at the time was quite reflective of the trauma that the girls who were taken as a part of *ukuthwala* went through, stating that the practice did not have a place in modern day Xhosa culture.

It was a very popular practice back then. I don't like it anymore because I see that it brings a lot of pain. It's not nice...[t]imes have changed though it sometimes happens.
(Ntombi, 78)

Ultimately Ntombi's feelings regarding *ukuthwala* were quite complex. From the late 1950s, not only was she a staunch advocate of *ukuthwala* but she actively participated in the practice through helping her male cousins find wives. An activity she still spoke on with pride during the interview, however, there was the acknowledgement of the pain she helped contribute to and an understanding that *ukuthwala* was no longer an acceptable practice in modern day South Africa.

The respect Ntombi had for Xhosa culture was directly linked to her fertility decisions. She lived in the rural areas, waited to be taken as a part of *ukuthwala* and married off. However, by the mid-1960s when Ntombi was around 25 years old and still not married, she went to live with her mother on the farms she worked at and Ntombi, herself eventually became a farm labourer. Over the next decade she moved around from farm to farm having given up on marriage. In 1973, she had her daughter who was the result of her first ever relationship where she explained in the interview that she knew nothing about sex and trusted the man to take care of her. Ntombi spent her pregnancy unsure of what would happen. She had little guidance as her mother had since passed and she was living on a farm she worked at in the small town of Burgesdorp away from her family.

I didn't have my period like how I normally did...yeah, I just knew then...I just sat and sat...I waited to have my period but it never came...I was very scared. Really scared...I was just scared. I didn't even understand what it meant having a child. Or how it was going to come out...I heard that there was only one place a baby came from and I was

very scared. How was I going to do it? I had no one. No mother, no father. (Ntombi, 78)

Ntombi was pregnant in 1973 which means that she was in her early thirties but because she had so strongly adhered to remaining pure until marriage, an ideology which was not impressed on her during childhood but rather one that she came to believe as an adolescent wanting and waiting for marriage, that she was naïve to many aspects of not only sex but her pregnancy too. It was this adherence to Xhosa culture that factored in Ntombi's fertility decisions rather than apartheid. When I asked her about apartheid and her experiences, she claimed she had none.

Apartheid? I knew nothing of it...I really don't know. I don't know what role it played.

I just know that before we had chiefs and then I remember hearing that Mandela, Mbeki were now in charge. (Ntombi, 78)

From Ntombi's perspective apartheid was a non-factor in her life, particularly in regards to her fertility decisions and experiences. Ntombi's fertility experiences were also further impacted by the rituals performed *kwaXhosa* in relation to fertility. She spoke specifically of a ritual called '*ukutonjiswa*' which was done while one was still a child, even before the onset of menarche. This ritual was meant to open the uterus of girl so that when she got married, she could become pregnant, thereby, fulfilling her main marital duty. The ritual was done in childhood because, according to Ntombi, it was better to sort out any potential problems with one's uterus earlier rather than later, when they would be possibly married. Ntombi had the ritual done when she was a child though she did not have one for her daughter, firstly because of the financial costs involved and, secondly, because she felt it conflicted in her beliefs as a result of her church membership:

You have to answer the call and take care for it but I don't know how that relates to the church...Uhm...I didn't really go to church...I started I going to church, I joined the

Zion church. Back home in the rural areas...in the Zion church people can believe and still do rituals, we haven't thrown the away...I would say some traditions and practices of Xhosa culture can work with the church but not all. It doesn't always go together...I think church teachings are good, but I don't want to throw away tradition. (Ntombi, 78)

The church was the only other institution outside of Xhosa culture that Ntombi identified as having had an impact in her life. With a goal of marriage, the Xhosa way influenced the reproductive experiences of Ntombi.

Case Study 2: Nomawethu

I first met Nomawethu in the early evening when she returned from work in the CBD of Cape Town to her modest home in Khayelitsha. She was introduced to me by my hairdresser, Thandie (mentioned in chapter 1) who acted as a key informant in introducing me to five of the women I interviewed as they all lived in the same street in Khayelitsha's Litha Park; a residential district within the township. After introductions I explained the nature of my research to Nomawethu and before I could even ask questions, she was quick to mention that in reflecting about her life, she viewed her early adulthood years with fondness and a yearning for an era she described as 'easier' compared to her life now. Now, this era that Nomawethu longed for was during South Africa's apartheid regime. Nomawethu's nostalgia regarding this period of time is not a unique phenomenon, Jacob Dlamini's *Native Nostalgia* – a book described as part-history, part-memoir, part-meditation and part-ethnography- is a discussion of how African South Africans who lived under apartheid can be nostalgic, not necessarily for

apartheid, but for their own lives.³⁰⁰ Furthermore, Nomawethu was able to separate apartheid from her daily life, viewing it as an outside factor that she refused to let impact her life.

In order to understand her reproductive biography during apartheid we must begin by discussing the broader sweep of her life, including her adolescence. Born in a rural village on the outskirts of King William's Town -then part of the Cape Province- in 1954, Nomawethu was raised in a family of *abantu abaBomvu* and she described her childhood as having been very traditional. Explaining that her family lived life according to the covenants of *kwaXhosa*, she mentioned rituals where animal sacrifices were performed and *umqombothi* -traditional beer- was made in an effort to appease or thank the ancestors. As one of five children -four girls and one boy- Nomawethu explained that chores were divided along strict gender lines. Her brother's duties mainly consisted of taking care of the cattle, a task she and her sisters found to be frightening especially when a calf was lost and he would have to search the mountain side until all cattle were accounted for. Furthermore, Nomawethu's fear of cattle was compounded by the beliefs associated with cows and girls within Xhosa culture: especially ingrained within the households of *abantu abaBomvu*.

Back then for Xhosa people you were not allowed to even drink or eat *amasi* when you were on your period...you couldn't go near the cows or calves. It would bring bad luck to your family. (Nomawethu, 64)

It was the late 1960s when Nomawethu first started having menstrual periods. In recollecting her adolescence Nomawethu talked about her naivety regarding menarche and how when she first started, the only information she had was from overhearing older girls talking and how she was scared to tell her mother believing she had done something wrong. Eventually, Nomawethu described how she went to confess to her mother about her menstrual period who only then

³⁰⁰ Jacob Dlamini, *Native nostalgia* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2009), 170.

explained the situation of what was happening to her. The talk that Nomawethu was given by her mother consisted of being told that she was now a woman with little context provided to that statement along with being told that her period was something she had to hide and make sure that no one ever knew when it was her time of the month. The information given by Nomawethu's mother was quite minimal and vague the overall message of her talk with her daughter being that she was not sick like Nomawethu had initially thought she was and that there were consequences to her actions. Nomawethu like many of the interviewees never questioned this upbringing, simply explaining that she knew what was expected of her. As a girl, Nomawethu stated that she was expected of her was to make sure the house and the yard were clean along with making sure the laundry and cooking was done. In regards to dating, Nomawethu explained that one had to be secretive to maintain the illusion of innocence in front of elders.

She told the story of how, as teenagers in the rural village, girls would go to the river bank under the pretence of doing laundry while boys would also go to the river bank pretending to look for lost cattle, it was there away from the supervision of elders that young people could interact. It was in this setting that Nomawethu met her future husband though she explained that while they were dating, she never imagined that she would be his wife. During that era - the early 1970s- Nomawethu said males did not declare their intentions to women they were seeking to marry. Instead, she said the custom was to send representatives from their family to the girl's family where the matter of marriage would be discussed and approved -or dismissed- by the elders with no input from the potential bride-to-be which is what happened to her.

Ndathwalwa qha [I was just taken] ...It was not up you, who cares what you want? Your family did not...wait on you. You would just be taken; it did not matter what you wanted or what you did not want. It was not your decision. No one would trust you with that decision. (Nomawethu, 64)

Undergoing *ukuthwala* and being married off was a source of pride for Nomawethu and she stated that it was a custom that not only represented the respect between the two families that were coming together but was also deeply entrenched within the Xhosa way of life at the time of her adolescence and young adulthood. It was under these circumstances that Nomawethu, secure in the beliefs she was raised with, was married in 1974. Central within marriage in Xhosa culture was children, as discussed in previous chapters. Nomawethu, like many of the other interviewees, understood her duty.

The main reason of you being there [in your marriage] was to have children. Your husband and his family wanted children, they needed children for their family to continue...children [were] really important. (Nomawethu, 64)

Nomawethu gave birth to her first child in 1978, four years into her marriage, she recalled the stress she was under when she did not conceive immediately upon marriage but stated that she had believed in God. Nomawethu coming from a family of *abantu abaBomvu* also known as non-believers married into a family of believers and so put her trust in her newly found belief system regarding children and, in her own words, God eventually blessed her. Having given birth in 1978, Nomawethu had another child in 1979 then again in 1982. It was after having her third child while at the clinic that Nomawethu was first introduced to contraceptives. Nomawethu was told by nurses that she needed to start using contraceptives because she had a lot of children who were close in age. However, she refused to do anything that would disrupt her fertility because of having had to wait four years to finally conceive. Instead Nomawethu decided she would abstain from sex with her husband because they lived together -still in the outskirts of King William's Town. However, this resolve was unsustainable with Nomawethu having become pregnant again and having given birth to their fourth child in 1984.

It was then (in 1984) that Nomawethu decided to use contraceptives having had four children in quick succession while still in her prime fertile years at age 30 in 1984. She was given three options at the clinic: the injection, the pill or the loop and she chose the injection. Nomawethu explained that she chose the injection in an effort to be respectful to her husband who did not agree with her decision to use contraceptives. She believed that to use the pill as her choice of contraceptives would have worsened the already tense situation because she would be taking it -the pill- every day versus the injection which was done every three months and Nomawethu could hide it, which she did. Her husband, according to Nomawethu, was against her using contraceptives because as a married woman her duty was to have children and the general reputation surrounding contraceptives in their community was that their users were hiding secrets: to be specific, extra-marital affairs. Alternately, Nomawethu told me that her decision to use contraceptives after having her fourth child was not because she was less devoted to fulfilling her duties, but rather because she realized that she would not be able to cope with any more children.

Nomawethu was quite emphatic in telling me that she wanted more children and was willing to have them but simply needed a break to give the children she already had a chance to grow up. When I then asked about her experience in having and raising children during the late-1970s and 1980s, in the midst of the political upheaval that was happening she stated that it had no impact on her life and her family.

You know with apartheid and all that my child, I did not take apartheid which was outside of my home and bring it into my home. Just because something was happening, it did not mean that you should let it affect you and your home... Things like apartheid and oppression and whatever else was happening did not concern me. Worrying and stressing about things I have no control of, especially something that was so far

removed from me that it did not affect my daily life or ability to take care of my children. I was concerned with what was happening in my house. (Nomawethu, 64)

She, furthermore, described the apartheid years as a 'better period of time' especially when she compared it to a democratic South Africa. It was in the middle of the 1980s, while raising four children with both she and her husband working that she felt secure and able in taking care of her family. She talked about financial stability which allowed her and her husband to open their home to extended family, so much so that her children grew up believing that their cousins were their siblings because they were always at their home. She also reminisced about crime being low, stating that in the 1960s people were afraid to get arrested and so did not commit crime, a fear she now felt in a post-1994 South Africa was no longer there and as such was responsible for what she observed as a spike in crime.

[W]hen I think back to when the white people were charge, I honestly think it was the better period of time compared to today...[y]ou were scared to break the law back then, you knew you could not just do as you pleased. If my husband was away, I was never scared that someone might break in because they know there's no man in the house. Or rape me. Or whatever unthinkable things that happen today...[w]hen the white people were in charge, life was good and simple. There was law and order. We were strict as a society. Today? There is no strictness and yet we are supposedly free. This freedom that we wanted I just do not see. (Nomawethu, 64)

In recalling the 1980s a time of civil unrest, Nomawethu was divorced from the political struggle and completely content with the state of her life and family so much so that in late 1989 she stopped using contraceptives as she was ready for more children with her fifth child being born in 1991. Her decision to have more children was a deliberate one because she viewed her life as good. Dlamini argues his observations are echoed in Walker's work

Landmarked: Land Claims and Land Restitution in South Africa where she critiqued the master narrative of South Africa's struggle history.³⁰¹ In particular, Dlamini characterises her critique of this master narrative as one which "would have us believe that black South Africans, who populate struggle jargon mostly as faceless 'masses of our people', experienced apartheid the same way, suffered the same way and fought the same way against apartheid".³⁰² This narrative has been proven to be untrue as ordinary South African's like Nomawethu, who were a part of 'faceless masses', tell their life stories. Nomawethu acknowledged apartheid and its oppressive nature, but she was able to look back at the 1970s and 1980s with fondness because of what was happening directly in her own life. Nomawethu was not an anti-apartheid activist, the 1970s and 1980s were not a time defined by the intensification of the struggle for her, but rather a time that was defined by her marriage, the birth of her children and her ability to financially support them without stress. Dlamini's book grapples with the nuance of one being nostalgic for a past that has largely been painted through a single lens of moral depravity and violence.³⁰³ This thesis, through analysing the lives of people like Nomawethu, shows that apartheid was not at the centre of all Africans' lives. Even when apartheid policies such as the Family Planning Programme had a presence in Nomawethu's reproductive decision making she was clear that her choice to use contraceptives was personal and not political and she ultimately minimized the heavy-handedness of the apartheid state.

³⁰¹ Cheryl Walker, *Landmarked: land claims and land restitution in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2008), 16.

³⁰² Dlamini, *Native nostalgia*, 18.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 13.

Case Study 3: Thandiwe

Thandiwe was born in 1937 and raised in a township located within Kirkwood, a town situated on the banks of the Nukakamma river in the Cape. At the time of the interview, aged 81, she lived part-time with her son and his family in Strand's Lwandle township explaining she went back and forth between the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape rotating between staying with her children and the home she shared with her husband in Kirkwood. Introduced to me through a family friend, the interview with Thandiwe took place in her son's home in the early afternoon, while she prepared dinner for her family who were not home yet. Thandiwe was 11 years old when apartheid was officially implemented in 1948 and in her late 50s when it ended in the early 1990s, so she lived through the entire apartheid regime from its inception to its dissolution. When I asked her about the impact apartheid had on her life, she removed herself from the narrative as a victim of apartheid and instead talked to how apartheid made her children's lives difficult but never saying the same in regards to herself. In ignoring her own experience with apartheid and speaking of apartheid through her role as a mother despite having lived under apartheid long before she was a mother indicated how successful the social conditioning regarding women and motherhood was, making them appear as synonymous.³⁰⁴

Born to parents who were not married, Thandiwe was raised by her maternal family (namely her grandmother) in Kirkwood, as Xhosa custom dictated. Her mother, meanwhile, left Kirkwood for Port Elizabeth to work because in the 1930s, the foundation of what would become the modern migrant labour system under apartheid was already in place with African people from rural areas flocking to the cities to find jobs.

Growing up in the semi-rural township within Kirkwood meant that Thandiwe was from a young age, exposed to a way of life that was actively transforming. In describing the

³⁰⁴ Walker, "Conceptualising motherhood in twentieth century South Africa", 434.

community, she grew up in, Thandiwe showed a place that was both steadfast in its ruralness and yet also changing because of western influence. For example, when Thandiwe started menarche she was told she could no longer eat or drink *amasi*, a traditionalist belief that was deeply entrenched within Xhosa spirituality. But, Thandiwe was also allowed to attend school, though it was not a priority with duties such as milking the cows and goats, gathering kindling and collecting water from the river in the mornings before school having all taken precedence. However, despite school not ranking above her responsibilities to the home, the fact that she was allowed to attend school at all showed that western culture had a presence within traditional Xhosa communities.

Thandiwe would eventually drop out of school in the early 1960s -she hesitantly stated 1962 or 1963- not however because she was hindered by her homelife but rather because of political chaos that defined the 1950s in reaction to the implementation of apartheid. In 1950, Thandiwe was 13 years old and in standard three (grade five today) and she told the story of how there were frequent boycotts and schools were constantly shut down. In the interview, she said that it was only now, more than 50 years later, having lived through apartheid and the transition into democracy that she realized that the boycotts during her schooling years were the beginnings of the fight against the oppression of Africans. At the time however, Thandiwe was ignorant to the greater political battle that was happening as the boycotts and threats of violence were normalized with her having stated that was just how life was at the time.

I went to school in the open field and then when the police hippo vans would come by, we would have to run and hide amongst the trees and grass. We would sometimes get chased so we would be running until you could slip away somewhere and hide. And then you would have stay in your hiding place and only leave when it was safe to do so, usually in the evening. We would not be home all day. We would have school in woods, writing on the ground. There were no books. There was nothing, just writing on

the ground...writing in the dirt. You would write in the dirt and the teacher would come try and mark. When the police would arrive, we would have to scatter and try disappear among the trees and grass because the field we were having school in was actually an old soccer field. (Thandiwe, 81)

By the early 1960s, almost 10 years later at age 23, Thandiwe was still in standard three due to schools continuously being disrupted as a result of the volatile political conditions. However, still wanting to get an education she then moved away from Kirkwood to Port Elizabeth to live with an uncle so she could attend school. Port Elizabeth was at this time rapidly expanding and recognized as a key strategic city in “[w]hite South Africa” and a primary objective of the government was the absolute separation of the races with regard to business and within residential areas with an expropriation policy in effect relating to property owned by African people in areas that were post-1948 deemed to be for white people only.³⁰⁵ In working towards achieving these goals, the apartheid government sanctioned the expansion and building of the locations for Africans, “[t]hus, between 1951 and 1960 the population of New Brighton nearly tripled from 35 000 to 97 000”.³⁰⁶ As a result of the growth of the urban African population there was more opportunity in the cities than in smaller rural areas which is why Thandiwe made the decision to move. In Port Elizabeth, where Thandiwe paid for her own schooling, she again had to redo standard three which she did and finally passed. At the end of the school year in 1962 Thandiwe was forced to drop out of school again, this time permanently, because she could no longer afford it.

After leaving school, Thandiwe remained in Port Elizabeth though she would go home to Kirkwood frequently. It was in a small rural village named Nqweba, just over 200 kilometres

³⁰⁵ Andrew J. Christopher, "Apartheid planning in South Africa: the case of Port Elizabeth", *Geographical Journal* 153, no. 2 (1987), 199.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 200.

from Kirkwood, where she was visiting an aunt who worked at a local farm right next to the village that Thandiwe met her husband.

I mean it was something that would just happen, you would just happen to find someone. He was just a person...regarding marriage, it was him that wanted me...he took me to his family. I was then dressed as *umakoti* (traditional bride) and I was then a wife. (Thandiwe, 81)

Thandiwe's husband chose her to be his wife and though she agreed the marriage happening was not dependent on her consent as she explained that the norm during that time was the practice of *urhuqwa* (another term for *ukuthwala*, specifically translating into 'to be dragged'). Though she never went through *urhuqwa*, Thandiwe witnessed it. A favourite aunt of hers was taken while Thandiwe aged fifteen at the time was on her way to visit her, she recalled standing on the street watching her being dragged into a waiting lorry while she cried and resisted. There was little a woman could do once she was taken, although if she really did not want to stay in the marriage, then she could run away and go back home, though this was seen as a huge disgrace to one's family. Thandiwe's aunt did initially run away from her marriage but at home her father -Thandiwe's uncle- and Thandiwe's father responded to her through corporal punishment before sending her back to her marital home where she stayed.

Another method that Thandiwe remembered that women sometimes used in an effort to get out of unwanted marriages was that the unwilling *makoti* would remain in the family's kraal, refusing to go indoors, naked and defecating themselves showcasing their rejection of the marriage. The result of such a display would typically then lead the husband's family to release the woman back to her family who would be horrified at the events while the women would be shamed for her actions but back at her parental home, which was the intended goal. Options for women were limited because of their lack of education, according to Thandiwe, who stated

that there were some women who managed to get an education and become teachers or nurses, however, the general pattern that she observed was that she and others were trained to be wives. In fulfilling her wifely duties, Thandiwe, had six children between the years of 1965 and 1983. She and her husband lived together in a settlement in Nqweba on the land of the farmer that her husband worked for. Her first four children born in 1965, 1967, 1970 and 1973 were all homebirths at the farm. This was the norm according to Thandiwe where elder women in the community referred to as ama-vrouvrou (vrou, an Afrikaans word translating to 'wife') would help one through pregnancy. Right there on the farms in their homes or your home they would perform pregnancy check-ups and give women a herbal drink called '*iyeza lesiXhosa*' (Xhosa medication) that they concocted themselves. They would then eventually help a woman when it was time to give birth. This was Thandiwe's experience from 1965 to 1973 with her mother-in-law being one of the women that helped during her first delivery. It was only in 1975 when having her fifth child that Thandiwe first went to a clinic. She did not recall any clinics before then, especially, since they lived in the farm settlement further isolated from even the township in Kirkwood. Thandiwe heard about the clinic through others at the settlement, it was nearly 100 kilometres away in a neighbouring settlement Alicedale. Thandiwe described the clinic as a normal looking house, which the nurse actually lived in during the week while she was on duty, as she went home to Port Elizabeth for the weekends. The clinic in Alicedale was used by a lot by the people in the surrounding settlements and townships and going to it became normal, according to Thandiwe. It was also there -in the clinic- that Thandiwe was first introduced to contraceptives after giving birth to a daughter in 1975.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁷ Brown, "Facing the 'Black Peril': The politics of population control in South Africa", 266. Due to the implementation of the family planning programme by 1983 there were over 36 000 'family planning service points' where nearly 60% of these 'clinics' only offered birth control devices with no other health services available. This meant that more than 50% of the clinics meant for black people were for contraceptive services and no other health services. Furthermore, while staff shortages were a chronic issue for the Department of Health, the birth control programme was treated as a high priority and seldom had such problems.

Thandiwe was told that contraceptives were for women who did not want any more children, however the nurse strongly encouraged contraceptive use for her. In a span of ten years, Thandiwe had five children. At age 38 in 1975 while she was no longer in her prime reproductive years, she was still ovulating and because she lived with her husband the nurse suggested that it was best, she use contraceptives. Thandiwe agreed, stating that she saw contraceptives as a way to have a break from pregnancy. Before her contraceptive use, Thandiwe had been able to space her children through abstinence but with contraceptives she could be intimate with her husband without worrying about pregnancy. Abstinence as a contraceptive was mentioned quite a lot by the interviewees, first as a lesson taught to them by their parents when they were girls and then later in life as wives in the context of one's husband being a migrant labour. So it was a forced abstinence in that sense. Thandiwe lived with her husband and used abstinence as her contraceptive method for about a decade. Thandiwe's experience is interesting because she was the only one of the interviewees who practiced abstinence while living with her husband. Other interviewees practiced forced abstinence because their partners were away and stated that one of the key reasons why they chose to use hormonal birth control was because they lived with their partners, implying that abstinence while living with a partner was not possible. Thandiwe only began using contraceptives when she started going to the clinic and the nurse told her about them. Thandiwe's husband knew she was using contraceptives but she did not remember having a discussion with him about it, simply that he knew that she used them. Her contraceptive of choice was the Depo-Provera injection because it stayed in her body for three months which was convenient as she did not have to remember to take the pill daily while raising five children and she did not have to travel to the clinic almost 100 kilometres away frequently. Thandiwe was on the injection from 1975 to 1981 and she had her last child in 1983 at the age of 46.

While her husband worked at the farm in Nqweba, where their home was, Thandiwe occasionally went to Port Elizabeth to work what she called 'piece' jobs, temporary menial labour mostly in small shops. In Port Elizabeth, Thandiwe would stay with family and she recalled the constant fear she lived under. Historically, we know that the pass laws were a vanguard of Pretoria's racial oppression and as such strict enforcement of population control policies occurred for much of the apartheid regime. So effective was implementation that the African population that lived outside the designated areas were down to a mere four percent. Thandiwe's payslip and *dompas* had a Kwazakhele address because that was where the small shop, she worked at was located however she lived in New Brighton at her uncle's house which got her in trouble repeatedly.

I was not really working, just doing a few jobs here and there in small shops...It was very tough back then, in Port Elizabeth there was this *dompas* thing. It was the era of the *dompas*. You could not have a Lwandle address and stay in Khayelitsha for example. You would be told to go stay where your identification says you stay. This happened to me so I can tell you. I was visiting my uncle and I was found there by the police... [in the] township in Port Elizabeth. [The] *izibonda* came [in] the early morning...*Izibonda* [were] like the officers who were in charge of monitoring the townships. They came and asked me...[t]hey went knocking, door to door, and if you did not have papers showing that you belonged in Port Elizabeth you would be told you have to go back to where you actually live. And it was not like they asked you, you were packed up and taken away immediately. (Thandiwe, 81)

Due to experiences like this Thandiwe preferred staying in the rural areas where in her view police harassment was essentially non-existent. Thandiwe's recollection of Kirkwood as being almost free of police harassment reveals a curious situation. Kirkwood fell into the Ciskei (the Bantustan) from when it became a separate administrative region in 1961 and then was declared

as an independent state from South Africa in 1972 was quite politically active with the highest number of ANC members in the Border region outside the Transvaal.³⁰⁸ Under the leadership of first Lennox L. Sebe (1973 to 1990) and secondly Brigadier Oupa Gqozo (1990 to 1994) the Ciskei was under strict police presence from their Police Elite Unit and Ciskei Defence Force.³⁰⁹

Meanwhile, Thandiwe stated that police presence and anti-apartheid activism was more obvious in cities like Port Elizabeth. Emphasizing that she did not know much about apartheid only what she witnessed when she visited her family in Port Elizabeth. As Port Elizabeth was recognized as part of the republic, it was policed by the South African Police so one cannot help but wonder if Thandiwe noticed the police presence in Port Elizabeth because it consisted of white officers while any police presence in Kirkwood was ignorable because the officers were mostly African. Similarly, Thandiwe was not actually involved in anything related to politics in the Ciskei whereas in Port Elizabeth, she was a target for police harassment because her payslip and *dompas* address did not match her residential address.

In reference to apartheid oppression, Thandiwe viewed it as only happening in the urban areas, so much so that her experience of it during the 1970s and 1980s was through her children who she sent to school in Port Elizabeth. She talked to the chaotic nature of school boycotts which intensified especially after the 1976 uprising, though she viewed the threat as coming from both the police and the anti-apartheid activists. Young people were a focal part of the anti-apartheid struggle. School children were often targeted for police harassment while anti-apartheid activists forced young people to join in the fight against apartheid.

They [activists] wanted fighters high and low. Your daughters and sons. They needed people to guard the safe houses where the activists who were being searched for by the

³⁰⁸ Jeffrey B. Peires, "The implosion of Transkei and Ciskei", *African Affairs* 91, no. 364 (1992), 377.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 380.

police where hiding. It did not matter that they were young. You could not tell the activists no or that your child was too young when they came for them...[y]ou had to hide your child and tell the police or the activists that they weren't home. (Thandiwe, 81)

As a result, Thandiwe ended up sending her children back to Kirkwood because in the rural areas she felt they would be safer than in Port Elizabeth. Thandiwe also recalled how in the townships, residents could not have fences around their yards so that people who were being chased by the police could run through the houses more easily to avoid capture and those who had fences had to make sure that they had large enough gaps so that people could get through. Ultimately in recalling her life during the apartheid years Thandiwe spoke about a constant fear that was always present with her having been scared of both the authorities and the freedom fighters. Having been scared of both the authorities and the freedom fighters showed a duality in Thandiwe's life where nothing was simply 'black or white'. Thandiwe spoke to how she kept her children safe by sending them to the rural areas away from Port Elizabeth, yet also spoke on how there was no fence around the yard of her home to help activists effectively run away from the police showcasing how African women migrants could consider themselves unpolitical yet aware of the political situation. Thandiwe self-described as not knowing a lot about apartheid and having not been involved in anything related to it, yet one can see in two instances where she arguably went against the anti-apartheid struggle by sending her children away and also how she helped it by not having a fence. It's in highlighting these nuances that singling out her fertility decisions in relation to apartheid within the pattern of her life becomes difficult. She herself did not speak to it because to her, the experiences were separate and because there were shades of grey in her decision-making.

Case Study 4: Nomangesi

Nomangesi was born in 1964 in the village of eDikeni, near the small town of Alice in the current day Eastern Cape. She grew up as one of thirteen children, having been raised by both parents. In describing her family life, Nomangesi mentioned that her father had children outside of his marriage with her mother and that those half-siblings were also raised by her mother. Though she never outright condemned her father for having had children outside of his marriage with her mother, in the interview her intonation when speaking about her family strongly indicated her disapproval with the double standard in how out-of-wedlock children were received for males and females. Later in the interview when speaking about what was expected of her as a girl *kwaXhosa* in relation to children outside of marriage she said the following.

It was disgraceful to some people to have a child outside of marriage, it was even worse if you were still in school. Getting pregnant while you were still at school? You were now disgraced and you were a source of shame. What was expected from you as a girl was to finish school and then get married. That's all. (Nomangesi, 54)

For Nomangesi, the discrepancy between the values she was taught and the reality of life was obvious from an early age due to her family life, a pattern that would continue into her adolescent years. In 1979 Nomangesi was fifteen years old when she became pregnant and gave birth to her son while unmarried. Like many of the other interviewees, Nomangesi was raised in a bubble of ignorance regarding her own body, specifically regarding her period and the act of sex. Nomangesi's naivety regarding sex was the reason she ended up a teenage

mother. She became pregnant during a game of hide-and-seek when a boy from her village that she had been playing with trapped her in her hiding spot and had intercourse with her.³¹⁰

I hadn't started my period. I only started when I ran into the problem...I only started when I was raped. I was playing hide-and-seek when it happened. Afterwards I immediately went home and told what had happened. It then became a case of he-said, she-said...he couldn't even be arrested because he was also still so young. Then the adults decided it was best to talk among themselves about what had happened, the boy then told me that I was probably pregnant and I went to tell my mother. My mother said that he was lying and that because it was only a one-time thing, I was probably not pregnant, she was convinced that I wasn't pregnant and that everything would be fine. Life then moved on, my mom made me sleep in bed with her...I mean, I grew up sleeping in the same bed as my mother anyway. (Nomangesi, 54)

A few months passed where Nomangesi recalled how she had stomach cramps until her parents eventually took her to a doctor who confirmed that she was indeed six months pregnant. Fear, confusion and shame were the primary emotions that Nomangesi expressed in relation to her pregnancy. She explained that she was disgraced and was taken by her parents to the home of the father of her baby where his family was officially notified that Nomangesi was pregnant. Nomangesi was then kept out of any further discussions in relation with what would happen but she did notice that the father of her baby was sent to initiation school to be a man in

³¹⁰ Delius and Glaser, "Sexual socialisation in South Africa: A historical perspective", 35. All the interviewees spoke to their lack of knowledge regarding sexual activities. They explained that their sexual partners generally took the lead in convincing them to have sex if they were teenagers or that it was their husbands who knew what to do on their wedding nights. All the women assumed their partners had knowledge though in some of the interviews all these years later some of the women acknowledged that their sexual partners were most likely as clueless as them. The Mayers' work in isiXhosa-speaking communities in the 1960s revealed that sexual education for the youth was present among the Red Xhosa while for the Christian Xhosa's sex was shrouded in shame and secrecy. The general consensus from many of the interviewees who had sex before marriage or as teenagers is that their boyfriends or sexual partners knew more than them though at times that was not much at all. As more Xhosa people converted to Christianity, the progressiveness of the Red Xhosa when it came to sex education started to disappear.

accordance with Xhosa culture. Nomangesi then gave birth to her son and spent the next two years unsure of her future.

In 1981, Nomangesi overheard her parents planning to have her taken as part of *ukuthwala* and married off to the father of her son. Nomangesi did not want to marry him, when I asked her why she stated that she did not want to marry her rapist. Nomangesi decided to take her child and run away to avoid being forced into a marriage she did not want. Nomangesi moved to East London where her older sister lived and got a job to support herself and her son. Her sister was supportive of her decision to not marry the father of her son and kept her hidden from their parents for some years until Nomangesi was ready to finally tell their parents what had become of her. Nomangesi's feelings on marriage were complicated and remained so during the interview. When asked about the importance of marriage within Xhosa culture she spoke of it in the same manner as many of the other interviewees.

Marriage was important because as a girl you would sometimes be chosen and forcibly married off to some man to avoid things like you having children while still at home or while you were still unmarried. It was done to avoid having children while you were still a girl at home...[it] was said that the home or the place of a woman was in marriage...your family wasn't your home, the home you grew up in was not your real home...[so], you got married and went to your true home. My sisters, for example, got married. Everyone got married and only two of us were left at home unmarried.
(Nomangesi, 54)

Nomangesi understood the importance of marriage as an overall concept within Xhosa culture, however, she had strong reservations about it in relation to herself and boldly said so in the interview.

I never wanted to get married...I was never forced to do anything. It was during the time where the importance of marriage declined and I didn't have to marry anyone. There was no need to marry girls off by force anymore if they didn't want to get married. (Nomangesi, 54)

The period of time that Nomangesi was referring to when speaking of a decline in the importance of marriage was the 1980s. Unlike her older sisters who had married throughout the 1960s and 1970s Nomangesi was adamantly against marriage which is why she ran away when her parents planned for her to be taken as a part of *ukuthwala*. Nomangesi's observation of a decline in the importance of marriage was based on her life experiences, namely moving to the urban city of East London and working to support herself and child. Census statistics from this time appeared to support Nomangesi's observations as marriage among Africans had been on a steady decline from 1960.³¹¹ In 1960, 28.5% of African women -15 years and older- were recorded as having never married and by 1980 the percentage had increased to 43,4% of African women recorded as having never married.³¹² In unpacking how this decline came about Mark Hunter has identified three factors which emerged as the leading causes, namely, "domestic instability caused by male migrant labour, women's increased work prospects, and the growing economic failure of rural areas".³¹³ The migrant labour system as stated in earlier chapters completely transformed the 'Xhosa way of life', "the rural household and many of its ritual and emotional practices, including marriage, became overwhelmingly dependent on male wage labour".³¹⁴ This was further highlighted when the marriage decline accelerated in the late 1970s, which corresponded with high unemployment numbers which made it difficult for men

³¹¹ Christine Mhongo and Debbie Budlender, "Declining rates of marriage in South Africa: What do the numbers and analysts say?", *Acta Juridica* 2013, no. 1 (2013): 184.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 184.

³¹³ Mark Hunter, *Love in the time of AIDS: inequality, gender, and rights in South Africa* (Indiana University Press, 2010), 94.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

to pay lobola or support families.³¹⁵ Which is why, as mentioned in the introduction, men turned to *ukuthwala*, a culturally approved practice that allowed men to avoid the cost of a full wedding but still gain a wife.³¹⁶ Furthermore, migration to urban areas by women was becoming more common throughout the twentieth century despite state interventions to limit their access, urban areas became sanctuaries for women who were rejecting or being rejected by the 'Xhosa way of life'.³¹⁷ Married women typically went to the city to be with their husbands but for single women it was stereotypically as a result of shameful reasons such as being divorced or having a child illegitimately.³¹⁸ Nomangesi's flight to East London was a combination of all of these factors, escaping *ukuthwala* and choosing to remain an unmarried mother. Interestingly, Nomangesi was against marriage despite its value in Xhosa culture, but she stated that it was a way of life in which she still strongly believed.

Nomangesi gave birth to her son in a hospital in 1979 and in accordance to the family planning programme of 1974, was given the injection afterwards. Officially the family planning programme advocated for contraceptive use and provided access for women but for Nomangesi like many of the other interviewees the decision to use contraceptives was not completely her own while still in the hospital.

I did know that there were things called contraceptives. You used to get the injection at the hospital after you gave birth...I was given the injection before I was released from the hospital after giving birth but I never went back again for another shot. I just never went back again...[t]hey don't ask you...[t]he nurses just told me that I had to get the injection...[t]hey said because there was a high chance that I would get pregnant again

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

³¹⁶ Mager, *Gender and the Making of a South African Bantustan : a Social History of the Ciskei, 1945-1959*, 177.

³¹⁷ Miraftab, "Governing post-apartheid spatiality: implementing city improvement districts in Cape Town", 602.

³¹⁸ Hunter, *Love in the time of AIDS: inequality, gender, and rights in South Africa*, 47.

and have another child. And obviously that scares you as you've just given birth.
(Nomangesi, 54)

Giving women contraceptives after giving birth in state hospitals and clinics appears to have been an unofficial default regulation that was practiced. However, after leaving the hospital, Nomangesi never went back to get the injection again or any other form of hormonal birth control. When I asked her why that was, she stated that her mother had told her that *kwaXhosa* if an unmarried girl with a child had sex then her child would die. Since Nomangesi had no intention of marrying she clung to this belief, one she still fully believed in at the time of the interview in 2018, explaining that was why she only had her second child in 1997 and her third in 2002. It was Nomangesi's belief in Xhosa beliefs and rejection of *ukuthwala* that was vital in her fertility decision-making rather than the apartheid state through the family planning programme. In fact, when speaking on apartheid Nomangesi stated that life was easier for her during that regime rather than in democratic South Africa.

Honestly, I think life is harder now then it was under apartheid...[e]veryday life was easier and of course things would happen. For example, at school there were constant strikes and we would be protesting and such the police would come and attack us. When that happened it was painful, what the white people were doing to us was very painful but despite all of that I think I prefer how it was compared to today. There wasn't as much violence as there is today, we have people jumping over fences into our houses now...[n]o one is scared of anyone today. People didn't have any guns unless they were police officers. Guns weren't readily available; I don't even think all police officers had guns because the level of crime simply didn't even warrant it. We also respected the police during apartheid. Today? There is little if any respect for the police. (Nomangesi, 54)

Nomangesi further stated that;

I didn't really feel apartheid or know about it in the rural areas...it started when I was in East London raising my son but even then, not really...[t]hings were really good at first. And there were lots of jobs available unlike today. These days there aren't any jobs which is why you see so much crime. Because we raise our children under difficult circumstances and yet...uh...I remember my life under apartheid very fondly, we enjoyed life back then. Now? No. For me things seemed to start going bad when the black man got into power...[l]ife became much harder. Now that we as black people are in charge? I can't say anything nice...it's not like when the white people were in charge. Sure, the white person could be oppressive towards you but you never went to bed hungry. Today? We don't even have electricity, we just sitting around. Back then electricity was available but we didn't need it because not everything ran on electricity. Everything just seems more difficult today. (Nomangesi, 54)

Nomangesi was in school during the 1970s and 1980s, a time defined by political upheaval which she does acknowledge with the school strikes that were ongoing then, however, its impact on her life was ultimately positive from her perspective, specifically with how she observed there to be an availability of jobs and a low crime rate. Two factors that were more important and impactful to her rather than what she experienced as occasional police harassment. For her, Xhosa culture meanwhile, namely her belief that her child would die if she had sex while unmarried and escaping *ukuthwala*, had a clear influence in her fertility and contraceptive decisions.

Case Study 5: Zingisa

In trying to document a relationship -if one existed at all- between apartheid and women's fertility decisions and experiences, I came across Zingisa. She was the only woman among those I interviewed who pursued an education post-secondary school, having received formal training in her chosen career as a nurse and also, she was the only one to have been actively involved in the anti-apartheid struggle. When I met her Zingisa was living in a three-bedroom house in Lwandle where she was renting out two of the three rooms to a family friend who introduced us to each other. Born in 1948 in the village of Matyantya which was a part of the Lady Frere settlement in the former Transkei, she was the fifth of ten children. Lady Frere was the home of the AmaGcina people, a clan within the main amaGcaleka house which is the senior house within the Xhosa nation.³¹⁹ Zingisa's father was a ranger and her family lived on land allocated for them by the chieftaincy where they farmed existing in a feudal-like system. The family had one rondavel which they shared, Zingisa explained that her parents had beds on opposite sides of the rondavel with the children sleeping on the floor between them. Their heads directed towards the centre of the house while their legs would face the walls.

Growing up on farming land Zingisa and her siblings helped their parents in the fields. Because there was a lot of work to be done, tasks were not strictly divided along gender lines and all the children were expected to help with whatever needed to be done though the girls did typically help their mother with garden more while the boys helped with ploughing the fields more. On a typical day Zingisa and her siblings were expected to help with the gardening, milking the cows, preparing corn for sale, cooking for the seasonal workers during planting season and so forth. Most of these tasks were expected to be done before school which resulted in lateness,

³¹⁹ Nomathamsanqa Cynthia Tisani, "Continuity and Change in Xhosa Historiography During the Nineteenth Century: An Exploration Through Textual Analysis" (PhD Dissertation, Rhodes University, 2001), vii.

only having arrived at school around 10am or 11am, though Zingisa explained that one never got in trouble as teachers knew that their students had duties, they needed to fulfil at home first.

Zingisa finished her primary education at a local school before moving to Mount Arthur Girls High School. It was while there as an adolescent that she started menarche, an occurrence that she was completely unprepared for as it was something that was not discussed because it was a source of shame.

It was shameful and at the same time...menstruation was also not talked about; it was something you were not told about. You know long...long ago if you were on your period had to sit behind the door. A blanket would be laid out for you and you would just sit there until you finished menstruating. (Zingisa, 70)

It was her older sisters that talked to Zingisa about what to do when her time of the month came. They told her that she was to find old clothing and tear it into strips to line her underwear with when she was menstruating.

Her mother, Zingisa recalled, was only ever involved in one incident as she referred to it during her daughters' adolescent years. At the age of 16 in 1964 while attending Mount Arthur Zingisa was taken as a part of *ukutwalwa*. Her father and oldest brother met with members of a family that had seen Zingisa and chosen her as a wife. The men came to an understanding with Zingisa having no knowledge of what was about to happen which was common and seen as normal. The decision to marry off one's daughter and all it entailed such as lobola was officially the domain of men, as heads of the family, mothers though were typically in the know in an unofficial capacity. Any involvement a woman had as a mother in negotiations was privately relayed to her husband and completely reliant on the nature of their relationship. In Zingisa's case, however, her mother did not know that her husband had agreed to marry off their daughter. In the interview, Zingisa conjectured that her father knew that her mother would have

interfered if she knew but that was a guess on Zingisa's part. Zingisa was taken by the men of the family she was going to be married into to their home where she was put in a rondavel with men standing guard at the door so she would not try and escape before nightfall when she would officially meet her husband. It was while sitting there waiting for nightfall that Zingisa's mother and sister arrived to fetch her. While the practice of *ukutwalwa* was universal among the Xhosa people, especially during the twentieth century, the exact execution differed from village to village and group to group.

For the *AmaGcina* Xhosas a mother could stop her daughter's forced marriage if she did not consent to it along with her husband. Zingisa explained that as the person of interest in the situation, she had no agency and could not leave unless somehow escaping, however, a mother could free her child. A mother had the authority to march into the yard of the home where her daughter was taken to, call out for her daughter, who would then have to come out of the rondavel she was being kept in and leave with her mother. The family of the potential husband, including those who were guarding her, could not stop her. Importantly, a woman's mother had to arrive before nightfall if they wished to get their daughter because if one spent the night then she was no longer pure and there was nothing a mother could do then. According to Zingisa, a mother fetching their child meant that they were denying the marriage and their lack of consent to it was valued within the *AmaGcina* Xhosa clan, which is perhaps why Zingisa's father had tried to marry her off without alerting her mother. Zingisa left with her mother and sister, her mother asked her once on the way home if anything had happened and Zingisa replied that she had just sat in the rondavel until she had arrived. Zingisa recalled that this was the only time her mother ever spoke to her about what had happened and the closest she ever got to talking about sex to her in general.

In the aftermath of the attempted *ukutwalwa*, Zingisa felt very bitter, particularly towards her father and brother, and scared regarding the whole experience. Because of the nature of her

relationship with her mother and how *ukutwalwa* was looked down upon within the school environment Zingisa never talked to anyone about what had happened to her. Without an outlet for her feelings, she was never able to process *ukutwalwa* in a healthy manner and as a result never got married even as an adult later on in life.

I never got married...there was a guy once, he was a teacher, who went to go ask for my hand but I did not love him. And there were others...I was still traumatized. I hated men because of what happened. That incident stayed with me; it was always at the back of my mind. (Zingisa, 70)

After finishing high school at the age of 21 in 1969, Zingisa began training to be a nurse in a three-and-a-half-year programme that consisted of practical and theory components at the then H F Verwoerd Hospital which today is known as the Steve Biko Academic Hospital in Pretoria. As nursing students, and eventually nurses, they were separated according to race, with African and coloured students having training together and white students having had their own classes. It was while still training in Pretoria in the early 1970s that Zingisa first became politically aware, although she would only become politically active almost ten years later in the 1980s. Zingisa's political awareness began while she was doing her midwifery rotation and discovered that as a African nurse, she earned less than her coloured and white counterparts. She found this unfair recalling that as African nurses they worked longer hours than the white nurses and also had more patients with less supplies in the non-white wards at the hospital.

Her feelings of uneasiness at the situation were further encouraged and validated when she met Siphokazi Sokupa, wife of anti-apartheid activist Silumko Solomon Sokupa who was part of the ANC's armed wing in exile.³²⁰ Sokupa who was recruiting nurses to secret meetings which

³²⁰ Nel Marais, "State security review panel will need the wisdom of Solomon", *Daily Maverick*. June 19, 2018, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2018-06-19-state-security-review-panel-will-need-the-wisdom-of-solomon/>.

Zingisa remembered having been in locations such as under bridges near the hospital to keep a low profile from authorities. Zingisa, still newly aware of the anti-apartheid political scene, recalled how she did not understand much at the meetings and required Sokupa to explain to her what had been talked about at the meetings afterwards. After Sokupa left for exile, Zingisa no longer went to meetings but was more aware of what was happening politically.

In 1975 she gave birth to her first child, who was the result of a short affair Zingisa had while on holiday. Quite a few interviewees directly mentioned or alluded to having had affairs in their youth outside of matrimony. Similar to how as teenagers the women who dated did so secretly the affairs one had as an unmarried young adult were also kept private. Though it must be noted that out of marriage affairs and dalliances were more accepted in urban areas, as they thought of as more morally corrupt compared to the rural areas.³²¹ Due to her training as a nurse, Zingisa knew about contraceptives, stating that they were introduced in the early 1970s, but chose not to use them which is how she ended up pregnant. Despite being 26, living away from home and earning her own money as a nurse, Zingisa still felt ashamed of having a child outside of wedlock because premarital pregnancy was still viewed as an embarrassment to a woman's family in Xhosa society. Though Zingisa's feelings of guilt regarding her out of wedlock pregnancy were in conflict with those of the satisfaction she felt at her father's disapproval at the situation.

I personally believe this was karma for my father because of what he tried doing to me with *ukuthwalwa*. That is how I justified it, that is how I made myself not care because having a child outside of wedlock was shameful as your child was fatherless. (Zingisa, 70)

³²¹ Sandra Burman and Patricia Van der Spuy, "The illegitimate and the illegal in a South African city: The effects of apartheid on births out of wedlock", *Journal of social history* 29, no.3 (1996), 626.

After having her child, Zingisa lived and worked in Kuruman, a town in what today is known as the Northern Cape province, until 1984 when she moved to Volksrust, a town approximately 250 kilometres outside of Johannesburg in current day Mpumalanga province. It was during her tenure in Volksrust that Zingisa became actively involved in the struggle against apartheid utilizing her nursing skills. In the 1980s there were some of the most severe of attempts at repression, which was allowed under the multiple states of emergencies declared by the government which caused a surge in violence as police more often, and more readily, shot rubber bullets at demonstrators.³²²

Through fellow nurses at the hospital she worked at in Volksrust, Zingisa found out that there was a need for medical personal to help remove rubber bullets and stitch up those who had been shot at by the police in secret locations because they could not risk going to the hospital where police would most likely already be waiting.

I remember there was a group of young men that we were always with, they would come and fetch us at night. We had to steal supplies like forceps, scalpel blades and their holders from the hospital to help remove rubber bullets from the children who had been shot in garage bathrooms. They [young activists] would collect those who had been shot and drop them off in garages instead of hospitals because they would most likely be arrested in hospitals where they would be taken and tortured or even killed. So, we had to remove the rubber bullets. (Zingisa, 70)

As part of this underground network of nurses Zingisa was scared of being caught either at the hospital stealing supplies or in the garage bathrooms in the midst of working on the injured but said that despite the fear this was her way of helping. She was only a part of this underground network of nurses for two years, as at the beginning of 1986 she became pregnant with her

³²² Adam Habib, "State-civil society relations in post-apartheid South Africa", *Social Research* 72, no.3 (2005), 676.

second child -the result of an affair with a married man- and so she told her handlers she could no longer continue helping out. Zingisa then moved back home to Lady Frere and worked at Glen Grey Hospital.

Zingisa was in an interesting position as opposed to the rest of the other interviewees because of her career, she was not only the target for contraceptive use but also an administrator of contraceptives as a nurse. Regarding her own personal experience, Zingisa chose to have the loop inserted after the birth of her first child but when she began to bleed heavily had it removed. She then tried using the pill, but she kept forgetting to take it and defaulting, she just stopped and never used contraceptives again. She never tried using the injection because through her job she witnessed the side effects of the Depo-Provera injection on women who were on it.

I would advise people to use the injection instead. The problem with Depo [for me] though was that I am already big [I have a high weight]and I did not want to get bigger so I never tried it. The reaction to contraceptives by the people was the belief that Depo made them fat. That was the big reaction, people would say it was an injection for cows.
(Zingisa, 70)

While Zingisa's personal experience with contraceptives spanned a few months, her exposure to them as a nurse was decades long. Standard protocol in hospitals was for women to get the injection after giving birth.

...it did not matter if they wanted it or not every patient left the maternity ward injected. Whether you asked for the injection or not, whether you had applied for it or you had not none of that mattered. You see people were ignorant back then, we were not educated and even those who were educated did not know much about contraceptives but...like for instance when the HIV crises started with the high death numbers, the

protocol was just to sterilize everyone who was positive after they gave birth so that they wouldn't have more children because those children would also be HIV positive. (Zingisa, 70)

Zingisa's testimony as a nurse corroborates the experiences of many of the women interviewed who stated that they were given the injection after giving birth. Zingisa's understanding of fertility was very much rooted in her nursing career with her own personal experience almost a backdrop in the context of both her decades spanning career and even her short-lived activism.

Case Study 6: Ntombiyenani

Ntombiyenani was born on 20 April 1965 in the tiny rural village of Exesi in the outskirts of Alice in the current day Eastern Cape. She was the youngest of ten children, four boys and six girls, though three of her siblings died before she was born or while she was still very young so she did not know them. Ntombiyenani described her childhood as a good one though she admitted that she was very naïve and as a result was traumatized by events that occurred during her transition from childhood to adolescence. In 1979, at the age of 14 years old, Ntombiyenani's father died suddenly. Her father was the head of not only their immediate family but their extended family because he was the oldest among his siblings, so when Ntombiyenani's cousin impregnated a girl in their village outside of wedlock it became her father's responsibility. The girl's father went to Ntombiyenani's father and demanded payment in accordance with Xhosa law because his daughter had been damaged by his nephew. The price of 'breaking the breast' of a girl -*ukuqekenza ibele*- was five cows and Ntombiyenani's father was forced to pay this fine. According to her, losing his cattle in this manner stressed him so much that within a month of his cattle being seized he had a severe asthma attack and died.

While dealing with the death of her beloved father, Ntombiyenani (still aged fourteen) became pregnant. After spending time in Port Elizabeth visiting her older sisters Ntombiyenani returned to Exesi having had a growth spurt while she was away and looking mature for her age. She met her boyfriend who, at seventeen years of age, thought she was his age, and she became pregnant the first time they had sex. Ntombiyenani did not, however, realize she was pregnant because the entire concept of her own fertility had barely registered to her having only started menstruating a mere three months before her pregnancy.

Like many of her contemporaries Ntombiyenani was kept in the dark regarding the changes her body would undergo during adolescence. It was her mother that discovered she was pregnant shocking Ntombiyenani who was unable to grasp the mechanics of it all.

But I was still stupid when I started dating, I got pregnant very fast...My mother was the one who figured out that I was pregnant, she dreamt about it and she asked me...she called me to her rondavel and asked me to take my clothes off because she had dreamt me naked. I was so shocked and it hit me that I had slept with a boy. I hadn't even told my sisters...I didn't know! I was still so young...I was really young and I honestly didn't know. My sisters only told me after I was pregnant. If I had known that by sleeping with a boy, I would get pregnant I would have run and fought my boyfriend off to the best of my ability. I would have done everything I could to avoid it. (Ntombiyenani, 53)

After discovering her daughter's pregnancy, Ntombiyenani's mother sent her to Port Elizabeth to live with her sisters for a few months. In Port Elizabeth, her sisters were worried that she was too young to have a child and gave her aloe based homebrewed concoctions in an attempt to cause an abortion, however, Ntombiyenani just vomited, afterwards telling them she would rather have the child. She then went back home to Exesi to have her child, though her mother

wanted her to stay in Port Elizabeth so she could have the baby in a clinic or hospital. Ntombiyenani wanted to be at home with her mother, who actually helped women in their village when they had their babies acting as a midwife of sorts. Ultimately, Ntombiyenani had a relatively smooth delivery guided by her mother and gave birth to her daughter in 1980 at the age of 15.

Then in 1981, while still a relatively new mother and attending school, Ntombiyenani was taken as part of *ukutwalwa*, organized by her eldest brother who, since the passing of their father, was now the head of the family, Ntombiyenani vividly still remembered the day she was taken. The general protocol of *ukutwalwa* was that the girl who was about to be taken would be sent on an errand and on her way, she would be grabbed by the men from her future husband's family. On the day Ntombiyenani was taken she had just returned from school, her uniform was still on and she was breastfeeding her daughter when her eldest brother told her that their brother who lived in Cape Town was arriving in Debe Nek, a village approximately 20 kilometres from Exesi. She was asked to go welcome him home and help him with luggage and, having done this errand many times before, Ntombiyenani was excited to go. She asked a friend to accompany her on the long walk and as they were leaving Ntombiyenani recalled seeing the beginnings of a celebration which confused her. When she asked her eldest brother, he told her to hurry up and leave so not to keep their other brother waiting. Ntombiyenani and her friend left, as they were walking a *bakkie* stopped next to them and they were offered a lift as the driver claimed to be going near Debe Nek.³²³ Ntombiyenani got into the *bakkie* first in the front and before she realized what was happening a man who had been sitting at the back jumped in next to her effectively trapping her in the middle. Her friend was threatened and told to go back home before the *bakkie* sped off.

³²³ A *bakkie* is a South African pickup truck, the name has its origins in the Afrikaans language.

The car started speeding. We were going downhill. And as we dipped in the valley then up a hill I was crying, not just for me but for my child. I kept asking them to at least let me have my child. I was taken to another village and dressed in the traditional bridal clothing. (Ntombiyenani, 53)

Ntombiyenani was married-off to an older man. She talked about the resentment and hatred she felt for her eldest brother, especially that first night as she stood in the yard of her marital home looking into the distance at her village. She later heard murmurs that her boyfriend, the father of her daughter who had been sent to Johannesburg when she became pregnant to work so he could provide for his child, had returned and upon finding out that Ntombiyenani had been married off, he set fire to her home -her family-of-origin's home. Ntombiyenani was at her marital home for two months, October 1981 to December 1981, until she was sent back to her family home because over the course of the two months that she was there her boyfriend caused trouble. In addition to burning her family home down, he harassed members of her marital family. She did not quite know what he did nor did she ever ask afterwards, but she remembered overhearing murmurs that her boyfriend was causing trouble until she was ultimately sent back home. In the two months that she was married in 1981, Ntombiyenani only slept with her husband once.

...when I got there, I was still nursing and my breasts were painful so when he would want to sleep with me, I would lie about how painful my breasts were. Even when they stopped being painful...he would question if I was really in pain because time was passing by...whenever he would try and sleep with me, I would say that my breasts were still painful. Obviously, he didn't know anything about that because he was an old man, I would tell him about my painful breasts knowing full well that I just didn't want to sleep with him. My breasts had recovered from nursing, I just didn't want to sleep with him. (Ntombiyenani, 53)

Ntombiyenani explained that knew her husband would have to return to Johannesburg soon for work so she was stalling. The one time they had sex it was forced on his end and she was grateful that she did not end up pregnant, believing that she must have still had the injection in her system. Because Ntombiyenani had avoided the clinic throughout her pregnancy and had given birth at home, preferring her mother over nurses to help her she finally went to a clinic roughly two weeks after her daughter was born when her umbilical cord stump fell off. It was there while taking her daughter for her first medical check-up that she first heard about contraceptives. She was told about the different options where Ntombiyenani preferred the injection, first trying out Noristerat but ultimately switching to Depo-Provera because it lasted three months in the body compared to Noristerat which lasted 8 weeks.³²⁴ Due to her naivety and ignorance when she became pregnant, Ntombiyenani was determined not to have a child again until she was ready, and though the only person she had planned on having sex with was her boyfriend, who was in Johannesburg, the nurses still insisted she get the injection so she went religiously every three months. She not only avoided pregnancy during her short marriage but for the next decade until she and her by then husband decided to have a second child, giving birth in 1991.

Ntombiyenani's fertility decisions were very much based upon her fear of becoming pregnant again, because her first pregnancy had been so unexpected. In the short span of two years 1979 to 1981, she went through a lot of personal change, so much so that apartheid was a factor to which she paid very little attention.

In 1986, she moved to Mbekweni township near Paarl to live with two of her sisters. Her daughter was living in Port Elizabeth with another of her sisters who lived there, so she could either finish school properly or find work. It was here that apartheid started having more of an

³²⁴ R. K. Bhathena, "The long-acting progestogen-only contraceptive injections: an update", *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 108, no. 1 (2001), 3.

impact on her day-to-day life. Ntombiyenani explained that there was a massive school strike in 1985 which impacted schools in the urban cities and towns of the current day Western Cape and Eastern Cape, which resulted in a lot of students from townships moving to the rural areas for school. However, the arrival of students from townships ended up disrupting schooling in the village with the urbanized students introducing their rural counterparts to politics.

In 1985 there was a school strike. It was school children. I do not even know exactly what the strike was for, but there was one going on...what happened was that the township children taught us all their rebellion and showed us all the wrong things from where they were coming from because that whole strike came with those children. When it was just us village children, we did not have strikes, it came with those children. (Ntombiyenani, 53)

In Mbekweni, Ntombiyenani was unable to go to school so a family friend living in Gugulethu found her a job as a nanny in Hanover Park. Before moving to Mbekweni, she had only heard from her siblings who lived in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth about the oppression of apartheid but experienced it herself first hand in 1986, when a riot broke out in Mbekweni and she was teargassed while with a friend. Over the next few years Ntombiyenani would try to finish her formal education, but due to the unstable political climate in the late 1980s she ultimately dropped out for good in 1989 when she failed grade twelve. Her boyfriend, who would later become her husband, had also moved to Cape Town living in Khayelitsha's Q block and after dropping out of school Ntombiyenani moved in with him and they planned to get married in 1990 though due to his father's death, they got married in 1991 and soon after had their second child.

Conclusion

The lives of Africans in South Africa were undoubtedly shaped by apartheid; however, a paradox must be addressed that while apartheid clearly impacted on all the women's lives as some of them acknowledged, they divorced it from their reproductive choices. All the six women featured in the chapter separated apartheid and their reproductive choices. However, through all their different experiences one can trace the influence of apartheid upon their fertility decisions in some way. Nomawethu for example, identified the apartheid years as a time she preferred because in her experience she could financially support her immediate family and extended family, something she said she could no longer do in post-apartheid South Africa. Apartheid, which others viewed as oppressive and fought against, was seen by Nomawethu to be comforting and, for her, because she was comfortable, she kept having children. While Ntombiyenani outright blamed apartheid for her poor education, the question that arose was would she have married her boyfriend in 1991 and had a second child if proper education was an option? She herself said she did not know, but similar to all the women highlighted in this chapter in reality separating the politics of apartheid from the everyday life was nearly impossible. Apartheid ideology and laws became ingrained into the everyday life of the women in a way similar to the deeply rooted customs of *kwaXhosa*. The hybrid influence of apartheid and *kwaXhosa* ideologies must be understood as bearing continuities with the colonial project to invent new traditions in Africa over a century earlier.³²⁵ The women's migrancy statuses and how they all spoke about it as normal showed how intertwined their ordinary lives were the grander political landscape. Ntombiyenani's boyfriend's leaving for Johannesburg to find work when she became pregnant was what was expected showing how a

³²⁵ Terence Ranger, "The invention of tradition in colonial Africa" 211. As discussed on page 68-69, Ranger showed how traditions was invented in Africa by colonial authorities.

system like the migrant labour, one which was enforced by the apartheid state, was also enforced within Xhosa customs.

In trying to understand apartheid in relation to fertility decisions, it also becomes a question of agency. To see the women only as recipients of apartheid laws -and Xhosa customs- would be a disservice to their agency and sense of self. We see that women found ways to assert their influence and navigate through situations such as *ukuthwalwa* where, superficially, it appeared that they had no power. Zingisa's mother is an example of a woman who acted in a patriarchal situation, she had some form of agency and stopped her daughters unwanted marriage. Ntombi is another example as she was a participant of the *ukuthwala* practice, despite being a woman, a participation which she was still proud of despite acknowledging the pain it brought to the women she helped choose to be taken. In examining the lives of the six women, it becomes important to understand and acknowledge the nuances that underpinned their decision-making.

The vastness of the apartheid state's reach must not be underestimated or viewed through a single lens. The impact of the apartheid state varied among women depending on the nature of their interaction with it. The six interviewees I focused on in this chapter were affected by the apartheid system due to having jobs outside of the home. For the most part the women recalled the apartheid years fondly due to having financial stability and relatively low crime rates, in their opinion. They acknowledged the horrors of apartheid in a generalized manner, not particularly relating it to themselves and their lives as opposed to the trauma most of them endured due to the practice of *ukuthwala*. All the women emphasized the little power and agency that they had in relation to *ukuthwala*, regardless of whether they approved of it or not. Nomangesi for example spent years hiding from her parents in East London after they tried to marry her off. Though she was confronted with the apartheid state in a more direct way in East London due to it being an urban environment as opposed to the rural one she left behind, Nomngesi felt that she had more freedom in East London than eDikeni. For the women there

was more room to manoeuvre when interacting with the apartheid system in a way that was largely absent when interacting with their families, specifically their fathers and brothers.

When asked about contraceptives (provided at state clinics to advance apartheid goals), all the women who were interviewed -those who used them and those who did not- spoke about how they gave women a choice regarding their family planning decision-making, because of contraceptives they at least had, had the option to pace their pregnancies. Giving African women agency regarding their reproductive decision-making was not the intention of the state. The intention rather was to limit and decrease their birth rate; however, we cannot ignore the fact that the execution of the state's plan allowed women like Nomawethu, Ntombiyenani and Thandiwe to plan their pregnancies and not have any more children until they were ready. In many respects, while the state's machinations had become a normalized and always present factor in the women's lives, in considering their fertility decisions they viewed it as never in the foreground.

Conclusion

The thesis examined the reproductive biographies of African women to understand the role of their decision-making in the decline in their fertility rates in the period 1960-1989. The decline has been noted by a number of scholars and organizations across disciplines such as demography and sociology. Demographers, Tom Moultrie and Ian Timæus investigated the fertility of South African women, using data from a 1996 South African census and a 1998 DHS study where they ultimately described the South African fertility decline from 1955 to 1996.³²⁶ Scholars Deborah Potts and Shula Marks also focused on the total fertility rate in South African and how it declined, becoming most evident in 1980s, particularly amongst African women.³²⁷ Having acknowledged the findings of the above-mentioned studies, this thesis focused on the reproductive experiences and decision-making of a group of isiXhosa-speaking migrant women in the Cape, ultimately providing a perspective on the socio-economic and cultural reasons behind the decline. It compliments these quantitative studies with qualitative social history data. Through interviews conducted in their own homes in their mother tongue of isiXhosa, it became evident that their moves to towns and cities significantly influenced their reproductive experiences and decision-making.

Beginning with their childhoods, all the interviewees grew up in the rural areas and as they entered adolescence, the importance of virginity was impressed upon them. Furthermore, marriage and legitimately utilizing their reproductive abilities within the binds of marriage to have the maximum number of children was also heavily emphasized, as it was of paramount cultural importance. The stories of the women then continued when they moved to towns and cities where as we saw they then were exposed to contraceptives. Due to now living in towns

³²⁶ Tom A Moultrie and Ian M. Timæus, "The South African fertility decline: Evidence from two censuses and a Demographic and Health Survey", 265.

³²⁷ Deborah Potts and Shula Marks, "Fertility in Southern Africa: the quiet revolution", 189.

and cities with access to contraceptives, the reasons of the interviewees who used them related to the socio-political and economic realities of racial oppression in the towns and cities. However, upon reflecting on their lives including the reproductive decisions that they made, a paradox emerged from the interviewees' testimony regarding apartheid and its place in their lives. Apartheid era injustices impacted on the women's lives, these including Bantu Education, pass books, influx control policies and police brutality against protestors. However, many of them did not view it as having been a dominant factor in the reproductive decisions that they made. Cultural institutions such as *ukuthwala* were instead recognized by the interviewees as critical in their reproductive histories. The thesis discussed the experiences of the women interviewed, tracing their fertility journeys through their migration statuses: from the views and traditions imparted to them throughout childhood and adolescence regarding fertility, to the reproductive decisions that they made as women in the rural areas and in towns and cities.

Findings in the chapters

Chapter One

In chapter one, I demonstrated that the childhood and adolescent years of the women interviewed were a period where they were inculcated with the belief that women had to remain virgins until marriage. In listening to the women recall their childhoods, it became apparent that innocence only achievable through a girl maintaining her virginity, which was prized above all else. All the interviewees talked about how they grew up being made cognisant of their status as 'flowers of the home'. Being a 'flower of the home' was a source of pride for the women. According to Xhosa culture, a girl belonged to her father and was not allowed to utilize her reproductive capabilities until it was legitimate to do so. The future husband of a

girl would pay lobola to her father, thereby transferring her reproductive capabilities in the approved legitimate manner. The interviewees explained that until they got married, they were subjected to practices such as virginity testing to ensure their innocence since virginity meant a higher lobola price. In speaking about lobola, the women who went through it mostly explained that not only was it a part of the way of life *kwaXhosa*, but they were also quite emphatic regarding the pride they felt for themselves and their families. For the interviewees, maintaining their virginities was of utmost importance and of the women that were interviewed who did not wait for marriage to have sex, all stated that they felt ashamed of their actions and most admitted that they knew what they were doing was wrong as it was against the Xhosa teachings with which they raised.

The effort by elders to keep girl's innocent extended to limiting their knowledge regarding their own bodies. The women were mostly surprised by menarche and some interviewees even described it as traumatic when talking about the first time they menstruated. Menstruation was then explained to the women, however the explanation given to them did not just speak to the biological changes that were occurring with their bodies but rather emphasized the social aspect of the phenomenon. The interviewees were told that they were now women and had the ability to have children though it was reiterated that this ability was only supposed to be utilized within marriage. What was further noted were the various protocols attached to menstruation though these slightly differed in their execution depending on a number of factors such as family, village, ethnic group with the Xhosa nation and whether one's family identified as *abantu abaBomvu* or *abantu abafundileyo*. Menstruation protocols mentioned by the interviewees were how, as young women, they were socially secluded and had to keep the fact that they were menstruating a secret, particularly from males. All the interviewees talked about the various taboos that were attached to periods. One taboo that was mentioned by all the

interviewees was how they were banned from having any contact with cattle or dairy while they were menstruating.

The early years of the interviewees were focused on maintaining their virginities and keeping them innocent which manifested in knowledge regarding sex and all it encompassed being withheld by elders in their lives. The limited sexual education led to a lot of naïve behaviour from some of the interviewees who had, had sex as teenagers. In an ironic fashion, limited sex education resulted in unintended teenage pregnancies though only one of the women who became pregnant as a teenager spoke to this when she blamed her family for how she ended up a teenage mother, criticizing how knowledge regarding sex was withheld from her. The other women who were teenage mothers were divided between emphasizing their naivety, not even realizing that they had participated in sex and had become pregnant. There were some who had a basic understanding of sex and spoke about the shame and guilt that they felt in going against what they had been taught at home. Ultimately, chapter one showed foundation of the women, specifically how they were raised in accordance to the Xhosa way of life which emphasized that as girls they were to remain virgins until marriage and then, once married, they were to have many children as possible in order to grow their marital homes.

Chapter Two

Chapter two focused on the women's statuses as migrants and how this influenced their fertility experiences after they moved to more urban areas: towns and cities in the Cape such as Cape Town, Queenstown and East London. Of the twenty women that were interviewed, the earliest migration journey began in 1958, though the 1960s and 1970s were the period of time when most of the interviewees began to leave the rural areas and move to urban ones. The women moved away from their rural villages to the urban areas for a variety of reasons. The two most

popular reasons that emerged throughout the interviews for moving to towns and cities were firstly, for financial reasons and secondly, for the women to go live with their husbands who worked in towns and cities. While a lot of academic literature regarding the migrant labour system has tended to focus on the experiences of men, this thesis has paid attention to the impact it had in the lives of African women and how they also actively participated in it, despite the Apartheid governments attempts at making life in urban areas inhospitable for African women. Due to poor education, as a result racial oppression experienced by of the interviewees, they worked minimum wage jobs in factories and as domestic workers or had informal jobs such as selling home brewed beer in urban townships to help support their families, particularly families in the Bantustans as they sent money back home while grandparents or other member of the extended family stayed with the children.

The second reason the women moved to towns and cities was to be with their husbands who worked as labourers and the women would typically stay a few months or even up to a year making them part of the circulatory migration system. The key reason the women gave to briefly having relocating to urban areas to be with their husbands were that African male labourers had little time off and long stretches of time would pass without their husbands returning home, so in order to fulfil their wifely duties they would travel to the towns and cities to be with their husbands in order to get pregnant. In the lives of the women that were interviewed for this study, the migrant labour system was normalized, so much so that a lot of the women viewed it as a non-hormonal form of family planning. Since their husbands were away for long periods of time, some of the women had a chance to raise the child(ren) that they already had without the risk of pregnancy then when they felt ready for another pregnancy they would try and conceive while their husband was on leave, or go to their husbands in the urban areas. Abstinence, as a result of the migrant labour system, was so ingrained in the lives of the

women that all of them referred to it as the ‘natural family planning of our (Xhosa) people’ when I questioned them regarding family planning in the interviews.

In focusing on the women’s experiences as migrants, the chapter further delved into their reproductive decisions and experiences, as they were introduced to contraceptives after moving to towns and cities. All of the women stated that they found out about contraceptives once they were in the urban areas. The women recalled how there were no clinics in the rural areas and how they had little to no access to western biomedicine while living in the rural areas. Upon moving to more urban environments, they were introduced to contraceptives such as the pill, IUDs and, most popular amongst the women interviewed, the injection. The women admitted that contraceptives had a reputation amongst elders within the Xhosa nation as being a means of killing off the future of the African population, though many of them discarded this perspective and used contraceptives. They described how they started using contraceptives because of the socio-economic oppression that they faced in towns and cities. The women had come to the towns and cities with the aim to work, being constantly pregnant or having a baby was not conducive to this goal, so the women turned to hormonal contraceptives to give themselves the chance to work outside the home, raise the children that they had and to give their body a rest. Interviewees who used contraceptives as married women justified their decision to do so by explaining that they were aware of the socio-economic environment that they lived in, in the urban areas.

Furthermore, by the virtue of being in the urban towns and cities where they had access to contraceptives through the government’s family planning programme which officially began in 1974 and access to western medical care. This also meant the migration status of the women did influence their reproductive decisions and experiences. An example, where the women’s statuses as migrants was influential to their reproductive decision-making and fertility experiences was evident in the different labour processes they experienced in the rural areas

versus more urban areas. Many of the women had their first child -in some cases more- at home in the rural areas where older women from their family or their village would help them through the childbirth process. The women would then move to a town or city where they would receive medical assistance during their labour. The interviewees who went through labour in both the rural areas and in an urban area all noted that there were differences in their experiences so in that way migration did influence the type of experience the women had while in labour.

In looking at the reproductive biographies of the women as a whole to contextualise their decisions to use contraceptives, the agency of the women emerged. Contraceptives being accessible to African women gave them the power to determine their reproductive experiences regardless of whether or not the women chose to use contraceptives, an option that was previously not there. Interestingly the women who did choose to use contraceptives dismissed my questions regarding their agency. Instead they stated that their reasons for using contraceptives were a direct result of their socio-economic situations rather than being based in any sort of feminist ideology or conscious rejection of the teachings they grew up with *kwaXhosa*. Furthermore, the six women who did not use contraceptives did not paint their reproductive experience as submission to Xhosa culture except for one. One interviewee was against contraceptive use because it meant that a wife was not fulfilling her wifely duties. Another of the interviewees did not use contraceptives because she was experiencing miscarriages and wanted to get pregnant. The other four remaining women all ultimately echoed each other's answers about why they never used contraceptives: they heard about contraceptives after they were done having children. Interestingly of that four all but one had their children in the rural areas showing how rural life -which for most villages during apartheid meant no clinics or hospitals- impacted their lives as they were left unaware of western medicine. The one woman who did not use contraceptives and lived in Cape Town had her children before the implementation of the family planning programme.

Ultimately, in looking at the experiences of the women who used contraceptives and those who did not, those who were migrants and those who were not, the diversity in African women's reproductive experiences emerges, as we look at the women's testimony as historical evidence of the complexity of how the apartheid state interacted with the lives of ordinary African women.

Chapter Three

Chapter three offered a nuanced re-thinking of apartheid and its influence on the lives of the African women who were interviewed. The chapter argued that while apartheid had a heavy influence on the lives of the women, especially during their times in the towns and cities, where the reach of the apartheid system was most prominent in daily life, my key informants said that it was not the most dominant factor in their reproductive lives. From the perspective of the interviewees, when they reflected on their reproductive decisions-making and experiences during the course of the interviews, they stated that they did not view apartheid as having influenced that part of their lives. They acknowledged apartheid as the system of legalized racial segregation that they lived under but could not speak to it as having influenced their reproductive decisions, seeing the two worlds as separate. The interviewees instead identified cultural institutions like *ukuthwala* as having been much more impactful in their lives whether they agreed with the practice or not. Interestingly, while most of the interviewees regarded apartheid as having a bad period of time in their lives there were some women who were nostalgic for that era. A significant factor of that nostalgia for the interviewees that worked outside of the home was the financial aspect of it all. For black women "migration offered an alternative to total control by men, allowing for greater personal autonomy and mobility".³²⁸

³²⁸ Jansen, *Like Family: Domestic Workers in South African History and Literature*, 50.

All the women, save Zingisa the nurse, worked unskilled or low skilled jobs in factories or as domestic workers and emphasized how they could provide for their families. The financial security that they felt they had under apartheid did not carry into the democratic era with many of the women stressed about their current day finances and the high levels of unemployment faced by their children and grandchildren. These experiences and perspectives highlight a nuance that could arguably only be found through studying the history of ordinary women. Between talking to the women and looking into post-apartheid laws I believe we can reach an understanding of why there were interviewees who were nostalgic for apartheid.

Post-apartheid South African law represents a practice such as *ukuthwala* as consisting of elements which are either unconstitutional or illegal.³²⁹ As a result, its practitioners have felt that “the government took people “out if [their] custom” with the imposition of “things of the West,” i.e. human rights which necessitated the criminalisation of certain customary practices that were considered harmful”.³³⁰ Virginity testing is another cultural institution that the interviewees grew up participating which has been criminalized with the Children’s Bill stating that virginity testing is prohibited on children under the age of eighteen.³³¹ There has been pushback against these laws and a yearning for the past. I would like to posit that my interviewees who were nostalgic for the apartheid years, in fact longed for the ‘Xhosa way of life’ rather than the actual discriminatory political and social system. The laws of democratic South Africa have criminalized and attacked many cultural institutions that were considered sacred to the Xhosa, whereas apartheid laws did not dictate or infringe on practices such as *ukuthwala* or virginity testing. The feelings of the interviewees showed the complex relationship ordinary African women had with the state during and after apartheid due to how

³²⁹ W. J. Smit and Catrien Notermans, "Surviving change by changing violently: ukuthwala in South Africa's Eastern Cape province", *Anthropology Southern Africa* 38, no. 1-2 (2015), 29.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

³³¹ Fiona Scorgie, "A battle won? The prohibition of virginity testing in the Children's Bill", 23.

the state interacted with Xhosa culture. It must also be noted that almost all the interviewees spoke of the 'Xhosa way of life' very fondly.

Chapter three in many ways exemplifies the efficiency of the apartheid system: its influence on the reproductive experiences of the women is undeniable from its family planning programme dispensing contraceptives to how the women participated within the migrant labour system (be it through their husbands or themselves directly as was discussed in chapter two). Apartheid was not viewed by the study participants to have been relevant to their reproductive decision-making and few were actively involved in anti-apartheid activism. Zingisa was the only woman out of the twenty that was involved in some capacity in the fight against apartheid as she used to nurse wounded comrades however we see even in her life story that apartheid was not a factor which influenced when she had her children. Zingisa knew about contraceptives from the late 1960s due to her nursing career and used various forms of contraceptives until 1974 when she decided to discontinue their use. Zingisa's children were born in 1975 and 1986. She was part of an underground group of nurses that helped wounded anti-apartheid activists between 1984 to 1986. As a result of her pregnancy, in 1986 she stopped helping with the wounded activists. Since Zingisa was the only one of the women to be politically involved, I used her as the main example in highlighting the nuances in how the women were impacted by apartheid.

Throughout the thesis in delving into each woman's story the thesis it has been shown how -if at all- apartheid was a factor in their lives and that it was different for each of the women. Interviewees who went to school in 1950s spoke of the constant school strikes that were happening which impacted their lives. Some interviewees who had moved to urban areas recalled being arrested because they did not have the correct documents particularly between 1960 to 1976, a time when the apartheid government was arguably at its most powerful having banned political parties like the ANC and the PAC in the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre

in 1960 and before the rise of the student rebellion in 1976. The 1980s, which was a period of mass resistance against the state, were viewed by the interviewees as having been no more impactful on the lives than any other period in time politically. In fact, two of the interviewees discussed how they escaped the practice of *ukuthwala* and arranged marriages in the 1980s and described how, that is what still haunts them about that period rather than the politics of the time. In answering questions about apartheid and their experiences over or within the period of 1950 to 1989, all the interviewees discussed the availability of jobs and low crime rates during that era. Two key factors that they mentioned as having made them view their lives then better than today despite having political freedom due to democracy. Only some of the interviewees acknowledged or viewed oppression by the state as having impacted their lives or their decisions.

Contribution to Literatures

This thesis offers an account of the reproductive decision-making and experiences of a select group of ordinary women. Statistics have been generated regarding contraceptive use and the decline in the fertility rate accumulated through various surveys by different organizations. The contribution of this thesis to women's history has been telling the story behind these statistics through the perspective of the women who made reproductive decisions. The thesis complements the demographic literature by showing the social aspect of changes in demography.

The thesis has examined, underexplored topics of relevance to the status of women and girls in South Africa. Menstruation, for example, is a topic that is still considered to be taboo. The literature that does exist about menstruation among African females tends to be anthropological. One of the earliest mentions of the menstruation protocols in relation to

African women was by Hunter in *Reaction to Conquest* in the 1930s where she observed that “[w]omen’s taboos are bound up with the concept of *umlaza* (ritual impurity). A woman has *umlaza* during her periods until she washes after the flow ceases”.³³² Meanwhile, a 2016 journal article titled “*Bitten By Shyness*”: *Menstrual Hygiene Management, Sanitation, and the Quest for Privacy in South Africa* done through collaboration between a number of scholars revealed that not only was menstruation still considered a taboo subject but little information was known regarding “menstruation in low-income settings and whether existing sanitation systems meet women’s needs”.³³³ These two works nearly 80 years apart are illustrative of the gap in literature regarding the menstruation protocols of African women, particularly within the historical context. In situating the fertility experiences of the women interviewed within the broader scope of their lives, the topic of menstruation emerged when talking about their adolescent years. This thesis allowed for the menstruation experiences of African women in the past to be recorded.

Another unexplored topic that was highlighted in this thesis was that of *ukuthwala*. Official discussions regarding *ukuthwala* have almost exclusively focused on it in relation to the law which is the top-down approach this thesis has worked to overturn. In *Ukuthwala in Rural South Africa: Abduction Marriage as a Site of Negotiation about Gender, Rights and Generational Authority Among the Xhosa*, Kate Rice interviewed two women who had facilitated *ukuthwala* as case studies from Bomvana village.³³⁴ One was a middle-aged woman who was separated from her husband and ran her own household.³³⁵ This woman organized wives for her two sons through *ukuthwala*.³³⁶ The second case study was the story of a

³³² Hunter, *Reaction to conquest: Effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, 46.

³³³ Fiona Scorgie, Jennifer Foster, Jonathan Stadler, Thokozile Phiri, Laura Hoppenjans, Helen Rees, and Nancy Muller. ““Bitten By Shyness”, 161.

³³⁴ Rice, “Ukuthwala in rural South Africa: Abduction marriage as a site of negotiation about gender, rights and generational authority among the Xhosa”, 384.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 393.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

grandmother who facilitated for her granddaughter to be taken as part of *ukuthwala*.³³⁷ Rice's case studies showed the complicated and complex relationship women had with practices such as *ukuthwala*, the reality of the practice was not simply the subjugation of women -particularly girls- by men. Even in a patriarchal structure and institution such as the *ukuthwala*, women had some power and agency to navigate space for taking action and decision-making. Rice's fieldwork about *ukuthwala* was conducted about the practice in the 2010s and was an anthropological paper. *Ukuthwala* was a subject that emerged from the interviews, as some of the interviewees underwent it, this thesis discussed the experiences of these women with *ukuthwala* across the period examined, creating, and drawing upon, new historical sources.

Lastly, the Western Cape-Eastern Cape circulatory migrant system was a key factor in the reproductive decision-making and experiences of the women. The thesis focused on both the socio-economic aspects of the migrant labour system and the most intimate decisions of the women, analysing the interaction between the two. African women's experiences as migrants in South Africa have been under-studied in history so this thesis sought to add more scholarship on the topic.³³⁸

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 395.

³³⁸ Dorrit Posel, "Have migration patterns in post-apartheid South Africa changed?", 278.

Shortcomings and Potential Future Directions

Methodological Shortcomings:

There were some methodological shortcomings of this study. This thesis could have drawn up a bigger sample size in order to create a broader anthology of isiXhosa-speaking women's reproductive experiences during the apartheid era in their own language. A future study on the topic could involve carrying out research in the Eastern Cape to examine the biographies of women who have left Cape Town and returned to their homes. My research would have benefitted from further linguistic analysis to trace the genealogy and nuance of terms and expressions uncovered that are no longer common in modern day isiXhosa, as a language. Upon completion of the thesis I will donate recordings of the interviews to the archives held at Special Collections at the African Studies Library at the University of Cape Town to enable future linguistics to examine the primary source material I have gathered.

Emerging themes which require further exploration:

Reproductive Health Care in the Post-Apartheid era

There are a number of issues in relation to the topic which are deserving of further examination. There would be value in exploring the biographies of the women beyond their active fertile years and looking into their motherhood -and grand motherhood- experiences in these later life phases especially in light of social and cultural changes that have taken place in post-1994 South Africa. During the course of the interviews, for example, when talking about contraceptives a majority of the women expressed that one of the stigmas attached to contraceptive use was the idea that if parents encouraged their teenage daughters to use contraceptives, they were in essence giving them permission to engage in sexual activity which,

as we know from the thesis, goes against the core beliefs of Xhosa culture which call for girls to be pure until marriage. However, there was an acknowledgement by most of the interviewees that life in post-apartheid South Africa was different and that the Xhosa way of life was perhaps no longer relevant in the lives of girls.

At the time of the interview more than 50 years after she first heard of contraceptives, Ida stated that she now supported the use of contraceptives and had actually advocated in favour of her teenage granddaughters using contraceptives because she recognized that times had changed. She said,

...today we have to give allowance. Kids today don't hide anything. There's nothing to hide. Once they start their periods my mind starts running... You must not hide anything from your children. There's nothing to hide today. Young girls make the decision to stay a virgin for themselves because they perhaps recognize that they're too young. Or maybe they decide to use contraceptives because they recognize that they're still too young to have a child. And as parents now we have to be constantly reminding them not to forget to go to the clinic. (Ida, 80)

It would also be interesting to discuss the influence of developments in post-apartheid policy on the women's experiences. To begin with relevant international developments: one of the first diplomatic endeavours of the new South African government was attending the United Nations' International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt in September of 1994.³³⁹ Anti-apartheid South African women activists had ensured that women's rights and gender inequality would be factored key points in the transition to democracy during the early 1990s.³⁴⁰ Women's issues and gender politics had not always been in the forefront of

³³⁹ David Gakere Ndegwa, "International thinking on population policies and programmes from Rome to Cairo: Has South Africa kept pace?", *Southern African Journal of Demography* (1996), 55.

³⁴⁰ Gay W. Seidman, "Gendered citizenship: South Africa's democratic transition and the construction of a gendered state", 298.

the anti-apartheid movement but due to the global feminist movement, South African feminist activists were getting introduced to a new ideology which challenged the previously assumed domestic role of women in the struggle.³⁴¹ As a result of this new knowledge women activists were feeling more confident in bringing up gender and women's rights within the democratization process as they argued for the importance of addressing gender concerns so that the new political institutions would not re-create or reinforce inequality.³⁴² The first success of women activists was in how they made gender issues become key in the discussions regarding democratization in the lead up to 1994.³⁴³ After the 1994 elections, women activists continued to work and advocate for women's rights domestically through drawing on "international debates and documents to fuel their own efforts to address gender inequality at home".³⁴⁴

The Cairo Conference was one which stressed reproductive rights and women's health in relation to population issues. The conference was viewed as a success as it shifted "focus on the goal of fertility limitation to placing emphasis on the reproductive health and rights of women".³⁴⁵ A year later, the Beijing Conference: the fourth of the United Nations' conferences on women took place in 1995. The previous three having been held in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985).³⁴⁶ While all previous conferences had been stepping stones in developing women's rights, it was the Beijing Conference which "was a turning point in the world's understanding; an acknowledgment that women's issues are the world's issues, and vice versa...and for the second time in 12 months, countries of the world reaffirmed the human rights of women and the critical importance of reproductive and sexual health and rights

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 292.

³⁴² *Ibid.*

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 293.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 297.

³⁴⁵ Gakere Ndegwa, "International thinking on population policies and programmes from Rome to Cairo: Has South Africa kept pace?", 55.

³⁴⁶ Martha Alter Chen, "Engendering world conferences: the international women's movement and the United Nations", *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1995), 477.

to women's empowerment and to development".³⁴⁷ Agreements made at the Cairo Conference were upheld through the Beijing Conference's Platform for Action, a formal declaration regarding women's rights.³⁴⁸

At the time of its adoption, the Beijing Platform for Action was quite revolutionary and complimented the goals of the health commission that the ANC had established in 1990 which worked to not only unite the divided health sectors but also transform them so resources could be divided equally among the people.³⁴⁹ One of the focuses of the health commission was to create reproductive health policies that would highlight human rights and be reflective of the country's soon to be democratic status.³⁵⁰

Post-1994, within South Africa, a number of significant reproductive health policies were passed. Some examples include in 1994 'free public health services for pregnant women and children under six'; in 1996 the Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act was passed, in 1998 a new population policy was introduced, and, in 2003 the government approved a plan for antiretroviral drugs to be provided to people living with HIV.³⁵¹ These are but a few of the reproductive health policies that were passed. One must specifically note that in 2002 and 2004 the National Contraception Policy and Service Delivery Guidelines were respectively launched. Those two documents were "instrumental in identifying problems in contraceptive services, such as limited method choice, provider coercion" and other issues.³⁵²

This should be specifically noted because when interviewing Zingisa, who was a nurse, she talked about how in the post-apartheid years - the early 2000s- women were given Depo-

³⁴⁷ Joan Dunlop, Mia MacDonald, and Rachel Kyte, "Women redrawing the map: The world after the Beijing and Cairo Conferences", *SAIS Review* 16, no. 1 (1996), 153.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ Diane Cooper, Chelsea Morroni, Phyllis Orner, Jennifer Moodley, Jane Harries, Lee Cullingworth, and Margaret Hoffman, "Ten years of democracy in South Africa: Documenting transformation in reproductive health policy and status", *Reproductive health matters* 12, no. 24 (2004), 71.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 74.

Provera, regardless of if they wanted it or not after they gave birth in states hospitals and clinics. A protocol that was continued from the apartheid era. Zingisa was the only nurse I interviewed, and it would be interesting for more nurse-migrants in the Cape to be interviewed in this topic. There is some contemporary research regarding coerced or forced sterilization of African women living with HIV.³⁵³ Scholar, Priti Patel has also written about forced sterilization stating that it is often targeted at women who are “ethnic and racial minorities, women with disabilities, women living with HIV, and poor women”.³⁵⁴ In her work published in 2017, Patel identified South Africa as one of the countries in which there was recent evidence regarding marginalized women and how they still dealt with coerced sterilization.³⁵⁵ This is a research area which deserves more attention. As is as of the writing of this thesis the guidelines of both the National Contraception Policy of 2002 and its 2012 update require medical professionals to have patients undergo a comprehensive assessment and screening where “everyone should have access to accurate, unbiased information about all available methods in order to make an informed choice”.³⁵⁶

In regards to making informed decisions, the use of Depo-Provera is still controversial with its long-term effects on women’s bodies unknown and continuously under re-advisement as new medical research happens. A study in 2015 revealed that “unwanted side effects included weight gain, nausea, decreased libido, impacts on menstruation, and concerns about the effect on future fertility”.³⁵⁷ Despite this uncertainty the 2016 South African Demographic and Health Survey revealed that the most popular contraceptive methods in the country are injectables.

³⁵³ Zaynab Essack and Ann Strode. ““I feel like half a woman all the time”: The impacts of coerced and forced sterilisations on HIV-positive women in South Africa.”, 27.

³⁵⁴ Priti Patel, “Forced sterilization of women as discrimination”, *Public Health Reviews* 38, no. 1 (2017), 1.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁵⁶ National Department of Health, “National Contraception and Fertility Planning Policy and Service Delivery Guidelines: A Companion to the National Contraception Clinical Guidelines”, (2012), 8.

³⁵⁷ Alexandra Lutnick, Mary Kate Shapley-Quinn, Kgahliso Nozibele Manenzhe, Jacob Onyango, Kawango Agot, Khatija Ahmed, and Ariane van der Straten, “Two birds with one stone: Health care providers’ perspectives about prevention technologies in Kenya and South Africa”, *Journal of the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (JIAPAC)* 18 (2019), 4.

How and why is this the case? For the interviewees that used Depo-Provera its key selling points to them were that it was a discreet method and it was not taken daily. Of course, a proper study is needed to try and answer these questions but I would posit that its popularity in the post-apartheid era is for the same reasons. Democratic South Africa is in many respects a paradoxical country with progressive laws, yet a significant percentage of its population still subscribing to conservative values which make any talk of sex or anything related a taboo topic.³⁵⁸ A study conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville Campus) among undergraduate students regarding abortion and contraceptives found that, “While the general picture of contraception and abortion attitudes of our sample of university students appears to be one of acceptance, careful examination of the findings reveals the need for a more nuanced understanding of the issues at play: judgmental and moralistic attitudes; evidence of conservative attitudes to women; an apparent disjuncture between cognitive understanding and intended behaviour; and stereotypes and misconceptions despite educational levels”.³⁵⁹ Additionally, the actual use of Depo-Provera despite its controversies calls to attention the long medical history of using black bodies for research purposes and negligence on the part of the medical community as proven when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission ruled that the health sector colluded with the apartheid government.³⁶⁰

It is also important to acknowledge that implementation of government policy continues to be a significant problem in South Africa. In democratic South Africa, contraceptive services have been made available to women through the public sector health sector, including hospitals and clinics and yet over ten years into democracy in 2006, a number of barriers stood in the way of

³⁵⁸ Mary Hames, "Rights and realities: limits to women's rights and citizenship after 10 years of democracy in South Africa", *Third world quarterly* 27, no. 7 (2006), 1319.

³⁵⁹ Cynthia J. Patel and Trisha Kooverjee, "Abortion and contraception: Attitudes of South African university students", *Health care for women international* 30, no. 6 (2009), 563.

³⁶⁰ Laurel Baldwin-Ragaven, Leslie London and Jeanelle De Gruchy, *An ambulance of the wrong colour: Health professionals, human rights and ethics in South Africa* (Rondebosch: University of Cape Town Press, 1999), 3.

effective use.³⁶¹ A new national Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Framework 2014-2019 Strategy was launched indicating that access to contraceptives is an issue with which the government and reproductive right advocacy organizations continue to grapple.³⁶² The post-apartheid era and the lives of the women in this period was not within the scope of this project but is an important area for potential future study.

Demographic Developments in the Post-Apartheid era

Another area I have identified for potential future study is an examination of demographic developments in the post-apartheid era. Surveys by the United Nations indicated that the fertility decline that had begun in the 1960s in South Africa finally levelled out by 1996 with data from the Department: Statistic South Africa indicating that the assumptions of expectation of life at birth without HIV/AIDS and total fertility rate in the 2002 to 2019 period averaged at 2,45.³⁶³ However the South African HIV/AIDS epidemic of the early 2000s must also be taken into account as between 1997 and 2003 the HIV incidence peaked in 15 to 49-year-olds though it has since been on a steady decline.³⁶⁴ Looking at a total fertility rate that has averaged at 2,45 from 2002 to 2019 in the midst of the country's still ongoing HIV/AIDS epidemic, a future study is required to analyse how Xhosa culture has changed or stayed the same. In particular it would be interesting to examine which practices disappeared, which remained and which re-emerged? During the course of the interviews the women's perspectives regarding life in the

³⁶¹ Kate Wood and Rachel Jewkes, "Blood blockages and scolding nurses: barriers to adolescent contraceptive use in South Africa", *Reproductive health matters* 14, no. 27 (2006), 110.

³⁶² Naomi Lince-Deroche, Melanie Pleaner, Chelsea Morroni, Saiqa Mullick, Cindy Firnhaber, Jane Harries, Edina Sinanovic, Masangu Mulongo, and Pearl Holele, "Achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health services: the potential and pitfalls for contraceptive services in South Africa", *South African Health Review* 2016, no. 1 (2016), 96.

³⁶³ Department: Statistics South Africa, "Statistical Release P0302: Mid-year population estimates 2019", <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022019.pdf>, 2.

³⁶⁴ Leigh F. Johnson, Rob E. Dorrington, and Haroon Moolla, "HIV epidemic drivers in South Africa: A model-based evaluation of factors accounting for inter-provincial differences in HIV prevalence and incidence trends", *Southern African journal of HIV medicine* 18, no. 1 (2017), 1.

2010s would emerge at times and they would speak on their present-day views. According to censuses done during the fall of apartheid and in the post-apartheid years the percentage of African women who were not married or had never been married was 45.2 in 1991, 49.7 in 1996 and 49.3 in 2001.³⁶⁵ For a culture where marriage was the most important aspect of a girl's life, the decreasing importance requires an examination into what has changed in the lives of African women. The 2017 South African census also showed an overall decrease in marriage among all South African citizens with a decline of approximately 27.37% from 2008 to 2017.³⁶⁶ The census also showed that African couples had the highest divorce rate of any of the population groups making up 44.5% of all divorces from 2008 to 2017.³⁶⁷ In the past decade while marriage rates have been declining and the divorce rate increasing among Africans, the total fertility rate has remained somewhat stable at 2,45 from 2002 to 2019. Further research that is outside the scope of this project would be needed to look into how the marriage rate decrease and the total fertility rate impact or influence each other considering their historical connection and significance within African culture.

Conclusion

Demographic studies have demonstrated that there was a decline in fertility among African women by the 1960s to the end of the period examined, 1989. This thesis related the women's decisions regarding their fertility to the decline as African women's own rationales for, and experiences of, planning their families have been underexplained. This thesis offers a qualitative, social history analysis of reproductive decision-making and experiences of a group of isiXhosa-speaking African migrant women in the Cape. It shows that migration

³⁶⁵ Mhongo, Christine and Debbie Budlender,, "Declining rates of marriage in South Africa: What do the numbers and analysts say?", 184.

³⁶⁶ Department: Statistics South Africa, "Statistical Release P0307: Marriages and divorces 2017", <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0307/P03072017.pdf>, 2.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 6.

fundamentally impacted on women's decisions to use contraception. They became aware of contraception and it was more readily available in towns. The women had to work in the cities and towns which meant that they wished to have less children and were not as subjected to the pressures of the Xhosa way of life in the rural areas.

Furthermore, the women lived through the apartheid era, and though it impacted their lives deeply they did not view it as having impacted their decision-making process regarding their fertility. Instead, they saw *ukuthwala* as far more significant in their sexual and reproductive histories. This thesis, thereby, contributes to the literatures on migration and African women's reproductive health during the apartheid era.

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Appendix 1: Interview Transcripts

Thandie

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: *Thoughts and explanations*

Part ONE

Introductions: Who is she? Where is she from? How did she grow up? General background

Mam' Olay ngokokwenda. Nom'vume kaMancotywa, raised emapondweni in Lusikisiki. Only child kuMama wakhe, no siblings. Parents separated and she was then raised by relatives.

Growing up being an only child common?

Most of the people I grew up with have brothers and sisters. Due to the life I had, I knew that the people I was raised with were not my siblings so I could not confide in them. The people I lived with, my mom's sisters were too old for me to talk to them. Whatever you go through as a child you have things that you feel like you can't discuss with adults. Even when you get to 'is-stage', you can't talk to anyone because they are old. And what old people did was that they put you at a distance with how they talked to you. They were trying to instil respect within you the way they knew how. They never gave you a chance to explain or dug deeper with you to ask how you felt. Or what challenges you were feeling in life. ***Kudala*** they were not those type of people, they were not people who gave you a platform to talk about your problems if you had any, whether you are happy or if there is a problem bothering you. You could not talk to them, you could just sense it in the manner in which they spoke to you without them explicitly saying so. But how someone chats or talks to you as a child, if they want the child to talk to them, you must be an open person. As a parent you must be open and not judgemental. You must give the child a chance to be free so that they can talk to you about things that they thought they couldn't. Growing up like that replicates in your own life, making you a curtain to your own children. So that when you talk to them you realize that there was a better way you could have spoken to them but you don't because of how you were raised, ***awufundanga emva***.

4:19 Was it common that adults didn't talk to children?

Adults didn't talk to kids. It was a norm that people did things so kids didn't see it. Even things that didn't matter, they hid even inconsequential things which led to children hiding big things that they should have been talking about.

Example of things that were not spoken about?

For instance, the father next door said something he wasn't supposed to say to you as a child and it embarrasses you. And if you repeat what he said -maybe you are a talkative child and you feel like you need to tell adults that you didn't like how this man operated- the response was don't talk about what the man said to you because it's going to look like you are making this man into a bad person. You talk about what this man did -whether it was holding you (***inappropriate touching?***), -wondering

why he is treating you this way -or maybe the way he looks at you makes you feels uncomfortable- so you mention all of this to an adult and you are told to hide what has happened.

So as a child did you feel ignored? Do you think that this was normal for that time period (50s and 60s)?

I didn't understand whether they were trying to keep a friendship at the expense of a child. A child was a thing that was not cared for to tell you the honest truth. Children were not taken care of. Mother's didn't care about children; a majority of mothers didn't care. A few mothers did seem to care and cover for children or notice if something was wrong. I believe that there a lot of children who go through rape but they can't tell their parents because of the response the response the parents will have towards the child. Parents could, maybe the next-door neighbour could say whatever to the child and humiliate them because they knew that at home the child will not be entertained regardless of what they say. The child could tell but it wouldn't matter.

Are children important kwaXhosa?

Children kwaXhosa are important, they've been important *kwakudala*. But they were important because...children were used kwaXhosa for their (adults) own needs.

What needs?

For instances, if you have a child -a girl child as your first born- it's said ooooh, you need to have a boy child as they will inherit. They will keep the name of the family. Of its a girl she's going to be married and leave her home. They have a problem as this child will get married and change her surname. At the same time the girl child is a gain because she will get married and bring cows during lobola so in all of this they are happy for the cows but at the same time she will be getting married. And they didn't mind that girl children didn't study because they took it for granted that she's going to be married anyway.

Is it safe to say that the value or worth of a girl child before marriage was essentially to keep her virginity and her value as a wife was her ability to have children in her husband's family?

They wanted a girl child to be a virgin but I believe that if you want your child to be a virgin you protect your child. You love your child so that they become what you want them to be. Your child- whatever you have you value because you know the value of what you have. Even a plant, as a female child is known as the flower of her home. You don't leave your flowers in the sun to burn, you don't put them somewhere where they won't get water that it is if you want your child, your flower not to be burnt by the sun you protect. You cover your plant, you protect you girl child. You love your girl child. You give your plant water and soil. You protect your child so that they don't want 'outside' things, that they see them as unimportant because they are getting what they need at home. You love them so that they don't go searching for love 'outside' and lose their virginity because you don't practice what you...not preach because maybe they (parents? adults in general?) don't preach love, they don't preach protection. Maybe they don't...maybe they didn't understand what protection was. Maybe some -not going to say all- parents didn't understand. There were some parents where you could tell that the child was a tool. How? Maybe there is parent without kids, a parent with lots of kids would say take some (kids) from me and have people to do things for you (**abanti bothuma**). That way you make a child into **yothuma**, you forget that a child is on earth as a blessing. if you have you blessing you are supposed to keep it *ngedlela eright* so will not lose the blessing.

12:06 Going back to virginity, why was virginity so important?

Its importance was that they wanted a person to have a white wedding. That is what they wanted, it was the pride **lekahaya**. It was a pride thing that my child is still a virgin and they are getting married in a white wedding. And they could tell when someone was not a virgin.

How?

They could see when she was sleeping...when she was getting married in a white wedding. They'll (in-laws) go ask for her as **intombi eboniweyo**. She'll be lobola'd and she'll definitely meet her husband. In the midst of the lobola negotiations and all that stuff, they'll want to know if she is a virgin or not. They'll be a white wedding and tradition dictates that a sheet is put on the bed when she is going to sleep with her husband for the first time. There will be a lookout for blood. Sleeping with someone for the first time as a virgin **uyaqgaqgwa** because it is her first time. If there is not blood it means you are not a virgin. And there is a higher lobola price for virgins compared to people have already had sex or people with children. Immediately after having a child you have no value according to **abantu bakudala**.

You don't have value because you are not a virgin? Your value is in your virginity? What about being smart in school? Or you are a good farm hand?

They didn't care about that. The thing they actually wanted was you being a virgin. It's a cherry on top if you work hard, they do look at that. They are happy that you can work with your hands (**ukhuthela**) but your smartness they don't know about. What they are looking at is whether this child never had a man or slept with anyone. That this child can work. What about school?

So, girls were defined by their virginity?

Virginity and their commitment **kwizinto zekhaya**.

When she's getting married, what is being exchanged with lobola between the families?

Lobola is paid and then it depends amongst blacks within their tribes and areas and families people grew up in. In some families it's like a game, I don't know why they do it because when someone lobola's...xa kulotyolowa kuthiwa kufunwa inkomo ka mama. Inkomo ka mama is because she bore and raised the child. That cow was associated with virginity back in the day. A cow because she is a virgin. And then there is ihashe ka tata, a horse with all the dressings as ibhongo kaTata. And then ezinye inkomo zikhapha elihashi kaTata kunye nale nkomo kaMama yevirginity yomntana. But the cows come back in that intombi funeka intengelwe ibedroom suite. Kitchen things must also be bought, things that they are going to cook with emzini. Funeka kuthengelwe lafamily impahla, everyone in the family must be bought something. From blankets to amakhukhu to aprons to doeks...everything. When you count all those expenses you realize that all that lobola money actually goes back to the groom's family. The groom's family got your child and their lobola back. The bride's family gets very little in return. And there is very little if anything at all that will ever connect the bride and her family again. And ekhayeni she has no say because ninikele ngaye kwababantu.

In marriage does the girl child cease to belong to her family?

According to culture it was said that you no longer belong with your family, you belong with your husband's family. Your husband's family also tells you, you no longer belong with your family but theirs. But you belong to that family when you're old, not while you are fresh. Because while you still fresh there are things you can't get involved in like family meetings. You aren't included. You are labelled as '**uze ngomendo**', you have nothing to say.

Connecting virginity and lobola, are you buying the rights of any children born to the union to belong to their father's family and without lobola they don't belong?

Correct. You (as the wife) were there to expand your husband's family. Your family does not have rights to those children.

Because lobola was paid?

Because lobola was paid. There is nothing your family could do or say.

As a mom do you have rights to the children?

You have rights as a mom but you don't have any in terms of how you are told to raise the children in accordance to how it is done within your husband's family. For example, if they say that their children are scarred on the face, these children belong to them and they must be scarred on the face because you are told so regardless of the fact that you gave birth to them.

What your role as a mother? What about your own autonomy and thinking about how you want to raise your child?

Some things depend on you, as the spouse and how you and your partner understand each other. And it depends on the type of communication your spouse has with his family regarding you and the kids. Did he marry you because he loves you or did you marry you because he wanted to use you how he saw fit.

So, bottom line, what you want must be welcomed and accepted by your husband's family?

You, as a female, the problem in relation to your kids is that it's going to be their word against yours. You are alone. When you are talking to many people when you are alone with your own beliefs it's not alone. Not unless your partner is close with you and understands your POV. There is nothing you can say if your spouse is against you and he shows another side. It happens sometimes that you marry someone thinking that they are one person and then once married they become someone else. And show their true self that they'd hidden because they wanted you and now they have you and they're done. He'll tell you it's his family and there is nothing that he can do. And that he must listen to his family and not you as the wife. You could leave and I'll be left with my family. These are my children and I'll do whatever my family wants. And do what I grew up being done within my family with my children. Whether what is being done to the children by their paternal family is right or wrong will be done.

22:52.1 As the mother because lobola was paid for you, you have no say in family matters

You were lobola'd. You get to your marital with things already being done a certain way. You need to submit to your husband and do what he says because he knows how things work. You do what you are told to do, you don't get there and change how things are done.

Going back to how you grew up alone...what time did you grow up?

Kwi60s...'64

Was it common to have one child families or were there many? How big were families within your community from your recollection?

In my community there was no family where they had 10 children for example, I don't want to lie. There were maybe 3 or 4 or 5 kids. In my area there were not a lot of kids. Even with my aunts...I had an aunt with 8 or 9 kids but she didn't live where I lived with my mother's family. There were not lots of children where I lived. At my mom's family everyone stayed there. There were kids who were distantly related being raised there because there was not a lot of kids. That's why I grew up with my mom's sisters. My Aunt, uncle, everyone had one to three children. There were few kids. I never had that problem, you'd hear that in some households the kids eat from one plate and there's 6 to 8 of them. I was never in that environment.

25: 41.9 With your mom and dad, how many siblings did they have?

With my grandmother (mom's mom) there were 4 kids and with my dad there were 6 of them.

Do you think your family was small compared to others? Or was it normal that people were having fewer kids

We were a small family. In some surroundings, I was in an area where people did not have lots of kids. When I look at where my mom was raised, people had 3 or 4...2 kids. I had a friend and he was an only child. I was not the only 'only child'. Most people in that area had few kids and I grew up in a place that didn't even have a creche. People had to leave and go very far to study.

So, when did that happen? People having less kids?

In the 80s

When you think about it, when did the shift happen? How? Why?

I'd say the shift happened when...having listened to elders chatting I found out that many people in the time period where I was a child were having abortions. They were aborting. They were aborting because they wanted a white wedding. They were working towards getting married. Because getting married was considered an achievement. No thought about school. Marriage was prioritized.

So, people who would have had 10 kids ended up with 5?

Definitely.

So where were you hearing about abortion? From your peers? Or adults?

People my age...I grew up around adults mostly. I'd hear that people in my age had had an abortion. Adults would talk about how unmarried girls were having abortions because they wanted white weddings. They'd talk about how so and so and so and so weren't having babies attribute it to their pasts where they had abortions because they wanted white weddings. Eventually, the girl would be married of and then she wouldn't get pregnant at all. It happened regularly and it wasn't really hidden. *Ibiyinto engekho funny nehlobo endiyibona ngayo*. I think that's the beginnings of...there was places for abortions. I think there were nurses who gave people abortions. There were places that were known like Marie Stopes which did abortions, they'd be stories like -the girl gave birth and the child cried but the child would still be disposed of because you went to get an abortion not give birth- so as a result people went through all of this so that they could get married. Their goal in life was to get married.

29:47.7 A child born out of wedlock was not valuable?

Yes, even according to the bible.

So, is it that thinking...?

Even according to the bible, a child born out of wedlock is not a blessing. God did not give you this child. He (God) says no sex because marriage. The reason in my own thinking is that God says no sex before marriage because what happens is that children are left with no fathers. He (God) knew beforehand that there will be people who will not take care of their children. There were men who will deny the pregnancy. That's what used to happen, men would deny. A guy would say he doesn't know you while he did. And if you were with him he says there were others because he is running away from having a child. I think even for guys it was shameful to get a girl pregnant even though they aren't as impacted as females but it was shameful. They were scared that once it's announced that the girl is pregnant he is going to be told to go Ego to get a job because he is now grown. And he needs to pay damage (to the girl's family for 'ruining' her before marriage) so to run away from those responsibilities he'd deny paternity and the elders would say "kuzobonwa emtaneni". Once the child is born, kubonwe emtaneni, the father's family would still not care for the child. So, when that happens and your child is not cared for by his paternal family you don't have value and neither does your child.

So that attitude was typical of that time period?

It was common. Immediately after being denied...his family...where are they going to get anything to pay for your damages? In fact, abantu bakudala, if you were dating, wanted you look at the family in which you were dating in and see if they are able to support children or if they will be able to support your child if they end up pregnant? These types of things were looked at. They were materialistic back then, it was very similar to today. It's not new for people to be checking out what you have and questioning if they have a child with you, what can you provide. That type of thinking was important, does this family have anything so that should something happen to my child...the money (damage money?) is not for the child, it will not be saved for the child. It is for them. To fulfil their wants and needs. I viewed this as unfair, you are the one that lost their virginity and you are left taking of the child. The money is not going to help with the child but the claim (of the parents/maternal family?) is that they will be raising the child.

As a girl was your virginity yours? Did it belong to your family? And then sell it during a transaction like lobola?

Exactly. Like a slave. I see it as being sold as a sex slave. They (your family? husbands family? both?) have their own ideas and plans that concern you though you have no actual say. They have their own aims. You don't get any freedom though too much freedom is not good either. If you are loose as a girl child you have regrets and what you did cannot be erased, it stays with you and you know you messed up. And you lose value within the community and also within yourself you are empty. There are lots of things that have happened to you that you could have prevented by sticking to your books or going to church. I'm not saying you are 100% safe in church, there are perverts in church too. As there are perverts in the community and within one's own family. Where you hear stories about how kids are abused by their own uncles. Which brings me back to my earlier point if you love your virgin daughter, bring them closer so that you know everything about them. Know how they feel about being a virgin, how they feel in relation to their friends. Look at your child's friends, if your child is a virgin and then they can't talk to their friends because the friends are not virgins. Maybe they are a virgin because they are scared of their parent. Maybe they are a virgin because they have been told they need to have a white wedding. I don't really understand the whole thing either than just saying we have a girl child and she will have a white wedding.

So, with everything you are saying, you grew up in that environment?

The environment I grew up in... everything I've said is how people talked.

So, saying a girl child who wasn't a virgin had lost her value, was that the same of boys?

Boys are seen as boys, it doesn't matter what they do. If you lost his virginity, so what? It's not even talked about in the bible. There is not male virgin, just girls. So maybe a guy isn't a virgin, maybe it doesn't go that way. But the whole thing (virginity) has something to do with females. So, I see it as using a child more than helping them in how they carry themselves...maybe they are told...I wasn't in an environment where I was told about virginity and virgins...I just heard adults talking. Saying so and so is a virgin and she'll have a white wedding. You learn things from adults, you should be told here is so and so. She is 30 years old and a virgin before girls start their periods and tell them why they can't do a, b, c, d. Rather than saying something once a child has already lost her virginity and talking about what has happened to her in a manner that lowers her self-esteem without your realization. And the child sees herself as having no value now that her virginity has been broken. But you (as a parent) have done nothing in protecting the child against their virginity being broken. You love your child, you sit them down and talk to them. Your first duty to your child is to love them, everything else follows. Then you introduce them to God so that they know their value. the moment the know their importance the they understand that their body is also important. Then they'll know that they can't do a, b, c and d because so and so does not appreciate me. Teach your girl child and

giver her information about people who have broken their virginities. Tell them things they'll understand so that when they come to you with questions you don't tell them not to ask you certain questions. When you are asking things, you are doing so to gain information.

40:48.8 You've mentioned church a lot, was there a difference in how kids who were believers versus non-believers were raised?

Kids raised in church grew up different than those who were not as they had respect. A child raised in the church is respectful, temptation is easier to deal with as it comes in a language that they do not recognize. A child who is not raised in church has no boundaries and does as they please. Acting and talking how they please.

Bible vs amasiko?

If you go to church you are taught what is expected of you as a good Christian. You don't do what you want but rather what God wants. Your desires are not more than Gods, you can control yourself because you go to church and know your boundaries and you respect them. You know right and wrong. Those who don't go to church might as well be blinded because they have no guide. And a parent -whether they go to church or not-if they don't guide their child, the child is basically blind. They are like a weed, going everywhere looking for sunlight. Going to places it shouldn't, if your parent can't guide you and tell you that education is the key. And about the importance of church. And the consequences of having a child. Parents can tell when their children are sexually active and are busy in the street chasing boys. Firstly, you don't even know if this child has slept with a man so the only solution for their sake is to ask them what they know about contraceptives and whether they are having sex or not. Kids will lie to you because they are your child, not your friend and will tell their friends the truth but not you. You tell them that if they are sexually active they need to use contraceptives. You make sure that they go to the clinic and show you their card. Give them the freedom to protect themselves. It helps them and you as a parent. If they are not protected and have a child before marriage, you are in a bind as the parent because you are now raising kids, including your child. You'll have this bastard child without a father in your house. What happened with us, you'd get pregnant and the man wouldn't pay attention to you. He'd continue with school and you'd be at home breastfeeding a baby. And your childhood is gone, you are no longer a child. Even at home I was treated like a grown woman even though I was a child because of this great shame that had happened to me and my family. You are no longer seen as a person with value because you...you are called all sorts of names. And do not think your child will be of value, they are not because you are not married. Things are not going to work out for you. That's what used to happen. I'm not saying it happens today because things changed. I think my generation changed things. We realized that how we grew up was not nice, raising a child in the same manner. Once a child is pregnant, there is nothing you can do. Damage has been done. You need to try deal with the problem. Take the child to creche or a nursery and to your child, sit them down and ask them to make sure what has happened doesn't happen again. Once the milk has been spilt there is nothing you can do, you just need to come up with a solution.

46:46.3 So it's still an ugly thing despite times having changed...what has exactly changed?

The ugliness (children outside of wedlock) of it all hasn't changed. Its ugliness is worse today because of diseases that are killing people. Diseases that are constantly stressing you about your death. Even diseases people think don't kill like high blood pressure or diabetes or cancer. For a while people only thought of HIV but even the diseases that people think aren't dangerous are actually dangerous. People should be scared of them too instead of just labelling the obvious one (HIV), what is actually painful is that someone in this day and age can get pregnant knowing that they are HIV positive and then they don't even prevent the child from being uninfected. They don't take care of themselves today

while being told. Instead they become rebellious. As their parent tries to talk to them they don't listen but it's the end of time.

What about the shame?

Today's generation does not care about shame. We cared about shame and we felt pressure. Our parents abandon us because when shame has befallen you and your parent distances themselves from you, who is going to cover you?

So why was it shameful? Like what made you feel the shame?

You betrayed your family.

Is this something you grew up knowing, that if you got pregnant outside of wedlock...

You get pregnant outside of marriage? And next thing you have to drop out of school. And they see you as a tool to work. There is nothing else you can do. Regardless they were grooming you to work and get married. That's it. And bring cows home.

What if you didn't get pregnant but it came out that you were sexually active?

You're don't pregnant and you're sexually active? They had no problem. As I said, abortion was very common because some people weren't getting pregnant. The thinking was that some people weren't getting pregnant when in actuality they were making graves and being the priest all on their own (50:01.3). Because when you are having an abortion it's like you kill and you bury your child when you put them in a plastic bag and then a hole by yourself. Do you see?

So, this abortion thing, how was it spoken about in the community?

Into yeabortion yayingeyinto efunny, even kudala.

When you say kudala, what time are you talking about? 80s?

Ewe, nge80s in the time period I grew up in. It wasn't anything odd and it was a common thing. Even married people were having abortions. For instances, a person is married and they end up involved with another person because their husband is away in Johannesburg so obvious they'll be evidence of what they've done and the timeframe...when did you get pregnant? Where was your husband at that time? Girl children who went to school...some really were successful as a result of abortions. It helped them but it was not good.

Do you think the reason abortion was not minded then goes back to the fact that a child born out of wedlock has no value?

Yes, it is that...it helped those who were clever to study and I'm not saying it's ok.

If it was a common thing, why was it something to gossip about then?

Society gossips about everything, the good and the bad. Society gossips, whether you are doing right or bad. Society will stay gossiping. Even if you stay home, are a virgin...there is something negative that will be said about you. It depends on you how you take things that are said about you. Because even when you are a virgin, family will use that like...like you're being sent to an auction. They're looking at if girls from that family are virgins or not and if they can marry them or not. They don't look...the parents of the virgin don't look at the type of men that will marry their daughters.

Yes...

You have value, you are a virgin. You are what they want. What about the people marrying the virgins? What have they done? What else did they do? You'll discover someone wants a umntana

oyivirgin kodwa they have children. Wena uyoqawa ivirginity ngumntu okudala esenza abantwana, kudala esenza izinto. So why wasn't it looked...things like that weren't looked at. That's why a young child could be married off to an old person. And an old person could marry a child because they wanted a virgin while not being a virgin themselves.

Is it because the value of a girl was...?

It was in her virginity, the value of a girl...mostly. And slavery. Because if you are a courteous (in terms of housekeeping skills) girl, who works hard...well you have to go build your husbands home. So, you are looked at as someone to build a home (ukwakha ikaya) while the man goes to work. You start in the home with the children and end up in the kraal outside. That's being a female.

And if you can't have children in all of this? Does it matter?

It does. If you don't have children they'll (elders) will talk to you. They'll sit you down and talk to you.

Saying what?

That there will have to be another who will bear children now that you cannot. You submit to that situation because you know yourself that you aren't having kids. Actually, you think you aren't having kids because no one bothered to take you to the doctor and check if you really aren't having children. It's possible for someone to not have children with a particular person, leave that marriage and go have children elsewhere. Things like that happened. Then if your husband doesn't talk to you, his family will be the first people to give you names. They'll call you all sorts of names, all of them. They'll say uyinkabi...inkabi yintoni nge-English? Ndiyilibele but inkabi...but what I know is the bull. Inkabi is not the same as the bull.

55:40.7...Like intshontsho layo?

No, yinto e...it's like a man and a boy. You are a man according to animals...according to humanity uyindoda so hamba ambho ngena phaya kulinywe ngawe. You're not supposed to stay home, you aren't getting children. Ibiba bubuthuko, ibiba sisthuko no matter how hard you worked...not matter what you did. Your priority was to bear children. You are there to generate children, cook and grow umzi. How do you think umzi is going to grow if you have no children?

How did people then feel if they didn't have children?

They felt bad. People with no children felt bad, as much as a child is a problem but though...they're a problem because you'll be left alone. Utata akakho. You raised a child...starting from a boy child ending up at a girl child you are on your own. But the family comes in when the children are grown, maybe when they've become problematic, bakwis-stage...otherwise, while the kids are young. Umntu ongumama is left by herself with her kids. She looks after them...by herself.

So, with you, how much of your identity is wrapped up in being umama?

Mna as a mom...the life I've lived...the experiences I had growing up made me learn to understand how people viewed things and how I viewed things. And what did I learn from what people did, the right and wrong. In society, there are right things. you learn from things that are right and you leave wrong things. And the place I'm at, I played the role that wasn't played by family...the people who raised me with my own children. Even including other children from my surroundings. Because when a child is doing wrong, I tell them. I say, I don't think you doing this right and I saying this to you as a parent. I'm not talking as being your biological mother but let me tell you that this is right and this is wrong. In case a child doesn't listen at home but mna I'll tell them. I can't not tell them. Even my child, I tell them when they're wrong, whether they take it or they don't take it but I must say it. I see myself as a parent who can tell their kids what's wrong and right. If they don't listen, they don't listen but I told them. School? I took them to school and told them this is where I stop. You can take what

I've taught you beyond, this is where amandla wam end and don't have kids like I did. I had a child when I was young and unmarried. I was 17 and the reason...when I check and look at my background my mom got married...my dad got married when I was 3 months. My mom got married when I was 14 and for that entire period...3 months to 14 they both...I felt the gap they both left. I felt that I had no one to talk to with any of the people I was around (**abantu endihleli pakhathi kwabo...interesting that's how she refers to her family**), even if I had a headache or a tooth ache or I felt pain somewhere there was no one I could share anything with.

Do you think it would have been different staying with umama wakho?

And my dad?

If you had grown up with your mom and...

I wouldn't know as I was raised by my grandmother and grandfather. I wouldn't know. I was not close to my grandfather. Maybe it's the way he was. He was...he was not playing a parenting role...it was more...he was not kind. He didn't give you a platform to be a child. To be free and to express yourself. He didn't give you that platform. he was a bully. So, he made me not close to males so I'm not sure how it would have been with my father because with him, even when I went to him...same thing. He'd talk and I'd keep quiet and listen and I could tell ***hha-aah negative no no sound*** no, I can't take this. Even if he wasn't shouting...

Do you think it was with all children or was it because you were a girl child?

Maybe it was because...yes, it was because I was a girl child. So, they made you feel like you had no value.

So, you growing, what was your place as a female child in society and in your family?

My role, as a female...for me it was the kitchen, garden...everything. Only thing missing was if I was told to be a shepherd.

Do you think it was common for a girl child...?

It was common. It happened. They did it. It was common and it was not fair. The reason I'm saying it was not fair...a boy child did not cook. A boy child did not wash dishes. Whereas if you're told you are all going to work, being a female, you'll be forced to work even male jobs.

1:03:31.9- Did you gain their respect then? Doing their jobs? Male jobs? Did you get respect for doing those jobs?

Yhu, no there is no respect that you gain. Respect is only given to otata...whatever you do...good or...and you have no say. You have no say.

And does that change to you grow up? Like the more obvious your femininity becomes as you grow older...get breasts and start your period, what are you told? What kind...

What impact did all that have on my life?

Yes.

Growing up, what I can say happened in my case...actually I think in most women...it made us firm. I can say it helped with...the way I was raised...what I'm said about how some things are bad but actually good at the end of the day. I'm raised a boy child...a young man. My son never felt the gap of not having a father because I was both. I was a mother and father. Firm. So, if I said something, I said something and I saw what I was saying as right. I'll tell you the consequences of not doing your school work up until a certain age, then I stop. You know what to do. At the age of 21 you let go...and

I'm not playing. There's nowhere I can manufacture a father...nowhere. I can't just pick up a father on the street to come be firm and strong here at home. Because they must hear me and my laws as I'm not going to appear with a father figure for them when they're acting out here at home. I won't be able to keep picking up father figure when necessary from other homes. **Abantu bakudala ke...**bona they saw themselves as right no matter the situation. They never gave you a chance to complain. They never gave you a chance...like they'd hear kids laughing and immediately be shouting 'what are you laughing at?' like...not in a loving way ****Haibo nihleka ntoni? (sweet tone)****, what you laughing about? I want to know. Involve me in the conversation. No, we did not have a platform like that. It was abuse.

Do you think that type of upbringing was common and its a result of that upbringing that you care how you are raising your children...differently?

That upbringing made us different. We said what happened to us won't happen again. What happened to us was not right...what our parents did. Then with us...households are different. You can be right with your children but society will have an impact in how your children grow up.

What...like the way you are talking it's like what happened with your mother and how she was raised, and your grandmother and how she was raised...like going back...what about the 80s then made an entire generation of women break the cycle? Like what was the...

I think what helped a lot was... as times change...people came from the rural areas to towns. Life in the township is not the same as life from the rural areas. So, a person from the township...township kids would come from townships and go study in the rural areas. We didn't know why these townships kids had to come...I grew up in East London. I studied in East London, I moved from Mdatsane because of riots, while I was studying eMonti e Duncan Village. I...so I had that township mentality and I got the rural areas mentality. The way they did things was different to how things were done in the township. In the townships you are given a chance to go play and be free as a child but in the rural areas you are treated like a slave. You never got a chance to be a child. They didn't look at the type of child you are, your personality...they didn't know who you were at all so for me it helped me in that...I don't have a child that would ever grow up in the rural areas with the rural areas mentality. I mean, a mentality that will make them aggressive. You'd find out that if you too a child from the rural areas and studied them you see that they don't even know jokes. They don't know how to joke because the parents don't joke. The child can't play with an adult, like maybe a game because the adult sees themselves above playing with a child. So, with my generation we broke that...that era where children were tense and such. By going and studying in other schools and meeting other children...that's where it started.

So, you think it was that more and more people were growing up in townships?

Yes, and that was an influence. And immediately once school children were influenced parents need to know that they won't have control. That's why I say, you don't raise children alone as a parent. Society also plays a role. You'll preach and it'll depend on the child's willpower...like how strong they are so that they are not overpowered by outside teachings. If you're weak you'll find yourself following everything despite what you were taught at home. What will happen is that society as a whole will end and parents will end up saying all the kids act or behave the same way. They're all out of hand and they can't say no, let's accept what's happening but try and sit down with your child and talk to them. So, what changed was society and how you handle children. How township children were taken to the rural areas and vice versa, an exchange happened and that's where values changed between generations. There were different types of influences.

And then, do you think it was a factor...with how you said people were having less children...was that a factor as parents now had more one on one time with their children? Raising many children...like raising 3 kids vs 10...you can invest more...

Yes, but it depends on how much a parent care's. A parent with one child...as I said my mom left to go get married while my father had long been married...it depends how much one as a parent cares because it's possible not to care for one child staying with them to the point that it's gossiped about, if don't care for this one child and you're still going to have more? Some parents just don't care. The change in society that caused people to have less children was contraceptives. It was the introduction of contraception's. The introduction of contraceptives, I remember...not exactly when but I left East London in the 70s, during the riots...

Coming to Cape Town?

Around '76...I went to the Transkei in '76 and...'79...I kept going in '76 and contraceptives were just starting. I remember...most children were getting a rash. Children were getting this rash and they'd have sores.

Because of contraceptives?

No, I'm just saying in my age group...we were around 8...7 years. So, children we went to school with would have a rash because they lived in the shacks. Maybe it was dirty water so...I lived in Pimperville...which was a coloured township...with family. And we'd cross the bridge and go to the clinic. At the clinic we went to get the white ointment to apply on your skin. While there you'd hear nurses shouting "Contraceptive users this side!" and as a curious child you listen to all the words and try and grab...wondering what is that? And what...things you don't need to know you become curious about. While not knowing exactly what you don't know and no one is going to tell you anyway. I remember during the 70s... well I first heard about contraceptives during that time.

And what was the conversation about contraceptives like?

It was something that was not welcomed by older people, especially people from the rural areas. Unfortunately for myself, I moved to the rural areas when I was young. Like before I reached the age where I was concerned with boys...before I even started menstruating. Definitely, I think if I had stayed...if I'd been allowed to stay there and finish school there...I'd never have fallen pregnant and had a child. Because I didn't stay with people who were stereotyped. People who wouldn't tell a child not to go play, not to do this or that because they'll see boys. It's possible for a child to get a boyfriend while sitting at home, immediately after leaving the house they'll do exactly what you think they won't do. There is nothing stopping them and they'll come back home (as though they did nothing). What's worse I got pregnant in that type of situation. At the time when I stayed in the township I played football with boys, I wasn't even thinking about boys. Immediately when you start to guard someone, there's when you are driving them to go look for what you are talking about. You just need to only make people aware of what's out there. When you sleep with a boy, he breaks your virginity and after you break your virginity you might have these syphilis diseases. And gonorrhoea. And... all of these diseases. And fall pregnant. You get pregnant? Well, this guy will deny you. When he denies you are laughed at, you are left with this child. You don't sleep 24/7. That was my teaching when I had kids. You stay 24/7, you stay with this child. And now there is HIV and Aids. This boy is going to trick you and say he doesn't have aids. As though it's written on someone's forehead when they do have aids. You sleep with him, you become HIV positive and also have a new-born baby. And you'll be miserable, he'll have gone because he knows he infected you. He'll carry on and go infect others. And your breasts in the meanwhile fall, they face down in embarrassment. Your breasts can no longer look up because they are being oppressed down by this man who is oppressing you. And what follows is that he doesn't want you because your breasts have fallen. He broke your virginity, you have a new-born baby and he doesn't know what to do with you because there are lots of girls out there who don't have children, in your own age group. He's finished with you. You are ruined and he's done with you. He's moving forward and he'll tell you that I never said I wanted a child. Secondly, he won't care for your child so your child basically doesn't have a father. So, you're going to dance alone with that

child. He gets to sleep, you are the one that won't get to sleep. You are the one that is pregnant, he is not. Contraceptives helped in one way. In that people can take their kids to the clinic so they can concentrate on their studies. That's where they helped.

1:19:30.2- So when they were first introduced ...you were saying they were not welcomed by elders and people in the rural areas...

The reason people from the rural areas...they'd question why does a child need contraceptives? Or if someone was a wife. They say all of this indirectly, because they say it as they are chatting away. Immediately, if they found contraceptives on you they'd be thrown away. They don't want you to get pregnant, you must be a virgin. They can tell that you're at a stage, when someone is at a certain stage it is not easy to control that stage. As the parent you must be the one to try to reason with their hormone addled brain as hormones want to do their own thing. In this day and age children are taken out, to sport and such. You keep someone busy when you want their focus to shift from a potential problem that you can see coming. You keep them busy, you have no money but while having no money you don't need to pay money in sport. No money is paid in church. Keep the child busy in church. Keep them busy and overwhelmed because that's what children need. Once you see that a child is busy (in the streets) you need to keep them overwhelmed.

Do you...here in Cape Town...in the city were contraceptives more welcome in that as long as you used contraceptives you were safe. But in the rural areas they were not welcome because there were still beliefs surrounding virginity and its importance?

Yes, they had this thing with the importance of virginity. They had this belief that they were opening (allowing) the child to sleep with men. They didn't have the recognition that a child will sleep with a man whether you like it or not. Because you don't even know when they started sleeping with a man.

But here in Cape Town? In the townships?

You're free in the townships. A child is opened...but also go to the clinic. Mom's check the (clinic) cards of the children. You have to go to the clinic and get an injection. You're watching out for your child to get pregnant before time. And then they're miserable. Children are miserable immediately after falling pregnant. Because when they slept with a man they didn't say they wanted a child but they are doing what their body wants or what they heard from their friends. Children will hear things from school friends and you want a child to be a virgin. There is nothing you can do to protect a child and keep them a virgin.

About the rural areas, does it go back to the idea that sex was meant for procreation. It was not meant for fun...as something you just do?

Sex was not made for fun for unmarried people. It was made for married people, for wives to satisfy their husbands. And for you husband to sexually satisfy you. And to make children because the results of sex...God knew the results would be bad as they are bad right now. With lots of children giving birth, having babies for the social grant. Giving birth and dropping out of school. They're drinking so that they can have sex, some of them out of their minds. Some haven't had sex but they'll be first served (alcohol) so that they'd have sex. It'll be like "my friends are already having sex so I must to, how will I do it though? I'm scared" and the friends will say "Here, take a drink my friend. You'll alight, here is so and so". They're not thinking of disease, they're not thinking of pregnancy but because they want...there's this desire...sexual desire that they have and that's it. They'll just see how it goes and deal with any consequences then. They don't even think that there are things like condoms. They don't even ask about condoms. They're taught at school but being taught is just theory. Practical...you have to practice what you were taught but you're drunk and you can't practice what you were taught at school. It's pressure that is present both in the rural areas and in the townships. It's a case of I also want to do what everyone is doing but then one forgets its consequences. When you're

told no sex before marriage it's because there are consequences that you can't reverse. You can't undo it...having a child. Being left alone with a child. Expanding an already poor family. Having a child that is not welcome. Having a child that was a burden to my parents because of my negligence sometimes. Sometimes...maybe it's you and you don't want to listen and you're rebellious with your parents or else it's pressure...pressure I don't understand. Maybe there is a lack of information, maybe you didn't get information and you are not well informed. Or else you are hungry. Because some people use sex because of poverty. Some people come from poor homes and they end up thinking "well, there is this old man and he does want me and he works so for me to be able to eat or dress nicely I must accept this man. I must sleep with this man so I can get what everyone else has."

So, when you were growing up what was this relationship like? As a female in a relationship? Relationship with sex? As a girl child?

As a girl child, sex was to only satisfy a man.

Before you got married?

Before I got married. I saw it that way. That's why when I got pregnant I split up with the father of my child. I never saw...

What were you told as...what were you told at home?

Nothing was taught to me. When I started menstruating I felt bad that I was menstruating...like just menstruating yoh! I didn't understand but my aunts were laughing at me. Like it was a joke. Everything with them was just a joke because they saw how I reacted and my expression. Then they just told me that I needed pads blah blah...I never used cloth. I'm not in that cloth age group. I never used cloth, they bought pads because in some places...the place where I grew up was enlightened because there were coloured's and all that stuff. So, I started menstruating and my mom said I had to start using contraceptives but my grandmother said that's not going to happen because she's not a young man. She wanted to prevent...she said I'll be a girl who chases boys **(1:28:29.9-intombi yabafana)**. A girl who chases boys? What does that mean? What does she mean when she says that? And I asked her one day, what do when you say I'll be a girl who chases boys? "No, when certain things are happening you'll be among boys" and I was like "What am I doing with boys?" So, they couldn't explain what they meant exactly or show you...or protect you in the various ways they could so that you don't fall into that poverty that they had to go through.

1:29:18.8- So another thing, what do you think is the intersection or the relationship between amasiko, traditions with black people and the church?

Amasiko and traditions were first, more than church.

Are the values...the things that are important...like what is important when one speaks of 'Kwa-Xhosa' in terms of amasiko, like what's important in that?

For me...well, I consider myself enlightened in this matter...I like knowing the background of Kwa-Xhosa. Where does Xhosa come from? U-Xhosa...when you say u-Xhosa where does u-Xhosa come from? When you are doing this thing (ritual), why are you doing it? Where did you get the idea to do this thing you are doing?

Like amasiko?

Yes, all that stuff? Where do you get it from? Because I find that most people do things because they are done by their families...because they say they are Xhosa and as Xhosa's they must do it. For most people, they do things that ended up costing them...while not having money someone will get deep into things that won't do anything for them because things associated with traditions...uhm **namasiko** you need to learn for yourself what exactly this thing I'm doing actually does for me. Is it a must for

me to do this thing? What benefit do I get from this thing that I'm doing? Our religion...we...what are the things that are done? What benefit do we get from this religion of ours? Things related to **amasiko**...me and tradition...some of them like **umxhentso** (rhythmic hypnotic stamping?) ...that is dance...some things are not meant to be done by **ngumntu ongumama**. For example, when **umntu ongumama** raises her leg it's embarrassing...I don't see it as right. There are some things you don't need to do...you must know what is expected of you. **Funeka ube ngumntu onetlthoni xa ungumama**...even with things...

Do you think this thing of saying umntu ongumama funeka abengumntu onetlthoni is something from Xhosa? Like is it okholo (core belief) ...like is it something that is believed kwa-Xhosa?

It's a belief of **umXhosa** that **umntu ongumama** must respect themselves. You must respect yourself. The moment you don't respect yourself you have no value with men. But if you respect yourself then men aren't going to want to play games with you (**bazokongena**). They don't just say whatever to you. They don't do just whatever with you. You must respect...respect your body...respect the things you do.

So, do you think...

Just being you.

Have women been respecting themselves for a long time or is that a new thing that's been instilled? Or is it something that has been believed kwa-Xhosa for a long time (kwakudala)?

Kwa-Xhosa there was a belief about respect...for example a women kwa-Xhosa did not show her breast...and a woman kwa-Xhosa...

Why doesn't she show it?

Because it was maybe she '**xhentsa'd**' with her breasts...girls do that...they can **xhentsa** dressed in exposing things and even with girls it depends on age. It depends on certain age groups. There are certain age groups that aren't supposed to do that...

Showing breasts?

Because men...those are things men look at. So, you need to respect your body and cover it because it is your temple. It is something that is supposed to be seen by your husband. You can wear short things if your body type permits you to wear short things but your breasts must be covered.

So as a woman are they being covered for your husband, covered because they are for your child? Like why are they being covered?

I'm talking about **ngomuntu ongumama**...not talking about a girl, that's why I said a girl can walk around with her breasts exposed until a certain age. But at a certain you must cover yourself because men have no respect. You must respect yourself so that they can respect you. They must wish/dream (**rhalela**) to see what they can't see in you. Their appetite of looking at you mustn't be satiated.

Oh ok. And then...wait do you consider...are you a feminist?

laughs No. Why? Do I seem like it?

No, I'm just...why are you...

A woman is supposed...men are rude and disrespectful. And I feel bad when I hear about them being disrespectful to...I just feel protective. Because you don't know what else to do. Men have no respect for women.

Do you think the way you think...why don't you consider yourself a feminist?

Laughs Well women...I love myself because I'm a woman. I have to start with myself. I see value in girls, I see value and I see girls as valuable and I think...I love women more than men because I was raised by a woman and I can say I was raised by a woman because I looked to my grandmother more than my grandfather. But I like the idea of women respecting themselves in life, don't give others something to gossip about. Maybe I have that in my mind, don't give people something to talk about. Try and be smart, be neat but do not give them the opportunity to disrespect you.

So why do you not think you are not a feminist? When you think about feminism what do you think?

Maybe I don't understand you.

Do you think you are a feminist?

Why are you asking me that question?

No, I'm just asking...just from the way you've been talking.

laughs Oh...yes...yes and no actually.

Explain to me why yes and no?

I look at men as people who use females for their desires but we as women give them the platform to play with us. Sometimes you find yourself letting a man take advantage of you as a female. So things like that make me not understand how we are as females. How can you give someone a chance to play with another female as a female? We can say bad things about another female to a man so how can you speak about things you wouldn't want spoken about you to a man. I love one thing about men, they all say the same thing but we can't do that. Why? Maybe it was how we were raised that allows...that makes us have no value in society. Because of our actions and giving people things to talk about.

And the no part?

No part?

I asked if you considered yourself a feminist and you said yes and no...so I think you explained the...this was the yes part but why when hearing this term feminist do you go no... that's not me?

Uhm...maybe...uh I can't answer you. What did you learn from all of this?

Me? Just hearing you I'm hearing there is a lot of sort of uh positive women power and the strength of women. For me...I understanding that as being...a very progressive and feminist view. So, it's interesting that you are saying no.

It's because I love both sides...on one side I like men but I have a problem with us as women we give them a platform to men to use us though men fail us most times. I don't like judging them a lot because we contribute to what happens to our lives. As I told you, my mom left me after my dad had already left me. So that's where I wonder what kind of mother...who would abandon their child seeing that there is no else they're going to look to so that tells you what kind of woman someone is. You understand? Not that I understand men and think that my father was right in leaving my mom for another women, including me. Because I did nothing to him. There is nothing that connects me to men that much because they have made no contribution to me. No. Because...well even though they are the heads of the house but most homes actually belong to women, only. So, I really choose the side of women because it's more...it made me the person I am and I learnt from a lot of women. I've been around and worked with many women and seen the various things they go through. There is a lot

that women deal with, they laugh while not laughing. They do painful things at a cost...even married there is no fun. You think marriage is going to be fun and then it's not. So, that makes me defend and want to understand the situation but uh well men.

But why do you feel...what do you think when you hear the term feminism or feminist?

I don't reject it, what I was saying yes and no to...

You don't see yourself as exactly as...

Maybe...a person...it's not easy to see yourself like that...

How?

I've been told for a while now by people that "No, you are a feminist, you have a problem with men...why?

Is feminism a bad thing to you?

I see it as like it looks like I have a problem with men but I think you must listen to why most of the time it seems like that

Do you think elders or your peers...considering the idea of feminism...define it as how you do, meaning that you hate men?

Yes, they don't see it as a positive thing. They see it as negative.

Is this amongst your peers?

Yes of course. People I worked with...I didn't stay with friends and I'm someone who works with females so...

What ages are they?

Uh...even younger in the 70s... yeah late 70s and yeah. Late 70s.

So, like black women have your view that being a feminist means having a problem with...
with guys

With guys? Oh ok. Just going back to that time period. Did you ever use contraceptives?

Yes, I did.

So, was it...why did you use them?

Uhm, I was...before I got married...because I was sexually active and I couldn't have a child again while unmarried.

So, it was to make sure you didn't get a child. Did you hide it at home that you were using?

No, after I had a child...there was no need for me to hide it.

What did you use? Injection?

No, I used tablets. Uh...I also use the injection but it made me get my period...I used to be wet for a long time.

Because of the injection?

Yes, it also gave me pimples. I also used "kwi-9s" and I stayed with "kwi-9". Then I stopped using contraceptives. I stopped a long time ago. I...

Why did you stop?

I sterilized.

1:47:49.2- So was that your own decision to do that?

Yes.

Were you still married?

Yes, I sterilized while married.

Did you husband know? Did he agree? Was it something you both talked about or was it something you decided on your own?

I decided myself.

Why didn't you talk to your husband?

We were not on good terms

While married?

Yes.

Do you think if you were on good terms you have talked to him?

I would have talked to him but I would have continued as I had planned.

So why did you decide to do this permanent solution?

I didn't want to have children anymore...whether I was still young or not. Because I realized that already with the kids that I had I couldn't afford them the way I wanted.

(1:48:43.7) Did you not feel like you were failing your job as a wife to provide children for the family

The economy controls us

Yes...so not...

And you look and see if this person will be able to maintain children while at the same time he steps out and leaves you...he won't be able to maintain the children.

So, your thinking was influenced by the society...the economy of...

Economy and looking at one's situation. You look and figure out where you are in this whole situation. Will I be able to stand this situation when this man leaves me?

So, you would...what was that time period like, the 70s and 80s... politically? Socially? Like how the community just in general? The social and political environment?

In the townships, eMonti, it was a difficult time. Everything that was actually really happening was connected to apartheid. Apartheid was not only with white people, it was present in the whole community. In such a way that you're Xhosa, you speak Xhosa and you're in a coloured community and they have a problem with your language and you can't stay amongst them. They see themselves as better than you so even in schools it was like that. If you study at a certain school there was discrimination and all the wrong things. All of the things that are wrong, they were present where we

came from. A Xhosa person could not stay with a Sotho person, A Zulu person can't stay with a Xhosa person so that whole apartheid ideology had been long applied within our communities. And class also contributed...you, your status says this and that person's status says but this whole thing (division) was done by apartheid.

So, with you, in your own personal life...especially in relation having children and how you raised your children, how were you impacted?

In my children, the role I think I played is just helping them go to better schools than I did and get all the things I couldn't get in my upbringing. And the environments they stayed in were one I never stayed in. Like I stayed with them in Ysterplaat, they went to schools which were a bit better than township schools. They had many things that I still can't have even today. I taught them respect, I taught them many things about life. How life is depending on your choices...how life is when you have a baby and as a result there is no child has a child in my house. Because I was transparent. I was open about everything in my life that was happening. I would tell a child, listen I drink alcohol but that doesn't mean you must think I'm an idiot. It doesn't mean what I say is stupid. It doesn't mean that you'll go to bed hungry. It doesn't mean that your transport isn't going to be here to pick you up (for school). I am teaching you so that when you have a child you know that you can have a good time while making sure your child has shelter, goes to bed full, not suffering at school. You must see to it that your child is studying. You must see to it that your child has fun and plays with other children. You must teach your child to be independent so that even when they are in another place...and see the manner in which they were raised. Because, when I was doing hair I would teach them how to handle the (hair) fibre. Put down your school bag, do your homework then come back and help me do this, that and the other. I taught them responsibility. I taught them respect. I taught them that they must be able to exist among others because there are various people in the world, one has to learn how to behave. And then once they think of themselves as grown up and decide to behave some other way, that's on them. But I taught them that school is the right way. I might not be educated but that doesn't mean you shouldn't study. I might not...I might drink but if you decide to drink, drink responsibly. If you decide to have a child then know that it'll be your burden. I cannot raise your child because I must take care of myself. I taught you to the best of my ability, and once I cannot anymore you must carry yourself further in school while you still have a chance. Because once you get pregnant before finishing school, with no car you'll be running around with this child in taxis. It'll be chaotic with the child's bottle and diapers falling. You want money for diapers? You have to go stand in line for grant money. So, I played my part as a parent to my best ability to them, they saw the type of people I worked with and saw that these people are educated and in good places in their lives. They have things, it's up to you which direction you take and which one you leave. It's up to you.

There's more I want to ask, but can we take a little break...

Part TWO

When you say it was common, are you saying people weren't hiding their abortions?

People...uh, abortion is hidden right? But in the end when you're doing something it comes to light...You are seen, maybe you said something. You were seen...it's obvious that something is going on in your stomach. There are people that notice something. Or you'll mention that you didn't have your period. And then when people realize that you don't have a pregnant belly...some people, the reason they have an abortion is...they weren't doing it just because they wanted someone to marry them. Some did it because they didn't know who impregnated them. Others had an affair with a married man...so...

So, this is all in the 70s? 80s... late 70s? Early 80s?

Yes, up to yeah...early 90s.

Do you think...is this in the Eastern Cape? That is was common?

Uhm...

Like where did clinics pop up? Who opened them?

There were clinics in the Eastern Cape but there were very few.

So, in these clinics they didn't provide abortion services? Like, where were these abortions?

Abortions weren't happening in clinics. Abortions weren't even being performed in hospitals. Definitely what was happening was that thing that I don't even know what to call when someone was given...like for example when they find out that your baby has died in utero and you're given something to clean your stomach. That's what happened. Abortion were done by people who did nursing, who were operating from their homes. It was them that did such things. There are such people who are corrupt, people that you find doing things that aren't right. They do these things on school children and you find that there's a certain woman who used to be a nurse and now helps people...that's where you go to get an abortion (*ukupha isisu*). Some get an abortion because they need to get a job and how are they going to start a job while pregnant? Some get abortions because they were denied by a man.

So, do you think there was a change in the value of children during this time or was this happening to people who were not married...abortion I mean. Was in common amongst girls and not with married women?

I think what made abortion popular with children...I'm sure it was in households which didn't want their children to use contraceptives. That's what I really think. Because you wouldn't get pregnant if your parent allowed you to use contraceptives, it wouldn't happen.

0:03:29.0- Where could one go to get contraceptives?

At the hospital.

OK, what services were provided by the government at that time? Like health wise?

Nurses...remember it was said that nurses go around to schools to the girls so they can put them on contraceptives.

So, this was the 80s?

Yes, it was the 80s.

For black people?

Yes, it was the 80s. They would go to certain schools.

Was there something in you that questioned that considering the government doesn't spend lots of money of the affairs of black people why are they allowing free use of contraceptives? Why weren't you paying? Did it seem like the Apartheid government now cared for black people?

I personally think the government during apartheid realized it too late that one day democracy (*into yevoti 0:04:51.5*) would come, and that's what would get them. They were trying to decrease the amount of black people. But, they were too late in stopping black people expand. The amount of black people was already high...klaar. There was nothing they could do with that. They were trying to stop people from having children from the source of how black people expand. Black people were

expanding in an alarming way. It was so alarming that even the resources that they had to send to black people...they had to give...spend more money on black people.

So, do you think...when you were using contraceptives, was there anything political that you thought of? Or politics, apartheid and all that was happening weren't on your mind? Was it a factor in your decision to use contraceptives?

So, with contraceptives you listened to what your teacher told you. The nurse would ask which contraceptive would you like to use? Injection or the pill? You'd choose what you think will suit you. Something you won't forget, injection or the pill. What was important was that you didn't want to fall pregnant. Politics surrounding contraceptives were irrelevant. We were not given any information about the contraceptives, like if there were drugs in the contraceptives which would cause cancer for example. I believe even the people who were in charge of everything were not given any information about these things that we were using, about what the side effects were, that this (contraceptive) might do this and this and that and that. So that a person is given a choice to use contraceptives or abstain so...anything to do with politics was never a factor. Because politics were not preached.

And then, you were saying people were having fewer and fewer kids because of abortions. Do you think there was an element of being rebellious against the teachings and traditions of Xhosa culture regarding being a baby-making machine or was it almost the opposite in that people had abortions because they wanted to get married and have children in matrimony?

Uhm...parents were 90% wrong and children were 10% percent wrong but that doesn't make them both right...parents and children. Parents should have played their role and made sure their children were not getting pregnant. And that would show the child that they are loved, because a child sometimes is looking for love and that's what makes them look for it elsewhere Show your child that they are loved and that no one is going to love them more than you. That won't prevent your child from looking for love elsewhere but they must also need your love. This won't make your child not rebellious but deep down they'll know that they are loved at home. Even when you are told by your mom...I mean boyfriend that they love you, they'll never love you more than your mother. So, if your mom tells you that this person will come along and tell you that they love you and when they impregnate you A, B, C, D will happen. Your mom has seen others who have been impregnated in her own generation and were denied (by their partners). And others who now suffer with their children. She's seen those things and she should have told you. And made you aware, 'saying my child I love you, don't listen to someone who'll impregnate you and leave you, that show's that they don't love you' Don't...if you come to realize that this thing (having the sex talk) is going to overwhelm you and you don't trust your child, and think they'll be doing this and that because they like the street. Then they (parents) should take their children to get the injection and use contraceptives so that they don't have to get an abortion later. They (kids) have abortions because they think their parents will see their clinic cards. Our parents used to thoroughly search and rifle through all of our things, from our school bags or plastics if that's what you used and look in your plastic and look through your school books. It's not like they're going to help you with your school subjects but they want to see what you are up too. The important things that they are supposed to be looking at, they don't pay any attention to. But they instead focus on what they see as important to them. So, children started having abortions because they want to look like they are not sleeping with boys. They are sleeping with boys, they get pregnant and then go find a way to have an abortion. Others would eat things that aren't right (poisons) and end up dying. They'd die and people would say they were attempting an abortion and they died. There would be funerals for children who died from having abortions. Children would be found in dodgy places having died attempting abortions. People would think someone doesn't have a child when in fact, they'd broken their virginity and... when you have an abortion it's obvious that you've had a child. Whether you like it or not your stomach shows and other people can tell that you've had a child. Some have stretch marks while others have stomach's that aren't firm. And so,

your own guilty conscious haunts you. Reminding you that you had a child. Every time you see a person with a child around the same age your child would have been you see your own child in them.

12:46.7 So, does this go back to what you said about parents not talking to their children about such things? Like it was something that was not spoken about?

Parents pretended that things didn't happen while they were happening.

Why was that happening?

Because they wanted...they saw themselves as being better than other parents in disciplining their children. As if other parents don't discipline. As if other parents don't wish for their children to turn out right or be educated or get married. And at the same time they failed at actually trying to figure out what they could do to stop their child from getting pregnant, or to stop them from having an abortion. Because for them not to get pregnant they must use contraceptives, for them not to have an abortion they must use contraceptives. This all goes back to contraceptives, it's better to protect than try to fix what has already happened. Because if there's no protection, it's going to happen. No matter if you talk or don't talk...but that's where they were supposed to say 'My child, I am advising you to do things this way because that's how things are done now.'

Why do you think...

...'I'm not saying go to a man, but I am preventing what could happen'...Sometimes people get pregnant from rape and they some have an abortion because they were raped.

Why do you think it was so...why was there such a high number or why was it common for such things to be talked about?

A society...which I don't understand how it operated...which was maybe naive or sheltered and didn't understand much...wasn't wise.

When did people, like which year, did they start having these conversations or do you think even today there's a silence in society about these things?

Most people don't understand you when you say things.

Today?

Yes, even today they don't understand. People readily admit that they can't have these conversations with their children. As some parents say 'I can't because it wasn't done to me'. So, it means that if you were told about rape as a child, you won't talk to your children about rape either. You forget that a child can be raped by their father, a child can be raped by their siblings. So how safe is a child really from such cases, if you can't talk to them about such things?

So, why do you think sex in relation to girls something that isn't spoken about? Like, other things are spoken about...what about this subject of sex and getting pregnant...why isn't it spoken about?

It goes back to how they grew up, a way that was not analysed and how it affected them. Because if you are a person that sees how they grew up and acknowledges that not everything that was done was good. And analyse why you think things were wrong and think that your parents failed you? And figure out your reasons for your thinking. It's not right for a mother to think that you are not important but your brother is because you are a girl. I don't see this as right, that people say my brother is a young man and he can go and do whatever he pleases and come back anytime. As if that's a commendable thing, that will eventually have an impact on his life when he grows older and gets married because he's used to being the man. That's how he was raised, being told you are a man. Like,

he can go and come back whenever he pleases because he will do that even when he's now married. While as a girl you are taught to stay at home and be responsible for all household related jobs before you are even at an appropriate age to be in charge of anything. So, we were taught to be mothers more than being educated. You are taught how to be a mother. You are being prepared to be a mother. And when you look back at it, reversing your mind to try find the reason for this manner of growing up you realize that in today's age they (parents/guardians) should have been arrested. There are lots of wrong things that they did to children. There is a lot of repressed anger because immediately when you have questions, you have questions that won't be answered by these people. Because when you actually ask them about the way you were raised you hear 'Oh, never mind its how things were done at that time'. Like, today I could do the same things they were doing. What they were doing wasn't right and there is no remorse because they are doing things (parenting) they learned in other homes. **(0:19:33.1)** When your child's panty is being removed and she's being spanked by a teacher at school without her panty on...you think taking your child to be spanked also is appropriate because you are too lazy to hit your own child. You'd rather have them spanked by their teacher at school. Things like that are examples weak parents, where they think things that are done to other children must be done to their own children too. And you don't know...children are different. One child...children also depend on age...from age 2 your child starts to notice life around them. Maybe they forget but at age 5, they don't forget. From 5 years, they don't forget and that's when you must censor yourself and watch what you say because they (children) keep it. They remember things even as adults, parents back in the day did not know that they were damaging their children's minds at the same time as their futures by instilling the idea that the value of a girl child is in marriage. That they must marry, that they must have children. They must have a husband and cook for their husband.

In that time, what was a woman who did not have children?

Ulidlolo

What does that mean?

Uhm...she doesn't have...it's the name she's called by. I don't know the English translation.

Is it ugly?

It's a shame.

So, it's like...could you use the word 'useless' to describe it?

Yes of course. It's like your man is just emptying...there's nothing happening and eventually he'll go make babies outside of your marriage.

So, do you think a woman, during that time, wasn't seen a human but as...

An object.

An object and baby machine?

Yes.

And that...

It was what happened. You had to work, you had to raise children. You had sleep with your husband make children.

You chose to be sterilized, so what happened to your value if you chose to use contraceptives? Like if that was their choice, they didn't want children while the expectation was to have children.

I think you can choose for yourself if you are not married. But if you decide to get married...because when you're married to your husband you are one person. Immediately when you get married you are one, you are no longer two people. So, since you are one you must speak as one. You can't say different things because there will be a communication breakdown. Immediately when you start having your own views and you don't sit down and talk together...if your husband also doesn't want a child, it's better that way. But you can't decide you don't want a child. You can say you don't want a child now because you're unmarried and use contraceptives and don't sterilize. I don't think there's a doctor that sterilizes people with no children. I don't know, maybe in this day and age that happens because the thinking is that one day you might want a child. And it depends on the type of sterilization because I was cut...my fallopian tubes. I was not tied, a person can be sterilized and become pregnant.

0:24:14.6 So what did making that decision mean to you as a woman considering how you grew up?

I couldn't imagine myself dragging around lots of kids in the environment I was in because I want what I want. What I wouldn't be able to have if I have lots of children and children demand all of your attention. If there are a lot of them, you won't be able to take care of them properly. You can't...a lot of anything will overwhelm you and then fathers aren't hands on in with their families. Most families you'll find a mom and a dad but see that the person who really plays a role is the mother. Dad is there...he's just there as a father figure but not as a parent who sees to it that everything that needs to be done is done. He's just something to scare the children, like 'here is your father, he's a monster' more than being a parent. If he is a present father, it's either he doesn't have the children's love as their parent if he doesn't spoil them. He spoils the children, that's his love. Instead of teaching his children right and wrong, he doesn't guide. I'm not saying there aren't (fathers) who do that but there are few. That's why you see lots of fathers sitting in bars with no time for their families because they don't want to be harassed by their own children. They don't want to be nagged by the children, including their mother. So, I saw all of this and decided for myself to go sterilize because I didn't imagine having another child with men who go around having more children outside their homes. So, if he's going to go have children in the streets I must do him a favour and ensure that he doesn't have another child here at home. Because I am at risk, on top of doing that favour I then condomize even though I am his wife so I don't have any problems. I cannot trust a person who can have children outside of this home, and sleep with him without a condom because I know I need to live for...I need to live for my children so I cannot afford to die and leave the kids I brought into this world. Imagine if I carried on and slept with this person and didn't sterilize...and not use condoms.

So, do you think your...was this your way to fight? To fight the patriarchy?

Yes, of course. Even the way I decided for myself to go sterilize without wanting to hear whether he wanted or didn't want it.

Was it common for women to have that autonomy?

Back then, in the 90s at least I'm not sure but I think so. Maybe I was 50 out of 100, because lots of people were smart and knew that they had to sterilize rather than...and it was...there was talk about sterilizations because it was obvious that many people were suffering by having lots of kids. At first there was the introduction of contraceptives. After contraceptives...

Who introduced them?

0:29:17.3- Government. After contraceptives it was the condom but condoms weren't very popular and people were dying while condoms were there.

So, this is 80s? 90s?

From 90s condoms. Actually, late 80s. Condoms were introduced late 80s. I knew of it then.

So, contraceptives were introduced first?

There were contraceptives first. Then condoms.

So, contraceptives 80s? Then condoms were introduced.

Yes, condoms. And thereafter sterilization. It was a way to protect yourself. Economy was tough. And it was a way to prevent everything that was happening. Having lots of children that you can't afford is not right because look...there's street kids. Because with these street kids we don't know. They might be rebellious and that's why they're leaving home to go live in the streets. For another child, there is no food at home and they don't know what to eat so they decide to go try their luck in the streets because of the poverty at home. For another it's peer pressure. There are three factors: poverty, peer pressure and negligence. Some mothers are alcoholics, they stay in shebeens and leave their many children. And instead decide to go get drunk maybe thinking that will alleviate the poverty instead of going to get a job or try learning a skill so she can work for her kid's sake. You aren't educated but try something to feed your family. Use contraceptives. Another option is condoms. And the last option is to sterilize. There are three instead of an abortion or putting yourself in poverty. Instead of blaming the government system or your family you can ultimately come up with your own solution, what's done is done and you can't change it but you can try make your life better instead of crying. Crying over things that have happened. Husbands are not faithful...some of them. I'm not going to say all husbands just because mine wasn't. Try to condomize, use contraceptives if you don't want children or sterilize. If you don't have a child, there's no need to stress about not having a child because you don't make children...you are a chamber to graciously accept and welcome a child. You are blessed with a child...that's it. If you don't have a child, you can't make yourself have a child because you don't make a child. A child is from God, he decides to make your womb have a child.

Is your thinking common amongst people your age? Or is it...is it common or not common?

In my age group...I can't lie and say it is common. Because I'd notice when chatting with people that they don't agree with many things.

Examples?

Like...

Examples of what you're saying about children coming at their own time and it not being your fault if you're not getting pregnant.

This is why I say females confuse me at times because they defend men a lot. They forget that for some things to happen it's not only your fault if that's what you think. Your partner, seeing that you aren't having children, should be involved in figuring out why you don't have a child. It's not only your duty to have a family.

Is the common thinking that the female is at fault?

Exactly. With my age group.

Within the time period of the 80s and 70s?

Yes!

It was common thinking?

Females were at fault for this thinking because they allowed everything whether it was right or wrong. Even knowing something wasn't right, they'd let it happen. They would allow it, allow men to abuse

them. Some men won't abuse you physically but emotionally. Emotional abuse is more dangerous than physical abuse. It stays with you and causes more damage than if he'd hit you and everyone is temporarily shocked so if you allow a man just because he's taking care of you or just to say you have a man to abuse you, I don't see that as right. Saying stuff like at least I have a shelter...no! Or saying he's a provider, he should be providing because that's his duty and he's a man after all. And for me to respect him he must provide so if he doesn't do that then I'm not going to do anything either. Maybe, I'll...it really depends on the type of person you are because I won't say everything that I am I learnt from my mother or so and so...maybe it's the experiences I went through. I was by myself and studied myself and where I was in everything that was going on in my life.

0:36:23.5- How do you think growing up during that time impacted you?

Things have occurred in my life and in other people's lives have made me wise. They made me wise which allowed me to decide what I wanted for my life and how to react to if this or that happened. Figuring out how to protect myself from people taking advantage and how to dismiss memories from my mind if someone has already taken advantage, how to forget that I was a victim in some cases. All of this has made me stronger...especially for the time I grew up in. Everything I saw and everything that happened with friends, society plus...

Oh sorry...space is running out...

With family, things that happened in my family, things that happened in my surroundings. In all these groups, people I stayed with, worked with...in my mistakes. I learnt a lot and was able to correct my mistakes. I was able to see the proper way of doing things and gain an understanding of people and learn their cues. How to react when people attack me, how to respond when people have hurt me, how to process the hurt. I learned that I to make mistakes, what have I done to anger this person? Maybe I was at fault, learn to understand people and figure out if they maybe have problems.

Sheila

Part One: Interview 1

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

Ok...we will start. What is your name?

Nonthuthuzelo... Sheila... Mbinda.

Ok. How old are you?

Sssss...June 15th, I will be 71

Wow...

2016.

And then do you have any kids?

I have four kids.

Ok...

Three girls and a boy

Ok, tell me about them. Names, ages...

Uh...uhm...ehm...my first born is Xolani. He is now fifty. The second one, Nozipiwo, she is now forty... how much? 1967?

Uhhh...forty-seven?

Haa ahh (*shakes head, uses phone to try figure out the age*)

No? Forty-six? Is it not forty-six? 1967?

Mmm.

She's forty-seven.

Forty-nine.

Forty-nine? Oh, wow...Ok.

(*laughs*) And the third one is Zoleka is forty-seven.

Mmm, forty-seven? Ok.

Mmm (*agreeing sound*)

Ok.

And eh...last one Pumza. She is...forty-two.

Mmm...uh do you have anything else to say about your kids? How do you feel having such old kids?

Mmmm...I can't believe it. Uhm, especially my first born who is already fifty (laughs) half a century...uhm...otherwise, I'm glad they are all grownups. You know.

How old were you when you had your first...when you had your first born?

I was...aaahhh uhm aaahhh twenty

Twenty?

I was twenty years.

Twenty years? And were you married at the time?

Mmm?

Were you married?

No.

Not married?

Mmm...my first two kids are out of marriage.

Aah...ok.

Then I married, I got the last two. Got married, I got the last two.

So where...sorry...where did you have your first born? Was it in the Eastern Cape?

In the Eastern Cape. We still living at ehh...Duncan Extension. That is eZiphunzana.

Mmm...mmh.

My first born. And the second born too.

Then?

And then we moved to the... new township...then. Which is now Mdantsane. Nineteen-sixty...I got married 1968. November, 8th of November then I had my first born emtshatweni [in marriage] ...

Mmm.

In May 1969.

Ok, I just want to ask...sort of going back to your first pregnancy. Did you go...did you...how did you find out you were pregnant? Did you go to a hospital or did you just know?

No...I uh didn't go to any hospital for that. I knew. I can't remember whether my mother saw me or... no I uh I knew because I didn't have my periodic...my uh periods, monthly periods so I knew that I was pregnant.

Did you tell anyone or did you?

(Long silence)

I told my boyfriend.

Mmm...was he the first person that you told?

Yes. And after that I told my uhm my...my boyfriend's sister. And then my boyfriend said I mustn't say it's him. (laughs) Which was impossible, he was just scared you know, scared of his parents and I was also scared of mine.

How were you feeling? Was is just...a scary time?

It was not that scary...because I didn't know anything. I didn't know what was going to happen so I was not that scared. Uhm I was...I was just shy...you know. My friends, my relatives seeing me pregnant you know, that was it.

Ok, so you were saying that you didn't know...so did you not, was it not spoken about? 'Coz you were twenty so did you not know anything before about sex or pregnancy? Was it not something that you could speak about to...

To anyone?

Ja, to anyone. Like your mother or maybe friends?

No! Yoh! You couldn't speak to your mother about those things. You...you know...because your mother, you know your mother would be...she's already disappointed in you and she's angry with you, you know.

About? About?

The pregnancy...we...before, before the pregnancy is that what you mean?

Ja, ja...so you hadn't had a conversation...

About sex? No!

About sex? And maybe pregnancy?

Uuhh aahh! Yoh! No!

So that was never...

Uuhh aahh! No! You never discussed with parents such, such things.

So, did you know anything about like contraceptives? How to like maybe...condoms?

That time it was not...no...it was not something that ehh we knew about. Uh you know, it was not something we knew about. Contraceptives and all that? Eh ehe, we didn't know...then but uhm...ja maan we didn't know. Uuhh aahh...that time.

So, did you...for you at that age: nineteen, twenty did you know anything about sex or...was it all a new experience?

No, I did know. I did know about sex that...at that age you know, but you...

But you didn't know anything about contraceptives?

You knew you were doing something that was wrong...not accepted.

Oh ok.

You know, but you know children. They always do what they...what they know is not right, most of the time. As long as they are not seen doing it, you know.

Oh ok, so...ok. So, you didn't at that time...sorry what year is this? So, you are twenty in?

1965

1965 you are twenty...ok. So, are you...was it just...do you think it was just specifically your family? Or was it just...would you say that it was maybe in the community that no one was speaking about contraceptives and how to stop pregnancy and all of that if you were having sex?

I wouldn't say everybody were uhm...was not talking about sex you know. Uhm, I'm sure there were families like if you you've got a nurse at your home. So it was...they would speak about that you know, if you maybe with the relatives or somebody or else. But within...as it is today where you go to the clinic, you find condoms there, you here people speaking about young girls having sex in an early stage and what-what-what...it wasn't like that in our time...mmm.

So even like in clinics you couldn't go there and find out anything about it?

(Shaking head and expressing negative sounds) Aah ahh no. It was...not at that time. There were only surprised when a young girl comes in or go to the clinic because she's pregnant. And it uh...you know, they were so surprised because why should you at your age get pregnant? You know, you're not married and you, you know, still young...is that your phone Zola?

Uh, I'm not sure.

Ja, it's your phone.

Ok, no it's fine. Ok, so what was...so for you did you give birth in a clinic or in a hospital?

When?

When you gave birth to your first born?

No! I have my...my...my first born at home.

Oh wow.

At home. All the women...the nurse came after. Otherwise I had birth at home. And ehh, the nurse was called after that. And it was, you know nurses they were no transport for nurses, the...the nurses that are working with the community. They walked...I remember that one came on foot from the clinic...it's your phone Zola.

Ok, let me just...(inaudible)...I put it on silent. So the nurse...why...was it a conscious decision to...to give birth at home or did it just happen that way?

No...they...it just happened. I had pains.

Mmm, ok so would you have gone the hospital if you'd had a chance or to a clinic?

I think...ja. You know we were listening to the...to uh the mothers or the older people that were around you. But they never suggested I should go to the clinic. They did the birthing themselves. They were here around me, telling me what to do. Telling me what to do.

So, was it common to give birth at home?

Yes, it was.

And then the nurse would come after?

Ja.

And then during your pregnancy did you ever go to a clinic or go get checked out?

Yes, I did. I did go to the clinic during pregnancy. I was doing it. I did the check-ups.

Oh ok, so did you...you went to a clinic. Was it near home...or was it far?

Not very far, it wasn't very far but I had to walk.

What was the clinic like? Like back then? Was it a small clinic? Was it a big?

No, it was a small clinic. Like a...it was just like a four roomed house.

Yeah?

That was a clinic.

And then do you...was there a doctor? Or was it just nurses?

Just nurses the...but the doctor would come maybe once a week.

Ok.

M: You know...I don't know how...how many times in fact but the doctors were not people that are always there. It was nurses, staff nurses, mid-wives because uhm they were people that gave birth there by the clinics and all that. You not usually taken to the hospital for giving birth, it was done in the, in the clinics. I remember...ja...when Pumza...I gave birth Pumza at a local clinic. Zoleka, hospital. Nozipiwo, at home. Xolani, at home.

Oh, ok. And then you're saying this was a common thing to give...

Ja, it was.

To give birth at home?

Ja...mmm. Ja, it was a common thing. They usually...they...you know people never went to school. But the old women...

Ja?

They did the...the...the...they did deliver babies, you know. Make a big fire inside, make the...the house warm and all that. They did it themselves. And they were so good in that.

Yeah?

Yeah, they were so good. Except that there is...you know the hygiene things and uh...

Yeah.

But babies came alive and they grew up nicely.

Ok, and in uhm so. I'm just gonna...so when did you have your last child?

1974.

1974?

1974, June the 6th

And where did...were all your children born in the Eastern Cape?

Yes.

In the Eastern Cape? OK.

Mmm (*makes agreeing sound*)

Then when did you move...I'm just going to change gears a little bit. When did you move to Cape Town?

Ooohhh... I first came to Cape Town for holiday, you know uhm 1976. That was my first time to Cape Town. We travelled by train and eehhh, the journey was two days.

That's a very long time.

Two day and...yeah and you only come...you only arrive on the third day in... Cape Town. That was my first time...and after that I uh keep on coming for...for December holidays, Christmas holidays here. I think uhm...1976 and all the other years and then uh...1986 too I was also here and I went back home, I uh...I was called from my uh old job then I did a thing for uh one and a half years or so but I uh...from 1991 up to today I was in Cape Town.

Mmh, ok.

1991, I think about March or so. Early 1991, I came to Cape Town until today 2016. How long is that now?

Ninety-one? So, it would be...2001, 2011 was twenty years. Then plus five...twenty-five years!

Is it?

Yes. So, you've been here twenty-five years. Wait, is that correct? Yes, five years...ja. twenty-five.

Mmh, ok.

Wow, so...and when you got to Cape Town were where you living in Cape Town?

I was living in uh Khayelitsha.

And did you live...so did you live in Khayelitsha for...I ...your whole?

Ja.

Whole time in Cape Town until now?

I lived in Khayelitsha all those years. Just changing places...but in Khayelitsha.

So, in the Eastern Cape you were living...where were you living in the Eastern Cape? Was it eMdantsane?

eMdantsane, ja.

So uh, how was the move? Did you? Was it a big difference between like Khayelitsha versus eMdantsane?

(Long pause)

(clears throat) Uh...yes, there was a difference. In the first place in eMdantsane we had...four roomed houses. In Khayelistsha, two roomed houses. Neh?

(murmurs agreement)

That was another difference. Number two, East London my town in Mdantsane is smaller than Cape Town. Cape Town is a big city and it has so many...you know...it's adventurous. You see many new things, you know.

How old were you when you moved to Cape Town?

In 1991? How old was I? In 1991, I was...

It was twenty-five years ago

Twenty-five?

Ja, and you are seventy-one this year so seventy-one minus twenty-five...is...you were in your forties.

When was this?

You were forty something. Forty uhm...

It was 1991...

(makes encouraging sound) 1991 minus when you when born.

Forty-six.

Forty-six...oh ok.

I was forty-six.

Why did you decide to make the move?

To Cape Town?

Yeah.

Ahh oh, I uh... firstly I did like Cape Town when I first came here...in 1976. And all the other years that I came and spent my Christmas holidays. So, I aah...I fell in love with Cape Town from then, you know. And when uh...when we were retrenched...when we were retrenched from where I was working in East London and I uh couldn't get a job that side. I decided to come...come to Cape Town. To try my luck here.

Was it successful?

Mmmh...not that much. I never got a permanent job. I worked in a supermarket. I did...I was a housemaid, you know. But there were no good jobs...no. I decided to do my own business. Selling anything that I could get, you know. So, I never got a permanent job, here. I...it was all temporary.

And then trying to circle back where we sort of started. Uhm when you got to Ekhave...so you were saying even up until...so you were in your...in your forties by the time you left the Eastern Cape. Do you think...had you...was there a change that you'd noticed perhaps from when...you were a child at twenty having like children...was there a shift in the attitude of how...in the way people now talked about sex or contraceptives compared to the 1960s and then let's say 1970s...80s.

Ooh ja. A lot. It was a uh...it was something that ...people talked about. I mean we were introduced to contraceptives, you know the injections, the pills...tablets, you know.

When was this? So, when is this happening? So, when does this happen?

Ja, when...uh...when...the contraceptives were introduced when I...if I remember well in the...in seven- in the early seventies.

Mmh ok.

You know; I think we started knowing about contraceptives then. Neh? Ja. Mmh.

Can you think...do you...can you think maybe why this happened? Or do you remember something maybe?

Yoh (*murmurs negatively*), I cannot.

Ok that's fine. So, what do you remember like where they teach...was it nurses teaching you? Or was it in school? Or was it in the community? What was happening?

I was uh, it was the nurses...when we started all of this. It was the clinics, the health workers...you know uhm gradually in schools because they will...there would be health workers that visit schools you know. And that time, it was either the injection in contraceptives. Either the injection or...or the tablets. There were no condoms that time. We knew nothing about condoms.

You know what was more popular between the injection and the tablets?

Mmh...I think it was fifty/fifty because other people were taking the tablets, others injections, you know. I remember, I was using the injection...that's where I took so long to have my last born. You know, I think the injection was still in my blood. Even if I stopped...you know.

Oh, why did you choose the injection over the tablet?

The tablet you would, you take them every day. Injection you go there...was it monthly? Yoh, I can't remember now. Ideally monthly, once a month...the injection. The tablets you have to take them every day.

Mmh, ok.

(*murmurs positively*)

So that was...and when...so when did you...when did you go on...on birth control? On the injection? Was it after you'd...

No, it was after uh...when was that? I think after, when was it? Ja, early seventies. That's when I only started. I had already three kids, it was after my third one.

Why did you decide to go on...the birth control?

I thought...yhu! There seemed to be a...I had enough...I mean I had uh...I had three kids already so I thought no, no. I must give myself a break, you know.

What were they popular that time with other women your age? Using contraceptives?

Ja, they were.

Oh ok. And then what made you then decide to eventually go off it? Where you ready?

Ja...my baby was old enough. She was uh...how old was she? Sixty-nine to seventy-three...she was I think she was seven...six.

Oh ok.

Ja.

Ok. And then so that...that so all of these contraceptive drugs that was eMdanstane in the early seventies when there was a huge...

(*murmurs in agreement*)

And then when you moved to now eKhayelitsha was it, was it...did you find it was the same thing? Was a contraceptive a big thing people were talking about in the community?

Yes, it was big but I was no more using it.

Why?

I uhm...firstly I didn't have a boyfriend. I didn't have...you know, we separated, my husband and I so I was in my own. So, I thought aah huh...there's no need...you know, ja. So uh, I never used them again.

So, you only used in that period of time?

Ja

Oh ok, and then...so it was still a big...I'm in interested in...so you were forty-six so your kids would have been in their twenties at that time when you were moving to Khayelitsha?

(murmurs in agreement)

In ninety-one, and then did you ever speak to them about contraceptives and...and sex and all of those things?

No...I never...I never speak to them about that. But I knew they'd been educated...I mean education from the...from school, you know...health educators, they had a chance of that. But myself? Aah huh, we never talked about you know, or educate them about that.

Ok... I was going to ask why? Was it because you knew that they'd been educated? Or was it just because...

(Burps) Excuse me.

Was it a common, was it a possible conversation?

Yes, but not strong. Not strong conversation, you know. It wasn't something that we sit down and we say, today or now we are going to speak about and ask them...say one by one how do you do? How do you do it? Or...I uh we never had such uh educations. But they already knew from the...the...I would say their own research because they were already in higher educations, tertiary you know. They were old enough, you know, to know and it was common you know. It was...

Contraceptives were common?

Ja, very common.

In li...so do you think was it...was it a time now when people could go to the clinic? Talk...to nurses?

Ja.

So, I'm talking about the clinics in Khayelitsha...was it...do you think...so were the nurses very helpful and...

Ja, they were very helpful...you know. And more clinics were built; it's not like... uh before. We had at least more clinics now, you know. So, it was not...uh...had to get a clinic that is not far from where you live, you know.

So, wait uh...how many clinics...was there maybe one clinic before? Or

In what big space maybe?

Like maybe in Khayelitsha? How many clinics would you...

(Exhales sharply) ...uh...yoh, in Khayelitsha? Clinics were uh..aah huh, they were very...they were few. They...maybe the whole of Khayelistsha...we had say about three clinics.

Is this the early nineties?

Ja, that's the early nineties.

Ok, and then was it after...

(Murmurs negatively) Even before the nineties...say...say maybe 1985 or so...there are about two, three clinics there...in Khayelitsha...before I came there were about three.

And then when did they uh...when did they change? When did they start building more?

(Exhales sharply) I'm not sure of the...when or the year but after say like uh from the about ninety-four or something we had more clinics.

So, it's definitely after...after democracy?

Ja, we had more clinics. Ja.

And then did you notice, was there a uhm a big change from...did you...from pre-ninety-four and then after ninety-four?

Ja, there was a big change. Most of the...most of the...what can I say...uh the, you know...things that we...we...we...we were using like uh we had clinics, we had hospitals. Two. A lot changed. We had hospitals, we had police stations, we had clinics, schools...more schools, more clinics, more police stations. More, you know. Even churches, you know we had a lot, there was a big change. You know, we had malls, shopping malls whereas we used to have...most of the...we were using spaza shops. People were making their own businesses but we had shops and we had uh big malls, you know. It was...the was a big change. It was very big, very big change.

And then, and then in the community, in the way people acted, was there also a change? Like, did ninety-four...was there a clear sort of change in how people now behaved or acted?

Uh...yes, there was uh...people had this...the people were so excited about the democracy and they had hope for a change. And uh people became political aware, you know and then started. People started to demand what they were supposed to be getting or doing, you know. They uh, what can I say...uh, they were learning to get used to the new, you know, lifestyle and all that.

And what were your feelings at this time? Was...did your life change in anyway?

M: Not totally but it did, I mean, the lifestyle became... it became, it changed. Uh, we did get some privileges like we...old people were given pension money like this government grant whereby the blacks were not getting it before...black people. So, we had that, that was number one privilege. And uh, the government did not stop there, I mean it didn't only give old people, it also give that grant, granted the children, the orphans...you know, the disabled people were also granted those peoples. There were some organizations that looked after people, street kids...get them some shelters and all that, you know, they were trying...some lives were improved in a way...you know.

And I just want to look specifically at the...at the public health sector. Did you see any changes?

In the public health?

Yes, with clinics and the hospitals.

Mmh...yes, there was a little change.

[Paused for a bathroom break]

So, I was just asking about the public health system so...so did you notice...was there a change that you noticed?

Mmh, ja, there were more nurses. There were doctors, you know. Uhm, that is...after ninety-four. So, the doctors in clinics, always doctors. And uh, and the service was imp...was a little bit better. Though there is always additional numbers, people, you know. There are so many people but it was now better, you know. We had uh a lot of doctors around clinics, even at night for emergencies there were doctors.

And that wasn't there before?

Uh ja.

And then uhm, I'm just going to take you a little bit back to the contraceptive days. Did your husband know that you were on contraceptives?

Yes, he did.

Was it something that you two discussed together?

Yes...yes. We discussed because...we did discuss it even to stop when we...needed another child, you know. So, we did discuss it.

Oh, ok. So, it was a uhm...a decision made by the both of you?

Ja...it was, ja.

Do you think...was that common, do you think most other women in your position...did they?

No, it was a new thing you know. Uhm because, before mos, we had no...there were no contraceptives. Uhm, it was a wife's duty just to have children. Not stopping and what-what or...there was no such thing you know. The women should be having children, that's all. When you get married, you had to, you must have children. You know, so it was a...you could have that gap to uh grow the child that you got because your husband would be working far...you know, in bugger towns. If either he goes to Cape Town or Johannesburg and he stays there...works there for, say more than a year he's away or he comes once a year you know, for holidays and then go back. So that was the uh only way to uhm not to have more children.

Oh oh, so you mean before the injections and the pills came...contraceptive was your husband-

Going away

Going away, oh ok. So, do you think that...do you think...so did you talk to friends about contraceptives and uh...this is in the seventies...like with other women in the clinic. Did you all maybe go together to the clinic to go get your injection?

Ja, we used to uh...ja. We were...be in groups you know and talk about this and you know. Sometimes one would say, the reactions of the maybe tablets or injection, you know, because with others it would make you...ndigathini [*what can I say*], you have iperiods zakho mhlabi...ayibambi ixesha [*maybe your period...wouldn't happen on schedule*] ...you know it doesn't happen at the right time, you know. Uh, injection, would totally stop ilentsika iperiods zakho iinjections [*what do you call it, yes, your periods.*] You don't have them with injections but with tablets you do, you know. So, we would speak about that, you know. One would say I prefer the injection; one says the...the tablets.

Oh ok, can we quickly pause again.

(Bathroom break)

Ok, so bendisathi [I was saying], so did you...was it a organized...did you meet this group of women at the clinic or would you guys leave home together on a specific day to go to the clinic?

No uh, it wasn't like that. You just go to the clinic because it's your day to go there, and then you will meet them there. Not that we...

Planned to go?

Planned that to go on this day...together...huh aah.

So, did you know any of the other women...women that you like met at the clinic or maybe in the community or did you just?

Some of them, you know from the community. Some are new faces.

Oh ok. So do you think for you, so you've said you and your husband decided to go on...for you to go on the birth control. Do you think for other women was it...?

The same?

The same?

Not really...I don't think uh...uh. I don't think everybody did what I...what we were doing or...was it the same pattern with the other families. I'm not sure. But as a...a husband and a wife they uh...they were uh...they did discuss this. Like any...anything, your family thing you know, you discuss it. But the difference is...uh, its's either the husband doesn't agree with you. Maybe he...she...he says now you must stop. And you carry on, you know, sometimes...uh...you as a wife you are not ready, you know. You are not ready to have a child now, you know, you are enjoying the freedom of having...of not having a small baby. And then...so, I think it was different...

For every...

For every family.

Do you know anyone who was perhaps hiding it...did you meet any such people?

Hiding from the husband?

At the clinic?

Not specifically Zola, but uh...just because I cannot...uh remember maybe, the name or something. But there were. (murmurs positively) There were, you know, we usually discuss it as women and the other one will say 'yhu! I don't tell my husband that I'm doing this and that', you know. Maybe if he finds out, he will...there will be a fight or something. They used to...the uh, the way we uh women, they were women who used to do it without the consent of their husbands.

Do you think you would have done it, if your husband hadn't agreed?

(little laugh) Oh ja...ja I would have done it but uh.

Why?

(little laugh) You know, women, they uh...I mean you know men. They like to be bullies so, to prove that you can also...do what you need to do or want to do so you would do something that he doesn't know that you are doing like using contraceptives when he doesn't want you too.

Do you think the choice to use contraceptives is...is a women's choice? Or do you think it should be a...if you're in a relationship it should be an equal fifty-fifty?

Ja, I think it should be fifty-fifty. I think you should...I think you should discuss it because you...you are going to be future parents so each one of you must be ready...when it's time. You must be ready. It should be a family thing or uhm, a fifty-fifty thing between the two.

And then uhm, what...when you were there getting the contraceptives, were the nurses helpful?

Ja, they were helpful. They would explain to you how to use them and uh if you've got some...there's something wrong that happens because you're using these. You must come back to the clinic and tell them so they were helpful. They were helpful.

And was there any...what was sort of the atmosphere when this was happening? What...what were the feelings around it?

With whom?

With you now being able to go to a clinic and get...and get contraceptives.

Oh, it's a ja...it was a good feeling. It was a good feeling, Zola because, uhm...there were. Before there were people were getting babies not because they want too. It was because they're having sex so obviously you are going to get a baby. You are not prepared, you know so now this was a good thing, you know. It was changing lives, in a way, you know. You, know you get a baby because you want one...to have a baby. There's no...mistake.

Do you think that's an important sort of choice for women or to...or for families to decide to have a child whenever they want?

(murmurs positively)

Oh ok, I think that's all for today. Thank-you so much.

Ok.

(giggles) I will probably be back.

Yhu, huh aha.

Part TWO: Interview 2

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

Thank you for sitting with me. What is your name? Where are you from?

My name is Nonthuthuzelo Mbinda, I was born in East London.

When?

15 June 1945.

Can you expand about your early life? Did you grow up with your mother and father?

I grew up living with my grandfather, my mother's father and my grandmother, my mother's mother. I was the first grandchild, I was the oldest. So, I lived with them in the rural areas. First, we lived in Kwelera then we moved to Tsholomnqa.

Why didn't you live with your parents?

My mother was working in East London and I never knew my father because when a child is born to an unmarried girl no one asks about fathers. Your father is the one that is there, for me that was my grandfather.

Was this common? That the child of an unmarried girl belonged to her family?

Yes. In Xhosa culture that child is called 'umtana uzalelwe ekhaya', that is a child born to an unmarried person. That child belongs to the mother's family.

Is that a good thing?

Growing up as child in that environment you don't know any different, you just see a mom and a dad (in your grandparents). These things happen or at least that's how they happen kwaXhosa.

Growing up what was your relationship like with your grandparents?

It was good. We lived together nicely, though my grandmother was very strict. You couldn't be annoying and just wondering around with no purpose. She was very strict.

With you? Or with just all the grandchildren?

Uhm...because I was the oldest and already just aware of things I felt her strictness. I don't know if the others would say the same thing. I don't quite remember when she died but...yes, she was very strict with me because I was the oldest. My grandmother didn't want any of us out and about or not knowing where we were. Or seeing us in out on the street talking with people she didn't recognize, seeing you at a distance and not knowing if you're hanging out with a boy or another girl. So, when you got home you had a lot of explaining to do and just as you're trying to explain you're being pinched.

Did you grow up with any boy siblings or boy cousins?

No there weren't any.

No boys.

No. no.

So, you can't speak to a difference in how you were raised as a girl compared to how boys were raised?

Yeah...no there was no boy child while I was young so...in fact the only boy came along very late. When we were all already grown, even my younger sisters. My little brother was maybe the third child after me so I was already grown up and so was my younger sister. I did the boys work because there were no boy children. I did boy and girl chores until my brother was old enough.

What were boy chores and girl chores?

We farmed back then. A girl was traditionally supposed to be in the home, collecting water from the river, cooking and preparing food for everyone who is out labouring in the fields. As a girl you could also be the one sent to take food to everyone working in the fields. Then boys usually worked with their fathers, going to helping with the farmers. There's this thing called 'ukukhokhela', cow calf's used for farming are usually tied up in twos and there needs to be someone guiding them from the

front holding the ropes. And they follow you, so that is a boy's job. They also help their fathers with...if your cows are well trained they can walk by themselves and can even understand you when you tell them when to turn and make a new row so a boy child helps with holding the hoe (ikhuba) because we didn't have tractors and had to do things manually. Do you see?

(0:06:57.7) So growing up what were you told about the place of a girl?

The place of a girl was to clean at home, and do the laundry, cook, collect water and go gather wood in the forest.

But what is the role of a girl?

Role? How?

What was expected in life from a girl?

What was expected for a girl life? Uh...for you to grow up, be a well-mannered and not busy.

Busy?

To be busy was to be all over, being seen in the street and just generally always wondering about. Going up and down. Being a child that is always out with friends. How can I describe it better? You wanted to be a stable child, one that stayed at home and only left when you were asked to run an errand by an adult. Going and coming back punctually. Just things like that, being always available to the adults and not making them look for you when you were needed. That's how you should be as a girl. Though I'll say boy children also need to have the same qualities but it's stricter for girls. Because girl children need to be always put together.

Put together for what?

Your manners need to be put together, you need to be looked at as an example. A child that is easily disciplined.

But why? What is the point of all of that?

It's for her future. You will be a better woman especially once she is married. And she'll be a good mother to her children because she knows the proper way to raise children.

So, the expectation for girls was to be wives and mothers?

Yes. As a girl you were being prepared to be a wife and mother because as a girl getting a job was not a priority. Working and bringing money home was for men. Not that women weren't working, they did but not as much as men. Sometimes some men didn't want their wives to work because they believed that working was for men only.

(0:10:34.5) What was the priority for girls then?

Priorities for girls was to stay at home and learn how to do things the right way so that when she got married and had children she was well prepared. And she was well prepared because she was taught well at home about what was the correct way for girls to carry themselves.

Let's just reverse a little, back to when you were a teenager...do you remember when you started getting your period? What was said to you?

When I got my first period I was told...firstly when you start your periods you can't eat/drink amasi or milk. You need to be a child that is always at home and not be out and about in the streets. You needed to learn how to sit properly and avoid sitting with your legs open. The thing with periods is that they were very embarrassing, you had to make sure that men or boys didn't see anything. You had to keep

it to yourself and be very private about it, no one needed to know you were on your periods. And you couldn't mix with boys, you see? All that was done to ensure that boys didn't see you were on your period.

Ok, with not being allowed to drink/eat amasi and everything else you weren't allowed to do, were you told why?

The not eating/drinking mass rule was because there was a belief that if you did eat/drink amasi you are burning that cow that is being milked, its milk is being burned. It was believed that its milk production would be heavily slowed down if not stopped. If it was a cow that 'ehlisayo'...do you know what that is?

No.

It's a cow that produces a lot of milk.

This cow whose milk is going to burn is like the one the family owns?

Yes. It's the family's cow, it stayed in the kraal and you also aren't allowed to go there. In fact, don't go anywhere near there. You see? You must have that respect and not go to the kraal. You don't go there, you don't eat/drink amasi. You aren't even allowed to touch the bucket ('selwa') that carries the milk. You see? You must stay away from all milk products.

Because...

You'll ruin the production of milk for the cow. It won't be able to produce any more milk, it'll just stop.

And it'll be your fault that your family goes hungry?

Yes, your family will end going hungry.

And uhm...what else did you say? When you started your period and you were told not to mix with boys did you understand why? Did you understand the connection?

The connection?

Yes, being told you can't hang around boys and mix with them because of your period.

Oh ok. The thing about boys and menstruating you were told that if you slept with a boy, maybe you already had a boyfriend but you weren't sleeping together yet, it's possible that you might fall pregnant.

Did you know that?

No, I was told.

(0:15:44.9) When you started your period?

Yes.

At that time did you know what sleeping with a boy meant?

No... mostly...before you get to that age when you're starting your periods you're really dumb especially as a girl. You aren't really aware of anything so you don't know most things and you're told once you start your period. At that point you're treated like a young woman and you're told things because you're growing and you need to know.

Also, you said there was shame and embarrassment associated with your period, how did that make you feel? Do you remember how that felt, having to hide this?

The thing about periods was a lot...firstly you are shocked and scared because you didn't know anything before you started. And the first time it happens you run and go tell an adult that something isn't right in your underwear, you feel like you've done something wrong. Then you're told what's happening, now you're a big girl, a young woman. And you're told everything you're supposed to do and not do...like what I was saying about not eating/drinking milk or going anywhere near the kraal. You needed to watch how you sat so that your panties don't show and you didn't show people you were on your period. You needed to carry yourself very carefully.

Would you say by starting your period you're no longer a child? There's a distinction now?

Yeah. Yeah...once you start your periods you are grown up now, you're a big girl. You're told that this will be happening every month for 5 to 7 days. That time is called 'ukuhlambha', that washing/cleansing is that your mother or whichever woman you live with will make strips of cloth for you to use as pads. You would wash those pieces of cloth when they were messy so the term 'ukuhlambha' comes from that, you having to be consistently washing the pieces of cloth. And then putting them out to dry, and even when you're putting them out to dry you have to hide them. There's something called 'igoqgo' in the rural areas, it's the place you put all the gathered wood so most of the time that was where you would hang your pieces of cloth to dry. And you had to make sure it was on the sides so that someone passing by wouldn't see it.

So, this whole thing is hidden?

Yes.

Are there any more talks are the first initial one?

No, there's nothing more to say. Unless if funny behaviour is noticed then you're reminded about everything you were told. Otherwise, you're told once and your mother watches you to make sure you do things the right way like tell you to go change the cloth if you start bleeding through.

(0:20:23.3) How many children do you have? When were they born?

Ok...I have four children. Yeah. I had my firstborn when I was 20 in 1965...do I have to include the dates?

Years are fine.

Ok, firstborn in 1965 then the second born is 1967. The third one is 1969 and last one in 1974. The first one is a boy followed by three girls.

Oh ok, did you have your children in marriage?

No, I had two children before I got married and I had two children in my marriage.

At 20 did you know anything more than what you had been told when you started your periods and the connection between that and being with a man?

What?

From when you were a teenager and you were told about your period to when you had your child at 20, what did you know? What knowledge did you have at this point?

So, when I started my periods I was told that how you get pregnant is by sleeping with a boy. You can now get pregnant because you're on you've started your periods so that knowledge was in my mind. In fact, I would say I knew what I was doing but I didn't want...not that I wanted to have a child before

marriage or even in marriage once I had been told...so at first, I would say that it is a mistake because you don't really know even though you were told but while you're doing it you're not really thinking. Though there is that inkling of fear about what you're doing and you soon realize that you have really messed up (zinqakile).

Meaning?

You are now pregnant and it's bad. You sit with that shame. You are embarrassed because you know you've done something wrong, something you were warned about.

Why is it wrong?

It was wrong because you are not supposed to have a child, you are not married. People who are meant to have children are married people. If you have a child while unmarried it means that you have broken a rule that you were taught at home. You are still a girl, you are not married and you are not supposed to have a baby or fall pregnant.

Because children are for marriage?

Children are for married people.

What is the value of a child? Why are they important?

Firstly, children are a gift from God and once they're here you have to appreciate them because you don't know who they'll become. They could grow up and do great things. And make you happy and proud. A child is something to marvel at and be in awe at as they grow up, even before they do anything. As you're raising them you celebrate their milestones; crawling, walking, talking and just all the stages they go through. You are constantly interested and watching them. A child is really an important gift that you have to love and uh...like a plant you have to water for it to grow.

So, in marriage...

Marriage?

If you're married must you have children?

Yes, if you're married you must have children.

Why?

Because...even the bible says be fruitful and multiply. Those words are directed at married people, not at people who have children while unmarried. Though this is not to say that if you do have a child outside of wedlock that, that child is not worthy or that they won't be appreciated. But a child should be the product of two married people so that they can be raised by both parents.

Are children born in marriage and those outside of marriage of the same value?

No. There is no difference. A child is a child whether they're born to two married people or not.

(0:27:57.3) So the shame goes to the mother?

The shame...yeah...it only goes to the mother because she had a child while unmarried but the child is not affected or looked at differently because they are the child of an unmarried person.

If you have a child while unmarried you are embarrassed and feel shameful?

Yes.

So, what does it actually mean for you going forward?

You should be a reserved and cautious person that is determined not to be a disappointment again. As I said, a child having a child while unmarried I can say is a mistake because you weren't supposed to be doing what you were doing which led to you falling pregnant. You know you're not married and you're filled with shame, to the extent that back then if you had child while unmarried you couldn't hang out with other. You had to be off to the side by yourself, you couldn't mix. You couldn't be friends with girls who didn't have children if you had one because it was assumed that you would poison the others and lead them into your bad decision of having a child while you were still a girl.

What was the value of girl?

A girl child was seen as a child that had to be raised correctly so that they wouldn't bring shame to their home like having a child while unmarried. It was very important for a girl child to leave her home and go to her new home as a married woman. It was important to get married while still a girl, which meant not having children. If that happened it was a big source of pride for parents. They would be very happy and proud of their child.

(0:30:44.0) The value of a girl was in keeping her virginity?

Yeah.

In keeping her virginity, what role did lobola play? What is its place?

The place of lobola...lobola is a payment by the people who are asking...

-----Interruption-----

What we're talking about? Lobola?

Yes, the place of lobola and how you understand it.

My understanding of lobola is that firstly it is a way to unite the two families. Lobola helps build a friendship. Secondly, for the girl's parents it's a way for them to get something after they have raised their child. The cows ensure that the family continues to grow and prosper despite losing their daughter. The cows will birth more...there are some cases where your daughter gets sick after getting married and a traditional ceremony is needed using cattle be it cows or sheep or goats so lobola makes it that your family doesn't struggle as they will already have the animal needed in the kraal. You went through lobola, those cows are there in your name...you don't own them but they're there so they make things easier for whatever needs to be done. There's also the belief that if lobola is paid for you, you are more dignified than a person who got married without lobola being paid.

Can you get married without lobola being paid?

Yes. Some people do get married without paying lobola. The man's family could go to the woman's family to ask for her hand in marriage and begin the negotiations then never follow up...the woman just goes and stays with her husband and he never pays off his lobola debt.

What about the children of that union?

They're born in wedlock because you and your husband are married, he just never paid lobola for you.

So lobola was a choice?

Lobola is not a choice but some people do fail to pay lobola knowing that they are supposed to pay it but just don't. Some will pay part of it but then they'll always be talk about how your wife's lobola is incomplete as you didn't pay the full amount that was agreed upon during negotiations. If you and your husband ever fight and you decide to go home your husband will be forced to pay the outstanding lobola, perhaps even more (udliwa). When he comes to fetch you, he'll be interrogated

about what happened and why you came home. Keep in mind that when you got home you properly explained your side of the story so your husband will have to not only explain himself in a hostile environment with your family but he will have to pay more lobola or whatever they want.

What is 'udliwa' is what exactly?

Udliwa is being forced to pay.

Why?

Because he (the husband) has messed up, maybe he hit his wife or whatever he did to make her go home.

So lobola doesn't mean your husband controls you?

No, lobola has nothing to do with controlling you. It has nothing...just because he paid lobola for you it does not mean he is the ringleader. Marriage is about two people who have to work together as partners, you have to share the major decisions. Marriage is a partnership, there is no leader or superior. Of course, there is the saying which says that a wife must submit to her husband and the bible does say that the head of the family is the husband but when you're married you are supposed to do things together. You're supposed to work together.

Is this how you did your marriage?

Yeah.

What years were you married?

1968...8th December.

Until?

1986...no... no it was 1988.

And your marriage was a partnership?

We tried but it's not easy. We're all created as individuals and have our own opinions which means that agreeing on everything is not possible. You have to compromise for the sake of the relationship with small things. Sometimes though you really don't agree and you have to work through that. Sometimes, despite trying to compromise though the other person might still not care and you have to remind them that you are equals. And honestly that's when your marriage starts falling apart and you realize that maybe you're too different as people.

Did you feel oppressed by your husband?

Uhm...towards the end I feel like there was oppression. Uh...because things change and you don't know why. Maybe the love ends? I don't know. The value of being married doesn't count anymore, you're just two people living together.

(0:40:16.7) Would you say your marriage was playing into the idea that the man is the head of the family?

No, not really. I wasn't seeing a head of the house but rather someone who stopped caring. It was like he no longer had any consideration for our future as a family and that's not being the head of the family. Not coming home or contributing to household expenses...even money to buy formula milk for your child, that's not being head of the family. Why does this head not have a brain? For someone to just disappear and not even leave money to feed the children. What does he think is going to

happen? Children need baby food which isn't just lying around the house. If you're not supporting your children, are you still the head of the family?

So, just going back to when your first got married did you ever feel like through lobola being paid for you, you were being sold?

No, I didn't have any feelings of being sold because lobola was paid for me because I knew that's what we did as Xhosa people. That's how we grew out families. It's the law (isithethe) of Xhosa culture though I do think these days it's in danger of disappearing but growing up you knew if you got married lobola would be paid. Furthermore, lobola is the priority, you don't get married first then pay lobola afterwards.

So, to get married lobola needs to be paid, you can't get married without it being paid, so how do you not feel like you were sold?

Well you can't get married then.

Were you asked if you wanted to get married?

No, you weren't asked. You wouldn't be asked if you wanted to get married...do you mean with girls?

Yes.

No, you're not asked if you wanted to get married. The process of you getting married starts with your potential husband's family coming to ask for you, saying they've noticed a potential bride then they're asked which girl did they notice. There's a play on language, there's nice conversation because none of this is confrontational. They're asked which girl and they state it, then you're called by your family and you are asked if you know the people who have come to ask for your hand. And you answer yes.

So that's a way of asking you if you want to get married?

No, you're not being asked if you want to get married but rather just a means for the process to start because if you didn't want to you would have said before...your boyfriend would have told you beforehand that he is sending a family delegation to your family so that's when you agree when he tells you his plans about wanting to marry you and remove you to his home. If you said ok then that's when he talks to his father perhaps who then talks to other senior males in the family about a lobola delegation to go to the woman's family. It's merely a formality when they ask you, your boyfriends' family wouldn't be there if you didn't want them to be. So, you're asked if you know them, you say yes and then you're sent away again. You're not asked anything else.

(0:45:37.3) Ok, so you get the chance to say yes in private with your boyfriend? And afterwards, you're no longer involved in the process?

Yes, you'll now hear from the males in your family who are a part of the negotiations. They'll negotiate and tell your boyfriend's family how many cows they expect as lobola payment and all that. The negotiations are happening while you are still at home though sometimes an agreement could be reached stating that once they've paid half or nearly all the agreed upon lobola then wedding preparations can begin. That's why you would hear that so and so is getting married though her lobola is not quite complete. You understand? The process continues, your husband -that's what your male in-laws are called- bring the necessary cows. Depending on your family, it'll be specified how they want the lobola. Either through money or cows or half and half.

Does lobola legitimize your children? Is it the sale of your womb?

The children you have in marriage belong to their father, there's no other way. Children you give birth to while married belong to your husband's family, there's zero discussion or debate about that.

Is having children the job of a wife?

Yes, a wife has to have children. Then it depends on the couple how many children they want, of course nothing is guaranteed and no one knows how many children they'll have.

What happens when you don't or can't have children?

If you're having a problem conceiving you look for a reason...there are many ways to try and figure out what the problem. Some people will try western medicine and science while some who have strong Xhosa beliefs will explore it that way. For example, your in-laws will tell you to go home and explain the situation of you not conceiving at home. Then when you get home and explain the situation your family will take whatever necessary cultural steps they believe in while they try figure out if the reason you are not conceiving is something that they need to deal with.

Do you know anything of the cultural practices of 'ukulalwa'? Or taking a second wife? Are they common?

What I know about a wife who is not having children is that in some families they ask you to give your husband the right to find a second wife. Being with your brother-in-law or one of your husbands' male relatives is something that happens across all races I think but it usually only happens when your husband dies but not while he is still alive. It's especially common if he dies while you two are still young before you had children in fact. You don't just sleep with him to have a child but in some cases, you are married off to him (your husbands' brother) so that...usually your in-laws don't want you to get re-married and belong to another family. They (your in-laws) would prefer for you to stay in the family because they like you but sometimes they do release if you want to marry someone else or at least let you go home, especially if you're still young and have no children.

Does lobola have to be paid again in that situation?

If you re-marry someone else?

No, if you end up marrying a relative of your husband.

Who is going to pay lobola for you now? You're already a part of the family, lobola was paid for you so it can't happen again just because you're going to be married to another person in the family. This is done as a way to keep you in the family because they like you and would prefer you stay in the family as a wife.

Do you know anyone personally that went through that?

No but because we're different tribes we hear things. There are different tribes who do this but now...if the wife...the widow doesn't want to then they let her go. She is not forced into a marriage she does not want.

You have four children, what does being a mother mean to you?

Yoh! It's good to be a mother, it's really nice. There are two sides to being a mother, good and bad. Being a mother is a struggle, children have many needs and they don't listen. You want to do right by your children and that requires sacrifice because being a mother should be your priority. Your duties as a mother is to nurture your children and work hard to make sure that their future is bright. Being a mother is complicated, you 'ugxeka ukholwa', crying and laughing at the same time. Children will upset you and make you proud at the same time.

(0:55:18.0) Is being a woman (umfazi) and a mother the same thing?

Uhm...being a mother and a woman...when using the word 'umfazi' it's generally directed at women when they are married. Once you are married, you are 'umfazi' (a real woman) and as such you must do things that wives do. Being a mother...

Is having children doing your wifely duties?

Having children...how can I put this? Yes, by having children you're fulfilling your wifely duties because as a wife you're supposed to have children. 'Ubumama' (motherhood) is to...it's like the care you give to children. There's a slight difference between 'ubumama' and 'ubufazi' because ubufazi speaks more to duty and what is expected of you while ubumama is how you will take care of the children. It's about your maternal instincts, not only with your children but with everyone else who depends on you.

What's the relationship between being a woman and a mother?

In my experience or knowledge when you're talking about women you're referring to a female and in comparison, to what...mothers?

Yes.

Like I said a mother is somebody who takes care of the family.

Do women have to be mothers?

I think it's your choice. You can be woman and not want to be a mother, that is you don't want to give birth or produce children despite being a woman.

Does that mean you're a failure?

In what?

In fulfilling your duties as a woman?

No, not you're not a failure because no one should be forced to have children though if you're married you'll probably feel pressured to have children because it's what you're supposed to do as a wife. You're not being forced but it's also something you know you should do.

Are you looked down upon if you don't have children?

No, there's no need to look down on anyone.

It's not embarrassing?

No, no there isn't any judgment because you don't know why someone doesn't have children. Of course, there is the belief that if you fall pregnant a lot and have multiple abortions while young you won't be able to have them later in life when you do want them. It's in that scenario that shame can play a role because you were busy having abortions and now you can't have children...so you've messed up health wise.

What is 'idlolo'?

Idlolo was a name given to someone who could not have children no matter what they did.

Is a nice name?

No, it was not nice because if you were 'idlolo', it was not because you did not want children. It was because you could not have them for whatever reason. That title was a smear, it was ugly and it was offensive. To call someone 'idlolo' was swearing at them and it was not like the woman you were insulting asked to be infertile. They wanted to have a child but they could not.

You're defined by not having children?

Yes. But that word is really ugly, you're being really rude by using it. It simply means that you don't have a child but it's not a nice way to say that, it's rude. A better way is to say 'oh shame, so and so isn't getting pregnant' but to call someone 'idlolo' is like talking about an animal.

(1:02:46.8) Oh ok. Briefly you mentioned abortions. Where they common? Do you remember when you first learnt about them?

I can't remember when exactly I first heard about abortion but I do know that it wasn't something that was always there, we didn't have it.

And you only knew about it as an adult?

No, I wasn't quite an adult when I first heard about abortion. I was about 15, 16 or 17 years old.

What years are that? Is that the 1960s?

No, before the 60s.

That's when you started hearing about abortions?

Yeah...abortions were...

Was it...

Wait, let me think...yeah it was the late 50s and early 60s there were whispers about abortions happening but it wasn't common. It was not something that happened regularly, so much that when it did happen it would be very shocking. And it wouldn't even be talked about publicly.

Only gossip?

Yeah, it was something that was gossiped about and it was all done in secrecy because people who had abortions didn't want it to be known.

Were you judged if you had an abortion?

Of course, you'll be the subject of gossip about how you aborted a child.

Is there a period where abortions became popular? Or was it the same?

As time went by abortion became popular.

When?

I can't say when because today we have places like abortion clinics so I can't quite remember when it became ok for people to go get an abortion. What I do know is that you can't abort passed your first trimester, that's the law because people were dying. People were having backdoor abortions...what are they? Backyard?

I think backdoor is right? Or maybe it's backstreet.

Yes that. Backdoor, backstreet abortions. The important thing about having an abortion is that you first have to be checked how far along you are and if abortion is even an option that won't endanger your life. DO you understand?

Ok. Shifting to contraceptives. When did you first start hearing about them?

My first year?

(1:06:28.6) When did you start hearing about contraceptives?

Oh, start hearing...uhm...before I had my first child I didn't know anything about contraceptives that is...I had my first child in 1965 so it was only later that I started hearing about contraceptives. I would say it was around 1970.

So, when you first heard about them what did you think?

I realized that contraceptives would have prevented me from having a child before marriage if they had been around earlier. Or I would have at least not had two children back to back because there's only two years between my first and second born. I could have planned it like I did my last two, one was born in 1969 and the other 1974. You see? Contraceptives would have given me the chance to plan.

So, you saw it as a good thing?

Yes, a very good thing.

What was the atmosphere in the community?

Regarding?

Contraceptives.

Contraceptives were welcomed into the community because clinics were full with people there to get contraceptives, trying different types of contraceptives. People's bodies reacted differently, like maybe you would get sick if you had the loop inserted so you would change to the pill. You would get to see works for you. In general, I would say that people welcomed the introduction of contraceptives.

So, it was seen as a way for the apartheid government to regulate black people?

No, not really because contraceptives allowed...they showed...there was a decrease in teenage pregnancies and abortions because people were using contraceptives.

Did you use contraceptives?

Yes, I did.

What did you use?

Depo.

Ok, what were your reasons for using?

I was planning my family, I didn't want to have an unplanned child having experienced having children who were not planned. Using contraceptives was a very good thing for me because it allowed me to have a bigger gap between my children.

Did you talk about this with your husband?

No. I don't remember talking to him about contraceptives but...the thing about husbands...while you're still nursing you're always very careful and want to make sure that you don't end up pregnant again soon after having a baby. You take it for granted that your husband...as a nursing mother you're supposed to be on contraceptives while raising the baby you have, you see?

So, despite the fact that you were raised being told your duty as a wife was to grow your husband's family, did you not feel like contraceptives stopped you from performing your duties?

Growing your husband's family is something that you have already done...using contraceptives does not mean that you do not want to grow the family, you are merely giving your body a chance to

rest. I was happy because I immediately saw the results of using contraceptives because I didn't get pregnant soon after having a baby. My last two children were nicely spaced out unlike the first two who seemed more like twins than siblings. I saw contraceptives as a good thing because they worked until you decided you were ready for more children. Although some people would decide not to use contraceptives because they wanted to have their children in quick succession, be done by a certain age and just raise the children they have.

So, the goal was not having as many children as you can?

No.

Just enough for the next generation?

Yes.

When did you move to Cape Town?

I started coming to Cape Town in 1976. I first came during the December holidays while I was off from work. I don't quite remember how often we came, I think it was every other year until...I was let go in 1983 from my job so I moved to Cape Town for about a year, where I worked as a maid.

What was the biggest difference between East London and Cape Town?

Firstly, Cape Town is a big city. It has lots of things that East London does not like factories and the huge shopping mall.

What are the jobs that you've had?

My job? In East London?

Starting in East London...from your first job until you retired.

My very first job where I was earning money was in 1962, I worked in a candle making factory. Then...I can't remember everything I did but I worked in the candle making factory then I worked at a place called Moburg. They made blankets, it was the biggest factory in East London that manufactured blankets. In East London it was Moburg and here in Cape Town it was Pep. Then from Moburg where did I go again? Oh, I went to work at Castellano around 1968...or was it 1967? Anyway, it was around that time when I worked at a place called Castellano, it was an Italian factory and they made curtain accessories...

So, you worked in a lot of factories?

Yes, I worked in factories. And then lastly, I worked in a factory that made TVs and radios. Car radios and normal radios. That's where I worked the longest, I was there for 13 years.

And this is all in East London?

Yes.

This side (Cape Town)?

I worked as a maid here in only two different places. In place I was there for a year and then the other for...it was 1992, I arrived in Cape Town and worked as a maid. During this time, I was also going to a... a sort of school where we were learning to be cashiers. We were taught how to use the machines and the tills. This was before there were codes and you could scan items, you would type in the price directly into the machine.

When you got to Cape Town where exactly did you go?

When I was first here for the holidays?

You can start from there.

In 1976 we arrived in Gugulethu.

And to stay?

That was 1992, I stayed in Makhaya which is in Khayelitsha.

Were there lots of people from East London in Gugulethu and Khayelitsha?

I didn't know everyone so I can't speak to how many people coming from the Eastern Cape were here. What I can say is that it was well known that most people who were here looking for jobs were coming from the Eastern Cape or as it was known back then the Transkaai. If you wanted a job back then you would come to Cape Town because there were lots of jobs this side. If you worked as a maid in Cape Town, you weren't on the same level as someone working as a maid in East London because you were paid better. I think it's still like that today.

(1:21:00.6) We're almost done, with apartheid...what did you know about it?

Honestly, I think we grew up dumb not even understanding what this whole apartheid thing was exactly. We didn't understand what it meant or what was happening. We were not aware.

Did you feel oppressed?

Later... I felt oppressed later but growing up we generally didn't feel like...we grew up thinking that you had to fear white people, that you couldn't talk to them and that they (white people) had the right to order us around. We grew up thinking that you couldn't stand up for yourself against a white person. They were our superiors in every way of life.

But did you feel oppressed? Or was this all normal?

We thought that was just how things were and it was only later that our eyes opened.

When did you realize that perhaps things weren't ok?

We saw that...like around the time...uh when we had to take pictures for the compases.

What year is that?

The year of compases? Uh...well before that we did have compases, they were being burnt in protest by Lilian Ngoyi and others but despite that we still had them. The government wanted a way to identify us so we...I would say it was around 1961 where I started thinking about compases and being oppressed. Like how we worked so hard and yet no one cared. No matter how hard you worked it was still never enough and you earned very little but you couldn't complain because you were scared. And you also had an inferiority complex. You felt small, it was like you were stupid and need white people to think for you. You know that's what white people thought of us, we were dumb idiots.

So, it was the early 60s when you realized that what you had thought of as normal was perhaps not normal?

Yes. And also remember that things were difficult because of the generation before mine. If you were annoyed by what a white person was saying and said no to them it would shock an older person because they were from a generation of 'ja baas'. If I called a white person by name, your elder would immediately shout at you for calling a white person by their name.

And that changed with your generation?

We tried, there was some change but it wasn't very strong. It was the beginnings of us standing up for ourselves.

(1:25:41.2) How would you say apartheid impacted your life?

My life and apartheid...uh would say apartheid made my life difficult because it was difficult finding a good job. It was difficult to survive. There is only one positive I think of...what is it called? This financial thing?

Social grant?

No. What do you call it? Back then things were cheap and it didn't matter that you earned little money. You always had enough.

Was it a financial problem?

No, what is it called...the economy things?

Regression? Repression? Regression? Like when prices went down? and the rand collapsed?

Yes, something like that. Back then, it didn't matter that you weren't earning a lot because...

Can you remember which years it was that prices were going down?

Yoh...I don't know.

Was it during the 70s do you think? Or 80s maybe?

When did I work at the TV factory? It was about 1975 and I remember we could manage. My salary was R18 a week: R8 paid for my bus fare for the week and everything else that was needed. The R10 I could save.

Wow.

Yes, you could save the R10 or maybe go buy yourself something nice in town.

R18 a week?

R18...R18.50 maybe but it was R18 for the week. And you would think wow R18, I have a job and I get paid R18. It was really nice. But then things changed...I don't quite remember when but prices started to increase. The better things got, the more expensive they became. And that pride you had in your job and R18 went away because before you earned your R18 and it was enough. Things changed because you would be earning triple that R18 and things were not easy.

So, apartheid made finding a job difficult but at the same time the economy made it so that process were down?

Yes, that's how it was.

Did you realize that the economy was in a slump or was it just that you realized that you could afford a lot for a little?

I didn't know anything about the economy, like I said we didn't know much. Our brains were closed. Its only now when I think about that time...because back then you just noticed that you suddenly couldn't afford something you previously could despite earning more money.

During democracy?

No, before. When did democracy arrive? Only in 1994.

So, what you're saying is that around 1975 you could live of R18, it was enough.

Yes. I could do everything. Taking the bus from Gompo to town, near the zoo was only 2 and half cents.

Oh wow...

2 and half cents...before we had cents we had tik. It was really easy to do what you needed to do with little money.

Ok. Is there anything else in regards to how apartheid impacted your life?

Uh...

Quick...was it the mid-70s that life was cheap?

Yes. It was also around the same time that our eyes started being opened. We were just starting to work.

Years?

Mine?

No, the years of when this was happening.

When it happened? Let's say...actual real work for me was working at the TV factory. The other places...I don't really remember how much I made at the candle factory but it was very little. Our money would be put in small brown envelopes, I really don't remember how much I earned...maybe R4 or something.

And when did you work at the TV factory?

From July 1975, my youngest was a year old.

And you were there for 13 years?

Yes.

Ok, last thing...is there any other way that you can think of that apartheid impacted your life?

Apartheid kept us in the dark for a long time. Even the things we did notice we couldn't do much about because of the conditions we were in. We were so locked up in our brains and so dumb.

At the time did you know that?

No at the time we didn't. That's what I'm saying, we weren't free minded. We thought that the lives we were living were normal. We only noticed it later from freedom fighters opening our eyes though even when they were talking we didn't quite understand. It seemed what they were talking about had nothing to do with us, it seemed so far away.

Oh ok. Thank you.

This was so long. I'm not doing this again.

Nokresmes

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

Bold italics: Interlocutor

Let's start with who are you, where are you from?

I am Nokresmes kaMtombeni. My home is eQhaba and I grew up eCala.

Which is where?

Eastern Cape. I grew up there. And then when I was 19 eCala, I moved to Klerksdorp.

For school?

I was in Klerksdorp later for my parents. The majority of my childhood was in the Eastern Cape.

When did you get this side (*Cape Town*)?

I got here 1996 with my young son...liphelo lam eliya (*pointing to her last-born son*).

Did you grow up with both parents?

I grew up without my mother, I only saw her when I was 13 years old because she...when she left Soweto where she was living...where my parents lived in my infancy and where my dad died. She came back to Cape Town with me as a baby. I stayed here until I was 3 years old before being sent to grown up in the Eastern Cape. She worked in Observatory.

Was it a common practice for people from the Eastern Cape to come find work in Cape Town?

Yes.

Were there no jobs in the Eastern Cape?

For my mom?

Where there no jobs in the Eastern Cape? Was it common practice for a person too...

Yes. At that time there were none and she was also raising us. She left her house, she left it to her younger sister. Her house in Soweto, Orlando West.

Growing up what were you told about your place as a girl in the home?

Growing up I knew as a girl that...coming back from school after you're done...we grew up at a time where you came back from school, changed from your uniform into regular clothes and then take a bucket to go collect water, firstly. You'd be collecting water. We grew up as people who were raised by other women like my mom's cousins...you had to crush maize preparing food to be cooked in the upcoming days. If you're old enough to...when you get home supper has been made or is about to be made. You crush maize and know that the next day you'll come home from school and start cooking.

Growing up was there a difference in how you were raised between you and your brothers?

There was a difference.

What was it?

The difference between me and my brothers...my brother...I grew up with my sister's son. My sister who was born in '57, her son was my brother. My brother herded cattle but we help each other a bit during the weekends. He'd clean the yard, and we'd do the washing. As children, growing up, we weren't allowed to go beyond the gate and leave the yard.

So, it wasn't like how it is today where children can...

No no. On Saturdays we knew it was the day to do the washing. My elder sister would be kneading dough. The next morning we'd be going to church. On Sunday after church we would do yard work.

As you grew into a young woman, starting your period and going through puberty, what was said to you?

I started my period at age 16 years. When I got my period I was shocked, realized something was different and I didn't know what was coming out of me.

So, you weren't told anything before? Or see an elder...

I was never told anything. We grew up at a time where it was said that girl children...that when we, the children, start our periods we don't drink milk (*amasi*). When you are on your period the only thing you'll be told is...'Sisi I think there's something' -growing up you don't know that there is such a thing as menstruation so you'll say 'Sisi, I just noticed that there's something in my panties' and the response 'Hurry up, put it on and cover up' and then she would wrap a towel around you and quickly take you to the bedroom. If it's a *rondavel* she'll take you to the bedroom one. And she'll say 'You see today? You are now grown up, you are a young woman and since you are a young woman...when this thing (*your period*) appears and will from now on a monthly basis you must make sure that boys don't know that you are going through something like this, that you have something coming out of you. If it's exposed...there wasn't any...well I don't know if it's because I grew up without my mother...we said 'sisi' to the person who raised us. We grew up being taught to use cloths. So, you had line your underwear with clothe. You couldn't enter the kraal. Even to get cow dung for the house. You can't eat *amasi* until you're finished with your period. You're not just going to see that you're done and start drinking *amasi*, you'll have to go wash your body at the river and then you can drink milk the next day.

Why is all of this being done?

It's a pathway to adulthood because you are no longer a girl but you are becoming an adult. It's the way of our people

(0:05:51.3) - So now that you're becoming a woman does your role in the home change? Is there a change in what is expected of you? Or what?

It changes in that...so when you're growing up...this is how Thobela (brother) and I grew up, if we were going to wash there was no body shame or embarrassment but when I got to the age where I was starting my period uSisi said 'When you're going to wash now you must go...' -we had a house *eliqhanda* (*egg shaped*), you had to wash in the bedroom. She would say, 'You have to respect your body now. Boys will now start talking to you and say they love you. You must know that the day you sleep with a boy you will get pregnant and your girlhood will be finished.'

So, did you know what getting pregnant meant or sleeping with a boy?

Hmm?

When she said 'sleeping with a boy', did you know what she meant?

Sleeping with a boy? She would told me saying 'A boy would say I love you, say yes to me and once you said yes to them, he would call you saying "I want to see you Nokresmes" and then you would go to him and he would tell you that...well he would grab you and once he was holding you he would do weird things and want you to sleep with him. You must not allow that.'

So, she never gave you details, she just explained it like how you just did?

Yes.

Did you know what she was talking about or were you at an age where you couldn't quite understand? Where you ever confused? or did you just understand what she meant?

He'll say let's have sex.

Oh ok.

You would say 'I don't know anything about that' and he would say 'I'll show you'. He telling you now when he's saying he'll show you. Be very careful, the day he says he'll show you is the day you get pregnant. You'll bring a baby home...and you are not allowed to have a child while you are still a girl.

Why not? What is the impact of having a child while you are a girl child?

It's not allowed.

Why?

(0:07:56.6) - Because your parents are looking to the future...your hand would be asked...in my time which was the era of white weddings your hand would still be asked, once that's happened you would be taken. At home we are from the Mfengu clan, you would know you are about to be taken. You would go to your new home and be told you are a wife. That night should be the night that you are finally with a man.

Did you grow up knowing that as a girl this is what you had to look forward to? The day your hand in marriage would be asked? And being a wife?

It was not in my mind, you don't think you'll be made to go to another house. You don't wish for it, because everything changes. You have to change how you carry yourself. You're told that you must act a certain way. And you see others, they're not like they were before. You can't just go anywhere you please now or wear a short dress. If you're honest with yourself you don't wish to be this new person.

You still want in the house you grew up in?

You want to be home. You'll never want to go to another house.

So, what is the difference if you have a child outside of marriage or having a child while married?

You have broken the law if you had a child while still a girl.

What law?

It was a disgrace.

It's an ugly situation?

Very much. It was very wrong having a child while you are still a girl.

How are you treated by your parents? Or others in the community?

You had brought great shame to your family. You are a disgrace...you were told when you started your periods and now you've brought shame. You did something you were not supposed to do. Growing up I was told constantly reminded that no one had ever had a child while still a girl, and that I must follow suit as the last born so that when my older sisters were not blamed for anything when my mother came back from Cape Town.

Did you then wait for your wedding? What were you told about marriage? And having children?

Having children in marriage is allowed. That is how it must be done. You are loved and seen to have done a good thing.

Is that a wife's job, having children?

Yes.

what is the purpose of children in marriage?

Children grow and expand the family you have married into.

When did you learn about contraceptives?

I went to my marital home with no children. I was married for a while, not getting pregnant, for about seven years. I then went back home. I stayed at home and I eventually had my firstborn son in 1981. It was a long wait for him. I was introduced to contraceptives in Klerksdorp when I had my child. I refused because I didn't know anything about contraceptives, I'd never been taught. I was told that it was done so that I could produce enough milk to nurse my child, that is what I was told.

About contraceptives?

Yes, that's how they phrased it.

The nurses said this?

The nurses told me. So, I told others that I had used contraceptives because they helped with milk production and I could guarantee that my baby would have enough milk. That's how they told me.

Who initially said say no to contraceptives?

For? Well...I had never used it! And I didn't even know what to do, what was this contraceptive thing anyway? I wanted to really understand and know if using contraceptives was the correct decision.

Did you ask your older sister? Or were you too nervous?

My sister was in the Eastern Cape, eCala, at her marital home. As was the other one, I have two sisters. I had my child in Klerksdorp where my grandfather's younger brother lived.

Talking about the importance of a child and you having children, why did you go back home?

Me? I saw that other people having children and I wasn't chased away. I decided myself to leave and not stay in my marital home. Back home I arrived and people that got married around the same time as I did had children. I saw it as disgraceful that I didn't have a child. I didn't do anything wrong and was quite comfortable and yet...

Why did you feel shame about not having a child?

I saw other wives around me with children. I remembered what I was told, that I was allowed to have children.

So, did you feel like you were bringing shame to your marital home?

Yes, other people were having children and I wasn't.

Did your husband know that you were using contraceptives?

I started using contraceptives after the end of my marriage, I had a child after my marriage ended.

Oh ok. What did you use?

The injection.

Was the pill around? Did you choose what you wanted?

I didn't choose. We were just injected by Sister Marlene. She was a nurse from Dutywa who worked in Klerksdorp.

This is in 1981?

Yes, just after I had my child.

You weren't given an option?

No. She (*Sister Marlene*) started with family members...and since we were all from the Eastern Cape and she was Tswana she would tell us she'll give us the injection by force since we didn't want it and that we were limiting our milk supply. She'd say we were acting out and didn't want to breastfeed. She treated us like children and didn't want us to question exactly what was going on.

Knowing what you know about contraceptives now, that they're there to prevent you from having children? Do you feel like you were tricked or forced into using contraceptives?

I thought that they (*nurses*) were telling the truth because I wanted to breastfeed properly and make sure that my milk came in.

But then what did you think was used to make sure your milk came in before contraceptives?

I have never thought about that, I don't know how women who had babies before did it. What I do know is that it was told 'You as a woman had to take care of yourself'.

What does motherhood mean to you?

Being a mother...having children has brought me joy. Growing up, especially when I returned home, I saw that my peers had children. I found joy when I had my own children and having the title of so and so mother. And raising my kids.

Having children after your marriage ended, was it like having children before marriage?

Having children before marriage is a huge disgrace. Having children after my marriage was not disgraceful, I was grown up.

Is it an age thing? What if you're unmarried in your 30s and 40s? Is it still a disgrace then to have children outside of wedlock?

It's different when you're younger. Another thing, growing up and hearing my older sisters talking, my older siblings ranged from 1939 to me in 1953, they would say 'with a girl child, according to our elders because we didn't know, esiXhoseni kuthiwa ududelwe nguJambase. Long along once you were over 18 years...there was a lack of knowledge kudala, do you see? Maybe there would be a few strong women who would teach their children, do you see? They'd teach their kids. What was important long ago was that girls were the flowers of the home. What does being the flower of the home mean? Always being seen at home cleaning, working and not...even if you made a mistake and went to the shop for example, you're were girl and you would most likely be stopped (*by potential suitors*) or get home later than you should when you're being shouted at they'll (*parents*) say "You've forgotten that you're the flower of the home!" you see? Your hand being asked in marriage was very important, I remember my sister who got married in 1965 following in the footsteps of our other older sisters in a white dress. So, when we were shouted at it would be "You'll leave through the windows NoChrimmes, why don't you listen?". When it comes to marriage, firstly you didn't get married because you loved this person, your hand was asked. We grew up at a time where according to culture (*esitwini*), as Hlubi people we were judgmental towards the children of the uneducated (*amaqaba*). To be *iqaba* was to wear blankets and loin cloth, we saw such a person as being uneducated. I remember there was a local girl, SisNtombentle, we didn't know that her hand been asked for. They talked to her grandfather and then when we were just sitting around as children, her grandfather came in and said (0:19:06.3) "My girl, go put on your traditional wear, you are leaving for Cofivamba", she questioned when? Where? How? And he said "You are getting married; the cows have come." She cried but to what end, it was done. It was a beautiful thing. Talking about so and so daughter has been *lobola'd*.

It didn't matter if the daughter wanted to get married or not?

No! That didn't matter...I remember your name would be called out in church and there would be announcement that you are getting married. Your hand would be asked and you would be crying while going through with the marriage. That's how things were done at first although has have been some changes.

So, did girls have a voice about what they wanted?

That's the last thing.

So, you're raised to get married?

When I was married, my sisters sat me down and said "Listen, we don't have a father and our mother is old. You are the last-born ad I am telling you that you will be getting married. No, you don't know this man but I didn't know my husband either, he was older too, and here I am married with children" And that was that.

So, what you want...

(0:21:15.9) You see I can't speak lies, I was advised by my sisters about life and what would be disgraceful. I was scared because this was my older sisters telling me.

So, what you want?

No, there's nothing.

Was your worth as a girl in a potential marriage?

Yes.

Bringing cows?

Yes.

What other roles did you have?

You were a flower that was planted for marriage. You had to be careful and not ruin yourself by having a child while unmarried.

If you break the rules you were you looked at differently? Like have a child

Yes, you are judged. You are no longer a girl. In those days, if someone had a child outside of marriage she couldn't interact with other girls. For example, on the way back from church you couldn't walk with them. You'd be asked what conversation do you have with someone that is ruined, what are they telling you? What are you hearing? Similar to when your friend would get married, I grew up at a time when you'd all go together to the river but now you couldn't go with them anymore. When they were married that was the end of your friendship, you're separated. What are you going to talk to a girl about when you are a wife?

So even though you were friends before one of you got married or had a child...

Your friends are still girls, you are not.

Did girls who had children before marriage only talk about boyfriends?

There's no more conversation. As a girl you had no place listening to girls who had ruined themselves by having children outside of marriage.

How are you going to be ruined?

You'll be a poison to the other girls. You'll give them ideas and plans to sneak out. That's how it was. I remember a local slightly older ran away with her boyfriend, when it happened I was immediately questioned along with other friends because we were around the same age. I didn't even know her well, I'd only played soccer with her and we sang in the school choir but I was still interrogated about whether I knew anything about how she had ended up in her current situation. I was repeatedly asked if I knew if she was dating, who her boyfriend was? I didn't know anything but it was like I was lying be saying I didn't know. I was told I would be watched and followed because they (adults) thought I knew something. As young girls we'd gossiped about who she was possibly dating but we didn't know anything for sure and now we were being forced to confess to things we honestly didn't know about. It would get bad, we would get hidings while being interrogated about this girl's whereabouts. She was from a Xhosa (*amaqaba*) family. It was a painful situation.

Is there a connection between girlhood, marriage and becoming a mother? As a married woman you no longer have the same interests as girls?

You'll poison the unmarried girls.

You aren't seen an individual person but a wife?

You'll be told by others in your situation how to act now, no more hanging around with friends. Other wives are who you talk to now.

Once married, why are you given a marital name? Or referred to as so and so mother?

There's must a difference now. You're no longer NoChrismes from your family. You are now a married woman and your name must reflect that. I was Nokulunga, my sister Nohlathi. You'll get called your birth name when you visit home maybe but you're not that person anymore.

So, this new name shows that you are now a woman?

Yes, you are a woman now.

You're no longer who you were?

You're old now.

You had your children in the Eastern Cape?

I had them in Klerksdorp then I went back to the Eastern Cape.

Being in the Klerksdorp and Joburg area what was the biggest difference you noticed from the rural Eastern Cape?

In what regard?

The way of life? How was it different? How closely did people follow traditions?

With the youth?

Were there differences in raising kids in the Eastern Cape versus in more urban places like Klerksdorp?

Raising a child in the Eastern Cape makes little difference to me. I was raised there for the first 18 years of my life then moved to Klerksdorp. How kids are raised depends on the family and how...firstly, you can't a mother that is out in the streets or for 7 o'clock to hit and your house is still dark because you're wondering the streets. My child, girl or boy, must know from an early age -not like you, at your age you should already know the rules- what is the correct time to be at home. Yes, children go off course but I didn't see a difference. There is a popular belief that children raised in the township misbehave more but I didn't see that difference. There were children coming from the rural areas who could out misbehave children from Cape Town, I honestly don't think there is a difference. It is up to you as a mother and God to raise your kids right and have them listen. Children from rural areas might be slightly naive or children from Cape Town might not know how to crush samp. I remember my older sisters couldn't because they were raised in Gauteng but they learned when they came to eCala. I honestly don't see a difference, especially in today's age. In fact, I think township kids are more respectful than rural area kids, I don't see a difference.

So, you learnt about contraceptives from the clinic?

Hospital.

You didn't feel forced? You could say no thank you.

When I started saying no, I was immediately told that I might bleed out and I was especially on board when they told me about the milk production.

You'd said no already...

I was saying it but then I was told I wouldn't be able to feed my child, there would be no milk.

Oh ok, how was it raising kids under apartheid?

I didn't feel anything really. We were in Klerksdorp for a while. I didn't feel a difference really.

How about with you? Are there any differences that you note?

What I remember from that time, before democracy, was that white people were respected. If you saw a white person, it was seeing someone very important and it made you feel tense. You'd hold your breath, you weren't seeing an ordinary person but a person that deserved respect. We were not equal.

Did you raise kids with this type of thinking?

No, my children grew up in a democratic country

They don't have...

They don't have must knowledge or experience

You said women couldn't talk to girls, what conversations did you have as women and mothers? What was it that you couldn't talk to girls about?

We were not told what not to talk about but rather that there is nothing to talk about between married women and young girls.

What was being hidden?

What is being hidden...as a married woman (*ubumama*) you've outgrown things like talking about your boyfriends or asking to go out. That's what we talked about, now there's nothing to talk to girls with. You weren't explicitly told not to but you'd figure it out yourself that your prior interests no longer have a place in your life.

Is there pride associated with being married?

Yes sweetheart, there is a lot of pride attached with no longer being a girl.

How many kids do you have?

3

(0:33:35.8) Back in the day there were bigger families with over 10 kids, did you ever think that's how many you should have?

No no, my one sister had 10 boys and 3 girls. The second one 6 girls and 5 boys. She was Mrs Mayini. And the other one was Mrs Mdunyane. Yhu!

Was it common?

It was people who had kids out there... my sister only had one child in the hospital in September 1979. Yhu! Yhu!

Where did people give birth otherwise?

At home.

Who would be in charge? Any nurses?

There are no nurses. As I sort of matured I remember hearing 'Go call your aunt or Sis Nondoda'. You'll be called again...a bride or wives' room was called '**entageni**' in the rondavel. You'd be called there and sent to announce to family members or neighbours once the baby was born.

So, there were no doctors or anything?

The doctors were the women who were there to help you give birth.

Was it not scary?

I wouldn't know. I didn't go through that.

What changed between the time you gave birth and when your sisters did? When were they having babies at home?

It was about 1954, my sister gave birth at home. My other sister around 1961, 1963 was having a child at home.

When did clinics become popular?

No one cared for the clinics?

It was a new thing?

It was my age group that started go to clinics and having babies there. Older people had their own beliefs which I can't quite understand.

So why...

Usisi had a child in the clinic with her 1979 one. She had an easy time giving birth, I remember when she had her child at home in 1965.

How did the whole thing, not giving birth at the hospital, work?

Back then there wasn't much, none of this maternity stuff. Women would be going about their business and when the time came just went to a corner and gave birth. There was one lady from the village who had just come back from gathering firewood up the mountain, she put down her basket which she had been carrying on her head, knelt down on the side of the house and just gave birth, her baby came out with two teeth and was named Remember. I saw him recently when I was back home, he's an old man now. But we used to call him an old man even when we were younger because he was born with teeth. There was no doctor when he was born. An aunt of mine gave birth to my cousin, named him Phuzamandla (source of strength), in the forest while carrying garden tools after she'd just finished turning the land in the rain. And the baby just came out. He's alive and has a very beautiful home.

Was there any care for pregnant women?

(0:37:38.9) I don't think so. You would be carrying buckets like normal. Take my aunt for example, giving birth in the forest. Putting down everything when she got near the house and gave birth to a child. And that child lived...is still alive though the parents are no longer with us. He lives at home. The generation before me...there's something called '*umcamo wefene*', you wouldn't know it you're a child. It was available at the chemist, it was a rock like black substance and everyday you'd make a tea with it. It was like drinking black water. There was none of this taking someone to the clinic for check-ups, you would do it yourself with help. And there was no danger, I never heard of a child dying from a homebirth.

What knowledge was passed from generation to generation?

I don't know actually.

When and how do you think the change in how things were done previously occurred?

I'm not sure, something was lost during my generation. We started going to clinics and just stopped doing things the old way. I don't know how or when things changed.

Do you wish to have that 'old knowledge'?

Oh no, it's a lot.

Did you ever feel judged for only having 3 kids at a time when big families were still a form of wealth?

No, no... never.

Why do you think people originally had big families?

I don't know...I don't want to lie, I don't know. When I asked my sister while in Joburg about having her 13th child and why she was still having kids she said to me...my sister loved God and she said "This is God's flock, all my children -those I have and those yet to be born- are gifts from God, if he didn't want me to have them he would take them but he hasn't." That's what she said.

(0:40:18.3) So

It was their pride...your purpose as a wife was to expand.

It's a wife's job to have children?

Yes.

In getting married, what was the purpose of lobola?

It was a source of dignity and it showed that you were married. You were chosen and you are a wife now.

Was there an element of feeling like you were sold?

No. It is a covenant that has always been there. It has been explained as the unification of two families through lobola. When older people talked about culture and tradition they mentioned that lobola was also a way to introduce the ancestors of the two families to each other. The whole tradition of a sheep being slaughtered, being cooked and being given to the bride...it was a common practice where the meat was cut for the bride by I don't know who exactly but it would be given to the bride and she would be told that she has now undergone a change, she is now a wife in her new family and no longer a girl. That is called uTshiki. And after that comes lobola and where it is the meeting and uniting of the two families. And you now no longer belong to kwa-Masiya because you have married into the Qwathi family, you are a wife and mother of the Qwathi clan. And everyone will know you as such. I'm telling you how things were practiced.

Why did you stop at 3 kids?

No no, they're fine.

But why?

I didn't want lots of kids.

Considering that people at the time were having many kids what...

I quickly realized that I wouldn't have the strength to feed and care for all a lot of kids because I was no longer married. I knew that I was going to suffer and that my kids wouldn't be raised like how other kids were raised. Look, we were poor even when I was working. Do you see?

(0:42:52.1)- Was it you and your contemporaries that stopped have 10s of kids?

It depended on the person

Do you think it was a financial burden? The change in living styles from rural areas to more urban areas where money was necessary as opposed to living off the land?

Yes. Yes. You must remember that in my time planting and gardening was not the important thing even in the rural areas. We would have small vegetable gardens.

Did you raise your kids in a city and not the rural areas?

Yes, I raised my kids. I didn't send them home to the rural areas. Each person's situation depends on them and how much you think you can handle. You think about how you're uneducated and you want your child to be able to go to school. And school...

Was school important?

School is very important and opens many doors in life for success.

Did you grow up being told that? Or did you discover this yourself?

I saw it growing up. Those who had the strength and means to study like my cousins -my uncle's kids- are educated. Some are teachers, one was a clerk. And there's one who didn't make and I saw that the future was brighter for my uncle's family because they're educated. When you're married, you work for that family not for your own home. We, who've come back from marriage, work for our homes. We know to do things that our mother needs like getting curtains or cupboards and such. When you're married all your efforts go towards your marital home.

So, despite what you're saying you still don't feel like girls are sold?

No no, you are not sold. Yindlela yakwantu (this is tradition)

Meaning?

How do I explain this to you?

Interlocutor: The nature of how things were done

Yindalo (it's creation) {use of this word and unyielding truth of it, no questioning or rebelling against tradition or feelings of oppression}

Interlocutor: The nature of Africans

It's not just Africans, white people also get married

Interlocutor: Yes, of course white people get married and then...

They don't get married like us.

Interlocutor: White people tend to look after their husband and kids (nuclear family) instead of working for their entire (extended) family...that's the big difference I notice. And there are some married women and men who can still help support their families (parents). Some people get married while their families have nothing.

You're very right, especially now. Then sometimes you get married to a man...for example if you marry up, like my son Siyamkhele works in parliament and if he married someone like a nurse whose own mother didn't even have a nurse, they would...particularly the marriage is good work together to help provide to her mother.

Interlocutor: That's exactly how it is of course.

At first it wasn't like that.

Interlocutor: Long ago it was a form of oppression

Yes, oppression.

Oppression from who?

From my perspective it was...

Interlocutor: From both families. From both families. You own family when they're taking you say that your home is no longer your home. There's nothing connecting you with your home.

And number 2, your married family treats and looks at you as though they paid for you because of lobola

Interlocutor: That's their way. It's their attitude. They'll say things like "You were lobola'd, you are a wife here". You'll be reminded that you were lobola'd. Where the oppression shows itself is when there are family meetings and you are told that you are only there because of lobola (uze ngenkomo) and whatever is being discussed is none of your business. And you won't be part of any family meetings or decisions, that right belongs to those born into the family.

Despite this they (*marital family*) want you to respect the family and help expand it. They want your children (*umzi wakho*).

interlocutor: Yes, because in that sense you belong to them.

And further oppression is that a girl child from your marital family can sit around all day and not make her bed.

Interlocutor: Because you are there to clean up, you are the wife. Make the bed and do whatever else needs to be done. What is your own mentality in this? It's like they think your life revolves around them. Your money contributes to your marital family's expenses. Black people have used this form of oppression for a long time, even today.

I saw this first hand at home and I decided to help my youngest brother's wife. I like going to the river, at home we are very close to the river and mountains. I grew loving to go to the river to do the washing. I would use a wheel barrow, going back and forth between washing at the river and hanging them to dry in the yard at home. It was my washing but the whole families washing, because I saw her (sister-in-law) as my sister. I didn't...we used to have bonfires and I remember she would wake up to clear the yard and start the fire. She would sort through clothes...we as sisters would talk about it but that's just how she was. It's true that there's oppression in the sense that you'll have to cook, the bathtub will be full waiting for you.

(0:49:23.9) Interlocutor: You'd wake up early in the morning while everyone else is asleep. They're all sleep and you'd have to be up and working.

It was really quite oppressive.

Interlocutor: It's hot outside and you would be stuck in the kitchen wearing your blankets (marital garb) while everyone is outside cooling down. That while process was like slavery.

Yes.

Interlocutor: Just plain slavery. But I use think about where this slavery came from?

Lobola

Interlocutor: What happened that women were treated like this? That women were oppressed from one generation to another? What authority said that's how things must be done? Did people just do what they had seen being done in other homes? Does that make it?

Did men have similar experiences?

He's not going to another family. He's home. He's just bringing you.

Did you ever think that it wasn't fair that you would have to leave home while your brothers would get to stay with your parents?

This is how things happened back then, your oldest brother **-inkhulu-** would be the one that got to stay home. Though that's not common today, adult children go buy or build their own houses. At home there was a thing that as daughters we must have some place to come back too (**amakowuzana mababenendawo yobuyela**) even if it's not the biggest rondavel. You see, for us who had come back from marriage. You see, I went back home and built additions there but I have no power there, there is nothing I could do. For example, if I'm having an event or party or traditional ceremony I must ask permission. I have to say "May I please", even though I'm paying for everything I have no power. When I arrive home, I put down my suitcase and I have to go greet my brother and bring whatever gifts I have, groceries or alcohol. And then I explain and ask for whatever I would like, it is very important to ask for permission and then he'll respond to my plea. I have no right... you see as a person that has come back from marriage I have no right to be in charge of home. I have the right to build on the property for my children but the main house is the family house. When I'm there I look to my sister-in-law for direction. I don't question how or why things are done because I wouldn't like it if it was being done to me. I make sure not to takeover.

Is that type of thinking common?

We're all different. You need to consider everyone's feelings even if they're the young new wife. You don't want to be mean to them, when you're getting married you're told that you are now a child of this family even though that's not true so you need to consider that in how you treat the new wife.

Do you think your perspective is modern?

No. no. I just knew how to act. I experienced at home. My mother was very strong and she would say that everyone belonged whether you were born into the family or married into the family. No one was going to wake up early while others slept. Everyone belongs here including the wives. That's why I was saying each family is different.

Was your mother's perspective common at the time?

Listen, each family is different.

Are there any families that you knew of who did things differently?

No, not really. You'd here gossip and there that so and so isn't treat their daughter-in-law nicely. You'd always hear gossip like that.

In casual talk or gossip how was it brought up?

I'm just agreeing and testifying to the truth of using the word slave in relation to how some women were treated. Where you would see that this poor child is in a sad situation where they'd have a bucket on their head with a baby on their back while the daughters of the family do nothing.

When you saw such would you feel sorry for the woman or was it seen as her doing her duties?

No no. It was never a nice thing to see. On Sundays normally as a wife you have to leave church early to prepare tea and an afternoon snack for the elders and then sometimes have the unfair task of having to wash these dishes while starting dinner but in some houses, you wouldn't be expected to wash the dishes after you made the tea or even make dinner. As I said each family is different and manners vary across different households.

What do you think when you here the word Apartheid?

It was oppression back then.

Like what...

It was painful! They (**white people**) said it was about respect...one sided from us to them. Another thing I want to mention, my parents' generation saw the bad treatment of women as natural (**indalo**) and it was...

Interlocutor: The abuse seemed natural when it came to how women were treated. We had to be submissive and careful with everything.

How were you supposed to feel like you belonged when you weren't treated nicely?

Interlocutor: We had to be submissive about the smallest of things. Even things that didn't matter.

Just leaving the house to go to church you had to wear the entire traditional (makoti) outfit to show respect.

Interlocutor: Since you never had children with your husband did he have any outside children?

My ex-husband? He has kids.

Interlocutor: Did he start having kids while you two were married?

No, no... he never did.

interlocutor: So, he didn't blame you for not having kids? Because in our culture (Xhosa) when you don't have children you are given a name. You are called 'inyumbha'. When you are called 'inyumbha' it means you can't have kids, 'ulidlolo'

Yes, you are '**idlolo**' and there are some families who even go as far as saying "we must take out the cow in the house (**mayikutshwe lankaba isedlini**)".

Interlocutor: This all goes back to the fact that women have always been oppressed from the beginning...from Mary Magdalene's time where she was caught with a married man and he denied his sin. And Jesus said that let him who is without sin cast the first stone. So, oppression is not a modern thing, our families have in fact contributed to it and don't recognize their part in oppressing us. Girls are told to cook because their girls. You're being trained to get married, you're not encouraged to focus on school. Education is light and you aren't given that option.

The importance of education is new?

Back then, educating your daughter would only benefit another family. You'd hear people question parents, asking why they were educating someone who was going to be leaving and belonging to another family.

Interlocutor: As a girl your job is to bring cows. Though, that's not even a guarantee. When you grow up you can silently rebel by not doing what is expected even if people think you're stupid, you know what you're doing and you make sure that they don't even get R20 because of you. These are

the times we grew up in though each family was different. A person can grow up under difficult circumstances and yet still be educated. Or grow up being a respectful person even if they were sworn at their whole life.

It's really all about God's grace

Interlocutor: It's not what time periods or parents it's God's grace. It's not your wisdom but his. Long ago parents used to hit their kids, that's rare now. Where you compare generations, you see how much has changed. Mu kids used to get hit on the hand. There were children hitting their own parents because they refused to be disciplined. Others ran away because they grew up in strict households where they felt like slaves. To me there was a lot of anger which was mis-directed during that time and females have always been the victims to the men in their lives. Females were cleaning slaves and baby making machines, waking up at 4am to clean and ending up falling asleep while standing and dusting cupboards.

Ok, thank you very much for your time.

Vuyiswa

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Interlocuter

Who are you? Where are you from?

I am Vuyiswa. I was born in Queenstown. My mother then left and got married in Lady Frere where she still stays.

So, you didn't grow up with both your mom and dad.

I spent my first few years with my mother then I was taken to my grandmother. Oh, she was a very tough woman (urhasatsha: can't wait for anything, takes on whatever) uRadebe. She was strict, I would have to wake in the early hours of the morning while it was still dark. In the mornings before school, I would have to wake up and start boiling water for tea and get everything on the table for her. She'd wake up and start getting ready for work while I cleaned. This is all before I leave for school, I would do the dishes at night. And then I would leave for school taking the key. when I came back from school, I would have to make dinner and clean again. Do the washing and put it on the line.

Was being raised by your grandmother normal?

It was very common to stay with your grandmother.

Why?

Let me explain it this way...my grandmother didn't have a child (to do chores) so my mother said I must stay with her and do what has to be done. My grandmother was a working woman so when she came home at 5pm everything had to be clean. Even her bedding had to be fresh.

So, a child was there to help with cleaning?

I did everything. it was just me, I cleaned a lot. I did everything.

So, it was your job to do all that?

And then afterwards I would start my homework, she would come home to me doing my homework.

Where did you go to school?

At my grandmothers in Queenstown.

Did you finish school there?

Yes, I finished school there...well I never finished because it was decided that I should drop out. I stopped in standard 5.

Why?

It was primary.

Yes, but why did you drop out?

My grandmother who I was staying with passed away.

Was there no other way?

I never went higher in school.

Was it common for someone not to finish school?

No, it was not common. Well, there were others who just never went back to school.

In Queenstown were you in the rural areas or a township?

Township but where my parents stayed was in the rural areas.

Where you an only child?

No, it wasn't just me.

Can you tell me about your siblings?

It was me, uSonwabo, uThozamile, uVuyokazi and then uNceba. There are 5 of us.

So, they grew up with you parents?

Yes, my mom raised them.

So, it was you alone...

I was the only one raised by my grandmother.

Growing up as a girl what were you told?

During that time being a girl child, you were told that after school you had to go home, clean and cook. Do the washing and whatever else needed to be done. You wouldn't have a chance to play and meet boys. You just didn't have that chance.

Were there differences in how you were raised as a girl child compared to your brothers?

It's different with girls. It was stricter to ensure that you wouldn't meet up with boys.

Why couldn't you mix with you boys?

They(adults) didn't like it because you would end up playing until night time. They'll think you playing but you've run off with a boy instead.

What was the reason you were told to stay away from boys?

Boys will take you and rape you elsewhere so my parents thought it was best for me to be at home. By 5 I had to be home.

So, you're avoiding boys in all of this.

Yes. It was only girls.

Growing up, what were you told when you reached puberty?

I was told you are now going to start your periods and if you ever meet with a boy you'll end up pregnant and have a child.

Did you understand what this all meant?

I didn't anything, I was told. You then sit, you come back at 5pm and start cooking.

What would you say the place of a girl in the home was?

At home a girl cooked, cleaned and did everything. Including washing.

What do you think about the saying 'a girl is the flower of the home', is that something you heard?

Yes. You are a flower that must stay at home and not go out at night. You can't just go anywhere.

Are you going to get ruined at night?

Yes.

(0:06:54.4) How do you get ruined?

When you leave home and meet up with boys, boys will take you and make you sleep with them then you might end up pregnant.

So now you're ruined?

Yes. You are ruined.

What did it mean if you had a child and weren't married?

If you just had a child? It was very strict. If you had a child you never got to go anywhere again. You'd sit at home, whether your parents were there or not.

How were you treated? Was it really bad?

Not really, it was just really strict now and you would be watched.

What does being ruined mean?

Oh...you're asking a lot.

What does it mean exactly?

When you've slept with a boy and had a child, you are no longer a girl.

Was that important? To be a girl?

In my time it was very important.

What was the correct way to do things?

What would happen is that you would be disciplined and stay at home. If you were sent on an errand you'd have to make sure you came back as fast as possible. I had to be a person that was always at home. If you wanted to see your friends it was best that they came to your house and you all stayed in the yard.

Always being accounted for?

Yes. And on Sundays you could go to church and then...I would wake up early, cook everything and leave it on the stove.

Oh ok. What happened when you go to marital age?

When you're at that age, a young man (isoka) would go to your parents. They would tell him how many cows they want and his family would have to bring them. You'd then be told that the person who was here wants you to be his wife so you must carry yourself in a respectful manner now.

Do you know this man?

The man?

Yes.

Well sometimes you'd meet him on the side of road and he'd speak to you.

Did you get married?

Yes, but I got married later. After I'd already had kids.

Oh ok, what was it like having kids before marriage? Was that common?

It was common, there were other girls who had children before marriage.

It wasn't a disgrace?

It was a huge disgrace during that time.

Where you scared when you had to go tell your children?

Yes.

What did you say?

They are the ones who actually took me to the doctor and they did everything else.

So, you didn't know? Your mom told you?

Yes.

So, what happened from then?

You are asking a lot of questions. I need to remember everything? No, I just sat around. There's wasn't a problem.

Your parents never said anything...

No, no.

How did they know that you were pregnant?

They saw...a mom always asks about when last did you have your periods and then you tell her. If you don't have your periods well then you know you're pregnant.

Your mom asked you?

Yes. She counted the months from my last period and found out I was pregnant.

So, you didn't know?

No, I didn't know

(0:12:15.0) Why didn't you?

In my time we didn't know. We see it now with the younger generation.

Like how things work?

Yes.

Where did you have your child? Hospital? Clinic?

Hospital.

In Queenstown? So, you had hospitals back then?

We had a hospital.

And a clinic?

And a clinic.

What year did you have your first child?

Oh, who knows what year.

Interlocuter: What year did you have your first born?

My first child? Yoh, I don't even know how old they are now. He's a boy, he's a police officer. He doesn't stay with me because once they meet women, they just drop everything and leave. Since he started working he's never given me any money for anything, like a new bed maybe. He's just living his life away from me and there's nothing I can do.

So, you know sure which year you had him?

Oh, my child I no longer know. I honestly don't know.

What about your second child?

The second one? It's a girl, she was born 19 something. You are asking me so many questions. I no longer know, she's 19 something.

Interlocuter: Can you perhaps guess what ages your kids are?

Which one?

Interlocuter: Which ever one

With both I just...I didn't stay with them...

Interlocuter: Try remember when you gave birth to them. Approximately how old are they today?

I don't know

Interlocuter: Ok, how about...how old are you? What age were you when you started having kids?

Me? I was born 1942.

Interlocuter: You were born in 1942?

Yes.

Interlocuter: So, you're 75...wait no you're 76 now.

Yes 70 something wait uhm... haibo, I thought I was...this past July...I thought...

Interlocuter: When is your birthday? July

Yes, this past July. 7th of July. I remember because I didn't have any money for church contributions. So, I remember making a note to pay the church when I get my monthly pension.

Interlocuter: *Zola, she's Tannies age. 7 July 1942. She's 75. This is her 76th year.*

I thought I was 78 and turned 79 in July.

Interlocuter: *No, if you were born in 1942 you have reached that yet*

So how old are you saying I am?

Interlocuter: *You are 76.*

So, you don't remember when you had your kids? Maybe in your 20s?

I don't remember. I don't even know their ages anymore.

Interlocuter: *If she knew her kids ages we could calculate when she had them.*

I've forgotten my oldest age.

Interlocuter: *has he reached 50 maybe?*

No, no...he's older than 50.

Interlocuter: *Older than 50? I guess that makes sense. I mean look at my son, he's already 50. I'm 73 and my son was born in 1965 so if her son is more than 50 she had him at maybe 25 or 26. She was still a young woman.*

I was very young.

Interlocuter: *Yeah, you were probably 25 or 26 when you had your first child.*

Yes. But I can't even remember my second born.

Interlocuter: *Do you guess that age difference between your kids?*

No, no. Please forgive me but I don't know.

No problem. So, did you have all your kids while unmarried?

I was married when I had the second one.

So, the first one was out of wedlock?

I wasn't married with my first born.

Where did you meet your husband?

He would see me when I was on my way to town going home. I'd be going home and he would accompany me then turn back just before we reached my house. And he would go back home.

Why did he turn back before you were in front of your house?

He was scared of my parents.

Why?

He wasn't finished paying lobola.

And because of that he couldn't come inside?

When my father and mother weren't there and i had maybe just come back from school he would come over because my uncle's house was a bit far.

(0:19:01.0) Could you talk to your parents about him?

Yes, we talked to my parents.

What did you talk about?

They talked alone; I wasn't there.

About lobola?

Yes.

What was the purpose of lobola?

Lobola is...this is a lot. I no longer know.

What is the lobola for? What is its place in Xhosa traditions?

He pays lobola because he wants to get married, the husband does.

Can you get married without lobola?

No.

What is the point of lobola?

Lobola is for the parents to allow the marriage to happen. And the lobola money is often used to pay for the wedding.

Once you're married...

You then go to your new home.

What was your job as a wife?

You cook for your father-in-law, mother-in-law and the children, including the grandchildren.

Is growing that family part of your job?

The father is in charge and then as the new brides you listen to him.

And having children? Was that part of your job?

You all work together to help the family grow.

Did you have to have children?

Yes.

And if you didn't?

If you don't have children you are not a wife/woman (umfazi). You must have children.

Why?

I don't know but it's how we did things long ago. You had to have children for your husband.

And if you don't?

If you don't you'll see for yourself.

Are you treated a certain way because you don't have children?

You're treated badly, you're called izolo because you are not having children. And that really breaks your heart.

Being called izolo is ugly?

Yes.

The worth as a wife was recognized through...

It was seen through having children.

And without children, you're nothing?

Yes.

Oh ok, did you raise your kids how you were raised?

Yes, I raised them exactly how I was raised. From going to school and how they were disciplined.

When did you leave Queenstown?

Yhu! It's been a long time. I no longer stayed there when my grandmother died and she didn't have kids.

It wasn't your grandmother that...

It was my mother's mother

Oh...so when you say she had no kids what do you mean?

She never had kids.

So how is she your mother's mother?

Yes, she's my mother's mother because my mother is her sister's daughter.

Oh ok. So, someone would be given a child if they didn't have one?

Yes. If you stayed alone and didn't have anyone you were given a child.

Was that common?

It was very common. When an old woman doesn't have kids someone in the family gives her one of theirs.

Oh ok, so then you left Queenstown when your grandmother died?

I went back...she got sick and we went to my parents where my mother took care of her until she died.

So, when did you come to Cape Town?

It was around 1960 when I came to Cape Town.

Had you already had your kids by then?

Yes.

All of them?

No, I left them with my mother.

Why did you come here?

I was working.

(0:24:46.5) Where did you work?

I worked here in Somerset.

Doing?

Cleaning houses and everything else.

Why in Cape Town?

I sent money back home so that my kids could attend school.

Were there lots of jobs this side?

Yes, a lot.

Were there a lot of people that you knew who were coming from the Eastern Cape to here?

Yoh, I don't know them anymore but there used to some back then.

So, it was popular to come here looking for work?

Yes.

Did you know anything about contraceptives?

I started seeing it now. We didn't have contraceptives back then in my time. I've only started hearing about contraceptives very late and how you go to the clinic and do whatever you need to do.

How did you feel about contraceptives?

I didn't feel anything, I was just seeing and hearing about them.

Are they good or bad for the community?

They're a good thing. There are times when you aren't ready to have children so you take your pills.

What about your duty as a woman being to have kids? Do contraceptives not interfere with that?

No. It depends on you if you want to use them. Well on your husband, if he doesn't want you to use them then you stop.

You did what was right for you?

That's how we did it.

How did apartheid affect you?

Affect me?

Like, did anything happen in your life because of Apartheid? How did the laws impact your life?

During apartheid? Well, we stayed in the hostels and there were white police always patrolling. They were always looking for a place to move us. A judge to move to a new area...where the new houses are. That's where we stayed. And afterwards, we were taken again and moved elsewhere here in Nomzamo for about a month and then the judge decides on the permanent place we would stay.

You were told where you were going to stay?

Yes.

You couldn't choose?

No, you were given. You'd be told that this area belongs to this person and that area belongs to that person.

How?

How do I explain this?

Interlocuter: They were given sites.

I don't understand. So, what happened when you got here?

At that time, we stayed in the hostels (emaholweni) and then it was decided by a judge that we needed to leave the hostels because of overcrowding and houses were built. There were a lot of people, from here all the way to Waterkloof. We stayed there, built shacks and there were no problems.

When you say emaholweni what does that mean?

Interlocuter: Amaholo are like blocks with rooms where different families stay.

Oh ok, you could stay because you were here to work and you had your passbooks?

You leave here and go walk around town looking for a job.

While staying at the hostel?

No, you stay at Waterkloof. Then you'd leave from there to go to work and then after work go back there.

Oh ok. Is there anything else that comes to mind when you think about apartheid?

Yoh! We weren't treated nicely. There were police everywhere searching for people who weren't supposed to be in the hostels. While you were in the hostels you'd help out others who didn't have a place to stay.

Was that allowed?

Not in the hostels but in the fields where we'd built our shacks.

In raising your kids, what did you tell your daughter about duty?

My place was taking them from my parents, bringing them to live with me and making sure they went to school. The white children I looked after would want my children to come over and they would even help them with school work.

Oh ok. Are there differences in how you as a woman was treated compared to men?

It was different for men.

How?

You had to stay where you were told to stay. You couldn't come and go from the shacks to the hostels.

Where you work?

Where you were given land to build. You'd go from your house to town, work and at 5pm you go back home.

In Xhosa culture what do you think the place of children is?

What do you mean?

Are children important?

They're important.

Why?

You raise them until they're old enough. Then they go to school.

Why are you raising them? Sending them to school?

Because they're growing and there's no one to stay with them. And you can't sit at home and not work.

You're raising them so that one day they can take care of you?

Yes.

Can you expand on that?

Yhu...this is a lot. You need to watch your children carefully and discipline them so that bad things don't happen. In school they will also be taught.

Are there any traditions and ceremonies associated with women?

I don't know any of that.

In relation to children?

No, I can't think of anything.

Interlocuter: What do you mean?

Like, ceremonies which ask the ancestors to allow you to have kids in your marital home.

Interlocuter: That is only done when the elders see that you can't have kids. When you get married and arrive at your marital home you are given amasi. Which is meant to be welcoming you to your new family. Isn't that how it is?

Yes, that's what happens.

Interlocuter: So usually being given amasi is the ancestors welcoming you for your whole marriage. And it's only later, if you're not having children when they start thinking about more ceremonies.

Is your also at fault? Or is it your problem?

Interlocuter: Your husband is also worried because he wants you to have children. So, he will talk to his family about what needs to be done so that his wife can have children. Sometimes, you as the wife will need to go home because maybe it's a ceremony that needs to be done by your family and not your marital family.

I think we're done. Thanks.

Ntombi

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Interlocuter

What is your name? Where were you born? And where did you grow up?

Ok, I am Ntombi. I was born in Lady Frere and I grew up there. Then my mother left to go get a job

Where did she go?

In Lady Frere, near Queenstown.

In the Eastern Cape?

Yes. She left me with her older sisters who then died. I grew up like an orphan.

Was it common to leave your children with relatives?

My mother left to go work for white people on a farm and left me with her sisters.

Where was the farm

She said Ntebekwane but I was very young.

And that's in the Eastern Cape

Yes. Yes.

You were raised in the rural areas?

Yes. I did not have a good upbringing my child. I was not raised the way it's supposed to be like how it is the school books. I wasn't raised like that.

How were you raised then?

I wasn't encouraged to go to school or anything like how things are done. My aunts' husbands would make me do their washing, telling me to avoid the dangerous forest areas on the way to the river. The wives would tell me to take care of the younger children. It was things like that.

Ok. When where you born?

I was born...uhm I was born 1940. So, I grew up in that situation.

So, growing up you...

I was raised like both a girl and a boy.

Meaning?

I had to do the laundry, herd the cattle, take care of the chickens and watch over the children of my aunts and their families.

Was that how girl children were raised?

No. They were not raised like I was. My uncle's daughter went to girl but they didn't let me.

Go to school?

Yes.

What did they want you to do instead?

Who knows? Who knows what they wanted me to do? I didn't even have parents.

What differences do you see between how you were raised and how you think a girl child should be raised?

I didn't grow up normally, I used to watch other kids going and coming from school looking dressed up.

Were you raised to get married and be a wife?

I was never married. I ended up having children not married. No one ever married me.

Why were you never married?

No, no.

Did you not want to get married?

I was never asked. I was never told that anyone wanted to marry me.

So, it just never...

It just never happened.

Oh ok. So, growing up, what were you told about being a girl in the home?

Nothing.

You weren't told anything about being a girl?

No one ever said let me tell you about this and that. No one ever said this is like that and that is like this.

And about being a mother?

A mother?

Growing up were you told anything about what is expected of you as a woman?

Things like what? I was taught to wash a certain way as a girl. And to stay away from milk (amasi) when it's that time of the month.

Yes, things like that. Can you talk more on them?

Ubetha amanzi? It was the way you washed yourself. And you would also be told that you were not allowed to drink milk. You had to leave it and so you'd just stay away from milk.

Forever?

For as long as you have your period. You would count down the days until you finished. You'd see the cows getting milked and the milk would look so good but you would have to wait and only have milk-based food a few days after your period finished.

When did you leave your aunts place?

They all got sick and I had to watch them pass away, one by one. I left then because their children took over the house. My mom came to fetch me and took me with her to the farm.

(0:06:42.3) Do you remember what year this was?

I was still young, just a silly child.

Did you have to work on the farm?

I started being raised by my mother and we lived on the different farms she worked on. I eventually also learned how to work on a farm and also clean in the houses.

Can you think of the year? Maybe in the 1960s?

I think it was around 1965-ish.

Still in Lady Frere?

No, no. My mother and I were in Hlantsi. I stayed with her there.

And you were both working?

Yes, I was helping her out and doing jobs here and there.

At this point, has she told you about what it means to be a girl in the Xhosa culture?

No.

You were never taught anything? told anything?

No.

Did you ever hear the phrase 'a girl child is the flower of the home'? And how girls had to be protected to ensure that they would get married and bring cows through lobola?

I wasn't told like that.

How were you told?

I wasn't told anything.

What did you know about cultural practices like lobola?

No. No.

You didn't know anything?

No.

No one said anything to you?

No.

When did you have a child?

Uhm...let me ask...

What year were they born?

Uhm...what year? This is hard...let me ask, when was I born?

Interlocuter: 1940 but I think she might be older than that but that's what the ID says.

And when was my daughter born?

Interlocuter: *Her daughter? 1973.*

Is that the only child?

Interlocuter: *Yes, it's the only one.*

Oh ok. Thank you. So, 1973, where were you?

1973? When was I? Oh God...where was I? Yhu...1973 where was I?

Are you still in the Eastern Cape?

I was in the Eastern Cape.

Were you still working on the farms?

In 1973, where am I? Where was I when I was pregnant?

Interlocuter: *Where was she? Uhm...she was in Burgersdorp working on a farm there.*

So that's where I was.

Interlocuter: *Anything else?*

No, thanks.

I was in Burgersdorp.

What were you doing there?

I was working...doing what I could as a cleaner.

So, you worked at a cleaner?

Yes.

How did you meet the father of your child?

I met him in a small town called Fendale.

Can you tell me about how you too met?

How we met?

Was he someone you knew? When did you two first meet?

He was a very forward person. It was my first time meeting him. I didn't know anything but he took care of everything.

(0:13:14.9) Did you talk about marriage?

No, we didn't talk about marriage.

So, when you got pregnant, how did you know.

I didn't have my period like how I normally did.

So that confirmed it you.

Yeah, I just knew then.

How did you feel?

I just sat and sat...I waited to have my period but it never came.

Were you scared? Happy? How did you feel?

I was very scared. Really scared.

Why were you scared?

I was just scared. I didn't even understand what it meant having a child. Or how it was going to come out.

You weren't told?

No.

No one told you how things work?

I heard that there was only one place a baby came from and I was very scared. How was I going to do it?

Was your mother still alive at this point?

No, she had already died. She was old.

Who did you have?

I had no one. No mother, no father.

You were alone and pregnant with no family?

I was alone but there were neighbours and friends who knew what to do now that I was pregnant.

What did they say to you? How did they help prepare you for birth and motherhood?

That I had to go to the clinic.

You had clinics?

We had clinics.

When did clinics first arrive?

Oh! All I know is that they arrived and we told that we now have clinics.

Before you were pregnant?

Yes, before I was pregnant

Did you grow up with clinics around?

No, I never saw them.

Did you give birth in a clinic?

Yes, I had my child at the clinic.

Where was the father of your child?

My child's father is no longer on this earth, he never even got to see her. That's the situation I dealt with.

How did you raise your child?

I had to take care of her. I was told to wash my breasts and breastfeed her so I did.

What do you mean washing your breasts?

Washing my breasts with water so I can breastfeed. You try and try, putting pressure on the nipple by squeezing until what needs to come out comes out. And it'll then turn into what your baby wants.

You learnt all this at the clinic while you were pregnant?

I was taught by elders, the same people who used to help women give birth at home

There were people like that before clinics?

There were old women who knew a lot, who would help someone give birth and teach them how to breastfeed.

Were these women known?

I'm not sure. They were there before clinics arrived but I don't know...

If they stopped helping woman once clinics arrived?

The women were well known.

So, when you were going to the clinic in 1972, 1973 did the nurses tell you about contraceptives?

No.

They didn't say anything. Did you know that contraceptives existed?

Contraceptives? No.

Nothing?

I never knew anything about contraceptives.

Was it your first time going to the clinic while you were pregnant?

Yes.

Did you go back after you gave birth? And hear about contraceptives?

No. I was never introduced to them.

How did you raise a girl child in that era?

I just raised her.

You said you weren't raised the correct way as a girl so how did you raise your daughter?

Mine?

Yes.

I raised my daughter right. I comforted her, I breastfed her and made sure she ate. I didn't do any special.

Did you talk to her about being a girl?

I would tell her that when she was on her period she couldn't drink milk.

Anything else? How about the way she carried herself and the possibility of a white wedding?

Yes. Yes.

What did you say exactly?

I would tell her to act like a young lady and be respectful so she could get a white wedding with a white wedding dress.

Was a white wedding dress important?

It was a very beautiful thing, it meant you had done right in my opinion.

(0:20:49.4) Can you tell me about the cultural significance of a white dress and white wedding?

A white dress was the proper way for a girl to leave her home. It was a source of pride.

Does that mean the child has been raised right?

That's exactly what it means. You have raised your daughter right and now she gets to leave home with a white wedding dress. It means your child didn't have children while unmarried.

You couldn't have a white wedding dress if you had children outside of marriage?

No... I'm not sure. There would be gossip that so and so's daughter didn't leave home in a white dress.

A white dress was something to be proud of?

Yes, you are committed in marriage and have secured yourself as a wife (uzibopha ngeqgina lomtshato)

Was the idea of a girl being the flower of the home just as present from when you were growing up to when you were raising your daughter?

Yes, it was a very popular idea. And while they were busy being flowers what would happen during that time was that they would just be taken while they were sent on errands. She would be taken by a man she didn't even love or know. That's what happened.

What do you mean by taken?

You are sent somewhere, normally through a wooded forest area and when you emerge there would be men waiting for you who would then take you to your new home.

Just like that? Is there anyone you can talk to?

Oh no, it's already been decided by the elders in both families. They know what is happening.

SO only the girl doesn't know?

The girl doesn't know but everything has already been talked about and discussed by the families. Lobola would then be paid for her. Though most times lobola had already been paid for her, she just didn't see when the men from the other family came for negotiations. Honestly, I would say that this was like selling a person.

Lobola was like selling the girl?

It's like a thing that's just being sold.

So, what exactly is being sold?

Huh?

What is this woman that has been sold going to bring to their marital home?

Children. It's all about children. They're buying her ability to produce children (ubuntombi)

Are children important to Xhosa culture?

Children are important to Xhosa culture.

What do they mean?

Children?

Yes.

They stand for the future, it means this family will grow. When a wife has children, it means that the family is strong (umile umzi).

This is the culture you grew up in?

Yes, these are things I grew up knowing.

Did you raise your child telling her this is how things work?

Yes, I told her how the world works. I explained to her that the neighbours and I for example could talk and decide to marry her off because they like her and have asked for her hand. We would negotiate how many cows I wanted for my daughter. And my daughter wouldn't know anything then one day I would send her on an errand then out of nowhere she would be captured and taken to her new home

What was it like?

It was a very popular practice back then. I don't like it anymore because I see that it brings a lot of pain. It's not nice.

Does it still happen?

Not really. Times have changed though it sometimes happens.

When did it stop being popular?

It's no longer popular. I remember I chose my cousin's wife, went through the process of 'ukutsalwa'. They didn't even know each other.

So, you were involved?

I chose wives for me male cousins. I would see a nice girl, go talk to the men and direct them towards her family where they would enter negotiations for lobola ask for the girl's hand in marriage.

Who were you telling?

I was telling people in my family about all the eligible girls that I thought my cousins would like.

To your brothers (obhuti)?

Yes.

You were choosing girls for 'utsalwa'?

I would pick them and the girls didn't know.

Did it work?

It more than worked. My family grew.

Your family is big now?

Very much. (laughing)

How many marriages did you help arrange through 'utsalwa'?

Quite a few. I worked very hard. There are some who still talk about it today, one of the wives always preaches about how she didn't know her husband before she was taken in her testimonies.

And it's because of you?

Yes, it was me. I accept my part in arranging the marriage.

How many did you arrange through 'utsalwa'?

Uhm, one of them just recently passed away in this past May, there is the one who is always preaching and one who is the grandmother of the child you saw playing outside. So that's three.

Three? Wow. What exactly did you do? Did you just see a girl?

I would see a girl locally.

You see them and then what? Do you go to your cousin?

I would go to him and say that I saw a girl I liked who I think he will also like. And then I would show her to him from afar and he would agree with me.

So, he also saw her?

Yes, he would see her and agree.

After you have shown him and he agrees?

Then they would get married and help grow the family with children and grandchildren.

What was your plan exactly? What would you do exactly?

My plan? I would just tell them that I think they would make good wives for my cousins and they would think I'm joking...shame. They would laugh and laugh about it, thinking I'm joking but the whole time I would be saying that I really think you'll fit into my family. Next thing they will go through 'ukutsalwa', be taken to my home and see that I was never joking. I remember giving them tea to settle their shock, they would be crying and I would be there.

Where was all of this happening? Lady Frere?

Burgerdorp.

Where's Burgersdorp?

Eastern Cape.

Oh ok. Do you remember which years this was possibly happening?

Not sure, they old women now with their own grandchildren. It was a long time ago.

So 'utsalwa' was a common practice?

Yes.

Was this your way of helping grow your family?

Yes. I was helping my cousins. It was important for a young man to have a wife.

Why is a wife important?

They're important for the sake of the family. They're important to help build the family. They're important to ensure that the family doesn't die out. Always building and growing.

(0:30:10.4) What does home (ikhaya) or family mean to you?

Home is home. Home is home, life can be bad but home is always there.

So, when you said you had a bad childhood. What was...

Yes. My uncle's daughter was sent to school and I was told to go herd the cattle. Why did I have to herd cattle? It wasn't nice.

You didn't have a nice child and you still wanted to help your family grow by arranging marriages for your cousins? Did you ever think you didn't want to help?

No.

It never occurred to you not to help?

I never thought about that back then, it was only later as an adult that I realized maybe I should not have helped.

Why did you never get married? Why did you never go through 'ukutsalwa'?

Maybe I was ugly?

You helped your brothers so couldn't...

Clearly, they didn't have an eye for good men. I was good, I could see potential wives for them but they couldn't for me. To be chosen and take you must be seen and I wasn't seen.

By seeing and picking their future wives, was that your way of helping out your family?

Yes, because I saw from others that family helps family.

Was there a difference between a child born to two married parents and one born outside of wedlock?

No.

A child was a child?

I just saw a child.

So, there wasn't nothing...

There was nothing differentiating them.

Was there a difference between a boy child and a girl child?

A boy and girl child were different.

How?

There are boy children and there are girl children.

Is their value at home the same?

They have the same value. It's the same.

You didn't see a difference?

I don't think there was a difference. Even today, I don't see a difference.

When did you come to Cape Town?

I came that year...what year did I come to Cape Town?

Interlocuter: What year did she first come here? Uhm she first came in 1987 regularly then officially moved in 1994.

Oh ok. Thank you. What brought you to Cape Town?

I was looking for a job.

Where did you find work?

I worked on the farms then moved to being a maid.

Were you alone when you first came? Did you bring your child?

I was alone.

Why did you choose Cape Town?

I was in King William's Town where my daughter went to school. I then moved to Cape Town and she eventually followed.

Why Cape Town?

I would say I chose Cape Town because I knew people here.

Were the lots of people who came from the eMonti area to Cape Town?

There were lots of people of I knew. One of my cousin's daughter was here staying in Khayelitsha.

The move from the Eastern Cape to...

To Cape was very common.

For jobs?

That was the main reasons.

What was the biggest difference between Cape Town and the Eastern Cape that you noticed?

I always had a job here in Cape Town especially as a maid.

And eMonti it was as a farm worker?

And as a maid.

As a maid...

I worked as a maid eMonti, eDimbaza. Do you know that place?

A little.

I stayed eDimbaza for a while where they had firms.

What other differences did you notice between Cape Town and the Eastern Cape?

Things weren't going well that side so I thought I should come this side.

What was wrong?

No.

What was the problem?

The problem? I just felt I needed to come look for jobs in Cape Town and work here.

Were there lots of jobs in Cape Town?

There no jobs really...there were lots of factories.

So why did you come here then if there weren't lots of jobs?

I came here and I worked as a maid.

Ok. Was there a difference between townships in Cape Town and the rural areas in the Eastern Cape?

Townships? There were no differences that I saw. I would say I don't know.

Is the lifestyle different?

It's both different and not different...I don't know how to explain it.

When you first got here where did you stay?

I stayed in Khayelitsha.

Was Khayelitsha the same as the rural areas?

No. Khayelitsha was a township.

What type of place is a township?

It was just a place. It was the kind of place where it was obvious that you couldn't be happy in, do you understand?

Why?

It was busy and noisy. There were people everywhere wondering around and always selling things.

(0:41:37.9) How present were Xhosa cultural teachings and practices in the township setting?

There are no cultural teachings and practices here in Cape Town.

Why do you think that is?

I think most people go home and that's where they do the rituals that need to be done.

Is there a difference in the way people carry themselves here in Cape Town compared to how life is eMonti?

I think there are differences. Look at my house here, it doesn't have a kraal (itango) but back home we have a kraal where the cows stay. The same cows that are used in rituals.

Ok?

We have a kraal and here? I don't have that.

Are rituals important?

Very much so, rituals (amasiko) are really important.

Why? What's their place?

A lot goes into a traditional ceremony. There is a lot of food. There are separate pots for men and women (imbiza yoTata and imbiza yoMama).

What does that all mean? What importance does a ritual hold in your life?

The purpose of 'amasiko' is for 'inkundla'.

What's 'inkundla'?

'Inkundla' is something like a veranda in front of the house while the kraal is a bit further from the house. You can do a ritual for your daughter called 'ukuthombisa'

What?

A ritual for girls called 'ukuthombisa'.

But what does that mean?

Ujaka

What is 'ujaka'?

Ujaka is a form of initiation for girls.

How does that happen?

Like how boys get sent to the bush.

Yes?

For boys, they are sent to the bush to become men.

And girls?

Girls don't go through the same practice.

What rituals do girls go through?

You build a small hut between the veranda and the kraal and sit them there.

Outside?

No, in the house.

What?

You build the small hut outside and then bring it inside.

Why inside?

That's the way of the Xhosa.

What is the ritual for?

It's so that the girl...it could happen that you're not getting pregnant and the reason is that your uterus has been closed by something like contraceptives but not contraceptives because we didn't have them. So, if you weren't having children you needed to have the ritual done to open your uterus so you can have children.

What is this ritual (isiko)?

It can be called 'iduli'

So, this ritual, 'iduli' is to open up the uterus?

Yes, it opens up the uterus. Normally, there would be women everywhere. Cooking and preparing for the ritual. Grass and hay would be covering the floor so people can sit on it.

When is this ritual done? Before a girl gets married?

It could be done before even marriage is considered or even before you start your periods.

Are you being prepared for marriage?

Just general preparations so that as a woman you are prepared for whatever happens.

(0:46:20.9) Prepared for potential problems conceiving?

If there's going to be problems with your uterus it's better the problems show themselves earlier rather than later. Whatever is going to happen to must happen (makuvele into ezukuvela)

So, what's going to show? The uterus being closed?

We don't know if it's closed but we must do the ritual to show us. 'Ukudula' will reveal what needs to be revealed and shows which direction you need to go.

How old are girls when they have this ritual done?

She could be married and then her family can go fetch her to perform the ritual.

So, it can be done whenever?

Yes, it can always be done. Even me now at my age.

What did you say the name was?

'Iduli'

'Iduli'?

Or 'intonjane'

'Intonjane'? Oh ok. And it's similar to boys going through initiation?

It's the same as boys going through initiation.

And the goal of this ritual or practice is to open the uterus?

Not exactly, it's for general good health.

Oh ok.

Whatever problems you have will show themselves, like maybe having dirty blood.

What?

The ritual heals you as it fixes whatever your problem is, like your dirty blood.

Healing your dirty blood? Oh ok, where does opening your uterus come in?

You see now, I'm now sure exactly how it works. The ritual will be done and then you'll end up getting pregnant where you couldn't before.

Oh ok. Is that practice still around?

Yes! It's a ritual that is still practiced amongst Xhosa people.

Is it popular eMonti?

Yes, It's popular eMonti.

And this side? Cape Town?

In Cape Town? No. the culture is very western here.

Are black people lost in your opinion?

Here?

Yes, here in Cape Town.

No, I wouldn't say we are lost as black people. Some people do the rituals this side but it's just more common in the Eastern Cape. Though some people are now believers and they no longer perform rituals the Xhosa way.

Why made you decide to stay in Cape Town? Do you still work?

No but who would I stay with if I went back. My children (daughter, grandchildren, nieces and nephews) are here.

So, you stay to be close to your children?

Yes. That's the reason.

Are there any other rituals done for girls?

'iduli liyakwediswa, intonjane iyatonjiswa'

What is 'utonjiswa' exactly? Is that to open up your uterus?

I don't know...

What is 'utonjiswa'?

It's sitting there for a month just like the boys stay in the bush for a month.

So, what are you doing for the whole month exactly when you are going through 'ukutonjiswa'?

There? You sit there.

But what is the ritual for exactly?

It's a ritual to open up your whole life and guard against any negativity or to stop potential bad things.

Oh ok...

It's done so that you can have good health.

Did you through 'ukutonjiswa'?

Yes, I went through 'ukutonjiswa'.

How old were you do you think?

How old was I?

Were you still a girl?

I was still a girl. I was still a girl.

Did your daughter go through 'ukutonjiswa'?

No, she didn't have that ritual done.

Why?

No! Where would I get the money for that? It's expensive.

And times have changed?

Yes, things have changed. We are believers now. We go to church.

What is your relationship between the church and Xhosa traditions?

Yoh! I don't know. I just don't know because when you need to do a ritual you have to do it. You cannot ignore the urge, the call (from the ancestors) to perform a ritual can be very stubborn so I don't know how people completely stop practising rituals.

The call (from the ancestors) to do rituals is not something you can just ignore.

You can't just not perform a ritual when you are called to do it.

(0:52:42.9) You must take care of it?

You have to answer the call and take care for it but I don't know how that relates to the church.

You don't know how it relates to church? Did you grow up going to church?

Uhm...

Was church important while you were growing up?

I didn't really go to church.

So when...

I started I going to church I joined the Zion church. (claps: a signature of the church)

Here in Cape Town or...?

Back home in the rural areas (emaXhoseni)

There were churches in the rural areas (emaXhoseni)?

Yes.

So, people were believers and they still continued performing rituals?

Yes. In the Zion church people can believe and still do rituals, we haven't thrown the away.

In your opinion do you think the church and Xhosa traditions can co-exist?

I would say some traditions and practices of Xhosa culture can work with the church but not all. It doesn't always go together.

Is there a difference in the teachings of the church and Xhosa culture regarding girls and women?

I think church teachings are good but I don't want to throw away tradition.

Why is it difficult for you to discard traditions and rituals (amasiko)?

It's difficult to throw away 'amasiko' because they are form of life, for me 'isiko' soothes better than the church. But the church can have the same effect.

(0:55:10.4) You grew up believing in both Xhosa traditions and the church?

It was a little bit of this and a little bit of that, I wasn't sure and absolute belief is what is needed.

And now?

I'm still practising both. I believe in the church but I also believe in Xhosa traditions.

Is that common?

I don't think it's common.

Most people know where they stand? With the church and Xhosa culture?

Yes. I am a church believer but also someone who believes in rituals. My grandfather who passed away will come to me and tell me what I need to do, I can't just ignore him. I can try but as I said callings (from the ancestors) are stubborn and I have to perform the ritual.

I think we're done. Thank you...

What must I say to him?

Ignore him?

No! You can't ignore him when he comes calls. My cousin's funeral from a few months ago, I was crying when I left there (Lady Frere). After the funeral we had a small ritual to send him off and he complained that we (as the family) had come to terms with his death too quickly.

Who complained?

My cousin who had passed away but what were supposed to do? We had to have a washing of the hands ritual (a ceremony to appease a recently deceased relative) so we did it because we had just laid him to rest. It's that type of thing.

So, you buried him in church and the had a ritual also?

Yes, he had a Christian funeral in the Zion church.

And then you had the...what did you call it?

'Uhlambha izandla' (Washing of the hands)

So, you mixed the church and Xhosa traditions?

In our way we mixed it. He was a church goer so we had to have a Christian service.

And also, a 'washing of the hands' ritual?

Yes. We had to do both.

Thank you so much for your time.

What did you learn from me?

So, my research is about black women's lives under apartheid.

Apartheid?

Actually, what did you know about apartheid?

I knew nothing of it.

Did apartheid have an impact on your life?

No, I don't think so...I really don't know. I don't know what role it played. I just know that before we had chiefs and then I remember hearing that Mandela, Mbeki were now in charge.

Did you think or know you were oppressed?

During that time?

YEs, were you oppressed?

No... maybe it's because I wasn't working...

When did you first realize that black people were oppressed?

Oppression of black people? No. I would just see with the red maize that we were buying and stuff like that.

What?

There used to be red maize.

And it was for black people?

Yes.

So, you never heard about apartheid legislature or experienced anything because of the laws?

I never heard about apartheid laws. I didn't know about it...I didn't know.

Oh Ok. I think we're done now.

I hope you go away with something useful.

You've helped me a lot. I just need you to sign here...where's my pen? Can you just write your name here...just need name and signature.

Thandiwe

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

Let's start...what is your name? Where are you from? Where did you grow up? Just a general background.

I am Thandiwe. Growing up I was called Winky, it was my nickname. I grew up in place called Kirkwood.

Kirkwood?

Kirkwood.

Where's that? In the Eastern Cape?

Yes, it's in the Eastern Cape. Kerkoot. I was born and raised there. I met my husband there (ndabonwa ngumyeni) ...I was still in school. I went to school in the township nearby. I went on foot to school, there and back. And then in the 50s there was what was called a boycott. And we couldn't go to school, all schools shut down. We stayed to stay at home. Then we went back to school but in the field.

Because of the boycott?

Yes. And the boycott was a way to fight for freedom. This was just at the beginning of everything, the fight and realizing we were oppressed.

Yes.

I went to school in the open field and then when the police hippo vans would come by we would have to run and hide amongst the trees and grass. We'd sometimes get chased so we'd be running until you could slip away somewhere and hide. And then you'd stay in your hiding place and only leave when it was safe to do so usually in the evening. We wouldn't be home all day. We would have school in woods, writing on the ground. There were no books. There was nothing, just writing on the ground...writing in the dirt. You'd write in the dirt and the teacher would come try and mark. When the police would arrive, we would have to scatter and try disappear among the trees and grass because the field we were having school was actually an old soccer field.

What was this boycott?

It was 1950...that's when we started. It's the reason my generation is uneducated. I was in standard 3 back then. And that was life. We grew up in that environment. I think the schools opened again in 1952. We were then able to go back and study in school again but we had to learn in Afrikaans now. Back then we had to study in Afrikaans. The same Afrikaans the children today don't want to learn...we learnt Afrikaans. I know how to write Afrikaans.

Can you speak it?

I do try and speak it. Back when we were being taught we would be told that in Afrikaans you must use 'g' (sound). And how the 'w' was a 'v' like 'van'. That's how we were taught. We would have to rite everything in our books. Our teachers would write down our homework and then you'd go home with it. At school we would read the bible in the morning and memorize it. Then the next day when you come back to school you'd be asked about what you learnt the previous day in the bible. What did you read in the bible? Which verse do you know? We'd have to parrot back what we remember. What did you Mary say? That's Jesus' mother, right? So, we'd be asked who was her son and you would have to answer. That's the time of schooling we had back then. I don't know anything about today's schooling. From then on, I grew up and moved to eBhayi (Port Elizabeth) around the 1960s. 1963 I think, I moved to PE. I stayed with my uncles. I started school properly, I had to re-do standard 3 again properly. Afrikaans wasn't as prominent, it was in a few subjects but not too many. But I had to stop again because I ran out of money to pay for school because I was paying for myself.

When you do you think you dropped out of school

1962.

Is Kirkwood a rural place or a township?

It's a township because it was under the local municipality. There were surrounding rural areas.

Did you grow up with your mother and father?

I grew up with my grandmother. My mother was in PE. She left me with her mother when I was a baby in the township. We had cattle. Cows, goats everything. My grandmother worked on a farm. I grew up in that township. My mother lived in PE at her uncles while she left me to be raised by my grandmother. I would go to PE for the holidays and go home afterwards.

Was this a common way to raise children? Being raised by their grandmothers instead of their parents?

It was common back then because your child would have a child and then leave. You'd go to the home of the boy that impregnated her and demand lobola. Then that whole process would happen if both families agreed. Or your boyfriend could deny you.

(0:06:00.3) And your father?

My father lived at his home with his family. My mother had me while she was still at home.

Oh ok.

But my father did end up paying for lobola for her and paying damages for me though I was raised by my grandmother.

Your father's mom?

My mom's mom.

oh yes. Growing up as a girl child what where you taught?

Growing up as a girl you would reach a certain stage...I didn't know what was happening to me. You suddenly saw red in your underwear and you would run and go tell an adult. I didn't even know what I was saying, maybe I had been pricked by thorns while I was playing outside. The adults of course knew what was going on.

So, before it happened, had you been told anything?

No. We grew up not being told anything. That's why it's so scary and shocking when it happens. You don't know what's happening.

So, when your period does start, what are you told?

Once you've started you are told you cannot eat amasi. You can't be out in the street, you must be at home. And you must make sure no one sees what's happening, you must hide it because this concerns your life.

How does it concern your life?

It's your health. It mustn't be obvious to just anyone because that would be embarrassing. It's not something you want to be seen. You can't as a girl be seen walking around with red stains on you, some people would know what's going on while others would not know. You need to hide things like this. They mustn't be seen.

Why didn't adults talk to you do you think?

Different homes do things their own way. My situation in the township was different to that of people who grew up in the rural areas.

At home did you...are you an only child? Do you have brothers?

I grew up with some of my uncles.

Ok, how do you compare how you were raised and how they were raised as boys?

There is no difference. I was milking cows along with them. In the mornings we would have to take out the cows and goats and milk them before taking care of the calves. In the evenings, usually around 5 even if you were out playing you knew that you would have to go look for the cows and goats which had been grazing all day. We had to make sure to get all the cows and goats back, they cannot spend the night anywhere but at home. In our kraal. If they weren't all there? We would have to walk around at night looking for our cattle. That was my uncle, he would make us go house to house looking for the lost goats. If we couldn't find them we would sit outside and wait for him (my uncle) to sleep then we could sneak in and sleep. Then we'd try to wake up early in the morning to go search for the lost cattle we couldn't find the night before.

Do the differences only emerge as you grow up?

Yes.

So, you grew up and moved to PE. Is that where you met your husband?

No, I met him in Nxeba/Nqweba I was staying in PE. I would go back home to visit but I was living in PE

(0:10:16.0) How did you two meet?

I met him there in Nqweba...that's where he stayed. I was visiting my aunt, that's where she stayed. It was a farm...it was in the rural areas. Well actually it was a big farm and people who worked there also lived on the property.

Did you know him and think this is who I am marrying?

I didn't know. I mean it was something that would just happen, you'd just happen to find someone. He was just a person.

How did you then up marrying him?

Regarding marriage, it was him that wanted me.

So, what happened? Did he go to your family?

He took me to his family. I was then dressed as umakoti (bride) and I was then a wife.

So, he didn't go to your family regarding lobola?

He went later because the distance between where my family lived and where his family lived was great. His family home was near Grahamstown.

So, you first got married and then went through the lobola process?

Yes.

(0:11:29.3) Was lobola important?

I'll say it's important because it was thought to be important back then.

What was its significance?

I can't quite explain it...I'll say it's because you were raised by your parents.

So...

You no longer a part of your family, everything about you now belongs to your husband's family.

Because of lobola?

Yes, I would put it that way. When you get married you no longer belong to your family. You have a different name, a new marital name and a new surname. Your children will also belong to your husband's family, you are growing and extending another family.

Are children important in Xhosa culture?

A child is very important because you cannot live alone. You need someone that you can tell what to do. In the long run as you get older you need someone to help you. In the rural areas there is so much to do like herding cattle and as a woman you can't be chasing cows.

So that's where children...

That's where children come in.

That's the role children play?

I can't at my age be in a position of not having a child to send on errands or do things around the house. If you don't have a child to help you out, it's acceptable to ask any child locally to help you. To help you with things like going to the shop for you. Where I grew up shops were very far, when you were sent to the shop the adult sending you would spit on the ground and you were told you had to be back before it dried up as a way to hurry you up. Generally, by the time you got back the spit would have long dried up.

As a wife what was your job?

Your job as a wife was to wake up early...waking up before your in-laws and preparing food for them. After dishing up you'd perhaps see that the house was dirty so you would have to clean. You would sweep using those old brooms. After sweeping you would go get some cow dung from the kraal...now

you're really cleaning...you have to do the floor. You get some cow dung and go collect some water, you have to mix the cow dung and a little soil with the water and paint (ukusinda) it all over the house. Then you throw away the left-over cow dung or maybe use it to paint the outside walls. We used to paint with that or with clay, the soil was pink and that's what we used. You would make patterns, mixing the clay and water. Then you use a cloth to paint and make patterns on the wall. You would make the wall really pretty. And then finish off with the cow dung as a band around the bottom of the house. Now you're done.

And children? Was it important to have children?

It's very important for you to have children.

And if you don't?

If you don't have them you don't have them. There's no other way. It's your lot in life. Some people are destined not to have children.

(0:16:00.1) Were you treated bad by your marital family?

Some people were treated badly and it resulted in the end of their marriages.

Because of children?

Yes, because they weren't getting children.

What advice did you receive from elders when you got married?

You are there to expand and grow this family. You are not there to change how things are done, you must do as you are told. If you are told to go collect water from the river that's what you do. If you see that water is running out in the house you take a bucket and go. You go gather wood for the fire and gathering wood takes time. Then you need to start the fire.

What do you know about the practices of 'ukuthwala' or 'ukutsalwa'?

'Urhuqwa'?

Yes, all that stuff. Was it common back then?

It happened. My aunt...in the township we lived in her house was near our house -my grandmother's house-...and one night, I didn't know what was going on and I was going to see her. I saw her leaving going to another house down the street but what we didn't know at the time was that when she was about to be taken. She was dragged away crying and resisting, there was a lorry parked nearby and she was stuffed inside and taken away. And just like that she was married.

Did the parents know if their daughter was about to be taken?

Parents knew, it was just the girl that didn't know.

Why did it happen that way?

I wouldn't have the answer to that. You would be taken by a man that means nothing to you. You wouldn't even know him. You would have never seen him.

So, it was just a transaction, as a man he needed a wife?

Yes. You would be taken to go be a wife and that's all.

Are you asked as the girl whether you want to get married or even ready for marriage?

No, you would be asked anything. You would just be taken. It was the very definition of 'ukuthwalwa'. You would be dragged. Or sometimes you would be sent to the shop and on your way, you would just see men approaching you and dragging you out of nowhere. And you are taken just like that, you'll cry but you'll eventually stop. You'll get to your new home, be dressed in traditional bridal attire and given your new life.

And that's just your new life now?

Yes, that's how it was back then.

Growing up what were you told regarding the place of a girl in the home?

How?

Were you ever told that a girl child is the flower of the home?

My grandmother died when I was young, I was eleven when she died. Growing up it just me and my aunt as young girls in the house...well it was the two of us and an uncle who was our age. Growing up we knew our duties were gathering wood, collecting water from the river, wax the floors with cow dung and cook. If there was samp we had to prepare it properly (ngqusha).

(0:20:39.5) How many children do you have?

I have 6 children but two have passed away. One died this last September and the second this past January.

What years did you have them?

My first one was born 1965, they live in Khayelitsha.

And the last one?

My youngest was born in 1983.

Oh ok. Did you raise your children in the Eastern Cape?

Yes, I raised them in Kirkwood.

Did you raise them how you were raised?

I raised my children myself, no one else raised them. They were raised by their mother and father.

So, this is the 60s, 70s and 80s?

Yes.

What changed that allowed children to be raised by their children?

It wasn't really anything new. Some children were raised by their parents while others were raised by their grandmothers. My kids? I raised every single one of them. And then when I moved to Cape Town in 1995 the youngest, born in 1983, stayed with her oldest sister born in 1967 in Kirkwood.

Did you give birth in a clinic?

I only started going to the clinic when I gave birth in 1975.

And before?

I gave birth to all the others at the farm, we used to do it ourselves where we lived.

Who helped you?

There were woman (vrouvrou).

And they knew...

They used to help you give birth, they knew what to do.

Were there no clinics?

We didn't have clinics at first.

Do you remember when clinics first arrived?

Yoh! I just remember the first time I gave birth in a clinic was with my daughter, Norma, in 1975. I had her in a clinic in Alicedale.

Do you remember if there were clinics before?

I don't remember having clinics before I went to go have Norma. We were in the township and there weren't any. And we moved from the township to the farms and there was nothing there, it was just a small settlement of people who all worked for the white farmer.

What was the biggest difference in giving birth on the farm and in the clinic?

I used the clinic for the first time when I was giving birth in 1975 and again in 1983. And with the others...there was nothing really that was so different. With my firstborn I gave birth with the help of my mother in law.

What made you decide to go to a clinic in 1975 then?

We were staying on the farmers land and the nearby township had a clinic.

Did the farmer tell you about the clinic? Did they tell you to go to the clinic?

No, it was other people. They were going.

So, it opened and...?

It opened and going to the clinic was now the normal thing to do. Back then the clinic was actually in a house.

Huh?

The clinic was just a normal house. That's where the nurse stayed...well she lived in PE but would come to Alicedale for the week then go home for the weekends.

Did you know anything about contraceptives?

When did I start using contraceptives? Uhm let me think...which child...I used contraceptives after I had my child in 1975 because there was a clinic.

So, is that when contraceptives arrived? Around 1975?

That's when I learnt about them. I got it in 1975 at the clinic.

(0:25:15.0) What were you told about contraceptives in 1975?

It was to prevent you from having children if you didn't want them or if they (the nurses) felt like you already had too many kids so you would be told that now that you are coming the clinic you must do your pregnancy check-ups there. Similarly, to what the vrouvrou women were doing back at the farm.

When you're getting ready to give birth?

Yes, when you're pregnant. The nurses at the clinic would check you out like the vrouvrou would do. The vrouvrou would then give you a bottle of 'iyeza lesXhosa' to drink, it helped with gas and other pregnancy related problems. They mixed it themselves.

So, with contraceptives, are they something that you...

I heard about contraceptives at the clinic.

What was your reaction to the introduction of contraceptives?

I saw it as a good thing because they helped you take a break from having children...a break in getting pregnant. It protects you.

And what about your duty as a wife in providing children for you husband?

When you're using contraceptives it's not something that you tell people about. You just use contraceptives privately. My husband did know though.

Was it something you chatted about?

We would have casual talks about it as women.

So, you knew that you were all using?

Not that we were using but that there was this new thing called contraceptives.

What exactly did you guys have? The injection? Pills?

It was the injection...I started with the injection. Depo...that's what they called it. It was depo. and there was another injection, I don't remember the name because I never wanted it. I wanted depo because it stayed in your body for 3 months. I used it from 1975 to...Nikelwa was born in 1983 and I had stopped using the injection two years prior in 1981.

Was there a community reaction to contraceptives? Did you ever hear people talking about how contraceptives were perhaps a way of decreasing the number of black people in the country?

No one said that at the time. We only started hearing about things like that when Mandela came to power.

So before...

No one said anything during the time of Verwoed...do you know Verwoed?

Yes.

From a book?

Yes.

To you he's just a character in the books. And then the De Klerks came around the time of Mandela.

So, you only heard negative things about contraceptives at a later stage?

Yes. Yes.

Did you trust the nurses who attended to you at the clinic?

Yes, I knew to go get my injection after every few months. And you would never be given the injection if you didn't go.

What?

You have to go before you get the injection.

Go?

Yes, it was to make sure that you weren't already pregnant before giving you the injection.

Oh ok.

It was to make sure that you didn't have anything growing already.

Would you be asked if you wanted to use contraceptives? Or was it decided for depending on how many children you already had?

It depended on you. You would be asked if you wanted to use contraceptives? Or you would go and tell the nurses yourself that you there to get the injection.

Why did you want to use contraceptives?

It gave you a chance to raise the children you already had.

Was the idea of being able to space your children according to your needs popular in the 1970s and 1980s?

We used to be able to space our children before the arrival of contraceptives before.

How?

When you had a baby, you wouldn't sleep with your husband.

Oh?

Yes, that's how you would space children. And usually your husband would be away working anyway. He'd only come home to visit sometimes. Though even when he did come visit you couldn't sleep with him because he could end up leaving you with a new born while you were already busy raising other young children.

(0:30:39.2) When did you get to Cape Town?

I came in 1995 but I didn't stay long.

Why did you come?

My children had moved here, they lived eNyanga.

Did you raise them here?

No, no. They came here as adults to find work.

Were jobs better this side (Cape Town) compared to the Eastern Cape?

There are many more jobs here in Cape Town than in the Eastern Cape. In fact, I still think that's true today...at least where I live in PE.

What was the biggest difference you noticed between the Eastern Cape and Cape Town?

Here in Cape Town I noticed that my children have had consistent work and as a result they can always help me and send money when I need it.

(0:31:50.2) And how are the townships here, Khayelitsha for example, different than in PE?

There's nothing wrong with PE...PE is just fine it's just the lack of jobs that's a problem.

So, the job market is the main reason...do you know lots of people who have moved to Cape Town for work coming from the Eastern Cape?

There's lots. I know quite a few from back home...they're all over. There's a young man who lives in Langa or somewhere like that. There're others...most of children are here now.

Oh ok.

They all get jobs here...four of them were here but one moved back to PE and one passed away recently.

How did apartheid affect you?

During apartheid...you see my daughter? She was in school in 1976 and went to a government school but had to change schools because of apartheid. She had to go to a private missionary school. This was in the 1970s.

In the Eastern Cape?

Yes, in the Eastern Cape. In PE. That's where she went to school. She finished primary at the church school and after that the township schools were open again so she went back.

So, in the 1970s schools were closed?

From 1976 there were a lot of school boycotts. You see, my daughter that you met? She went through it, she knows the situation of '76.

That it was tough?

Everything that happened was chaotic in the schools, there was no learning happening.

Were you working?

In 1976 I was in Kirkwood.

Working?

I wasn't really working, just doing a few jobs here and there in small shops.

As an adult did Apartheid affect you in anyway or did you feel it through your children?

I saw it with my daughter, she was in PE in school. It was very tough back then, in PE there was this dompas thing. It was the era of dompases you couldn't have a Lwandle address and stay in Khayelitsha for example. You would be told to go stay where your ID says you stay. This happened to me so I can tell you. I was visiting my uncle and I was found there by the police.

You were at your uncle's house in PE?

Yes, a township in PE. Then 'izibonda' came the early morning.

What is 'izibonda'?

'Izibonda'...you don't know?

No.

Izibonda are like the officers who were in charge of monitoring the townships. They came and asked me...

Wait, did they come to your house?

They went knocking, door to door, and if you didn't have papers showing that you belonged in PE you'd be told you have to go back to where you actually live. And it wasn't like they asked you, you were packed up and taken away immediately.

And go back home?

Yes. That's how things worked back then. I showed them my payslip which had a Kwazakhele address which is also in PE but because we were in New Brighton they still told me to go back to Kwazakhele. I didn't belong in New Brighton, I had to go where I got my payment. That's how it was...you could also be stopped in the street and asked to show your identification in the form of your dompas. And they would look to see who you are, where you work and why you were in the area. Just everything...and if you didn't the correct papers? Off you go to where you belong. That was the type of oppression that I remember experiencing.

How it reflects in your life?

Yes.

And Cape Town...

I don't live here anymore, I just visit regularly to see my children and grandchildren. I'm back in PE.

Did you know any apartheid laws or anything about politics?

No, I didn't know any laws...I don't even want to pretend I do. I only started knowing things around Mandela's time...I remember initially the ANC called for 'mayibuye i-Afrika'. People were getting arrested back then. My uncle and aunt, the one who went through 'ukuthwalwa', were in PE while we were in Kirkwood. My grandmother, uncle and I would be visiting them in PE and see people singing on the bridge as the train pulled into the station. And we would see crowds of people being arrested and being taken to Rooi Hel prison

Wow.

It was said that prisoners had to do manual labour while they were breaking rocks.

Were women arrested?

Both men and women were sent there.

All together?

The police were just arresting and locking up everyone.

Did you notice a shift in woman leaving the home and going to fight against apartheid?

That happened. It started with children being forced out the house to join marches.

Whether they wanted to or not?

It happened, whether they wanted it to happen or not didn't matter. They would just come in, searching everywhere including under the beds.

For young girls too?

They were mostly looking for young men but they would force girls to join the marches too. It got to the point where I had to send my oldest daughter away from the township to stay in the rural area for a while.

Because you were scared?

Yes. They wanted fighters high and low. Your daughters and son. They needed people to guard the safe houses where the activists who were being searched for by the police were hiding. It didn't matter that they were young. You couldn't tell the activists no or that your child was too young when they came for them. You see my grandson? He's 17 and I would have had to hide him back then.

Because...

We weren't even allowed to fence our yards. And if you did there had to be large enough gaps for people to be able to run through when they were being chased...

By the police?

Yes, the police. It gave the activists the freedom to run and be able to escape through the houses without having to be delayed by scaling the walls. So, they could run into your yard knowing there was an opening at the back and they could try loose the police between the houses.

As a woman and mother what did you think your role was in helping out in the fight against apartheid?

Your role is to protect your child, you hide them and say they're not there.

Whether they are wanted by the police or freedom fighters?

Yes. You had to hide your child and tell the police or the activists that they weren't home.

(0:42:09.2) The fear and terror was coming from both sides? The police and the freedom fighters?

We were scared of everyone and everything. It was a tough time. Now? Now it's easy. There is still oppression but it's not like before. We've come a long way. I went to school in an open field and we couldn't just sit at home we had to go to school even though we weren't allowed too. We would be told schools have been shut down and no one is going.

And you listened?

No one was allowed to go to school. Schools were closed everywhere and our only option was staying at home.

(0:42:58.1) Was it common for girls to go to school back then?

We just weren't educated.

No, not the boycott. I mean did your parents encourage you to study as a girl child?

Uh, I would say you were trained to be a wife but also you could study to be someone. A teacher maybe or a nurse, that's what people generally studied to become.

If you weren't interested in marriage was that ok?

You could say you weren't interested. Your parents would listen to you and not force you into marriage if you did not want it.

Was not forcing your child into marriage a popular practice?

You would be forced into it but you could fight it and not agree to the arranged marriage by not complying with anything once you were taken to your new marital home. You would refuse to wear the traditional bridal clothing and just sit outside in the kraal naked.

What?

That was a way to show that you were rejecting the marriage.

So just because you were taken it didn't mean you were stuck in marriage you didn't want? What would happen then?

Well you would be eventually taken back home.

Really?

It is clear that you are rejecting the marriage so you are taken home. You don't belong there.

So, you are not forced to stay married?

If you don't want to be married no one can force that on you. Your family can't even force you to go back because you have been a disgrace (inyala) to the family you were supposed to be married into by sitting in their kraal. If you were really committed to leaving and displaying your rejection of the marriage you would soil yourself and sit right there next to your waste in the kraal.

Outside in the yard your new home?

Exactly there. You're then taken home.

And how would your parents react when you were brought back?

What are they going to do? There's nothing that they can do at that point.

Wow.

And you get a new name "Nyayo" (she who shits herself). Others would even smear the waste around the yard or even on themselves. It was a whole thing. I don't know all the details because I was quite young when a woman did that to a distant uncle of mine. I remember hearing adults talking saying "Nanku uNomvula unyile pha emanzothweni enkhundleni", she smeared it all over and on herself.

So...

You just absolutely refuse to cooperate and do anything that is expected of you.

Did the women realize the consequences of their actions?

You would know that you have done something ugly. The whole situation is just bad as you've disrespected another family's kraal.

Would parents be embarrassed?

What's that going to do for them? It's already done. There's nothing they can do, you've already created this ugly situation and you are the one that is disgraced not your parents. Afterwards you need to be washed and cleaned, there's a lot that must happen now.

Wow. So, while you were not consulted about getting married you were not forced to stay married?

You didn't have to stay. You could sneak out your first night there and by the time everyone wakes up you are long gone. And no one knows where you are or where you are going.

In this scenario you couldn't go home?

You didn't go home. It varied family to family, some would look for you and others didn't. And if your family found you first, you could be beaten before being sent back to your marital home.

But this was all family to family?

It depended on your family if you would be allowed to stay at home or if you would be forced to go back to your marital home. If you were beaten, you'd be sent back bruised and all. And when you got there you would be forced to wear the very same traditional bridal clothing and act like the wife you are supposed to be. Some women ended up staying, all bruised up in their traditional clothing. You stay, settle into being a wife and have children there. The whole ugly start fades with time and you forget that there was a time that you ran away from your husband and marriage.

Was the biggest problem the fact that normally you didn't know the man you were being forced to marry?

You don't know this man and also you were not even aware you were getting married until you were already married. Even little things like him being maybe ugly are a problem. Or maybe he was a rude and abusive person, you just didn't know.

How popular were this traditions and cultural practices?

Like the practice of 'ukuthwala'? It's something that has been around for a long time. I remember I was very young when it happened to my aunt for example, maybe I was 14 or 15. When my aunt got married she didn't even know her husband. She tried running away but my uncle, her father, hit her so she went back and not only did she stay she had children. She stayed, her husband later died but by then they got along quite well. I also remember it happened to one of my cousins though she knew her husband and wanted to get married.

Was this sort of thing still happening in the 70s and 80s?

It had already happened.

I mean where these practices and traditions still happening in the 70s and 80s?

Yes, they still happened.

Do they still happen today?

Uhm, it depends.

On?

It's not as popular as it was back then, things don't happen that way.

When did the change occur?

I think parents realized that you can't force your children to do something that they don't want to do. A husband can't be forced on you. It's like being forced to eat while you are not hungry. Raising my children, I realized it was easier to let people choose their own partners because you force a child into something and they may end up committing suicide.

Do you think the change happened because women were being seen as more than homemakers and mothers?

You can choose for yourself now and decide what you can handle. You don't have to be in a situation you don't want to be in. You can agree to something and then realize that it's too much for you and end up separating about 3 or 4 months. Maybe you don't like how things are run at your marital home, having to wake up early, cooking and always cleaning so if that life is not for you then you can just leave. As a parent I have no problem with that, I'm still here and if they are unhappy they can always come back home.

(0:51:23.7) Are children still important kwaXhosa today?

It depends on whether you and your partner want children or not.

What is the cultural perception of women who are not mothers? Are they treated badly?

It depends. My daughter who was born in 1983 doesn't have any children yet but I trust in God that she will eventually have at least one. But it depends.

Did you grow up in an era where it was important to have children?

I grew up at a time where you would always be hearing about babies being found after being dumped. So, talking with friends as a young woman while doing our duties like collecting water from the river we would discuss such things. I always said I could never throw away my child and those who do are dumb. You'll dump your child and then what?

Why were people throwing away children? Actually, how did you throw away a child?

You know when babies found?

Yes...

A young woman most likely gave birth and then went to go drop the baby off somewhere, sometimes just at the gate of a house. It could be the father of the child's home or just a random house. Babies have also been found dumped in rubbish bins. These things happen. You're not used to this are you?

Uhm...I think I've seen one or two cases on the news.

Things like this happen.

But they're not common right?

Yoh...yhu. It is.

Was it common back in the 1970s/ 1980s?

It wasn't really common back then. Sometimes you would see that someone was pregnant, see their stomach grow then suddenly there would be no big stomach and no baby. Where is the baby? No one knows.

So, you would see that a young girl is pregnant and...

And then nothing. There would be no child or stomach. Sometimes you would then here that an abandoned baby was found and there are no parents in sight.

Would that cause gossip?

Of course! You were pregnant! But now where's the baby? No one knows. It could be a miscarriage for some but not all.

Was this common amongst unmarried young women?

It happened to young girl children a lot, most with mothers who were equally embarrassed and ashamed of what their daughters were going through. Of course, this was not the same for all parents. It was complicated. The young woman would not be ready to raise a child but at the same time she was old enough to choose to sleep with a man and get pregnant. Young women might have felt that dumping the baby was the only solution.

Is there a difference in how children born in wedlock and those born out of it are treated?

How?

Are they seen as of equal value?

Having a child outside of wedlock? It's not really an ugly thing. I don't know everything...ok I will say this back then when you had a child out of wedlock it ended up not really being yours. What I mean is that usually the child ended up being raised by your parents, it would not really be your child. And if you got married, that child would stay with your parents. They are not yours, they belong to your parents. Your children are the ones you have in marriage with your husband. Your 'fall' child is not really yours.

Fall child?

It was called a 'fall', if you had a child while you were still at home. Or if you had a child while unmarried. But you can get married afterwards.

This 'fall' thing, what does it mean?

You have messed up. That child is ...let me say it like this, you have ruined...you have been ruined by the man that got you pregnant. And when you do get married, you can't bring the child you had as a girl with you. You have to leave them behind.

(0:56:32.0) Can boys be ruined? Or was it just girls?

A young man can have a child with another woman and then get married (thwala umfazi). And that child isn't his, his wife isn't going to take that child on. The child belongs to his mother's family.

But is he ruined?

He's ruined some girl but he's not ruined. His mistake is not the same as the girl.

Ok, that's what I'm trying to get at. There is a difference in how they are treated.

Yes, because the 'fall' happens at home. And once you get married, you can't bring that child to your new home. At least that's how it was back then. Today you can.

Is this 'fall' the loss of your virginity before marriage?

That's exactly how it was. And it works on some people, the fact that you came into marriage not a virgin (intombi).

Are you shamed because you're not a 'girl' anymore?

It depends, rude people might shame you. It depends on the type of family you marry into and how rude they are or aren't.

Ok.

Some families don't care because honestly what's the point? What does shaming her change?

Ok.

She's been chosen, she's your sons' choice. Her husband wants her. That was the one thing I never wanted to go through. I also prayed to God for my sons to find good women and to have their own stable homes. We would dress the new wife in the traditional bridal clothing and only have her stay with us for two weeks before they could both go start the lives alone and together. And that's how it happened. My youngest family actually got married first. Then my middle son. Their wives just stayed with me the first two weeks before they left. That's how it happened with all three of my daughters-in-law, God heard my prayers. They all have their own homes.

Is this type of thinking common?

I think it's different, no one knew what I was thinking. And only once it happened did I admit that things had gone the way I wanted. The new wife only needs to stay for 2 weeks with me and at the end of the second week she can go home to her husband. All my sons were stable and had their own homes. Everything worked out perfectly.

You didn't go the traditional route? Like how a wife generally lived with her in-laws because her husband was away.

I didn't want that life. It's chaotic and uncomfortable. It's very easy get annoyed, especially because you don't know each other very well and it's only maybe after 6 months that you start to slightly relax around each other.

And this way of doing things was different compared to how you were raised.

Having a strong relationship with your daughter in law is important, so that when you need something it's not a problem because she knows that you didn't treat her badly. And there's none of that ordering your daughter in law around thing was said to happen. I like doing my own work.

You never saw your daughters-in-law as...

Like slaves? Never. They are not slaves to me. I can wake up and I'll be the one making tea for her.

(1:01:06.6) How does your thinking compare to other mothers-in-law?

I think it's different.

The way you did things, was it common within your family?

I started it. I decided that I would never treat my daughters-in-law the way I was treated by my husband's family as a new bride. I didn't want to do what was done to me, I made a choice to be different.

How were you treated?

Back then you would get married and go into your marriage with the best of intentions. I was well mannered and I was not confrontational while being told to do this and that and everything else by different people. You are stressed out by running around like you're stupid trying to do everything at one. Though with me it didn't last long because I told them that I was not crazy. That I had a brain, and just because I was quiet by nature it didn't mean I couldn't see what was going on. I told them I was not scared or intimidated. I was raised in a good family. I was raised by my grandmother then my aunt and uncle. I was taught right and wrong growing up so no one was going to tell me what to do.

You refused to be taken advantage of?

I am a hard worker, I know what to do. My mother-in-law used to test me all the time. And the way to prove yourself to someone is through hard work. Just do what you are supposed to do, that's all. Don't make a scene, just wake up and work. Make coffee, sweep the house, I deep cleaned Wednesdays and Fridays. My mother-in-law would wake up and go sit outside while I made tea and breakfast for her. Afterwards, prepare breakfast for everyone going to work and make sure they all leave on time. Then go back inside the house, finish cleaning and then you can relax. I didn't see anything wrong with relaxing once I was done. The family would come back from work and if it was clean there was nothing they could do.

You never felt like you were being forced to do something you didn't want?

I did what I wanted. I used plan what I needed do, like getting the cow dung and water mixture ready to paint walls. The first time I did it they were so shocked that I could and told them of course I could paint the walls. They were surprised because they thought I came from PE (township, urban) and I told them that I was only ever a visitor in PE, I grew up working hard. I can build and fix the walls of a house...well a mud house not like the bricks of today.

Did lobola feel like you were being sold?

No. Honestly, I didn't pay attention to the whole thing. My uncle handled everything.

Because you'd already chosen your husband?

He was already mine.

And the traditional of it all?

I didn't really get involved.

Because...

Because I'd already found my husband myself and we just survived on our own.

Oh ok. I think we're done.

We are done.

Thank you for everything.

Ok sisi.

Thanks.

Nomangesi

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

What is your name, where were you born? Where did you grow up?

I am Nomangesi Taalbox. I grew up eDikeni.

Where's that?

Near Alice.

Oh ok. How old are you?

I am 54.

Did you grow up with both your mother and father?

I grew up with my mom and dad.

In the rural areas?

Yes.

Were you an only child?

No, I did not grow up alone.

How many of you were there?

There were lots of us growing up at home.

Exactly how many?

There were 13 of us.

All from your mom and dad?

Yes.

Was that common? Having big families?

Yes...I think? There were 13 of us at home then my father also had children outside of his marriage from my mother. My mother actually raised the children my father had outside the marriage, we all grew up together.

Growing up, was there a difference between how you were raised and how your brothers were raised?

There was no difference.

Growing up, what were you told the place of a girl was in the home?

The place of a girl?

Yes.

The place of a girl?

What was expected from you?

Your job as a girl was to wake up early, cook...uhm we used to gather wood so you had to do that. We grew up gathering wood because it was before electricity arrived. We gathered wood, we worked the land and we would also have to polish the house and the floors with cow dung.

And then...

We also used to grind corn into maize meal, we ate a lot of samp and my family farmed a lot and had a huge garden. We would grind the corn and harvest the garden and fields. We would also have to go collect water from the river.

Did your mother speak to you when you reached puberty? And if she did what did she say?

Reaching puberty? We were told that as girls we weren't supposed to play with boys and that we had to be home before the sunset. By the sun goes down you should have long been at home. Then when you start your periods you were supposed to tell your family and you would then be told how to deal with it.

So, you knew that your period was something that was going to happen before you started?

No, I knew it was coming but it was still shocking when it happened.

What did your mother say?

She told me to hide it and put something in my underwear. This was before pads, we used to use strips of cloth.

Was your period something you were ashamed of?

You would feel ashamed; your period wasn't something that was meant to be just seen by anyone.

Did your mother then tell you what it meant?

She said I had reached a certain stage in my life, that I was grown up. It was made very clear that I was grown up and that because I had started my periods I now could not talk to boys anymore.

Did you understand what she meant when she said don't talk to boys?

I had no idea what she was talking about.

It was all new to you?

I didn't know what she was talking about.

Oh ok. Then you grew up, did you get married?

No, I've never been married.

Was marriage important? Or was it just something one did if they felt like?

Marriage was important because as a girl you would sometimes be chosen and forcibly married off to some man to avoid things like you having children while still at home or while you were still unmarried. It was done to avoid having children while you were still a girl at home.

Was having children while still at home a bad thing?

It wasn't really ugly but back then it was a matter of respect

Ok...

It was disgraceful to some people to have a child outside of marriage, it was even worse if you were still in school. Getting pregnant while you were still at school? You were now disgraced and you were a source of shame. What was expected from you as a girl was to finish school and then get married. That's all.

Why didn't you get married?

I never wanted to get married.

And you could...you were never forced?

I was never forced to do anything. It was during the time where the importance of marriage declined and I didn't have to marry anyone. There was no need to marry girls of by force anymore if they didn't want to get married.

What did you grow up being told about the importance of marriage?

It was said that the home or the place of a woman was in marriage.

Yeah? Your home wasn't your family?

Your family wasn't your home, the home you grew up in was not your real home.

So ...?

So, you got married and went to your true home. My sisters for example got married. Everyone got married and only two of us were left at home unmarried.

When did you have children?

I had a child when? I had my child while I was still very young. I was 16 or 17 when I had a child.

What year was that?

My first child was born in 1979 and I had my second one in 1997.

That's a big gap.

Yes. And then I had another one in 2002.

Oh ok. When did you get to Cape Town?

I arrived in 1994.

And before you were eDikeni the whole time?

I left Dikeni and moved to East London. I went to school in Mooiplaas. Then afterwards I went back home for a while before moving permanently to Cape Town because I wanted a job.

When you had your first child in 1979, were you scared?

I was scared because I didn't know how I was going to have the baby.

What did you know about children at that time?

Well...I loved children. And I still do. I actually currently watch children to...I don't work so I watch children for people who have to work here (in Khayelitsha). I raise their children and watch them, for example if the mom works security at night they can leave their child with me. So, I've always loved children since I was young.

When you were having your child in 1979, did you know that you were having a child? Or was it something that you were shocked by?

I was really shocked because I didn't even really have a big belly. I only found out I was pregnant around when I was 6 months along. I really never even had a stomach, I only found out...I knew something was wrong and I thought I had maybe been bewitched or maybe I ate something wrong. or...

Were you able to put it together that sleeping with a boy meant you might end up pregnant?

I never put it together, I... I only slept with a boy one time. I hadn't even started my period.

You hadn't started menstruating?

Yes. So, I went to go tell my family and that's when they discovered I was pregnant. It was because of playing games like hide and seek. You'd be playing the game and hiding while a boy was busy sneaking towards you.

Was that common? Can you explain the whole hide-and-seek game thing? What happened exactly?

With hide-and-seek game others knew what playing the game meant and others didn't. Some would know but wouldn't care. We were all children but at the same time our brains all develop differently...we uh...how can I say explain this? Some children would know more than others (ukundweba) and be overly curious while others just weren't. And back then some girls wouldn't tell anyone that they'd started their period, they would just sort themselves out while no one at home knew. Then maybe at school they would just see it when you bled through on your uniform, you'd be sent home and at home you'd be asked about when you started and why you didn't tell anyone. You would probably get a hiding for lying and because when you start your period there are things that you need to be told by your mother and you need to be taught about how to deal with your period.

You said that when you got pregnant you hadn't started your period?

I hadn't started my period. I only started when I ran into the problem...I only started when I was raped. I was playing hide-and-seek when it happened. Afterwards I immediately went home and told what had happened. It then became a case of he-said, she-said...he couldn't even be arrested because he was also still so young. Then the adults decided it was best to talk among themselves about what had happened, the boy then told me that I was probably pregnant and I went to tell my mother. My mother said that he was lying and that because it was only a one-time thing I was probably not pregnant, she was convinced that I wasn't pregnant and that everything would be fine. Life then moved on, my mom made me sleep in bed with her...I mean, I grew up sleeping in the same bed as my mother anyway.

Ok.

I then kept having pregnancy pains...well, I was in pain and I didn't even know what was happening or what was wrong. I kept saying I had a sore stomach and I kept wanting to go to the bathroom. My parents felt it would be safer to take me to the hospital where I was told that I was pregnant.

You were in labour?

No, it wasn't time yet.

Oh ok. Were you scared?

I was scared because I didn't understand how any of worked.

Oh. What did your mother say when talking to you?

My mother told me that I was now going to be a mother like her. She told me that I would have to watch over my child and that there was no other way. She then told me that if I talked to any boys again my baby would die, she really emphasized that.

And you believed that?

What happened was that I raised my child until they were 15, 16, 17. I just raised my child, I avoided boys the whole time because I was scared that my child would die. And if my child died I would be in trouble at home, I would get a beating.

(0:10:30.1) How did you parents react to your pregnancy? Was it shameful because you were not married?

It was a disgraceful and I was taken to his house...to the boy's house and my family told his family what had happened. He was then told to go to the bush and undergo the initiation ceremony. He was then told that he would not have any other wife besides me.

Ok...

Because he had already impregnated me. He couldn't just dump me.

So ...

I was already pregnant.

So, the adults decided the path forward and you're the one that decided to say no?

Oh me? I just hid and went away.

Where did you go?

I went to East London with my baby.

How old was your baby?

He was maybe 2 years old.

Because you didn't want to get married?

Yes, I didn't want to get married so I took my child and left. I went to East London to find a job. I then raised my child there and only went back home when my son was older. His father then asked why I had left because it had caused a huge fight within his family especially with his mother because he had gotten me pregnant while I was still a girl. He was expected to take care of me.

Did you know anyone in East London?

I was going to my sister; her husband was from East London.

Did your parents know where you were?

They didn't know at first. My sister eventually told them. I had told her that they were trying to forcibly marry me of the father of my child.

And you didn't want to?

Yes.

Do you think...

And my sister supported me, she didn't think I should get married either.

Did you not want to get married in general? Or did you not want to marry specifically the guy you were being forced to marry? The father of your child.

I didn't want to marry him because I thought he was evil.

If had been someone else?

No, I just didn't want to marry anyone.

Oh ok. Was your son treated differently because he was born outside of marriage?

There wasn't a difference...well at least to me since I never got married anyway. I raised all my children on my own. I saw how others raised their children and try to copy the good things. I then had more children here in Cape Town. And I raised them by myself, my parents died with me having never run back home for their help in raising my children. I went for the funeral and helped bury them, then came back to Cape Town and worked hard for my house. I have a house here in Cape Town now.

So, did you know anything about contraceptives?

I never used contraceptives.

Did you know that they existed?

Yes, I did know that there were things called contraceptives. You used to get the injection at the hospital after you gave birth.

Were you given the injection after you had your baby?

I was given the injection before I was released from the hospital after giving birth but I never went back again for another shot. I just never went back again.

Were you asked if you wanted the injection?

They don't ask you. The nurses just told me that I had to get the injection.

Because?

They said because there was a high chance that I would get pregnant again and have another child. And obviously that scares you as you've just given birth. But I told them that I wouldn't get pregnant again, I was just focused on raising my child and that my child was going to die if I had another one. I didn't know at the time that when my son got older I could have more children and he wouldn't die.

Oh ok. So, at the hospital you were given the...

I was given the injection.

What was the general reaction to birth control in the community? Was it something that was gossiped about or could it be casually discussed?

It was something that would be gossiped about because your child...it was widely believed that if you let your children use contraceptives you were sending them to go have premarital sex. It was seen essentially pushing your child into the street to look for boys to have sex with.

In your own recollection when were contraceptives first introduced? When did you start hearing about them?

I started hearing about contraceptives when I went into the hospital to have my baby.

Oh ok, and the belief at the time was that if you allowed your children to use contraceptives you were encouraging them to have sex?

By allowing your daughters to use contraceptives it was said that the parents were encouraging them to be out on the streets meeting boys.

Ok. In East London where did you work?

I worked in Bonza Bay.

Doing what?

I was working in the fields. And I also had a few part-time jobs as a maid.

Did apartheid have any impact on your life?

It was a difficult time but you did your best to survive.

Is there a difference between then and now (post-apartheid South Africa)?

Honestly, I think life is harder now than it was under apartheid.

Really? How?

Back then we really didn't need much. Today? It's difficult.

Yeah?

Life was much better back then.

Despite apartheid?

Yes. Everyday life was easier and of course things would happen. For example, at school there were constant strikes and we would be protesting and such the police would come and attack us. When that happened it was painful, what the white people were doing to us was very painful but despite all of that I think I prefer how it was compared to today. There wasn't as much violence as there is today, we have people jumping over fences into our houses now.

Here? (Khayelitsha)

Yes, here! No one is scared of anyone today. People didn't have any guns unless they were police officers. Guns weren't readily available, I don't even think all police officers had guns because the level of crime simply didn't even warrant it. We also respected the police during apartheid. Today? There is little if any respect for the police.

When you think about apartheid do...in East London did you live in the township?

Yes, I was in the township.

Was there a difference in how apartheid was present in the township versus the rural areas?

I didn't really feel apartheid or know about it in the rural areas...it started when I was in East London raising my son but even then, not really.

Oh ok. So how was...

Things were really good at first. And there were lots of jobs available unlike today. These days there aren't any jobs which is why you see so much crime. Because we raise our children under difficult circumstances and yet...uh.

When you think about apartheid you remember an easier life?

I remember my life under apartheid very fondly, we enjoyed life back then. Now? No.

When did life change?

For me things seemed to start going bad when the black man got into power.

Yeah?

Life became much harder. Now that we as black people are in charge? I can't say anything nice.

Yeah?

It's not like when the white people were in charge. Sure, the white person could be oppressive towards you but you never went to bed hungry. Today? We don't even have electricity, we just sitting around. Back then electricity was available but we didn't need it because not everything ran on electricity. Everything just seems more difficult today.

Oh wow. Going back to children...was it important to have children?

I don't think they're important...not anymore.

What is the place of children kwa-Xhosa? Did women have to have children?

Yes, as a woman you had to have children but according to the rules.

What rules?

I mean you had to be married so that you wouldn't have to raise your children difficultly. You know...I don't think it was that difficult for me to raise my children because sometimes you look around and see a parent really struggling. You see children freezing outside because they don't have anything warm to wear or you see girls too young for a child who still want to go out for a good time that they can't afford. So, having children is really not that important.

When for you did that change happen? When did children go from being important to not?

My child, there are situations where you can very clearly see whether someone is ready for a child and there are situations where it quite obvious that the mother had no business having children because they have no care at all.

So, the idea that wives should have children simply because they're wives no longer exists?

Yes...well, the thing is if you know that you can raise and take care of a child then you can have one even if you're not married. Not this...I don't support this thing of girls not using contraceptives and just having baby after baby or even having abortion after abortion, just throwing away babies on the street. You see? So much is happening so having children is really no longer important.

Did you know about abortions while you were growing up?

I never heard about abortions.

Ok...

Yeah, we never had abortions back then. Which actually further emphasizes my point when I say that things today are really bad. Today you'll just be walking down the street and you'll see a dead baby stuffed in a drain.

And that's life today?

Yes. Things like that are only happening today. In my time, while we were oppressed we also knew what we had to do and we had a purpose. Back then there also wasn't this thing of people going to hospitals or wherever to give birth. You gave birth at home.

Ok. But you had your child at the clinic?

Yes, I gave birth in a clinic but my mother gave birth to me at home.

What number are you out of the 13?

Me? I am uh...I'm number 11.

Did your sisters help in raising you? And the other younger children?

In raising us? Yes, they helped raise us younger children because our mother worked.

She worked?

In the kitchens as a cleaner so we had to be looked after by our older sisters when they came back from school. It was before creches, it was long ago. What happened while my mother was at work was that...well either you'd go with her, despite the oppression, because she couldn't leave you in the village alone or in the house alone. She would be forced to me with her.

So, your sisters were helping out, were your...

My sisters helped out when they were finished with school, usually it would be in the way back home they would go fetch me and I would stay with them. That's how they helped and gave our mother a break so that she could work better. So, they'd fetch me or any of the younger children from our mother.

And your brothers?

They would also help, they also helped in raising us the younger children.

So, it wasn't just your sisters that were expected to help out in raising you and the other younger children?

No, it was never just my sisters' job to help raise us.

So, everyone was involved?

Yes, it was very important for our brothers to also learn how to carry and soothe a child.

Oh wow. And that's the time of house you grew in?

Yes.

Where you, your brothers and sisters were all treated the same?

Yes.

Growing up did you feel like your family was differently because of how you were raised? Or was it normal?

It differed house to house, family to family.

You grew up in a home where you and your sisters and your brothers all did the same jobs?

Yes. We never had that thing where we were told; no that's a boy's job or that's a girl's job. Everyone knew what to do and whoever was home did what needed to be done. Whoever was done with school first would go fetch me from my mother at work while the next person would go home and start cooking. Remember this was before we had electricity, we used to have to make a fire outside. Starting from scratch, we had to first go gather wood. Everyone had to play a role and help out. Even with herding, if bodies were needed outside to help it didn't matter if you were a girl or a boy.

So, in your experience there was never a division between girls and boys?

At home we all slept together, we weren't separated into boys and girls.

Did a time come when you were separated?

It happened once we were quite grown up, when we could go out and find jobs to support ourselves and build our own house.

Build a house at home (on the family land)?

Yes, at home. You could build your own house right at home. We would all still cook in one house, eat in one house and you would only leave for your own house once it was time for bed. I never left because I slept in my parents' house.

Oh ok.

There was a room us as the children and my parents had their own room.

Oh ok, just one last thing...you came to Cape Town for work?

I came because I wanted to work so that I could support my children...well I still only had the one at the time. I left him at home and came to Cape Town.

What's the biggest difference between Cape Town and East London?

Well, one of the things I was definitely running away from was the father of my child, he was just there where I was.

Were there lots of jobs in Cape Town?

There were lots of jobs because there are farms here.

And you worked on farms?

Yes. Harvesting grapes, potatoes, apples and all these other things. There was always farming work.

I think we're done. Thank you so much. Thank-you.

Zingisa

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

What is your name? Where are you from?

I am Zingisa Nakani from Lady Frere.

Did you grow up there?

I grew up in Lady Frere. I went to primary school in Matyantya, which was also the name of my village. The town was Lady Frere and the village was Matyantya. I went to Matyantya school for primary. You know in the olden days you didn't go to school before you were 7. You would do pre-grade one, little grade one and big grade one then you would start standard B. Only after those four years would you start standard 1 which is what you call grade 1.

Ok, how old are you?

We didn't start school before 7 years. Then I went to Mount Arthur for high school. Primary was until standard 6 where you would have to do external exams which would allow you to go to high school. I studied at Mount Arthur where I failed my first year, I sort of did 5 years before I had to drop out in grade 9. Going back to how I grew up...

When were you born?

I was born in 1948. Going back to my childhood...I grew on a farm as my father was a ranger. I don't know what you would call it today, he looked after a section of the forest. So that's where I grew up, we were 10 children including twins. I was the fifth child. My experiences as a young girl was going to school, coming back from school, turning the garden, plant what was needed like potatoes. During the holidays would be the big turning of the garden, removing weeds and ploughing. We had a lot of vegetables in our garden: beans, pumpkins, corn and others.

So, you were a gardening family?

We ate from the garden. There was always fresh produce, vegetables and all types of fruits: peaches, leaches, oranges, lemons and pears. There was so much. We had corn and we would braai it over an open flame and eat it fresh.

So, was your job as a girl to help with the garden?

No, our job was to cook and help our mom with 'upeta', that's when we learnt to 'ukupeta'

What is 'upeta'?

To uh...it's using a fork spade in the garden.

To turn the soil?

Yes. We were taught to do that and the use the hoe in the unkept forest. Those were our duties. We had to cook the corn and prepare it for sale.

And what did the boys do?

My brothers planted and also helped us with turning the garden. We really did the same thing. They also ploughed using cows though sometimes we as the girls also helped. This was all before school, we would also have to cook before we left and take food to the workers in the fields during planting season. You would get to school around 10am or 11am, school would have already started and you would have missed the morning classes. But you never got in trouble because the teachers knew that you had duties at home to take care of before school.

Did you grow up with both your mom and dad?

I grew up with both my mom and dad. We all lived in a rondavel, all ten of us sleeping spread out on the floor. We each has our own blankets sleeping head to head. A rondavel is round so our legs would be facing the walls while our heads were directed to the centre of the house. Our parents had beds, our dads' bed was on one side of the rondavel and our mothers was on the other side. We as the kids grew up sleeping on the floor.

So, there were ten of you?

Yes, there were 10 of us.

Was the size family common?

How?

The children...was it common for people to have a lot of children?

Yes, back then people gave birth until they just couldn't have any more children. Women didn't have anything to prevent pregnancies.

What was the job of a woman and a mother?

Her job is to guide her daughters, teach them how to turn the garden and also how to clean when you come back from school. And just how to be clean and tidy up the house. Her job was to teach them to clean, how to cook and just everything. She made sure we were involved in everything from hoeing the fields, weeding the garden and learning how to cook different vegetables. She taught us everything. We had shuck corn and then use big rocks to make samp.

Was there a difference in how you were raised as a girl versus your brothers?

There wasn't much difference because we as the girls were also involved in doing things like milking the cows. We were also involved in herding the cattle but as girls we wouldn't go to the mountains get the wayward cattle back, the boys did though. The boys had to separate the calves from their mothers. Then at school in Mount Arthur we had prayers. I just realized it now watching the World Cup when England was playing that we prayed using the English national anthem instead of Our Father Who Art in Heaven. Our principle was from England, so he made up sing their national anthem. I just realized that now. We sang it every morning during prayers.

Growing up, what were you told about your period?

We were never told about anything about periods. What happened was that as a young girl I was told by my older sisters that I would bleed, and when that happened I would have to find old underwear, cut it up and use the cloth strips like a pad. My mother was never involved.

She never said anything?

She never said anything.

When you started, what did you think was happening?

I didn't know anything except that as a girl I bled, that there's a time when you bleed. My older sisters would help me, telling me to use strips of cloth to line my clean underwear. My mother was never involved in anything really. Though there was once an incident with me when I was sixteen while I was at Mt Arthur where I was taken as part of 'uthwalwa'. I went through that whole incident. Do you know 'uthwalwa'?

Explain it.

'Ukuthwalwa' is when men arrive, take you and forcefully marry you off. What would that be called now? There's another name...but anyway it was only hours later, before even nightfall my mother and sister arrived to come fetch me. If you're fetched by your mother the men can't...remember you're taken and guarded by men so that you won't try and escape before you meet your husband that night. But for me it never got that far because my mom and sister arrived before night time to fetch me.

Why could your mom and sister fetch you?

They went in...

They have the power to come...

When your mother comes to fetch you, calling your name and telling you to come out you have to come out of the house you are being kept in and go with her. The men guarding you have no right to stop her or you from leaving. It means the marriage is being denied, your mom is fighting for you. Back then the whole process was not as forceful as it is today when it happens to these young girls because they aren't even given a chance for their moms to come fetch them. Though some mothers do agree to the whole thing but my mother did not agree for me to be married off.

So, if your father had arrived what would have happened?

My father could not be the one to fetch me because he was the one who had arranged for me to be taken, him and my brothers...my eldest brother. Because when people come from the other family to ask for your hand they talk to your father and brothers. Though the people that took me didn't even go to my home, who knows where they met up with my father and brother to arrange everything. We never saw them at home, we never saw them coming to start the process and ask for me. It was not like that, the way they did it was very dodgy. But luckily my mother fetched me before anything happened to me. I had spent the night then she would have had a problem because I would have already been raped by the man who was supposed to be my husband and I would have maybe already been pregnant. So, it's important that you're fetched before anything happens.

(0:15:46.3) Did you mom talk to you about what happened?

She asked me if anything had happened and I told her nothing had happened yet, that I was still sitting and waiting when they came. Though she already knew that nothing had happened because everyone was waiting for nightfall because that's when things happen...at night. So that's what I went through.

What did she say to comfort you? Actually, were you scared?

I was scared. I was angry. I was frustrated. I had all those emotions thinking about how all this time my father was busy planning this. But I never...how do I say this, there was never...like my mother just fetched me from that house and she never said anything afterwards. I think she might have asked me if they (the men who took me) had hurt me and I said no. That was that, there was no reassuring me.

Oh, so she never said anything else?

She never said anything about me being taken again. It became something that was not talked about.

Was that common? Her not talking to you? Did she ever talk to your sisters about any of it?

No. We were not told anything back then. We just existed.

Why do you think that was?

Firstly, we were living in ignorance and secondly, my mother was doing what was done to her. My generation only realized later through education that it was important to talk to your child about things like periods. Growing up things like that just weren't talked about, from periods to what happens when you go through 'ukuthwalwa'. None of it was ever talked about.

Why was that? Did it have anything to do with shame? Or embarrassment?

It was shameful and at the same time...menstruation was also not talked about, it was something you weren't told about. You know long, long ago if you were on your period had to sit behind the door. A blanket would be laid out for you and you would just sit there until you finished menstruating. And once you were done, the blankets would be taken and burnt then you would clean/polish (usinda) the floor where you were sitting. So, it was generally something that was not talked about.

Was it like you had done something wrong? Or something? How were you feeling with having to hide that you were on your period?

You just feel ashamed. And with the incident, I didn't even have a chance to talk to anyone about it because I went to school. I couldn't talk to anyone about how I had gone through 'ukuthwalwa'. It was something very shameful because it was something that was not spoken about.

Did you get married?

Eventually? No, I didn't get married.

No, I mean in the future.

No. No.

So, you never...

No, I never got married.

Why?

I think...there was a guy once, he was a teacher, who went to go ask for my hand but I didn't love him. And there were others, when I was training as a nurse in Pretoria, who asked but those who came forward weren't men I was interested in. You and your partner have to talk first before he goes to your family to ask for your hand so for me there was never anyone I okayed to go ask my family. Furthermore, I was still traumatized. I hated men because of what happened. That incident stayed with me, it was always at the back of my mind.

(0:21:25.3) Do you have any children?

Yes, I have.

How many?

Two. It was uh...one (of the fathers) was married and the (father) of the first one just didn't want to be a part of anything.

When did you have children?

I was quite old by the time I had children. I was 26 with the first one and the second one I was uh...I think I was about 39.

What years was that?

The first one was 1975 and the other one was 1986.

So how was...

What were my affairs like?

Yeah.

They weren't healthy affairs because with the father of my second child it was just one incident and I got pregnant. With the first one, uhm I was on holiday and I got pregnant by someone who didn't bother to get back to me even after I wrote him a letter telling him that I was pregnant. He was just not interested.

What was it like having children outside of wedlock?

It was...back home my father did not approve but my three oldest sisters already had children so I just followed their example.

Out of wedlock?

Yeah, they weren't married. One of them eventually did get married but it took a while, she got married after her fourth child.

Was it common to have children outside of marriage?

No, it wasn't common but it happened at home. I personally believe this was karma for my father because of what he tried doing to me with 'ukuthwalwa'. That's how I justified it, that's how I made myself not care because having a child outside of wedlock was shameful as your child was fatherless.

Did you have your children at a hospital or clinic?

I had them both at the hospital.

So, this was the 70s and later the 80s?

Yes.

Were hospital births common?

Yes. I was actually working at a hospital. I had already trained, I was a professional nurse. So, for both of them...

When did you start with that? Can you tell me about your nursing career? When did you start? Where did you work?

I started in 1969, it was a practical and theory programme. There was a split where we would work and then go to school. So, you did this until you qualified as a professional nurse. It was a 3 and half year programme where at the end you wrote an exam and got your general nursing degree. In nursing school, we (as black students) studied with coloured students while white students were on their own. This was at H.F. Verwoerd, we studied with coloured students.

Where was this?

H.F Verwoerd in Pretoria.

Pretoria? Oh ok.

Our salaries weren't equal, the coloured nurses earned more than us while the white nurses earned even more. There was that with the salaries, we only realized it when we were doing the midwifery block. The coloured nurses started discussing their salaries, come to find out they were getting so much more than us. We continued with the programme, passed our general exams and started midwifery. After finishing the midwifery block you then could work as a professional nurse. What happened with nursing and uh...uh what happened with nurses and apartheid was the differences in our salaries. And that we (as black nurses) worked more. There are many more our people, and they have been sick for a long time so we had that burden. For white nurses it was...for example we would be nursing 18 people in a ward while two white nurses were nursing only three people. That's how things were. We were really an oppressed people, even our food was expired. Another thing that happened...you want to ask something?

I was just going to ask where you were working?

I was working in Kurumaan, and I got pregnant and gave birth there.

Where is Kuruman?

It's in the North West...no Northern Cape, near Kimberley.

Oh, I see.

So, I gave birth to my son there. Afterwards I worked in Volksrust, that was in 1985.

Where's Volksrust? Also, in Kuruman?

No, it's not in Kuruman. I stopped working there when I got pregnant. I then went to go work at Velezane before moving to Volksrust where...

Where's Volksrust?

Volksrust is between Standerton and Newcastle.

What province is that?

I think it's Mpumalanga, around Ermelo.

Ok.

It's Limpopo or Mpumalanga, something like that. So anyway, at that time it's when the children were being shot at with rubber bullets. I remember there was a group of young men that we were always with, they would come and fetch us at night. We had to steal supplies like forceps, scalpel blades and their holders from the hospital to help remove rubber bullets from the children who had been shot in garage bathrooms. They (young activists) would collect those who had been shot and drop them off in garages instead of hospitals because they would most likely be arrested in hospitals where they would be taken and tortured or even killed. So, we had to remove the rubber bullets.

When you say tortured, do you mean shot at again?

They were taken at night and dropped off at garages. And we (as nurses) had to come and remove the rubber bullets. At times it was touch and go so you would have to administer a drip so that they would have some energy. The drips would then be removed by cadres later, we had taught them how to remove drips because if you had been shot at by the police the next morning you had to show up at work like nothing ever happened.

Were you not scared?

Of course, we were scared because we could have been caught. If you get caught not only are you guilty of stealing hospital supplies you're...we also would have been arrested. But we were lucky, we were never caught.

How did you get involved in this whole thing?

It was through friends. There was a guy named Ray, he was our friend. He sold alcohol and he was a promoter of sorts, what do you call it? He was a rep for alcohol. He was our friend. And he got us involved and would fetch us. We never went if it wasn't Ray fetching us because we felt safe with him. We knew he would never sell us out or take us to an ambush where we would be arrested.

Why did you help?

We were told that some of these children would end up dead if we didn't help. Or some would be arrested and tortured so...not everyone who was hurt was brought to us, just the really bad cases like those who had been hit with rubber bullets. Those most injured were likely leading the protests and marches. They would be really hurt, especially on their backs from where they were running away from the police.

So, this was your way of helping?

It was my way to help because it was...uh...it was just my way of helping though I wasn't totally aware. What I did know was that if we got caught by the white people we would be arrested. We would also be arrested for stealing hospital supplies. We were in constant fear and you had to be careful because you couldn't be found with these things as you would end up in jail. And your career would be over.

Were there male nurses at the time?

No, there were no male nurses.

So, it was just a group of women?

Yes.

Just helping out...

Yes, helping out in the different garages. You couldn't take injured people home, they were dropped off at garages. I don't know why they were dropped off in garages but I never asked, just did what I was asked to do and help. And if there was a lot of police surveillance we didn't even move and we just waited on Ray to tell us when it was safe. You know, I no longer even know his surname or anything but he was the one who was in charge.

Where was this?

In Standerton.

Around which years?

It would have been around 1985...1984, 1985 because I got pregnant in 1986. Towards the end of December, I was pregnant end of 1985...not I got pregnant in 1986. And then that's when I stopped. I told them that I was pregnant and I couldn't...it was '84, '85, '86. Things were really difficult, children were constantly being shot at by rubber bullets. I think they had just arrived; rubber bullets were still new and they didn't have that thing that they throw now.

Stun grenades?

Yeah, they didn't have that. When the protesters were getting rowdy they would be shot at using rubber bullets.

(0:36:15.3) When did you first start hearing about contraceptives?

It was in nursing. I could have used them but never did. What I used was the loop...insertion of loop. A doctor did it but it made me bleed so I had to take it out and stop using it. After that I didn't use anything. I didn't want to use the pill because it was too much energy, you had to take it every day at the same time so I was not...I tried but I kept forgetting so I was always defaulting.

What year were contraceptives introduced?

Uhm it was as early as 1975 when I was pregnant with my first child I had already heard about contraceptives. We were told...taught about them so that we would be able to teach others in how to use them. I didn't use contraceptives knowing about them and I fell pregnant.

What was the reaction to contraceptives?

Reaction to contraceptives by people was that of defaulting because...I never heard that a person...well except that perhaps someone would heavily bleed. There were pills though to help with or prevent heavy bleeding. I would advise people to use the injection instead. The problem with Depo though was that I am already big and I didn't want to get bigger so I never tried it.

And the social reaction? Were contraceptives seen as a good thing?

The reaction to contraceptives by the people was the belief that Depo made them fat. That was the big reaction, people would say it was an injection for cows.

What?

It was an injection for cows. So, people had a negative reaction to Depo as a result because it made you fat. And that it wasn't meant for humans but animals. That was the reaction from people. Then with the pill, there are some people who were illiterate and didn't understand the difference so they were just given the injection immediately after giving birth. They were also told to go to the clinic regularly for check-ups all the while not knowing that they had been given injection so that they couldn't get pregnant.

So, people were getting injections without their knowledge?

Yes, it was protocol after giving birth. Especially if you were a young girl, we would just inject you and give you a clinic card so you would come in for your regular check-ups.

Why was it done that way?

It was to prevent...there was a time when it was done to ensure no one was getting pregnant. There was increased fertility so this was done to stop it. We just had to inject everyone even when I was in Glen Grey.

Where?

Glen Grey, it's in Lady Frere. I moved back home. We injected everyone.

(0:41:14.1) Regardless of whether the women wanted the injection or not?

Yeah, it didn't matter if they wanted it or not every patient left the maternity ward injected. Whether you asked for the injection or not, whether you had applied for it or you didn't none of that mattered. You see people were ignorant back then, we weren't educated and even those who were educated didn't know much about contraceptives but...like for instance when the HIV crises started with the

high death numbers the protocol was just to sterilize everyone who was positive after they gave birth so that they wouldn't have more children because those children would also be HIV positive.

So, the decisions were made for women?

At the beginning the doctors decided for them.

Where was this policy coming from?

Uh?

Like who told you (as nurses) to give the injection to women after giving birth?

It was not really directed at us the nurses but doctors were told.

So, the doctors told you as the nurses to inject women with Depo after giving birth?

It was just known...I don't really remember how. I just know that the doctor decided on sterilizations. And with giving people Depo I think that was decided on a higher level. We would give them cards so that they could come every three months and they would come not even knowing that the injection they were getting was Depo until eventually a few people realized what was going on. It was only then that it was explained and the women were then given a choice on whether they wanted to continue or not.

Regarding Depo and other contraceptives, was there ever any talk of contraceptives being a way to decrease the black population?

You see that type of thinking only emerged...no, that never...contraceptives were administered mostly to young girls or women with a lot of children...especially those who would have several children outside of marriage and would just keep having more. Back then there wasn't even grant money, young girls were just having children who would end up being problems for their parents. We saw contraceptives as a way to stop unmarried young girls from having children who would end up being raised by their grandparents while they went to Johannesburg only to end up pregnant again. That's how we justified administering contraceptives.

When did you move back to Lady Frere?

I moved back in 1986-----

What was reproductive care like back then?

We had a lot of people coming in for pre-natal care. We would have anything from 30 to 50 people coming into the pre-natal clinic.

What made people start having smaller families?

I think it's because people became educated. Long ago people were uneducated but what changed was that they became educated and contraceptives were introduced so that women could better space their children so that they would have small children back to back.

But what do you think changed in society? Do you think growing up things would have been the same had there only been two of you? Or were ten children necessary?

I think previous generations were having sex and not preventing. Women would sleep with men and get pregnant, there was nothing they could do. They had very limited knowledge and didn't know how to prevent pregnancy. People back then had a lot of children. For example, my uncle and aunt had 13 children.

When did you move to Cape Town?

I moved to Cape Town in 2012 to move in with my daughter and her husband. She married herself off, her husband only paid five cows for lobola as a start and never finished. My daughter called me while pregnant with her second child and back in the Eastern Cape I wasn't working because I had retired. I stopped working at 49 because of back problems so I cashed in my pension which wasn't much but I managed. I stopped working in 1998 and had to start again in the mid- 2000s. I worked in Port Alfred for about 9 years but I was on contract and I was let go in 2012. And that's when my daughter called, she and her husband were always asking for money so I thought it would be easier if I just moved in them. I sold my house and moved in with them but it didn't work out so I ended up moving out as I was paying the majority of their bills. I moved out and ended up buying this house (in Lwandle), my daughter didn't want me move out and we had a huge falling out so we don't talk anymore.

(0:55:17.3) Ok. Was there a difference between the 60s and the 70s? And then 70s and 80s?

Yes. The 70s... the 60s I was young. But the 70s and 80s there was a difference. The struggle became more violent, especially in the 80s more than the 70s. People were accused of being traitors (impimpi) and were being necklaced with tires. There was a lot of black on black violence during the 80s. And the 90s... did you ask me about the 90s?

I asked between the 60s, 70s and 80s.

Ok, 60s was a time where people were ignorant but there were those who were...I explain the difference exactly but during the 60s there was not as much activism. I don't think we were really aware, there were some activities but...

So, a shift happens in the 70s?

The 60s was when women marched against the dompas and its laws. There were big dompases that you had to wear around your neck during the 60s. I know women protested them but back then I was not aware of what was happening exactly, I was still a young girl. So, I was not actively involved. Then in the 70s things became more open, there was knowledge and we learnt to critically think. I remember when we were in Kuruman, there were two nurses who were in exile and while I was still training in midwifery I remember Siphokazi Sokupa would take me to some meetings under the bridge. I couldn't tell you what was discussed or talked about there.

Why?

I can't even say but it was very harsh. You couldn't understand what was going on especially if it was your first time there but Siphokazi would try and explain it to me. I relied on her a lot, she would also speak at these meetings.

So, this is what? The 60s?

This was the 70s.

Oh, the 70s...ok.

It was around 1973, 1974 because I was doing midwifery. Afterwards I heard that Siphokazi was going to exile, her husband was already gone. I think she was pregnant when she left, I'm not sure if she had the baby here or in exile. Her older two children were brought back to be raised by her sister here. I think they went to Kenya

So, how would you say apartheid affected your life?

With school we had to study under bantu education, you know when we got to standard 7 we had to start writing things in English. So, we were constantly having to first write essays in Xhosa before

translating it to English. For every subject, it was difficult. There was a constant delay in your mind because you had to translate everything first. So that was the education I had until I left school. I left school in the late 60s. And it was in the 70s when bantu education was changed to Afrikaans. On top of the protests regarding Afrikaans there was also a lot of black on black violence because there were already cadres who had agendas. And there were different factions and innocent people would be accused of being traitors. So, there was that unrest. We also couldn't go to the bioscope anymore during the 70s. It started being violent in cinemas. School children from East London used to have to walk long distances and when the violence started they, especially girl children, were affected and couldn't go to school. Schools were either closed or there would be faction fights between people who wanted to go to school and those who wanted schools to be shut down. Of course, the root cause of all this was apartheid, there was a lot of paranoia.

Did you see yourself as oppressed?

I would say yes, I really saw and experienced it in my nursing career. While I was studying I didn't see it. For example, what I said about the English national anthem and how I just realized what it was now. And how the education system was set up. It was like the knowledge light bulb was switching on and off. Growing up we had to do hard labour like going to plant crops in the field which is actually tractor work but we did it manually. We also had to harvest ourselves. All this work which a machine could do. Later, my father was able to organize a few machines to do the work we had done for so long. We never had time to just sit around and loiter. In summer you're planting, in winter you're harvesting and the whole time you're going to school. We didn't have time.

(1:07:03.1) Did you feel oppressed by your father?

My father was not as involved as my mother but it was...we were under a lot of pressure. In our minds, remember we were very close minded, to us our mother was the one who was oppressing us. Even with her we didn't really see it as oppression because she was just teaching us about life and how to live. It's only later once we went out and started working that other children had...we would see them wearing berets and getting on the bus going to town while we were out in the fields turning the soil. We felt oppressed more at home rather than outside. I only felt oppression from outside later in the 1970s, it was only once I was actively...in 1973 was when Siphokazi opened my eyes and I realized how blind we had been. She would casually bring up anti-apartheid topics while we were all hanging out on break as midwives, it was little comments here and there because I realize now that she was also very scared in case one of us turned her in. She taught us and we slowly realized what was going on and how oppressed we were. 'Ukuthwalwa' had nothing to do with apartheid, it was something that was done by black people. At home we were oppressed by the arrival of a chief who just came to stay with us.

What chief?

It was the Gcina chief. His name was Zwelixelile and he came to stay with us. My father was tasked with introducing him to the community because our area didn't know about chiefs but my father had some knowledge so we had to host him because as my father was a ranger we lived on government land.

And that's where the rondavel you grew up in was?

Yes. It was all really uncomfortable because there were witch doctors who tried to kill the chief but they were found and arrested.

Are children important kwa-Xhosa?

Very much, they are umnombho. Children are very important.

What is umnombho?

Uhm. Basically, it's the carrying over of...the carrying over of...

The continuation of one generation to the next?

Yes. One generation to the next generation. Umnombho is a generation in Xhosa.

Oh ok. I think we're finished. Thank you very much.

Nomakosazane

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

What is your name, where did you grow up and how old are you?

I am Nomakosazana Sihele. My home is Tsomo, I was born and raised there. I was raised by mother and my father passed away when I was about a year old. My mother was 'umuntu obomvu', she was uneducated but she did take me school.

In Tsomo?

Yes.

Is Tsomo a rural village?

The area is Tsomo, my village specifically is Ntsume. That's where I also went to school. I dropped out of school in grade 5.

When were you born?

Me?

Yes.

I was born 1944. In November.

Did you grow up as an only child?

At home there were four of us in total but growing up it was just me and my brother. Actually, I thought of my brother as my father.

Because he was older?

Yeah, he much older than me. He was my mother's first born. So, I stayed with him, thought of him as father since I didn't know our father. My two sisters stayed with our mother's family in Nqgamakho.

Why did they stay there?

They just wanted to live there.

Oh, so you could choose where you wanted to live?

Yes. They just wanted to stay in our maternal family's home. One stayed with our grandparents and the other with my mother's sister.

Oh?

Yeah, our aunt never had any children.

Was it common back then that if you didn't have children you would be lent one by a family member?

Yes. Our aunt requested my sister, Nomathamsanqa to go live with her because she never had any children of her own. She lived there until she went away for school in Standerton. My oldest sister who stayed with my grandparents did eventually move back home but then she got married shortly after that. I'm the one who spent the most time at home.

Growing up did you notice any difference in how you were raised versus your brother?

I just had the one brother. I think I had a good childhood. Things were different back compared to today.

How?

There were none of this picking and choosing what chores you want to do. My brother was the first born. I was born in 1944 and my brother was born 19 something...I don't know but he was much older than me. He was my mother's first born and she had a few miscarriages after him. He later moved here to Cape Town for work and I was left at home with our mother. Then I eventually got married.

Ok, so growing up what were you told about the place of a girl in the home?

How?

What was expected of you? What were your duties?

At home we were raised in a way...I grew up herding cattle, we had cows and sheep.

Was that usually a job for boys?

Yes, that's how it usually was back then. Herding cattle is traditionally work for boys but if there aren't any boys...I had to herd cattle growing. Your job as a girl was to be at home, you weren't supposed to be out on the streets visiting friends. You were supposed to stay home. If you wanted to play with your friend they were supposed to come over. You had to make sure that you're cleaned the house, waxed the floor with cow dung. Sweep outside, around the house.

What does 'ukusinda' mean?

The use of cow dung to wax the floor.

Oh ok.

You had to wax the floor inside and around the house. This was before we had cement or polish for the floor. We had to use cow dung, you had to clear the kraal and gather wood. We used to go to the forest to gather wood and prepare it on Saturdays. Monday to Friday you're at school, Saturdays you go gather wood. Those are the things we did. Well we gathered wood every other weekend but it was something that had to be done. Then we would grind corn into maize (ngqusha) because you couldn't buy samp back then. We did it ourselves. You know what ungqusha is right?

Yeah.

So, we prepared the corn. I had to do all these chores: prepare the corn, wash it and cook it. We also had to go collect water from the river carrying it in a bucket on our heads. The distance we had to walk to go collect water was quite far, you don't even know. It was so far. Those were our jobs.

(0:06:19.5) Why weren't you allowed to go visit friends? Why were you expected to stay home?

It just wasn't done. And from my personal experience my mother did not want us visiting other houses. She preferred us at home. As a result, that's how I raised my own children. I raised them how

I was raised though raising them in the township was different in that I grew up in the rural areas. My children always played in our yard, they weren't allowed to go to other people's houses. Unless there was an event that they were invited to they were not allowed to go visit. That's how I raised them.

Where did you raise your children?

I raised them in the rural areas.

In Tsomo?

Yes. Though I gave birth to them all here in Cape Town but I raised them in the rural areas.

The way you were raised?

I raised my children the way I was raised to the point where there would be gossip about how they looked down on others simply because they weren't allowed to go out and play at other people's houses. That accusation was so ridiculous because my children were children and were following my rules. Even when I allowed them to go it was limited.

As you grew up what were you told when you started your period?

About my period? You know, when I started my periods I had just moved from the rural areas to here in Cape Town. I was staying in Steenberg.

When did you arrive in Cape Town?

1958. I moved to Cape Town in 1958 to stay with my brother. The one I told you about, my one and only brother who was the only sibling I was raised with. I was having asthma problems so I came to Cape Town. When I got here we stayed in Steenberg, I did my standard 3 there in retreat. I came with my papers from my school in the rural areas. I started standard 3 while living here, going to school in Retreat. Back then...some of the places (suburbs and townships) weren't even around. Areas like Kensington existed but we were in Steenberg. My brother took me to doctors so that they could treat my asthma. I studied in Retreat and passed standard 3 then I went back home to study standard 4 in Tsomo.

So, what was said to you about your period?

Oh yes, that's where I was going with this. I started my period while living with my brother, you see? Him and his wife. I lived with them. My oldest sister was also staying here in Cape Town, we were all here but she lived with her husband because she was married. So when...I didn't know anything because my mother had never told me anything.

So, your period was something that wasn't talked about?

No, she never said anything. I was so shocked when it happened, it was in the morning or maybe in the evening? I no longer know, anyway I saw it and I immediately ran to my sister's house and told her. Well actually, when it first happened, I didn't say anything, I just kept changing my underwear and hiding the soiled panties but eventually I bundled them up and ran to my sisters. I went to her, I explained that something was going on even though I didn't remember cutting myself. She laughed then sat me down and explained that I was now grown up. She explained that I was starting my periods and that meant that I had reached a certain stage of life. Afterwards, she told me to wash the soiled panties...well she washed some of them for me. She also said she would talk to our brother for me.

Ok.

She called him 'bhuti' too because he was older. She said she would tell him herself. Afterwards, I left her place and went back home to my brother's house. The moment he arrived home from work everything just came out, I didn't even wait for my sister to come by and explain because I didn't even really understand what was happening. I still didn't understand that this was something that was meant to be hidden. He was confused and I was insisting that he take me to the doctor. Just as he agreed to take me to the doctor my sister arrived and explained everything to him and again to me. She reminded me that this meant I was grown up. And that I was not to be with a boy. I didn't know anything; I didn't have a boyfriend.

So, when you're being told to not be with a boy, what did you think that meant? Was it something you knew?

No, no. They explained it to me, that I was not supposed to be with a boy and I immediately became defensive shouting that I didn't even know any boys and that I didn't even understand why I would be meeting up with boys. I didn't have a boyfriend and I think they quickly realized that I was still immature and my mind wasn't on boys yet. So, my mother never told me anything because when I started my periods I was living here in Cape town and my mother was where? Tsomo.

Were you ever told things like stay away from milk or amasi? Or stay away from the kraal?

I was told that once I went back home.

By your mother?

Yes. I was told that I could not eat or drink amasi. That I was not to enter the kraal. You see?

Was it explained why? What would happen if you did those things?

No, she never said what would happen just that I couldn't even drink tea with milk when I was on my period. No tea with milk or amasi and I couldn't go into the kraal. I was told those things by my mother.

So ...

Anyway, I was happy when I was told that I couldn't go into the kraal because it meant I didn't have to go milk the cows.

So, it was a break from your chores?

I wouldn't have to milk the cows or have to go get cow dung for cleaning the floor. My mother would have to be the one to not only get the cow dung but then actually be the one to smear it on the floor. When she would try to make me do it I would remind her that I was not supposed to touch anything that had come from the kraal so she had to do it herself. We weren't very enlightened like now.

So, you then grew up...did you get married?

IsiXhosa (traditional)

Can you tell me about how you met your husband and how you eventually got married?

You meet a man and begin a relationship with them then he eventually tells you that he would like it if you went to his home and helped take care of his mother and others.

(0:15:15.1) Was lobola paid for you?

Lobola was paid for me.

What is lobola? What is its role?

It's to join the two families. It's a bridge between my family and my husband's family.

Did you feel like you were being sold?

I never ever thought of it like that.

So, it's a beautiful thing? Joining the two families?

It's a beautiful thing. I first witnessed it when my older sisters got married. I remember the arrival of my cows...it was an event. We had to prepare food and host the negotiation delegation (onozakhuzakhu) from my future husbands' family. They arrived driving the cattle into our kraal.

How many children did you have?

I have 3.

When were they born?

1971 and 1972 and 1974.

Where did you have them?

I gave birth here in Cape Town.

In a clinic?

No, the first one I gave birth to in NY1 kwa288.

What's that? A house?

It was our house. I went...a nurse was called. Nurse Bhabha, she was a nurse and her surname was Bhabha. She lived in NY6. She would arrive in her car. I gave birth at home. Back then we gave birth at home.

So, it was something common?

Yes, because after I gave birth I was not transported to the clinic. The nurse would come for check-ups.

Did you and your husband move to Cape Town after you got married? When did you come back to Cape Town?

We came in 1970.

Why?

My husband was working here and I followed.

To live with him?

Yes, I came to live with him. I was pregnant with the first child. I was staying at my sisters, the one I told you about earlier. She had a house in NY1 by then.

When you got married, what was expected of you as a wife? What was your job?

The role of a wife is to work in your marital home (emzini) and you do everything. For example, if extensions to the house were needed you would be building. You would be outside mixing cement and lining up the bricks. You're literally building the house, expanding the family. If you get there and there is only one house (rondavel) you build a second one, if there's two you build a third one.

And what are the people from the family doing?

They're there, doing nothing and watching you. They have a daughter/sister in law now.

So, they do nothing and you do all the work?

Yes.

So, it's not like...you don't feel...

It's not like anything. Or doesn't feel like anything

You don't feel oppressed?

It feels good. You're supposed to work in your new home (emzini). It wasn't forced. It was nice. I never questioned why I did all the work.

Was having children important?

It was very important to have a child.

Why?

There is no why, just how it was. If you didn't have children what happened was that when the cows were being harnessed outside for ploughing the fields people would shout that the cow inside the house should also be taken outside.

So, you (the infertile wife) were now a cow?

People would say the cow inside must also go outside and be with the other cows because you weren't having children. You were characterized by your inability to have children. You aren't really a cow so you actually can't be harnessed.

So, when people were saying take out...

Take out the cow that's in the house! When you're harnessing cows to go plough the fields don't forget the one in the house because you are not having children. You are 'inkabi yenkomo'. The calves are the ones taken to plough the fields, so you must go them because you are also 'inkabi yenkomo'.

Was this as insult?

It certainly was not a nice thing. You are a human but you were being called 'inkabi yenkomo'.

So were you treated badly because...

It's impossible not to feel horrible about yourself even if no one ever says anything to your face...can you imagine? Would you feel good about being called a cow?

No.

Exactly. It was not my experience but you see and hear things.

(0:21:02.1) Did marriages end because of infertility?

No, not really. Your marriage wouldn't end but your husband would go looking for it (a woman who can have children) on the side.

Kwa-Xhosa what was the place or role of children? Why were children important?

It was very important to have children.

What do they bring?

Children will help you especially as you get older. Children help you. You can order them to do tasks for you, like go to the shop. I often call neighbours kids these days because your own children grow up and get married. Or move away.

So, you had your children here, why did you raise them in the Eastern Cape?

I raised my own children. They all grew up in my hands. My children? I gave birth to them here in Cape Town. And when I would go home they would come with me and when I would come back they would also come back with me.

Oh, I thought you said you raised them in Tsomo.

I grew up in Tsomo. My children? First, Ntombhomzi the one I gave birth to in NY1 kwa288. Second, the young man you saw earlier also had him in NY1 kwa288 while I was still staying with my sister. All my children were born here.

Ok. Was there a difference between Tsomo and the townships here in Cape Town?

Of course, there was a difference.

Explain.

Of course, there was a difference between a rural village and a city. There was a difference.

What would you say was the biggest difference?

Everything here (Cape Town) was closer and more convenient. The city was just easier. And also, being able to be with your husband so you weren't waiting on money from him back home while struggling. But I did separate from my husband and raise the children on my own around when the kids were in primary school.

Were you working here in Cape Town?

Yes.

Where?

I worked in a lot of different places here in Cape Town. My husband and I separated so I had to work, I officially moved to Cape Town from Tsomo for myself. When I separated from my husband I initially left Cape Town, went back to home to tell my mother that I had, had enough and I could no longer handle the situation. My mom would see when the children and I were there that we would struggle because my husband was never reliable with sending money. As a result, I was forced to work in town in Tsomo. I would have nothing for our children and he was also busy outside of our marriage, he liked women.

Here, in Cape Town did the township clinics talk about contraceptives?

Yes.

When did you first hear about contraceptives?

Contraceptives? I used contraceptives from the beginning. I have experience with contraceptives. I decided to use contraceptives because I had my children very close to each other. '71 and '72 do you see that?

Yeah.

Yes, I decided to start using contraceptives after that.

After giving birth in 1972?

Yes. Yes.

Who told you about contraceptives? Nurses?

My sister. She took me aside and told me to protect myself. She told me to not only go to the clinic but go there regularly. So, I went and I started using contraceptives.

The pill?

I first used the pill then I stopped and used the injection because the pill didn't sit well with me.

(0:26:21.4) Contraceptives were welcomed? They were frowned upon?

Well for me...me because I can't speak to other people's experiences...

Yes, that's I want.

I didn't look down on contraceptive use. I saw contraceptives as a way to help you and give you a chance to raise your children. Do you understand? Especially considering the type of person the father of my children was.

Did your husband know you were using contraceptives?

At first, he didn't know. No. No, he didn't know at first.

Why? Was he not going to like it?

Yes, because there was a common belief that if you're using contraceptives you were doing something on the side, that you were having an affair. So, I hid it, along with my sister. Then after a while I realized that I had nothing to hide and besides I was also seeing that he was going down the wrong path. Plus, what was me hiding it this going to achieve?

Did you ever view contraceptives as something disrupting your duties as a wife, mainly having children?

I viewed contraceptive use that way. I saw my contraceptive use as helpful. If I had kept having child after child, what was I going to do with them? Ultimately, I'm the one who was going to struggling.

Was there a change in attitude in the 70s regarding having big families?

Uhm...in the 70s? I guess...but there were those who still didn't see the value of contraceptives.

Regarding contraceptives, was there ever any belief that they were a way to kill of black people by the apartheid government.

No. I never heard that.

So, you made you made the decision?

I made my decision because I saw how hard it was raising the children I had.

How did apartheid affect your life? In Tsomo and Cape Town?

It obviously wasn't nice to be treated like that but that was how we lived. You would notice at working that you were doing the same job as coloured people and yet they were paid more. Back then we didn't earn much. So, there were some unfair laws.

Were you ever arrested because of anything, like your pass?

I was arrested.

What happened?

The police would arrive, going house to house.

Was that here in Khayelitsha?

No, that was in Gugulethu. I moved to Khayelitsha afterwards but I lived with my sister in Gugulethu for a while.

So, the police would arrive and do what?

They would arrive at night demanding to see passes. This was the time of Mbulelo. They would just be demanding passes.

And you didn't have one?

I didn't have one. Where would I get one?

Weren't you working?

During the era of passes I wasn't working. That time? I wasn't working.

When did you stop having to have them? Actually, when did they start? The years.

They started around 1970...1971.

Oh. What would happen if you were arrested?

You'd be taken to the police station and you would have to be bailed out.

So, you weren't transported back to the Eastern Cape?

No. You'd be given a certain amount of days to leave but you would just lay low for a while and stay.

And then the cycle would begin again?

If they had the urge to do the door to doors then yes. Oh, I remember that sometimes if they knew if they found out that everyone who was arrested was from the same area like Tsomo you'd all be put on a bus that same day. The police used to arrive at like 1.

In the morning?

From midnight onwards. If there was unrest we would all talk and people would say "Yoh Mkhaya, sizohamba ngomqomo ngomso"

What is umqomo?

It was the bus we were taken in. The police would go door to door, make arrests and you'd all be taken away to the police station to be bailed in the morning.

How many times did this happen to you?

I couldn't tell you.

So, it was a common occurrence?

Yes. Because back then even if you were walking along in the road the moment a police van appeared you would immediately get in between houses to avoid them because you knew they would ask for your pass.

Were you scared?

Not really.

Was it also like this in Tsomo?

How would it be like it was here in Tsomo? Why would I be arrested there? It's home. People weren't arrested in the rural areas.

Was apartheid present in Tsomo?

No really. You could relax when you were home.

And you felt oppression when you were here?

Yes.

Going back a bit, when you were growing up did you hear things like how a girl was the flower of the home?

Yes.

Can you speak to that? Why?

I won't know why.

But you heard it?

It was said a lot. I was told that big things were expected of me because I was girl. There was a lot of pressure on you as a girl.

As a woman was it important to you to be a mother?

Was it important?

Yes.

For you to be married?

Yes.

Clearly it was important because that's what we did, we got married.

Could you have said you didn't want to?

Want to what?

Get married?

Sometimes a man would see you and decide to take you as a wife through the practice of 'ukuthwala' and you'd be taken in the middle of night, in my honest recollection this was very rare but it happens. Where sometimes you'd just be forced into marriage because your parents decided you were ready so they organized a plan where you would be sent on an errand so you could be taken because everything has already been decided whether you want to get married or not. You're just grabbed as you're walking on the road to your new home.

This whole plan was done in conjunction with your parents?

It happened, that's how it was. They talked with your parents.

And you wouldn't know?

You are the one doesn't know.

Can you reject this and say you don't want to?

It's difficult but you can try slip away and... you're also guarded because they know you don't want to be there. You don't know or love this person. It could be a much older man. It was just that era.

But it wasn't common?

Honestly places are different, it was common in some places and not in others. In my village it wasn't very popular.

Oh ok. I think we're done.

Yes, let's be done.

Thank you very much

Nozipwo

PART ONE: Interview

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

Bold italics: Interlocutor

Thank you for sitting with me.

Drink your drink!

**I will. Let's start with who are you? What's your name? How old are you? Where are you from?
General background.**

I am Nozipiwo Tshingane. I am from Mthatha, specifically Corhane village. And now I'm here.

Have you been here long?

I arrived in 1972.

How old are you now?

I'm 68 now.

So, you arrived here in 1972, do you have any children?

Yes.

How many?

3

Ages?

1971, 1974 and 1989

Did you get married?

Married? I was married but I'm a widow now.

Did you lose your virginity when you got married?

Yes

Did you know anything about sex before you got married?

I was told.

By?

I had a boyfriend you see and he knew not to go down to the land below the waist (angezi kulamhlaba ungezantsi). He was limited to my hips.

Ok, so who told you?

My mother did.

Is that how you received information? Like there were no nurses to teach you?

No. Our mothers were the nurses.

Was she also taught by her mother?

She was also taught by her mother, it was passed down generation to generation.

What did she say exactly when talking to you?

About what happens?

Yes, all of that...what happens? What type of experience did she prepare you for?

Sweetheart, when you're first with your boyfriend after you are married you are scared. Secondly, he touches you in a place that is very important to you. Do you see? But because you are married you have to allow it and give in. And in giving in it's not nice, do you understand? You would cry because he has touched you in a place that is not right. The whole experience is not really nice because you're also bleeding.

So, after you got married you then had children?

We had children. I had my first born in 1970.

How much time passed from the time you got married to when you had your first child?

Uhm uh...I had my firstborn in 1971. The first time I slept with a man...my husband was in January of 1971, you know and I got pregnant immediately. I had my child in September. 12 September 1971.

So, did you know? Did you want to get pregnant?

I knew that by getting married I was now going to be expected to have a child. Do you understand?

Is that how it was back then? You got married to...

To have children.

Just for children? Anything else?

There isn't any other reason to get married. You have to have a child.

So, you got married and had a child almost immediately?

Yes, I never had a trouble.

Oh ok. During this time where you aware of contraceptives? Did you know anything about the injection or the pill?

There were women back then who would help you give birth. These women were...so when you got pregnant and you were about a one month in...you would be asked if you thought you were pregnant because people would notice that you weren't eating certain foods that you normally like. And that was how it as generally figured out that you were pregnant. DO you understand? You would then tell you mother after having already told your husband that you had missed your periods...you also tell your mother that you have missed your periods. Your mother would then tell you that you're most

likely pregnant. You see? Then you would have regular check-ups with older women who knew what they were doing. They would check you out.

You never went to the clinic or the hospital?

I went to the clinic because around this time we were starting to become more enlightened. I went. I went to the clinic. And by going to the clinic I ended up going on some medication.

For?

It was pregnancy related medication. Do you understand? Although when I did give birth I didn't go to the hospital. I gave birth to my first child at home. I didn't even realize that I was in labour because I never had contractions. What happened was that a woman from church came to visit me. She arrived while I was busy grinding corn into maize and she was laughing very loudly telling me about something that had happened. I remember not liking her loud cackling laugh and wishing she would be quieter. Yho! I remember stopping what I was doing and running to the garden. I was there for a while before realizing that I was not feeling quite alright. I had very minor contractions. You see? And then I gave birth soon after.

Was giving birth at home common?

Yes, it was very common.

And everything went well?

Everything went well because the elder women knew what they were doing. They knew and did everything. You see?

Oh ok.

You're a doctor?

Me? No. So, at this time was there...you said you went to the clinic?

Yes.

So, while there were you told anything about contraceptives? And how they worked in case you didn't want to have children?

It was said that contraceptives prevented you from...you were supposed to go on the injection after you gave birth. But I of course didn't do that after I had my first child.

Oh? Why?

I gave birth in the rural areas so I only just heard about what I was supposed to do. I didn't have time for contraceptives, I didn't care. Back then a lot of the elders were saying that contraceptives were a way for the white people to kill of our people and future (abelungu bazobulala inzala yethu)

So contraceptive use was...

It was just not important.

Contraceptive use wasn't popular or important, is that why you didn't care?

I didn't care because of those things, at least until the next year.

What year?

Yes. The year I came to Cape Town. I came to be with my husband, you see? So, when I got here I discovered that people here used contraceptives. Do you understand?

Oh, so it was it in the Eastern Cape that contraceptive use was not really common?

I think just generally contraceptive use wasn't common. You're raised certain way at home with certain beliefs. Your education begins at home not at the clinic.

Oh ok.

Education starts at home and it all stays with you even if you're now living in a big city. You're told very early that you need to carry yourself a certain way and be proper. Do you see? You cannot just do as you like, you are a girl and should act a certain way. And if you are a boy you act a certain way. Do you understand?

Regarding the decision to use contraceptives or not to use contraceptives was it your choice to make or not? Or was it a decision you made as a family? Or was it your husband's decision?

It was my decision if I wanted to use contraceptives or not. I wanted...I loved my husband and that was really what it came down too. It depended if you loved your husband enough after having a child. Do you two respect each other? Are you understand me? If you choose to use contraceptives why are you using them? Do you understand? You both need to agree on why you are using contraceptives? Is it because you want to have an affair? Or are you using contraceptives because you're a working woman? Do you understand? DO you have valid reasons?

So, what did you...I mean what did you both decide in the end?

I ended up using contraceptives after I had my daughter Xoliswa in 1974.

Which one is that?

My second born?

Oh yes, your second born. So why...why...why did you make that decision? What happened?

Nothing happened. I just wanted to work.

Oh ok.

I just wanted to work.

And that was the reason...

That was the main reason because...I was also starting to hear from others that if I was living with my husband here in the city you couldn't expect him to do everything, you had to contribute.

So, you had...

You had to work. You had to use contraceptives. You're understanding me?

Oh ok, so those two things were connected? If you wanted to work and contribute to your family you had to use contraceptives?

Yes. And it allowed you to raise the children you already had.

Oh ok. What did you use?

I used De-po.

De-po?

Yes, when I first started.

Was it the popular choice? Why did you choose it?

What made you choose it?

Yes.

I chose it because I felt the pill required a lot of effort, I knew I was going to forget to take them. You understand?

Can you speak to uh...which was more popular? The pill or the injection?

I wouldn't know.

You don't know?

I do not.

Interlocuter: I'm not sure but I think the injection was more popular. People liked it because it was effective for a long time. You understand?

Yes, the injection stayed in your system for a while. From 3 to 6 months.

Interlocuter: And you would really end up forgetting to take the pill. With de-pro you knew that you would go get it administered at the clinic.

Do you understand what we're saying?

Was your contraceptive use something you talked about with other people? Perhaps other moms...like discussing what you were doing? Did you chat about it?

Well yes, we chatted. As women we would talk.

Yeah?

We would advise each other; one person would say they're on the pill. Another would say they're using the loop. You see? You could also go to the hospital where the nurses would give you more information and explain everything to you. And you get the chance to discuss what works for you. You see?

So, the whole process...using contraceptives wasn't something to be ashamed of?

Here in the city it wasn't something I had to hide.

Oh? Was it something you had to hide in the rural areas?

There were no contraceptives in the rural areas.

How? Was there no contraceptive use because it wasn't available or because it was well hidden?

Using contraceptives was something to be ashamed of in the rural areas because everyone knew that it meant you were cheating on your husband.

Really? Using contraceptives meant you were having an affair in the rural areas?

Yes.

Oh wow. So uhm...contraceptive use was common here (in Cape Town)?

Contraceptive use was common here (in Cape Town).

So, for you coming from the rural areas to here did there have to be a mental shift for you to understand that now...

I could now make the decision about how many children I wanted to have and what I needed to do.

Would you say perhaps that...was it a way to encourage your rights as a woman? To assert your independence?

Yes, I would say that. Don't you agree?

Interlocuter: Yeah...yes.

So, you were doing this because...

I was better organizing my life.

Interlocuter: Back then you were doing what was right for you.

And you didn't think about your husband?

It's not that you don't think about him but you make yourself a priority.

Did your husband know that you were using...?

Yes.

So, you discussed it with him?

I had to talk to him and explain that I was now working so I could have child after child. I'm the one who would be struggling.

And he understood and didn't have a problem?

Yes.

So, you would go to the clinic every 3 months for Depo?

Yes, after 3 months.

While there would you meet up with other women?

At the clinic? Yes.

Would you guys discuss contraceptive use? Were you all open about it?

No one was hiding anything. We all knew that the other was using contraceptives for various reasons. Maybe you felt like you already had too many children. Most mothers came here to the city to work and we were introduced to contraceptives for the first time. So, you came here to work and you didn't want children.

Can you recall the years when contraceptives were introduced?

We didn't always have contraceptives. In the rural area's contraceptives weren't even really important because once you were married and you got pregnant your husband would leave for Johannesburg or any other big city.

To work?

He had to go work now. You would stay behind and have the child. You would nurture and raise your child for about two or three years while your husband is away. While he's away he needs to be sending money back home. He would then come home when your child is about 2 or 3 years and impregnate you again. So, as you can see there was no need for contraceptives.

Which years did contraceptives get introduced?

Wasn't it the 70s?

Yeah?

It was around the 70s

Interlocuter: It was the early 70s when they first introduced and we started learning about them.

And it was coming from the clinics and the nurses? Were they knowledgeable?

Yes.

Yeah?

The nurses who told us about contraceptives knew what they were doing.

So, there were no problems coming from the clinics? The nurses were well trained?

Yes, they knew what they were doing.

They were knowledgeable?

Yes.

Oh ok, was contraceptive use important to you?

I think it's important.

Why?

Because...I'm speaking as someone who has children. You need to consider a lot of things if you have children. Who is going to feed these children? Secondly...how can I put this, my granddaughter is still so young and if she were to sleep with a boy and get pregnant. Who does that child belong to? I don't know. You have to keep your daughters safe so that's why I took my granddaughter to the clinic to get on contraceptives so that we don't have problems.

You support contraceptive use among young girls today?

I think it's the right thing to do.

Is it still something that is hidden or do you talk to your grandchildren about it?

Back when I was growing up we didn't talk about things like this...at all.

Why do you think that is?

Yoh! I will I even explain it?

Interlocuter: Can I interject? I'm not interrupting?

No...no. Speak.

Interlocuter: Things like this weren't spoken about. The way pregnancy was prevented back was your husband being away. That was our contraceptives. This way you were given a gap to raise the child you already had for about 3 years so that when he did come back you were no longer he mother of a new-born. When you were a new mother you weren't supposed to sleep with your husband back then. Do you understand? The way we prevented was not sleeping with your husband. But now...

Now, when you were both living in the city, you would be sleeping with him.

Interlocuter: But because of contraceptives you could now sleep with him while you still have a baby (umdlethane). You know you won't get pregnant.

Let me explain it this way. You sleep with your husband 10 days after giving birth, he needs to protect you so that you don't get pregnant. Do you understand? He needs to prevent you from getting pregnant. And afterwards, your child grows up and you use contraceptives. Everything works out well.

Is that why conversation around contraceptive use is freer?

Yes. Because your husband is no longer away so you need to use contraceptives.

Did you talk to your children about contraceptive use as they were growing up?

I talked to them. I told them that I didn't want them to bring me a grandchild. I wanted a good education for them. I recognized that times had changed, they were growing up in a different world than me.

You changed how you raised your children from how you were raised?

Interlocuter: It went from being told to wait for marriage to telling young girls to use contraceptives

Times changed and you had to encourage your children to use contraceptives. Even schools started teaching our children about sex and contraceptives. Sometimes by the time you tried to talk to them they already knew. They would even know about their periods before you even had a chance to tell them, they would tell you that the school would talk to them since you as a parent weren't. This allowed for open communication between parents and children. You would be able to encourage them to use contraceptives.

Earlier you said that in the rural area's contraceptives were seen as a way to...what did you say?

In the rural areas people believed that white people were trying to kill off the future generations of black people.

Why did they think that?

In the rural areas what was common was that once you as a wife got pregnant your husband had to leave and go work. Back then women didn't work. And even if you did work...like a cleaner in a shop you knew that you had one husband.

Why were people in the rural areas in that frame of mind? Was it the political situation in the country?

It was the fact that we were here at black people. The white person arrived after we were already here. The white person arrived and taught black people all of these different things. The white man arrived and introduced sugar to us when we didn't have it before...in fact they introduced us to tea.

So, there was a problem with trust?

They (white people) just came with a lot of different things so it wasn't easy to trust them or the way they did things. There was bark we used to get from trees in the forest that we used for tea for example, that's what we did though I don't quite understand how it exactly it was all done.

Interlocuter: In the place of sugar?

Yeah, I never understood that.

Oh, ok I think we're done for now. I might come back tomorrow with some follow up questions.

Part TWO: General conversation after interview while finishing up tea

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

Bold italics: Makheswa

You needed a permit to stay here back then

Makheswa: Oh Lord, I have led a very painful life here in Cape Town. You see Cape Town and white people (amabhulu)...yho...I'm just shocked when Maimane speaks.

No, Maimane is just talking...people are there to get t-shirts, that's why there so they can have something to wear. Or tear them up right in front of them.

Makheswa: Can anyone defend the way we were treated back then?

He has to, Makheswa they're making money. I promise when a black person seems to be defending the actions of white people it's because there is money to be made.

Makheswa: No, no, no... I hear that but it doesn't justify how we were treated. It was a very difficult and painful time.

You would be stopped and questioned all the time, for example if you had a car you would have to explain why or how you had the car while you earn next to nothing.

Makheswa: We really didn't have any money back then.

You know our husbands were paid something like R20 per week. R20 I tell you. And if you were a woman you would earn R10 per week. And it was like R2.50 to go to work and back.

Makheswa: I remember that R2.50. At the end of month, I would have to go pay R1.20 for that 'Tsha' (part-time work agency) in offices in Langa because I still employed.

And you had to pay rent.

Makheswa: I am telling you about the difficulties we had to live through in this Cape Town.

Now? Although there are still problems, young people need to say thank-you because it so much better. Say thank-you.

Thank you! We are grateful.

Really, the schools you get to go to now you wouldn't have been able to go to back then. Black children from Cape Town had to go to school all the way in the rural areas because there were no schools for them here. Now you have young people calling themselves Cape Born. Cape Born nothing. What's important is using your brain and understanding where you come from to get where you're going. Do you understand?

Makheswa: You know, sometimes when you talk about the way things were back then it's like you're lying. My granddaughter says on some level we must have allowed it.

I really don't know how you survived back then. For me, experiencing Fees Must Fall was difficult enough.

Now imagine what we went through in 1976 when children were actually dying. There would be multiple coffins, definitely over 20. Children would march to Cape Town (CBD) going to Down Station demanding for us as their mothers to be allowed to ride in first class so we didn't have to be rushing up and down stairs. Some segments of the train were for whites only. As black people we have come a very long way.

Makheswa: Really, we've come such a long way.

You might not think so because of all the games Zuma and his cohorts are playing in government instead of actually serving the people.

Makheswa: And doing important work.

The way we view it is that they're playing around in government especially considering where we come from where a black person couldn't even be a position of power. Instead they're just filling their pockets.

Makheswa: And they are all just filling their pockets...all of them...just filling their pockets.

They don't even want to help school children. The very least the government could do is help black children get a good education.

Makheswa: Were you a part of it?

She's a school child, why wouldn't she be?

I did go to parliament for the big march...it was a mess of a day. We had to go to the police station because students were arrested and call people's parents. I think I got home around 10pm or 11pm and I immediately called my mom and I had a good cry. The whole day just really shocked me. The police were chasing people and stunt grenades were just going off everywhere. And for a long time afterwards when the noon gun would go off at midday I would get frightened.

Makheswa: Yes! That's normal. You'd never been through something like that.

Yeah, just the feeling of running and not knowing where you're even going.

Back then school children would be coming from here (Khayelitsha), Gugulethu, Langa on foot to town. It was a really painful time. It was really painful. It was painful back then, it's nice now. We actually live in houses now. It was a tough time. If you're being visited by a relative from the rural areas you would have to hide them. Hide your visitor because there would be police searches. The way white people built up their fortunes was through arresting black people. They didn't have that much money before.

Makheswa: And that's true. I went through it.

When I think about all the money we spent back then on bail. Bail would be R20, and the reason you were arrested? Because you're in Cape Town. Whose land was it?

Makheswa: It was really tough, you know my husband once had to pay R75 to bail me out. Back then that was a lot of money, I remember my heart was so sore.

For context, going home back to the rural areas was about R20 from here. And the train was R14.

Cape Town to?

Eastern Cape. And now how much more does that journey cost? When you see school children today all you want to do is tell them to persevere because we really come from an ugly past. Even educated people need jobs so to at least persevere through school is important. And to work hard and avoid drugs. It's really difficult.

Makheswa: It really is difficult and now we have to deal with Zuma. Well it's up to you guys now.

We have people like Malema now and he knows all of Zuma's tricks. He knows stuff. Mbethe also needs to go. Don't you agree?

Uhm, for me it's just been interesting realizing that the more things change the more they stay the same. My generation was raised on the rainbow nation and the idea that everything was fine but I'm realizing now as an adult that what I believed is perhaps not quite true.

The point was for everything to be ok for you guys.

That's interesting, I remember saying to my mother that I was surprised by what was happening with Fees Must Fall because I had been raised believing everything was ok.

Things are not right and it requires you to tell white people immediately.

Makheswa: Today's young people have no problem telling white people off unlike us.

Yeah! Today you can say things like 'you came all the way from Europe to here, you can't tell me what to do here'.

-----Conversation changed topics-----

Ida

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

Bold italics: Interlocutor

We can now start. Can you tell me your name and where you are from?

I am Makheswa Ludidi. What else do you want? I'm old now, my brain no longer works.

Interlocuter: Just prompt her, Zola. Makheswa, tell her that you are Nomatshawe kaDzana. And you married into the Ludidi family.

Oh ok, it's as she said. I am Nomatshawe and I married into the Ludidi family.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in a rural village. It's called Nonyikila.

Which town?

KwaQumbu

In the Eastern Cape?

KwaQumbu in the Eastern Cape. That's where I grew up.

Interlocuter: Can you write Qumbu?

Yes...I think.

Interlocuter: Q- U- M-B- U

Ok thanks. So, you grew up there?

Yes, kwaQumbu in the village on Nonyikila. I then got married to a man in from the same area. He was Rhadeba, uLudidi from the village emaQubeni.

All still that side?

Interlocuter: This is all in the Eastern Cape.

So what else do you want to know?

How old were you when you got married?

Oh...do I even still know?

Interlocuter: When were you born?

I was born...I'll tell you what my ID says. I was born 1938. And when did I get married?

Interlocuter: It's fine if you don't remember.

Do you perhaps know how old you were when you got married?

I think I was about 18 or 19. I was quite old already.

At 18 or 19?

Yes.

Did you know your husband before marriage?

Know him how?

Was he someone that you knew from the village?

He was from the same village. I would see him around but uh...

Interlocuter: He wasn't her boyfriend.

He would always walk by house and he wanted to be my boyfriend but I refused because he was much older. But he eventually did become my boyfriend. And my friends would laugh at me because he was so old. He then married me. He told me he wanted to take me home with him. I initially didn't really believe him because back then we had to be careful because men would tell you that they wanted to marry you and not actually follow through. I again said no but I eventually gave in, he became my friend and we came to an agreement.

Was it common back then to have a boyfriend?

No. It was something very rare. You had to be married. We had to hide it because our mothers would hit us. You were not supposed to have a boyfriend.

Why?

You're asking why? Because that's just the way it was. But as you grow you just end up having one, like I did.

Once you got married, did you have children?

Yes. After we got married, I had my first child. He passed away. Then I had a girl. And then my third child was a boy. And then my last one.

Did you have them at home?

No, it was all different. They all follow each other because even the one that passed away...oh I always forget, the child I had in 1958...

Interlocuter: That was your firstborn in 1958?

Yes, and he died almost immediately. Then I had uhm another one before my daughter. We named him Stanley and he also died. My mind is starting to forget these things. He was a year old when he died. It was after him that I had my daughter Thabisa in...

Interlocuter: 1965.

Oh yes, she was born 1965. And then I had my son in 1969. Another boy in 1973.

They were all born kwaQumbu?

Oh no, the children I just mentioned were born here. My first child was born that side, my son born in 1958. I was still a young bride.

So, he was born in the Eastern Cape and the others here in Cape Town?

The first two who passed away were born in the Eastern Cape and all the others were born here. Well my second son who died was actually born here but he died back home. All the other children were born here but I used to go home regularly.

When did you come to Cape Town?

I came...uh...I came when the fighting was just starting. When it started, I was already here. When the political unrest started, I couldn't handle it and asked to go back home. My great uncle who was also here agreed because I was getting sick from the stress so I went back home. I remember I had been home for about two weeks when the Langa office burnt down. It was all around the time this whole thing was starting, it was the time of Sobukwe. I was so scared which was why I went home. I was just scared of everything that was happening because it wasn't nice. We were being treated so badly by white people. Our husbands were working long hours, I didn't know what was going on. I really didn't like any of it so I went back home. But did come back to Cape Town. I went home and stayed but because you are a wife you have to have children. I couldn't just stay home and not have children so I had to come back despite all my health troubles, I had to come back to Cape Town and get pregnant. That's when I had my daughter.

So why did you come to Cape Town?

After my sons passed away there was nothing so I was told by the elders to come up to Cape Town so I could have a child.

To be with your husband?

Yes. He worked here in Cape Town.

And you were coming to him?

Yes.

And you regularly had to come here to Cape Town, to him?

Yes.

(0:10:14.2) What's the biggest differences that you noticed here in Cape Town versus the Eastern Cape?

In my marriage?

Interlocuter: No, the difference between the rural areas and the city.

There was a lot. My shocked and scared me the most was that we were always stressed because we could be arrested at any moment. We were treated very painfully by the white man. You would be constantly stressed because you never knew if your husband was coming home that night. There was just a lot that we went through. I remember once we (as the wives) were going to Killarney to try...we weren't working and we found out that there were factories where you could go pick up and collect some leftover fabrics...well you could buy them at reasonable prices. So, we went and we were arrested. The white police often arrived and asked for our passes. We said we had left them at home but we were taken. Our husbands had to come fetch us, they came with our I.D documents but the police wanted our passes. So, they had to...in that area all the policemen were white. And they only wanted passes. We ended up having to stay overnight. I will never forget how uncomfortable I was having to sleep in jail. I was never happy again here, I just wanted to go home. We were then taken to Langa for our case. I wanted them to just send me back home immediately, I didn't want to be here anymore. The whole situation made me really unhappy.

Things were different back home?

Back home we lived in peace. We were happy. We're really happy. You do all the work you're assigned to do as a wife. It's all good. But here? It was like we were criminals. I was really not happy but I stayed.

So, you stayed despite being unhappy for your husband?

I stayed because...you see I was already pregnant again and I couldn't travel while pregnant. Cape Town was not fun at all, I was really unhappy. I was actually very lucky in getting pregnant and having my children while here because I was so unhappy. I could not be happy because of the situation we were in here in Cape Town.

Going back a bit, when you were getting married did your mother talk to you about what marriage was and what was expected of you?

Unfortunately, by the time I got married my mother had passed away. She died while I was in standard 2.

Was there any other person who talked to you?

About?

About marriage and just what is expected of you.

My older sister talk to me. And so did my aunt, she told me to be careful if I have a boyfriend and all that stuff.

Be careful of what?

Be careful that you don't get pregnant and go through that situation. Things like that. Back then before you became a wife you were a girl and as a girl you could not get pregnant. It was not allowed. In my family none of us girls ever got pregnant before marriage.

What would happen if you got pregnant before marriage?

Some people ran away from home. There are some girls that we have no idea what ever happened to them because they messed up. There was one girl whose parents had passed away and she was staying with her older brother and his wife, I think she was unhappy at home. She got pregnant and it was because there was a lack of mature supervision, her brother was older but he wasn't an elder.

Did you know about marriage when you got married? And what was expected of you?

Interlocuter: Can I say something?

Yeah.

Interlocuter: When you asked about why a girl couldn't get pregnant while still at home it's because it was very shameful (ihlazo) to black people. Your daughter having a child while still at home was really bad, she had to be married. You were not allowed to be with a boy if you were not married. Do you understand? Your private parts needed to be known and touched by someone your family knew (like your husband). DO you understand? The guy that would rape you and stay unknown was not the right way to do things. It was like rape. And getting pregnant as a girl was a source of shame.

A huge shame.

Why is it a source of shame?

Interlocuter: As a girl you were not allowed to get pregnant while unmarried. Your husband needed to come and ask for your hand in marriage. Your boyfriend would have to come to your parents' house and explain that he has seen a girl and would like to ask for her. Then members of both families would talk, you would be asked by your family if you know this boy and he would be asked if you are the girl he has seen. Once that has been done the elders would then get into negotiations.

What was the place of a girl in the home?

As a girl you were the flower of your home.

Interlocuter: As a girl you need to be treated with care and in being treated with care any young man that sees you will see that you are well taken care of at home. So, that when he comes to ask for your hand he knows that he will also treat you with care the same way you were treated at home. That's the big difference between now and then is that today our daughters just go out with boys. And if they're being treated badly we don't know about it, by the time we know about it it's second hand news. And the whole thing is painful for everyone involved. This is why it's so important to have parents involved for accountability.

And then with the arrival of contraceptives did things change?

I only started using contraceptives quite late, I was had already been married for a while. Although contraceptives didn't really work for me. I had the loop. I would feel unwell and dizzy all the time. And one day I was home alone with the children and I fell. I called out for the neighbours who came rushing, called my husband who was at work to tell him that I had fallen. By the time he got home I was already up and somewhat alert, I couldn't even explain what had happened. He used the company car to take me to the doctor who told us that I was pregnant despite having the loop. I got pregnant despite the fact that I was on the loop. That was my experience with contraceptives. It was my first time using any kind of contraceptives, I was already quite older and I got pregnant.

When did you get the loop inserted?

It was 19-something...uhm...It was interested in 1965 just after I gave birth to Thabisa...it was at the hospital.

Why?

So that I wouldn't get pregnant while I still had a young child.

Was it common during that time then to use contraceptives to avoid pregnancy?

It was all still new, I don't even know everything that was available. For me, I used the loop. I then had to go to the hospital because I was not feeling to good and I had the loop inserted. I had to be checked, when I got to the hospital they did whatever they needed to do and then I started having my periods again.

Interlocuter: Zola asked you if it was common for women to use contraceptives.

Not at all. As a woman why do you need to use contraceptives? Why are you using contraceptives? You're married, you're a wife.

(0:21:17.6) So you were expected to have children?

If you're married like I was...I had to have children. So, I can't use contraceptives if I don't have children because the important thing was that I have children. I had to give birth to children.

How many children did you have when you had the loop inserted?

Interlocuter: After her 3rd child.

Yes, it was after my third child.

Oh ok, 3. Did you decide you needed a break after 3 before potentially having more?

Interlocuter: It was because she was now living here in the city with her husband.

I was living with my husband now; I was living here in the city so I had to use contraceptives because we were living together and I would get pregnant.

But you're supposed to have children aren't? So, you're living with your husband and you'll get pregnant, isn't that the point? Why get on the loop?

It was to protect me so that when I did sleep with my husband there would be no mistake of me falling pregnant.

Interlocuter: With a young child

Yes, so that I would not fall pregnant with a young child. My daughter, Thabisa was still a baby.

Interlocuter: When was it ok to pregnant again?

When you'd already given birth you just did it..You know, I don't know because it took me a long time to get pregnant again because of how my sons died.

Interlocuter: Yes, but I'm asking typically when would you be encouraged to get pregnant again after giving birth?

Oh! I don't quite know because I... well it would be a while and your husband would even come back home...well my husband rarely ever came home but when he did he would come and leave without impregnating me. So, I would then have to come up and live with him for a while so I could get pregnant and have child. But to answer your question, it wouldn't be encouraged while your child was a few months old or something. Even one year was too soon, you would have a long break but others would be lucky and get pregnant quickly. But typically, you would wait, you couldn't rush a child.

When did you learn about the loop and just contraceptives in general?

I learned about all that when I was here in Cape Town already an old wife/woman.

And you weren't taught anything back home?

Absolutely nothing, back home there was...

Growing up what did you know contraceptives?

We didn't know anything about that. Just that as a girl you were supposed to stay a girl. And that you couldn't just do whatever you wanted.

Interlocuter: Once you started your periods you couldn't have a boyfriend.

Exactly! If you've started your menstruations you don't go anywhere near a boy.

So that was the way you were taught back then to protect yourselves? That was the kind contraceptive use you were taught?

That was how we were taught at home.

That you don't go to a boy?

Yes. Even when you had children you would just stay...your husband would come back from the mines in Johannesburg (Egoli)and your baby would be a toddler learning to work and he would have to return to Egoli without impregnating you. Not because he couldn't impregnate you but because you as the wife (makoti) would be protecting yourself and keeping yourself because it was time yet to be impregnated.

So, what happens then with the arrival of contraceptives like the loop, the pill and the injection?

You know...no... these things are the reasons why there was such an increase in children being born outside of marriage. We didn't have so many babies in my time.

So, you're saying contraceptives have increased the birth rate?

I'm just saying...uhm...I'm just saying this is how we have so many children. I had been a wife for a really long time, I was quite grown when I... we were told in the clinics that we needed to change the way we had always done things and do what we were told by the nurses. We were told to start using contraceptives, I was quite old by the time I started using contraceptives.

What did you think of contraceptives when you first heard of them?

I ended up going along with the whole thing because I was living with my husband so I had to make sure I was protected and I wouldn't accidentally get pregnant.

Could unmarried women also use contraceptives?

Things like that would happen. You'd hear that so and so's daughter is pregnant.

But could unmarried women use contraceptives?

Huh...

What was the consensus around unmarried girls using contraceptives? Could they?

No. You're not married, why are you using contraceptives? But I honestly don't know.

Interlocuter: It was a disgrace because it meant that you were loose (hewu)

Using contraceptives as an unmarried girl was very disgraceful.

Using contraceptives was disgraceful if you weren't married or if you your husband was away?

Yes.

And then...has that thinking changed today? Can young unmarried girls use contraceptives? Is it a good or a bad thing?

It's not right...well it is right in the sense that young girls today are growing up in a time where they have to be careful and protect themselves. But they're not really told anything.

So, you're saying it's wrong because they're not told anything?

You know uh...it was wrong with us but we weren't told anything. Today, young girls are spoken too and told. We weren't told anything; all I knew was that I had to keep myself pure. That I had to keep myself as a girl. And that I couldn't just have a random boyfriend.

Interlocuter: The difference today, the reason we have to talk to our children and tell them to go get contraceptive care is because they're are being raped. Do you see? The number of rape cases has

increased, you might still see your daughter as a child but that doesn't mean she won't get raped. So, we now have to talk to them and encourage contraceptive use.

I'm just thinking about my granddaughter, I was asked at the clinic if I had talked to her...if I talk to her about rape and not sleeping with boys when she reached the age where she was getting a bit mature...my granddaughter uSnazo, I went to the clinic because I could see the way she was acting and at the clinic I was told that the best thing to do was to sit down with her and talk. They asked me if I had ever talked to her about boys since raping young girls was becoming more common. I hadn't so I was told to talk to her, I did and I also told her to keep her virginity. We live in a time now where you have to talk to young girls and encourage them to get on contraceptives, we can't ignore the change in society. Growing up I wasn't told anything.

Why weren't you told anything?

It was a huge disgrace! Having sex and getting pregnant while still a girl was very shameful, how do you do that? That situation never ever crossed my mind.

Interlocuter: All that we were encouraged to do was to get married.

Yes! We had to go to school and afterwards get married.

Interlocuter: Just school and getting married. That's all we were talked to about. And after you finished school, and you maybe had a job you still couldn't sleep with a man and get pregnant outside of marriage. That was not allowed. After you were finished with your education a suitor could come ask for your hand.

So, there was little communication?

Interlocuter: The only thing that was talked about was that at some point a bachelor would come and ask for your hand.

Having now raised children and grandchildren did you then do things differently?

As I talk to you today, I can say that there is nothing I can really say to my grandchildren because they are growing up hearing about contraceptives from a very young age. Today children grow up knowing everything, even the hospitals are telling so we as parents also have to say something despite the fact that we grew up not being told anything. We had to figure it out but today we have to tell them. Now, I'm even on alert for my granddaughter's clinic appointments so I can remind her to go. And I had to ask if she's gone and if she hasn't I have to tell her to go. That's where I am in my old age, having to make sure that my granddaughter doesn't miss her appointments at the clinic to get contraceptives. And this is something that I never imagined I would be doing.

And it never happened to you?

It certainly never happened to me. I... what confuses me is that my daughter Thabisa got pregnant while still in school. When she and her cousins came home from boarding school they knew how strict things were at home, that the first thing they had to do when they arrived was to lay out the thatched mat (ikhukhu), lie down and be examined to make sure that they weren't ruined. To ensure that they did not sleep with any boys, that's how I raised too. So, I tried to follow the same beliefs and traditions in raising my children.

Interlocuter: Are you understanding what she's saying?

I think so, you're saying that when children were coming back from school...

Interlocuter: From boarding school when they're are in high school. They come home during the school holidays, right? Girl children would be required to lay down on a thatched mat and be examined by the older women. That was contraception for black people.

Yes. Because you knew that if you did anything you would be exposed once you got home so you wouldn't do anything because you were scared.

(0:33:00.4) So as older women did you know what you were looking for?

Of course! You could tell if someone was still a girl. It was very obvious and clear if you were a girl. It was something to be proud of.

And if you've ruined your girlhood/virginity?

If you've ruined? It's bad!

Interlocuter: The moment you're ruined it immediately obvious in even just how you carry yourself.

What's the before and after? What makes it obvious that you are no longer a girl?

Interlocuter: Your legs change.

How?

Interlocuter: Even your knee exposes you...you see my knee?

Yeah...

Interlocuter: My knee is no longer it was when I was a girl. The knee of a girl is full.

So full!

Interlocuter: Her leg is shiny despite having not used any Vaseline.

Exactly! A girl was just beautiful in the face.

Interlocuter: Yes, there was a certain glow about a girl. Her knee would be closed and full.

Take my granddaughter for example, she's a beautiful girl but it's very superficial because she's a girl in age alone. She's not a girl like how girls were when I was growing up.

Interlocuter: And that's why back then when a young man came to ask for your hand if you were a girl a box of matches would be used as a test of your purity. If that box was open you were not a girl, if it stayed closed you were a girl and this was evidence.

Like a normal box of matches?

Interlocuter: Yes, the same box of matches you know.

But how isn't it going to open? It's a box of matches!

Interlocuter: You understand that a young man has come to ask for your hand?

Yes.

Interlocuter: And it's announced that you are a girl so if the delegation (from your potential husbands' family) doubts that this is true they would just open...

Just a random box of matches?

Yes.

But wouldn't it just open because it's a box of matches? And that's how they work?

Interlocuter: Zola, look at your phone.

Ok.

Interlocuter: Imagine it's a box of matches...so you would be given this box while it's closed and the person on the receiving end of it who doubts your purity would open it. And it would slightly open.

What? Huh? We are talking about a box of matches? Just a regular box of matches?

Yes!

I don't understand.

We grew up in different times.

Interlocuter: I would show you but I unfortunately don't have a box of matches in the house.

I don't either.

Interlocuter: You see this box? You see how it's closed? So, the delegation would arrive stating that they're here to ask for a girl's hand in marriage...do you understand?

So far.

Interlocuter: So, when the hand of a girl is asked she is closed up, she has never been opened (demonstrates with a jewellery box). She had never been touched. So, when the delegation who is there to ask for the girl's hand...

Whose giving who the box?

Interlocuter: The delegation who has come to for the girl's hand will produce a box of matches then they'll show you the closed box and then they'll attempt to open it and if the box opens it will then show that the girl is not quite a girl.

What? How do they know?

Interlocuter: It's cultural. It's a Xhosa belief.

Oh?

Interlocuter: It's deep rooted Xhosa traditions.

The box has to be full. When the box was opened it was supposed to be full. There should be no gap.

How did you know that the box wasn't full because someone removed some matches beforehand?

No!

So, this is based on luck? On if the box of matches had been used or not?

You know if a box of matches has been tampered with.

How?

Interlocuter: You won't understand, you're growing up in this new world.

Yeah, I guess. So, this was used as a way to determine if a girl was still a girl/virgin?

It was a way to tell if she had been ruined.

Ok. You also said something about her leg and how it could also determine if a girl was still a girl/virgin?

There is a difference between the leg of a girl who is still pure and one who is ruined.

And you can tell?

You can just tell the leg of someone who is no longer pure, for one thing it's full of stretch marks.

Interlocuter: The skin of a girl is clean and clear.

Very clear and just tight. If you're ruined?

Interlocuter: It's just wobbly and out there.

So, all of this you were taught by your mothers?

Yes!

Interlocuter: Our mothers were our nurses.

You never went to clinics and such to learn?

There was no need. Our mothers were the clinics actually. They taught us and showed how to do everything. For example, if you went away to a wedding the moment you came back you had lay out the thatched mat, open your legs and be examined.

Wow.

You're laughing...

Interlocuter: Would you be able to live like that?

Uhm...I don't know. It's seems very invasive and I would probably mention my right to privacy or something.

Interlocuter: After you've been examined between your legs, your breasts would also be examined.

Why?

Interlocuter: Your breast can also expose you.

How exactly? If it stays perky? If it falls?

Yes. There is a lot that shows once you're no longer alright.

Interlocuter: When the wrong thing happens.

So, everything you've just explained was well known and was a part of Xhosa culture?

Black people knew this stuff.

And it was before the arrival of Western products and information?

Before any of these white people things arrived.

Did Western products ruin how things had been done before?

The things white people introduced ruined our way of life. They really disrupted a lot. Children knew how to be children but now we've been messed up.

Interlocuter: I would say white inventions messed up a lot of things in how black people operated.

Yes, they ruined things for our people because they changed how everything had ever been done.

Including contraceptives products like the loop or something? Was the old way of doing things better?

I would say our methods and ways back then were much better than what was introduced. If someone called you so and so's daughter you would feel real pride because you were still a girl, you were still pure.

Interlocuter: And later you would also feel huge pride at being referred to as so and so's wife. There was so much pride and everyone knew that you weren't out in the streets probably having affairs. There are somethings that don't require you as a wife like being constantly see out in the neighbourhood. And as a girl before you got married it was also important not to be out and about. You had to carry yourself with pride. You couldn't be married and then still have a boyfriend on the side or more than one boyfriend.

And you could hide...?

Interlocuter: You see in Xhosa culture (kwaNtu) a lot of things were hidden. Even if you were doing something you had to make sure that it was not public, if you have sex before you're married or if you cheat on your husband while you are married there would be a child to expose what you have done.

So, contraceptives helped hide secrets?

Interlocuter: Contraceptives created a culture of dishonesty. A wife could just go out, cheat on her husband and never get caught. There would be no consequences to her actions. Maybe there would be suspicions based on who she would be seen with but no actual evidence of any wrongdoing.

(0:40:51.5) Does this mean when contraceptives first arrived you had to hide that you were using them to avoid being accused of hiding something else like an affair?

You weren't supposed to use contraceptives as a young unmarried girl. Your contraception was being guarded and examined at home. That was what I knew to be contraceptive care growing up and what I did for my children.

So, going to the clinic or the hospital for the pill or the injection was not something that was well known?

Back then? No.

-----Interruption: Makheswa stepped up and I stayed with MaRhadebe who was acting as the interlocuter-----

Interlocuter: Today it's different and it's common. For example, Makheswa only found out about contraceptives in 1965, do you understand? And it was only because she was here in the city, had just had a baby and living with her husband. Long ago (ixesha lokuqala) once you were pregnant,

maybe one month or two months, your husband had to leave to go find work and leave you behind at home. Then that changed where you now had to live together, do you understand?

So now contraceptive use was not something to be hidden because you had to use it since you were living with your husband?

Interlocuter: It's not something you when you're living with your husband.

Have the ways in which girls are looked at in their families changed compared to when they were seen as the flowers of the home?

Interlocuter: Yes

What would you say the place of a girl is today?

Interlocuter: Today the place of a girl is to have a good and stable job. You want to see your child educated with a job. We no longer see marriage as the only option for girls because marriage today is very different than it was back then. It's not always the right thing for your child like it was before. Do you understand what I'm telling you? Marriage today is totally not right for our girls. Men are...just because our daughters are now educated you find that these potential husbands just want their money. Men today want to live off their wives while they remain uneducated, you see? The men today work very hard to get not only you but the lifestyle you will provide for them. You end up working for him above your own family. You see? Today's young men are evil like that. Young girls today are more focused on their education and work very hard especially in comparison to the young men. So, I would say girls are still the flowers of their homes but in regards to education and careers rather than having the perfect marriage. Young women today are like how men used to be, you work and you support your family. You're understanding me? The young men can't do this.

Is this the reverse of how things were done back then? The men used to go work while the women stayed home.

Interlocuter: Yes. Now it's changed, the whole thing has just changed. As women we now have to work and you see a lot of men just sitting at home living off their wife.

What caused this change in your opinion?

Interlocuter: I think knowledge changed things. I think there has been an increase in knowledge. Also, the fact that both mother and father started to work. The allowance of black men to bring their wives to Cape Town saw the ending of ubuntu (unity).

-----Makheswa came back-----

It was the end of isiXhosa.

IsiXhosa was ended by money? Or work?

Interlocuter: Ubuntu was ended by money.

Yes.

Interlocuter: For example, I can no longer just borrow money from a friend. Now they'll tell me about interest or say they don't have any. Back in the day, you would be borrowed money no interest or anything. If I didn't have a child I could borrow another person's child, have that child stay with me and be raised by me. Today you can't borrow people's children.

There's no such luck today.

Oh ok. Just going back to the secrecy and hiding things bit, you said girls couldn't hide losing their virginities before marriage because they would be examined at home?

Yes.

(0:45:35.6) So, when you started using contraceptives, did your husband know?

That I was on contraceptives?

Yes.

My husband actually knew because he was told.

By you?

No, he was told at the clinic...I mean hospital. They told him that they had removed the loop and were going to...

Did he know that you had the loop?

Yes. I had to tell him! It was after...

Interlocuter: It was after she gave birth.

Yes. After I gave birth the doctors said they were going to insert the loop.

Interlocuter: And your husband agreed?

Yes, he agreed. He agreed.

So, you didn't ask for it? But you were told by the doctors that you were getting it?

It was discovered that though constantly giving birth and all the miscarriages I suffered that I... I guess the white doctors noticed something and I was told I had to give myself a break before getting pregnant again.

And that's how your husband found out?

He had to know that I had the loop.

And what was his reaction?

He was genuinely worried but he questioned what I was preparing for by getting the loop inserted and I told him that it wasn't my decision, and if he had any questions he should have asked the doctors. He didn't really believe...

What was he exactly worried about?

He was worried about the reasons behind my insertion of the loop. He was questioning what I was going to be up to when he was away.

Oh, so that's the type of worry or stress that was caused by contraceptive use?

Yes! For it was...you know I immediately realized that he had it in his head that I was going to be up to something. And I told him he should have talked to the doctors if he had questions about the necessity of the loop being inserted because they (the doctors) did tell him. I was also very feisty back then.

So, the possibility of hiding an affair through contraceptive use was a key worrying point?

Yes. Because now you wouldn't get pregnant if you were doing something. My husband really questioned me about why all of a sudden felt the need to get the loop inserted. And I repeatedly had to tell him he should have asked the doctors since we were both there when they explained that I would have the loop inserted. The white doctors didn't hide anything, they talked to both of us.

Was it important for both of you to talk about you using contraceptives?

Yes. Hiding it would have been unnecessary. My husband had to know that I would not be getting pregnant any time soon. And if the loop did its job properly you would have the break you needed before you could get it removed and try getting pregnant.

And if he been against it, have you thought about what you would have done?

It was going to be a problem. How would he have been against me using contraceptives when the whole thing had already been difficult. Having the children, we did have had been a long struggle already. I almost lost my life.

For you it was a life or death situation while with others...

Of course! I think I know where you're going with this and you're right...there were other women who would have the loop inserted having not talked to their husbands because they didn't want any more children. So, there were women who...

Who didn't tell their husbands?

Yes, who didn't tell their husbands.

Interlocuter: Or that they were out and about...

Huh?

Interlocuter: They didn't tell their husbands because they either didn't want any more children or because they were doing things outside of their marriage.

But even with those women they generally wouldn't be talking about it, they kept it do themselves because only they knew that they were cheating on their husbands and that they had inserted the loop and closed everything up.

Back then was contraceptive use common amongst black people?

Interlocuter: The only form of contraceptive that was common among black people was for your husband to be away.

Yes! That was all we knew and you would be back home obviously not getting pregnant.

Interlocuter: You would just stay home. And if your husband came home on leave and you had a new-born you would not sleep in his house (rondavel) with him. You would have to sleep with the elders (his parents rondavel).

You couldn't sleep in the same place with him and the baby. The three of you could not sleep in the same place.

Did you ever think of contraceptives as a way to assert or gain your independence?

Interlocuter: When you're married there is nothing you do without your husband.

That's what marriage means.

Interlocuter: You must do things together.

Whatever you do must be known.

Interlocuter: Do you understand? Once you start having things on the side that you do alone then something is wrong.

It's all bad from then on.

Oh ok, I think we're done. If I have any more questions I might come back. I now need to go transcribe all of this. Thank you so much.

Just be clear that you could not be a girl and use contraceptives because you had to right to sleeping with men. Especially while you were still a girl. You only start using contraceptives once you're a wife.

Interlocuter: But I must say that in today's world we (as older people) agree that contraceptive use amongst young girls in acceptable.

Yeah, today we have to give allowance.

Interlocuter: Because of things like rape as you never know...oh Zola do you want coffee?

Yes please. Uhm...Do kids today hide it if they're using contraceptives?

No. Kids today don't hide anything. There's nothing to hide. Once they start their periods my mind starts running...when my granddaughter started I told her it was important for her to now stay away from boys because if she didn't she would end up pregnant. Once your child starts their period you need to talk to them and tell them if they meet with boys they'll end up pregnant. You mustn't hide anything from your children.

Interlocuter: Do you want tea?

Yes, please.

Interlocuter: Is rooibos fine?

That's exactly what I would like. A small cup will be fine.

So, what you're saying is that young girls no longer have to hide it if they're having sex? Or if they're having their periods? Or if they're on contraceptives?

There's nothing to hide today. Young girls make the decision to stay a virgin for themselves because they perhaps recognize that they're too young. Or maybe they decide to use contraceptives because they recognize that they're still too young to have a child. And as parents now we have to be constantly reminding them not to forget to go to the clinic. You know I raised 5 children with my husband and I didn't realize how much men didn't know. It's only now when my son calls me asking me to help him with his daughter and having to buy pads that I realize that men don't know anything about girl children and their periods. You know back then (when I was growing up and when I was raising my children) it was a rare thing for periods to be talked about in general but even more so with men.

And now that's changed?

Now it's changed because men now need to buy pads for their daughters.

Why was it not discussed before?

A girl was always someone who had to stay new...you know the bible?

Yes.

Mary was a new girl, so you as a girl child have to stay new like Mary. You have to stay a girl until a time comes when you are to be married. Remember, even Mary was confused when she was told she would have a child because she had never been with a man so it was something like that. That's how you would...I grew up at a time when as a girl you were not supposed to be with a man.

And has that type of thinking changed?

It's changed because now you have...it's really changed now because you have things like a 12-year-old child is pregnant. That's a child! And why are they even involved with a man? At 12 you're a child. We didn't know any of that when I was growing up. We couldn't imagine that a child aged 12 would sleep with a boy. You don't even think of them as being ready to be talked to about boys. Back then we generally waited until girls started their periods to talk to them. But apparently there are 10 years old's who are already having their periods so I think the problems have just begun. The influence of white people has a lot to answer for.

It's the white people?

They really messed us up. Because how is a 10-year-old child on her period? For us things started much later. I was 17 when I started my period and I wasn't even worried because I knew I had nothing to feel guilty about.

-----MaRhadebe arrived with the tea and the interview officially ended-----

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee (2)

Underline: Interviewee (1)

Part ONE

1: It was a source of shame to us. You could not sleep with a man that had impregnated another woman. That was very shameful to us. Like there would be gossip that this guy was having a relationship with so and so and he's gotten her pregnant. We didn't even really talk about it. And if you had given birth you couldn't walk with girls (virgins) and you couldn't talk to them.

Who has a child? Who can't you talk to?

1: For example, if I had, had a child I wouldn't be able to walk or talk with Makhule here.

Oh, ok.

1: There was no conversation between us. Even if you weren't talking about the pregnancy, you were just not allowed to interact with girls who had gotten pregnant while unmarried. You also could not talk to never mind date a boy that had impregnated someone else. The situation was seen the same as dating a married man. You couldn't do that. We used call that guy 'unodsana'.

Oh wow...let's just go back to the beginning of all of this. What are your names. When were you born and where did you grow up? Just a general background.

2: I was born in Queenstown but my family is from Hewu. I was born and raised in Queenstown. I went to school there. I only occasionally go emaXhoseni (Hewu) especially now that I'm older. Otherwise I grew up in a small town.

In Queenstown?

2: Yes, in Queenstown in the township (location).

So, you didn't grow up in the rural areas?

2: I only went to the rural areas as I grew up for school holidays. Like, maybe if I felt like it during the June holidays.

So, it wasn't a place you went to as a small child really.

2: No. I was quite grown up when I started going.

Your name?

2: My name? I am Nomhle.

Nomhle Tom?

2: No... wait, which surname do you want? My maiden surname or my marital one?

Both? It doesn't matter.

2: I am from the Siyengo family but I married in the Mabongweni family. The reason you're thinking Tom is because my daughter married into the Tom family and my granddaughter is a Tom.

When did you get married?

2: 1965.

How old were you when you got married?

2: Yhu...how would I still know? I was in my 20s. Not sure exactly.

And before you got married, did anyone talk to you about what was expected of you?

2: Like what?

Let's start with; did you choose on your own to get married?

2: It was my decision, I made my own choice. We were in love so we got married. I was never forced.

How did you meet?

2: We just met on the street. He would always greet me.

So that was allowed? You could meet someone that way?

2: It was allowed because it was a more enlightened time during the 1960s. You could at least stand in the street with a boy.

And there would be no problem?

2: Yes, there would be no problem. You would both say what you needed to say. But it was just talking, there was no touching like it is today with people's hands all over each other. If you were seen it looked like just two people talking, the person seeing you wouldn't even know if you were talking to a potential boyfriend or your brother.

1: Let me say this, there were different types of black people. There were 'abantu ababomvu' and there were 'abantu abangakho bomvu' (the non-enlightened/non-believers and the enlightened/believers) when we were growing up.

What is 'abantu ababomvu'?

1: It was people who lived according to Xhosa practices and beliefs.

2: They didn't go to school.

1: They were what you would call 'abantu besiXhosa'. Some did go to school but it was very rare. It just depended where you grew up. Like where I grew up kuBomvu, sisiXhosa. You couldn't just do whatever. You couldn't sleep with a boy before marriage. You couldn't sleep on a bed until you were about my age. Other Xhosa people did do things like sleeping in beds like uMakhulu here. I grew up not sleeping in a bed. Why? Because of ubuBomvu, because at home we practiced isiXhosa. You understand this?

So ubuBomvu was deep Xhosa beliefs and practices?

2: Yes.

But how would you exactly describe it? Is it strict?

2: It was very strict long ago.

What were the rules exactly?

2: First of all, we (as abantu abaBomvu) did not eat chicken.

Why?

2: We did not eat eggs...you said wanted isiXhosa so don't ask why.

Yes, but I'm trying to understand.

1: We didn't ask.

2: We didn't ask, just did what we were told.

And everyone did this?

1: Everyone I knew where I grew up was 'abantu ababomvu'. It was kwa-Xhosa. We didn't eat eggs as a girl child. And once you were married you could not eat a head.

Chicken head?

1: A sheep head.

Oh.

1: If you were married you couldn't eat/drink amasi unless it was given to you. These are examples of Xhosa practices. Things like that are what I mean when I talk about 'abantu abaBomvu'. Maybe, uMakhule here was allowed to eat eggs and chickens but I grew up not eating those things because it was our rules esiXhoseni.

And you never questioned it?

1: We couldn't ask and we didn't. You were just told what to do by adults.

2: And you just listened to adults, not what your generation does.

1: You couldn't eat/drink amasi while you were on your period.

So, you never questioned anything? You never asked why?

1: No, we couldn't ask anything and we just didn't ask anything. That's what I'm telling you.

So even today you don't know why you had to follow some of these rules?

1: I still don't know why I was told all the things I was growing up.

2: We just don't know.

1: To this day I still don't know.

So, were these rules directed at girls? The not eating chicken, eggs...

1: If you were a girl child you could not eat chicken or eggs. You couldn't eat/drink amasi once you were married. You couldn't eat eggs if you were a girl child. You don't eat anything you're told not to eat.

2: Even if your family kept chickens and they were being slaughtered and cooked right in front of you. Only the adults could eat it.

So, you can eat chicken once you're married? And it's only when you're a girl that you can't eat it?

1: Once you're married you can eat whatever you want to including chicken if it's something you want. But it depends on you, to this day I don't like eggs for example. It doesn't do anything to me but because I grew up not eating it I just don't like it.

So how was it growing up in... like in relation to marriage what were you...

1: Talking about marriage now...once you're married you'll be told you can't eat 'amasi' and what else? Uhm you also can't eat a sheep's head as a young bride. You'll be fed those things during your welcoming ceremony by the elders, you'll be given new marital name. You'll be given 'amasi' to drink and a sheep will be slaughtered.

2: That's what called 'utsiki'

1: Yes, the ceremony is called 'itsiki'.

And you're now officially a wife?

2: You're a wife now.

1: You're given a name and fed 'amasi'.

So, before marriage do you know anything about sex?

1: Nothing.

2: We know nothing.

Growing up what are you told?

2: Just that you should never sleep with a man. We grew being told you must just never sleep with a male, be it a boy or man. Nothing!

1: And if you're suspected you'll be examined by adults. Your legs will be opened and you'll be checked. And the adults will know if you've slept with a man. When you had sex when you weren't supposed to it would be out in the field behind some bushes, not like it is today. And you would be checked, right between the thighs.

You're being examined by you by your family?

1: Yes, you're being checked by the adults in your family.

So, when you were told not to sleep with a man, what did you think that meant?

2: You were scared.

1: Just being told you must never sleep with a man was scary. Even before you have feelings for boys.

2: Even before you question why you are being told not to sleep with a man or before you even think about testing what is being forbidden. Today young girls will try things and experiment things just to see what will happen.

1: For us you would be caught by the adults.

2: We were just scared. You were repeatedly told not to sleep with a man.

Did you know what sleeping with a man meant? Did you understand that it wasn't actually sleeping?

1: You're told clearly not to have sex with a man.

2: Do you sleep with a man!

What were you told exactly? Would your mother talk to you?

1: Listen...if you had maybe slept with a man, adults would immediately know. How they knew? We don't know. But it's obvious that you have slept with a man. And you'll be examined and looked at carefully to find evidence that you have slept with a man.

(0:10:51.3) And if you're caught?

2: You're no longer a girl.

You're not a girl?

1: You're no longer a virgin.

2: You can't be friends with girls now because you're dirty now and you'll tell them bad things, you'll influence them into sleeping with men too.

So, you're seen as dirty now?

1: Yes.

2: Yes.

You're no longer ...

1: You're no longer a virgin.

2: You're no longer a girl.

Why was it important to be a virgin?

2: It was important to get married while you were a virgin. It was important that you went into your marriage a virgin.

1: You had to be a girl. You had to get married as a girl. You needed to get married having never being touched by a man. When your hand was asked in marriage and it was announced that you were getting married you would have to sit in a corner where you wouldn't be seen. Even your future husband could not come near you until you were married.

Was the virginity aspect emphasized on girls only? Or did the boys also have to remain pure before marriage?

2: Well we wouldn't know what was said to boys but it was very strict for girls back then.

1: You could not sleep with a man until you were married to him. Even if he came to ask for hand and you get married before you sleep with your husband you'll be checked and examined while you're still sitting on the thatched mat as a bride.

By his family?

1: By your family.

Oh ok, so it was your family?

1: Yes, your family will examine you.

2: It was so that they could avoid potential embarrassment and not marry of someone who wasn't a virgin. It was so that your family would not be stressed about you embarrassing them by not being a girl. The knowledge that you were really still a girl was important. You would then be free to have sex with your husband who had paid lobola for you.

Why was it a disgrace if you weren't a 'girl'?

2: It's a disgrace because it meant you had not taken care of yourself.

1: You did not take care of yourself, everyone would think that.

Not being a virgin meant that you had not taken care of yourself accordingly?

2: Yes. you haven't taken care of yourself.

Oh, ok.

2: You've have not taken care of yourself once it's discovered you'd already slept with a man. You should not sleep with men before marriage, you have to be a virginal girl.

And once you're getting married, are you talked to?

2: Before you get married the elders would meet and negotiate regarding how many cows they want. Then the wedding happens. It's only after the wedding that you're taken to your husband and that should be the first time you sleep with him.

What are you told before the wedding?

2: Since you've kept your virginity and taken care of yourself lobola will be paid for you. And then when it comes to the wedding it will be the uniting of two families. You'll be married and then taken by 'iduli' to your new home before your family members come back home. And now you're free to do whatever you want with your husband, you're allowed to sleep with him now.

So, you at this point you know that...

2: You know that you've gone to be a wife.

And you're not given any details about what sleeping with your husband actually means?

2: No. No. Your husband tells you what you need to know.

1: Or you figure it out yourself.

Oh ok, so you aren't told not to be scared or anything like that?

2: No.

You're just married off and good luck to you?

2: Basically. But you know the whole thing is quite natural.

How?

2: I'm just saying sex is a natural act and there isn't much teaching involved. Your husband just follows his instincts, there's no learning anything. It just happens.

Were you scared?

1: Of course, you're scared.

2: You're scared and stressed because you've never been in that situation.

1: You're scared because you don't know how this man is going to touch you. You're really scared and crying when you're being taken to your new home. You are really crying unlike today where it's fun you would be laughing.

2: The way things were back then is that sometimes girls were married of to men they didn't even know. Or even if you did know him, he would have been a neighbour that you never thought you would be marrying. The elders would talk and agree, there would be no input from you.

How was it once you were married?

2: I'll be honest, a husband was not chosen for me. We were in love and chose to get married. It was a good marriage. It was my first time meeting his parents. But we lived very nicely together, there's nothing to complain about.

No problems?

2: No.

Oh ok, was it the same for you too?

1: Yes.

So, you were just worried that first day but after...

1: I was scared that first day when I was arriving.

2: And you would just be scared while you were being taken to your new home but once I got there...

1: The thing is that you don't know what to expect or how you'll be treated because it's not your family. You don't know all the rules and...

2: And how they do things. You don't know how many people are even in the family, or how people you'll potentially have to clean up after or cook for or doing the washing.

1: And you had to do those things.

2: Today it's a bit different because young women get married already owning their own houses. They don't need to stay with their in-laws. There's none of that having to wake up early and prepare tea for the elders.

1: Or washing piles of laundry in the river. You had to do the laundry for everyone, not just your husband. Or only your children. Everyone's laundry.

Who was doing the laundry before you arrived?

2: Exactly! Do you hear yourself? That's how you are today. Asking all these questions. Who was cooking before? But you know if you had young sisters-in-law who aren't lazy they would help you. Like if you made breakfast then they would make dinner. But if they're lazy or just didn't feel like it then you had no one to help you.

1: If you had young sisters-in-law they would maybe help you but do you remember what I said earlier? That not all Xhosa people believe the same things or live life the same way. In my experience there was no help whatsoever, my sisters-in-law just sat around. They were not supposed to help me at all. As soon as I arrived I was shown where everything was and I had to quickly figure it all out myself. You couldn't even always go to your mother-in-law to ask for money even though you were in charge of groceries. You'd just be pointed to the cupboards.

So, you weren't in charge of buying the groceries just making sure everything lasted for a while?

2: Yes.

1: And if there was no food in the cupboard you had to figure it out on your own.

2: You would be forced to beg for money from your mother-in-law who would ask your father-in-law or give you money herself so you could buy something. Or your mother-in-law would buy what you what was needed. My husband was educated but I was never involved with money directly. He would give his mother money who would then...like if I needed new shoes because the old ones were falling apart she would ask for me. Then she would give me the money to go buy new shoes.

1: In my case I was not allowed to touch money, my husband worked in Johannesburg. He would send money only to his mother.

Why?

1: Would you survived that kind of life? Always asking why.

2: That's why marriages don't last these days.

1: You know I would find out second hand that my husband's money had arrived. And there was nothing for me. Maybe your mother-in-law would give you 10 cents just being nice.

You had to ask your mother-in-law for money?

1: Yes!

So, you had to live with your mother-in law?

2: In my time you lived with your in-laws, his parents and siblings. Unless they too were far away working. But you generally lived with your father and mother-in-law. You cook for them, you wash their laundry and eventually give birth to the grandchildren.

And they're raised there?

2: They're raised by their father's family. And then maybe after a certain amount of time has passed...with my husband it was after 10 years. I stayed emaXhoseni for 10 years then he felt it was enough my husband called me up to come live with him in Queenstown.

Were you staying together in the rural areas?

2: I lived with his parents and he was in Queenstown working. He would then come visit when he had leave. He worked eKomani Hospital. He would only come visit when he was off or when he had a holiday. And then if I wanted to come to Queenstown I had to ask or he would ask for me so that I could go clean his house in town (Queenstown).

He's calling to clean?

2: Yes. I would clean the house he was living in. I would be there for a week or so. After that I would go back.

(0:20:16.8) Is that how marriages were back then?

2: Yes. As a wife you stayed back home. Not this thing that happens today where wives are barely there for the day. Or going to live with their husband immediately. And maybe only visiting his family in June or December.

Back then your husband would be away...

2: He leaves so he can work.

And you're stay behind living with his parents?

2: Yes. And you would do everything there.

When did you and your husband then have children?

2: When he would come visit is when he would generally try to get you pregnant, like if he was home for a holiday. You would get pregnant, give birth, raise the child and then he would come home for a visit again and so on.

Was it important to have children?

2: I was very important, very important. As the head of the house he wanted children. It would be awkward and uncomfortable with your in-laws...people would be counting how many years you've been married. There would be whispers about you being infertile. One or two years without children would cause mumbles.

Why was it important to have children?

2: It was said that you were growing and expanding the family so that it doesn't die out. You see?

Your husbands' duties were to go out and work and then come home and impregnate you?

2: He would have to go to town and he couldn't stay years with you in the rural areas. He only came home when he was off or when he had a chance during the weekends. Or when he had holidays.

How many children do you have?

2: 7.

Seven? That's a lot. When did you have them? What's the gap?

2: My first one was born in 1965, then I didn't finish a year because I had another 1966. Again in 1967. Then 1970...no it was 1971.

1965 to 1971?

2: Yes, and then I had twins in 1974 and my last in 1977.

You were quite busy with lots of small children running around.

2: They all followed each other very quickly. But I wasn't working, my job was giving birth. And cleaning the home.

So that was your job?

2: Yes.

Having children and...

2: Yes...well it wasn't my job but back then you had to do what your husband wanted. My husband didn't want me to work except the work that I was doing in the home. I never had a real job.

1: Back then wives didn't work.

2: Women working is new. Back then only men worked.

1: Your husband was the one working, not you.

2: He would work to feed the family, today you have husbands and wives who both have jobs. You both leave the house in your separate cars to your separate jobs. And today, you only see your husband at 5pm and all this is only possible with the help of housekeepers. I didn't have a housekeeper.

You said your husband didn't want you to work, was everything according to what he wanted?

1: Everything you did was what your husband wanted you to do.

2: My husband decided everything from the food we ate to my clothes because he would buy them for me since I wasn't allowed to work. He had to do everything I needed since I wasn't working.

Could you talk to him? And discuss something if you disagreed?

2: No, you just did what you were told. If I ever mentioned getting a job he would swear up and down that I would never work on his behalf because he was working. I wanted to work and he told me I would never work because he was working.

1: All I know is that my husband worked and I was just a wife and mother. Your mother-in-law was the only other person who could dictate the rules, she would tell you what to do and when to do it.

You lived according to your husbands' rules or your mother-in-law's rules?

2: Mother-in-law was more day to day.

And if you wanted something...

2: You would ask her.

(0:25:17.9) You'd ask her? Oh, ok. So now when contraceptives arrived were, they something you used? Or that you knew about?

1: I never used contraceptives.

2: I might as well not have used contraceptives because I gave birth to my last son in 1977 and I was given the injection. I was told to come back after three months for another injection, my husband then found my clinic card and told me that I would not be going back. And I never used contraceptives again.

Why?

2: He didn't want me too.

1: For us we listened to our husbands, if he didn't want something happening it didn't happen. Simple. You didn't have the right to question him.

2: You know, if I had wanted to, I could have done something sneaky. He had seen the card; it was lying around in the open so he knew what was my last date at the clinic. I could have asked for a second card from the nurses, a card I could hide so I could secretly go get the injection. He would just see the one card not knowing that I have a secret second one. But I just listened to him and didn't go again.

1: For me, it was not allowed for you as a wife to use contraceptives. It was not allowed.

Why?

1: You're a wife! You're there (marital home and family) to have children. Do you think you're there to be fed and taken care of?

But what if you just needed a break from having children? Maybe a 4- or 5-year age gap between children

1: No, you couldn't do that. Or at the very least it was difficult.

2: It's a lot of effort. You'd generally get a year between children and three at the most.

1: It's quite recent that wives now use contraceptives. For us you just gave birth to as many children as you could.

Your husband said no and you stopped, do you think there some women who did hide their contraceptive use from their husbands?

2: Maybe...I guess. I don't know. There must have been because some would have realized the poverty they were living in and decided using contraceptives was the best option.

1: But it wasn't allowed. For any reason, you were not allowed to use contraceptives as a wife.

2: I can't imagine how the people hiding it would have done it, maybe you go on days your husband is away. And you have to make sure you've hidden the second card in a place only you know where you only get it out to go to the clinic before hiding it again.

So that was a way someone could have hidden their contraceptive use?

2: Yes.

Would you consider your marriage an equal partnership? Could you discuss how many children you wanted? When you should perhaps stop getting pregnant?

2: No. We couldn't do that.

1: There was none of that. Telling your husband that you thought you had enough children? No, that never happened.

2: You would stop getting pregnant when you stopped. That's all.

1: Only God could stop you from having children.

How did he do that?

2: He would ensure that you didn't get pregnant or maybe you would start menopause. We used up as many eggs we could before they finished.

1: Yes. We had a lot of children back then.

Did you hear about contraceptives at the clinic? If so, what was said?

2: For me, I went to the hospital to give birth...it was actually my first-time giving birth in a hospital. Nurses used to come help you deliver at home.

Nurses came to your house?

2: Yes. And then they would help you give birth there.

How did she know to come? Or that it was time?

2: You would go to the clinic for check-ups.

And it was planned through the clinic?

2: In Queenstown we went to the clinics on Mondays. Every Monday.

1: I won't lie to you, I would just squat behind a door and give birth.

How?

1: I don't want to tell you lies. I could probably help people deliver...oh you're having contractions? Then push the baby out. And nothing would go wrong. I never gave birth in a clinic.

How exactly did you do it?

1: It's the same as going to the clinic when you're having contractions instead in the midst of all the pain you would just squat down to the floor and give birth.

But how?

2: Giving birth is difficult. That's why later nurses would try and teach you how to push. And you would just be pushing without a care because it was painful. You wouldn't even really need nurses to tell you when to push because you would just feel it. You would know when to push because that's how it was made to be.

Oh ok. So, you said you went to give birth in a hospital?

2: Yes, that's when I first used contraceptives. I had never used contraceptives before and I started after I gave birth to my son in 1977. I was given the injection and my husband saw the clinic card before the three months was up so I never even got the chance to go back. After that I never used contraceptives again.

(0:30:16.4) What did the nurses say to you? How were contraceptives explained to you?

2: I don't know exactly what the different types were or what you were actually being given. I just know that there was the injection and the pill.

Were you asked which you would prefer?

2: No, they never asked me.

What reason were you given for being given the injection?

2: They knew that I had a lot of children.

Wait...were you asked if you wanted to use contraceptives or was it decided for you?

2: I was told I had too many children already so I was being given the injection.

Oh ok...

2: And I was honestly coming to the same realization myself, I had a lot of children. My husband was the only one working and the children were in school. But you know, God really blessed us because we never really struggled.

So, when the nurses told you that you were being given the injection how did you feel?

2: I didn't really care because I could see that I had a lot of children. But I did never have another child.

So, when contraceptives were introduced what was being said of the social atmosphere? How were they received?

2: You see it was around an enlightenment period that contraceptives emerged. There would be nurses going door to door talking to young girls who had just started menstruating. There would be meetings in back rooms for women where the nurses would talk to them about the different methods one could use when it came to contraceptives. Did you want the injection? Or did it make you sick? So then maybe you would be changed to the pill. All that stuff.

So, when all of this was being discussed what were you...?

2: I never went to any of the meetings. Those who were interested would go. And for young girls, nurses would literally go inside houses and call for them if they thought that they had started their period and were starting be interested in boys. There would be big announcements about meeting at the community hall where nurses would teach about contraceptives. But I was never involved.

Did people publicly talk about whether or not they used contraceptives? Or was it generally a secret?

2: Some young girls did sneak to the community hall meetings about contraceptives while some parents let, they children go. There would be parents who would notice the path their children were on, realizing that they might have children before time so they would end up taking their children to the clinic themselves.

Oh ok.

2: It all really depended on the type of parent you were.

And within the community?

2: It was something very common and quite well known.

What would you say the initial reaction was?

2: When contraceptives arrived, some people said that you were giving your child permission to have sex even if you knew that, that was not what was happening. All you were doing was protecting them from having a child before marriage. Those were really the two different understandings people had. For some it was like you were this undisciplined and untrustworthy person because you allowed your child to go to the clinic for contraceptives. Others were against their children using contraceptives but even those who were against young girls using contraceptives eventually capitulated because your child would end up pregnant while you were still blind to their faults, thinking their above a teenage pregnancy. While you were busy denying your children contraceptives because you thought it meant you were encouraging them to have sex they were busy getting pregnant anyway. So, in the end even those who were against contraceptive use ended up accepting them because children ended up pregnant before it was time.

How did men react?

2: Fathers were generally against everything. And what they would do is put the burden on the women. Despite that child being raised in a house with both parents it would always be the mother's fault if anything went wrong despite the fact that he too was there and chose to do nothing. Fathers would see that their daughters were going down a bad path and not say anything. Today parents sit down with their children and talk, that didn't happen back then especially with fathers. Fathers typically did not take on an active role in their children's lives, particularly their daughters. It's a bit better with boys because some father did talk to their sons about life and what happened. For women it was constantly being an active parent, talking and teaching your children everything. And with girls you would have to talk to them about their period and that they now had to take care of themselves and keep themselves pure. You would tell them not to sleep with men and that they had to be secretive regarding their periods, it's not something that needs to be known.

1: For me personally, I only went to the hospital to give birth with my last child.

All the others were born at home?

1: Yes.

Did you at least have nurses?

1: I didn't have nurses; we didn't have them in my village.

Where are you from?

1: I'm from the Transkei.

Where in the Transkei?

1: Nqamakwe.

Ok.

1: Then I moved to Cumakala near Stutterheim when I got married. It was my first time going to the clinic with this last child...

2: You went for a check-up?

1: I was there for a check-up but I ended up going into labour and giving birth at the hospital. I was so confused and lost because it was my first-time giving birth on my back. I was used to squatting. I remember being hooked up to some machine which was encouraging my contractions which made me mad and I wanted them to remove it from me. That was my first-time giving birth in a hospital. All my other children were born at home.

2: We had nurses in our village, even a clinic. You would undergo 'uhlukuhla' where...

What does 'ukuhlukuhla' mean? Is it contractions?

2: It's sort of check-up where your belly is felt up.

To what end?

2: It was a check up to see if everything was going well with the baby.

Did you ever think of contraceptives as a method of killing black people?

2: Oh yes.

Did you view them that way?

2: Yes. They were viewed that way because you would hear people say that we (as black people) were not familiar with contraceptives.

Were they Western products?

2: Yes. And also, for us if you were pregnant you were just pregnant. The idea of using contraceptives to not get pregnant did not exist. We thought of it as white people things. Just like AIDS. We never thought it was something that black people would get. It was a disease that was very removed from us and we thought of it as a white person disease. It was then through people doing research, nurses going to churches and meetings being called in the community halls that we were told that AIDS was not something that did not affect us but rather that it affected people in our communities in South Africa. AIDS was not just a disease that existed abroad.

Oh wow...

2: Similarly, with contraceptives, it was preached to us that using contraceptives was good because it meant children didn't get pregnant before they finished their education. Though unfortunately there's no preventive care AIDS. If you're reckless you'll be infected with HIV and there is no cure. Contraceptives were actually quite good, if you allowed your child to use contraceptives then they wouldn't have a child as long as they kept up with it and made sure not to skip dates.

So, when you raised your children...wait, you said you never talk to your mom about sex, right?

2: I never talked to my mother about sex but with my children I spoke to them about it. I told my children that if they didn't use contraceptives then they would end up having a baby.

Why did you make the decision to talk to your children when your own mother never did?

2: I could see...I was enlightened. I could see what was going on, you would be sending your child to school and then they would end up pregnant. In most cases going back to school after pregnancy was really difficult and young girls would end up uneducated.

So, you recognized that times were changing?

2: Yes. And that you had to have a conversation with your daughters and tell them.

Tell them?

2: Tell them that if they slept with a man, they would end up pregnant. Tell them that if they slept with a man while not using birth control, they would end up pregnant.

No one had that conversation with you and yet...

2: I was enlightened. And I could see what was happening.

So, you talked to your children? And you took them to the clinic?

2: I would talk to them and then they would go on their own. I wouldn't actually take them; I would tell them that they had the options and it was up to them what they chose to do. I would say 'if you want to have children while still at home go ahead and you clearly don't want an education. But if you want an education and to be whatever you want when you grow, you'll go to the clinic'. I never took them myself to the clinic, I would just tell them what options they had and they would decide to go themselves. And that's what my children did so that they could finish their education and become the successes they are today. Because it would have never worked to take your children to the clinic because what happens the next month when they don't go? What will you do then? And they wouldn't even tell you that they didn't go despite the fact that you took them before.

And today? Is it important to talk to your children?

2: It's very important. It's like with these condoms, young people are being told to use them and yet that's not happening. You don't use a condom then what happens? You get sick because people with HIV don't have it written on them and some people don't even know they're positive and they end up passing it on to you. I'm not talking about those who infect others through rape knowing that they are sick.

So, times have changed and they've forced an attitude change?

2: Yes, you have to talk now. But even though we're speaking up and talking today it doesn't make a difference. We should be at a place where there are no longer any new HIV positive patients if young people today listened. And understood the meaning of the word 'no'. There should be no children still getting pregnant while in school if young people listened.

The problem is not listening?

2: Children today don't listen; something needs to happen to them before they listen. Young people want to experiment on themselves and experience what they're being told 'no' about. Back in the day we didn't ask questions, we just listened to what our parents told us. There's a generation that has grown up on TV seeing and learning things. We didn't have TVs, we had gramophones with just FM.

Today young children watch TV and stay up seeing all the different ways one can have sex. While we're sleeping, children today aren't.

One of the positive changes is that parents now talk to their children?

2: Yes, but still despite talking to children they don't listen because children think they know better. You tell them to use contraceptives and they don't. Some you physically take to get contraceptives and the moment you step back they stop going then the next thing you're surprised by a pregnancy. Who told them to stop? Not the parent. Young people today do not listen.

Ok. Let me try summarize what you've told me. In the past young girls were not supposed to have sex before marriage and if they did it was shameful. And it was something that had to be kept a secret and you would only get caught if you got pregnant. While today...

2: Today the youth just do whatever they want. You can just tell if a young girl is busy with boys, girls today don't even sleep at home anymore. They stay out all night sleeping in random rooms and unknown beds with boys. You know our boyfriends has respect and they were scared of our parents. Today? No fear. Especially now that there's social grants.

Ok.

2: You know back the we didn't even talk about sex. Getting pregnant before marriage was rare and when it happened was a huge disgrace in the past but today girls there are more and more children being born out of marriage. In the past it was such a huge disgrace that when it was talked about people would say 'umtwana kabani ufumene isiwo...uwile'. Today girls don't fall they just give birth.

So, before contraceptives arrived...

2: It was rare that girls messed up.

And now there's more teenage pregnancies despite the availability of contraceptives?

2: Yes. Young people just want to experience everything, there's no understanding of the word 'no'.

Wow. So, things are different now?

2: In the past young girls rarely got pregnant especially when they were in school. They certainly never went to school with their big bellies as if they were grown married women. Girls today give birth and go back to school like it's normal.

(0:45:38.5) Was the arrival of contraceptives a good thing?

2: They really messed things up. They really messed up. Because if they were good there would be no pregnancies unless you were married or if you don't get married at least have a child when you're at an appropriate age and can afford having a child. Not this thing of having a child while you're still in school and relying on your parents. Having children before marriage is trouble and adds a further burden on your family when you're already a burden yourself on your parents. And your parents will have to raise your child in addition to raising you.

Contraceptives were supposed to in theory help so what happened?

2: Young people are arrogant and think they know everything. And there is no longer any fear or feelings of shame. Young people don't care about being a disgrace to themselves or to their parents. Growing I was so scared of disgracing my parents but children today just don't care. Children don't even listen while their being disciplined, comes in the one ear and out the other. Maybe it's being products of these Model C schools.

You think morals have changed?

2: There is no longer any respect for parents. Or any sense of shame. There is just no fear and even when you try to talk to someone, they just tell that times have changed. Isn't that so? That's the defence of modernity that things have changed. Well modernization has ruined young people. It was better in the past than it is now. The time where we were still in the dark with a little enlightenment was better.

Ok...

2: You might not have known everything but you didn't even want to investigate deeper about why certain things were a certain way. Today young people are always digging deeper and questioning everything. I just listened to what I was told and no was no. Today that's not acceptable and instead you suddenly have teachers outside. If as a parent I say no you have a mother on the street who will tell you yes and say you're being tricked. Do you know where that leads? We'll just see you with a baby bump. Friends can lie to you tell you not to use contraceptives while they are secretly using it but you're the idiot that's not only listening but you're the one that's going to end up pregnant whose life won't go anywhere. That's the casualty of listening to your mothers on the street instead of the one at home. It's like young people think their parents want to punish when they're protecting you. As parents we know better. Inyathi ibuzwa kwabaphambili. There's none of that for today's young people.

(0:50:15.6) Was your marital home in Queenstown?

2: Yes, but emaXhoseni.

Was there a difference in the village vs in town?

2: In the rural area's girls carried themselves better, for example you would never find...the only women who drank were very old women and even then, it was umqombothi. Though today they have shebeens in the rural areas and there's young girls who now get drunk. In the past we didn't have any of that.

Did it happen in town?

2: It only happened in town but it's even worse now because you see children as young as 12 getting drunk and no longer sleeping at home. Instead they're wondering the streets.

How do you compare the rural areas and a town?

2: It was strict in the rural areas. House lights (candles) could only be switched on by a girl child. As a girl supper was also your duty. Today girls just eat without cooking. Girls don't have to be home by a certain time to make the lights are switched on, though you also have electricity now so it's not as an important task. You know we had to even wash the glass for the lanterns. And make sure there was enough paraffin to switch on later.

That was a girl's job?

2: Yes.

And boys?

2: Boys herded cattle if your family had any.

And as a girl your duties were mainly in the house?

2: Yes. And as a result, back then you didn't have a chance to be wondering around. Even if you went away you knew the appropriate time to come back unlike children today. Back then we knew that if

you went somewhere you had to be back home by sunset to cook supper. And this all goes back to young people today knowing everything. There are no priorities today.

Coming from the village how was town when you went to go visit your husband?

2: The township was always very noisy. It was the start of people having gas stoves so that they could cook at night. There were maybe 2 or 3 houses that initially had gas stoves.

How did women and girls handle themselves in town?

2: I would say they carried themselves well but when you're coming from the rural areas you're blind so you're an easy target. Girls in town are street smart.

Oh ok. Thank you very much. I just want to ask uMadlamini about contraceptives quickly...is she still busy?

2: I only started used contraceptive sin 1977 after I gave birth to my son on the 4th February. I was given the injection before I was released and told to come back after 3 months. Then husband saw the clinic card and I never used contraceptives again. It was my first and last time.

Why didn't you hide your card?

2: I did actually hide it but I don't know why he was looking through a suitcase I had put away.

Oh! So, you actually hid the card when you got home? Were you not going to tell him?

2: I wasn't going to tell him because I had already had enough of giving birth.

And you wouldn't have been able to talk to him?

2: No, I could never. My husband was very tribal. I couldn't tell him anything. No, he was educated but also very tribal. He used isiXhosa to govern our lives.

And isiXhosa said...?

2: My wife should have as many children as she can. She must not work.

Were there women who could talk to their husbands?

2: I'm not sure because my sister and her husband were living in Botswana, only coming back in December but she also had a lot of children even though she was a teacher alongside her husband. She worked and had a lot of children, 5 or 6.

So, it was all up to your husband? Whether you wanted more children or not was not up to you?

2: Yes. Some husbands were fine with two, a boy and a girl. Others two boys or even four boys. It just depended on what they felt they could afford. Plus remember we planted unlike today where you have to buy your food. We planted and would also grind corn into maize.

After your husband threw away your clinic card you never felt the urge to go to the clinic anyway and hide it?

2: No, I never went again.

Why?

2: I respected him as my husband and I never went again. And then he got a promotion and went to go work in Port Elizabeth anyway so he was rarely ever home.

So, him being far helped in not getting pregnant?

2: Yes, that helped.

Ok.

2: MaDlamini! Come!

Why did you never use contraceptives?

1: When I was having children, we didn't have contraceptives.

And when they arrived?

1: I think I'd already stopped having children.

Did you tell your children about contraceptives when they were growing up?

1: I knew nothing about contraceptives or what they did so I never said anything. Everything they knew they found out for themselves.

You didn't even know what contraceptives were for?

1: No. I just heard people talking about preventing and I didn't even know what they were preventing or why they were preventing. My children found out on their own.

Oh ok. Thank you both.

1: Anything else?

I think I'm done.

Part TWO

2: Back then people ate unsafe things and did unsafe things. Things that would harm you. You know as a result some could never have children again...even when they did in the future. So, we had such things back then, we had these abortions the difference today is that their safer and allowed. For some young people it seems like they think they can have unprotected sex because they know they can have an abortion later.

You're saying there's a culture of not carelessness?

2: Yes. There're young women today who just rely on abortions.

Ultimately do you think things have changed for better or worse?

2: It's a bit of both but I do think that even though abortions were happening back then they were quite rare. Abortions weren't common whereas today they seem to be happening all the time. And there's no shame today, you hear people talking about their second or third abortions casually. And honestly if you just use proper birth control abortion wouldn't be needed. I think it's better to use contraceptives than be constantly having abortions which could be bad for your health.

As a parent and grandparent do you think there has been a cultural shift in that now you tell girls to use contraceptives to stay safe rather than staying pure like before?

2: Today it all depends on the young women. It's all up to you. What do you want to do for yourself? If you want to date around and have sex you can choose to use birth control instead of getting pregnant. But honestly choosing not to use contraceptives your choice. You can also choose not to date and wait for marriage. You can say no to man if you want to stay pure but some men are evil and will rape you. There're all these things now but in the past if you weren't interested in someone that was that.

Yeah?

2: Yes, you would go your separate ways and nothing would happen.

Has the place of a girl in the home changed?

2: It hasn't really changed because in a way by using contraceptives young girls are still taking care of themselves. How you take care of yourself still determines your future. Whether you choose not to use contraceptives or to stay celibate is up to you. Sex seems to be the first thing on people's minds today, and love doesn't seem to be a factor. Your boyfriends just want sex. We wouldn't have sex for 6 months back then, it wasn't the focus. Everything moves so fast. I will say that boys today seem more selfish, they use girls for sex before going off and marrying someone else.

So, regarding a change in society and culture...

2: It's not really a change. Nothing has really changed except that there is an excess problem today. Everything is the same, the problem is excess.

Meaning?

2: Young people today have their own houses away from their families. People just live together and girlfriends act like wives. Doing laundry and cleaning at the boyfriends. Duties that are seen as a wife's duty.

It's been really interesting hearing your perspective about life

2: Not much has changed outside of excess and a lack of respect. People did things with respect before, there is a lack of respect and shame concerning sex. Also, neighbours could discipline a child but now there is no communal respect. You know girls just stand in front of you with boys today. Back then a neighbour could smack your child and as parents it was never a problem. We have really lost the decency we had in the past.

Nothing has really changed except instead of hiding certain things, young people do them out in the open?

2: Yes. And there is a lot of judgement and jealousy today. The village is no longer raising the child, you make fun of your neighbours instead of praying with them. People's problems are now gossip fodder.

And this all comes down to respect?

2: Yes. There is no longer any respect.

Well that makes the future scary.

2: Yes. And your generation will even be worse with your children. You'll probably welcome the boyfriends into your homes. Me? I didn't allow any of it for my children. When my husband and I were dating the closest he got to my house was way down the road. And I would have to find a way to sneak out. Today you're supposed to know your child's boyfriend, you're apparently supposed to serve them cake and tea. Some do get married but most times it's just a one boyfriend after another. Where's the respect in that? Imagine meeting 5 different boyfriends.

That's not common?

2: Not it isn't but I guess it's being normalized now.

Wow. I'd better get going. You've helped me a lot. Thank you so much. Really, thank you.

Nomzana

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

Ok, what is your name? Where did you grow up? How old are you?

My name? Which one?

All of them...?

I grew up in the rural areas in Mount Fletcher. I also got married in Mount Fletcher. I was Nomzana Gelly Masokha and I married into the Khoza family. And my new marital name was Nomsawenkosi Mfusi of the Khoza family. I got married! It was a white wedding in a church with my husband. We were married. We met in church, we were both church goers and that's where I first saw him. Then he went to go ask for my hand from my family and paid lobola for me then we got married. He paid 12 cows for me, then we got married. We lived quite nicely together, I soon discovered that my husband was a very organized person. He was also a farmer and back home growing up my family also grew corn. I grew up in a farming family, we would harvest corn and grind it into maize. Make 'amasi', that was our main meals. Back then children didn't drink tea like they do today. Sugar was very rare so only adults drank tea and we as children didn't. We ate porridge without sugar.

How old are you? When were you born?

Huh?

How old are you?

Now?

Yes.

I'm 78 now and I was 19 when I got married.

What year was that?

I got married 1959. And then I was a married woman and I eventually had children...I had 8 children.

Was it common to have 8 children?

I had 8 children but they didn't all survive. Four survived from the eight. And only two are alive today.

When did you have your first child?

My first child was born in 1960.

And the last one?

I had my last child in 1984.

Oh ok.

Yeah, my last child was born in 1984.

Just going back to how you grew up...

I was quite old by the time I had my last child.

In 1984?

Yes, I was in my 40s. I was quite old when I had the last born. You know, I used to farm. Really farm, not with tractors like today. We used cows. I was in charge of holding the plough so I could guide the cows.

This when you're growing up?

No, once I was married too. I did it at home growing up and once I was married too. I could tie up a cow and use it to help me plant crops. I also used to milk the cows, the cows would eventually get used to me and accept me.

Did you grow up with your mom and dad?

My father died when I was very small so I was raised mainly by my mother who worked here in Cape Town.

But you stayed in Mount Fletcher?

Yes.

Who were you living with there?

I lived with my grandmother. My mother's mother while my mother worked here in Cape Town.

Was it common for children to stay with their grandmothers?

Yes. That was something that had been happening forever. it was very common. My mother worked here in Brakenfell in Cape Town.

What did she do?

I think she worked as a maid because she was not educated. I think she was a kitchen girl.

Did you grow up with brothers and sisters?

Yes, I grew with both brothers and sisters. There were also 8 of us at home, I was the 5th child at home with 3 children behind.

Was there a difference in how you were raised as a girl versus your brothers?

We were raised by our grandmother. Actually, our grandfather was also still alive. We were quite grown up by the time he died because my eldest brother had a house by then.

Was there a difference in how you and your brothers were raised?

No, there was no difference.

Growing up what were you told about the place of a girl in the home?

Huh?

What was expected of you as a girl?

The work?

Your work and role as a girl.

I grew up going to school and I only stopped when I got married. I went to school and I also had to work because at home we were farmers so we need to help plant the crops, harvest it and turn over the soil. We needed to gather wood, sometimes even go up the mountains to go gather wood. We needed it to make fires because we didn't have paraffin. There was none of that, paraffin is new. We had to make a fire outside for everything. That's how I grew up.

What were you told when you reached the age where you started your period? Did your grandmother speak to you?

You know we didn't care about things like that. We just had no business with boys.

So, she never said anything to you? When you first started your period you weren't scared?

She talked to me when she noticed in church that I had talked to a boy. We had to stay away from boys because as a girl you couldn't have a baby outside of wedlock. That was not something that happened, it was a huge disgrace.

Why?

It was a disgrace because it was something that was not supposed to happen. Having a child while still a girl and while you were still at home? That was not accepted by adults. It was a huge disgrace and you would be called a horrible name if you had a child while still a girl. You would be called 'idikazi'.

And that was offensive?

It was offensive, you were being cursed at to be called 'idikazi'. And that's what you were called if you had a child outside of marriage in my time. For me, the first time I was with a man was when I got married because he had asked for my hand.

Could you have rejected the offer marriage?

Yes, I had the right to say no.

You wouldn't be forced?

No. I chose to be married because I liked him when we met in church.

What is the role of lobola...?

Lobola was paid for me.

Yes, but what is its role and place?

It's lobola...what else can I say?

Yes, but what's its point?

When you get married, your future husbands family has to bring cows to your family. That's lobola.

Did you ever feel like you were being sold?

(laughs hysterically) Being sold? No! You're not being sold, you're just getting married. Back then if you were a girl your family needed to use you to eat. But it wasn't seen as being sold, you were getting married. You were becoming a wife. So much that when you were a girl and you were getting married...you see we didn't ever interact with boys. You only ever interacted with a man when he was your husband. Any other man or even boy you had no business with. Back then when you would get married you would be counselled, and you would be told that because you're now married you needed

a new name to signify your position and that from that day forward there was no other man you would ever talk to again. Your husband would also be told the same, he'd be told that from that day there would be no other girls. The marriage was to be only between husband and wife, and that's what would happen. You would be married, you would live in your new home being called your new name. Your surname would also be changed. You would be there and be a woman and eventually have children.

What were your duties as a wife?

It was to cook and look after the home. We looked after the home. We didn't work.

(0:11:19.9) Was it important to have children?

You had to have children. You were a real wife when you had children.

If you don't have them?

Well you won't be kicked out because they did pay lobola for you. If God doesn't give you children you won't be discarded because of that because lobola was paid for you.

How was that situation handled?

It wasn't anything new, it's something that happens. It even happened to our great grandmothers.

Would you feel bad if you didn't have children?

Not having children? Nothing would happen, they would learn to accept it.

You said you became a real wife once you had children, so children are important?

Yes. I was lucky to have children because it's what you supposed to do as a woman. You're there (marital home) to have children. You are in there to have children and grow that family. You have to. Which was why you would be taken to a doctor if you weren't having children to ensure that you did have children. Unless ultimately it became obvious that you didn't have the gift to have children. So, until the doctor said you don't have the gift to have children and that your eggs are useless and so on. But if you weren't having children and the doctor said that your eggs were fine you would then undergo treatment so that when you slept with your husband you could have children.

Who would be at fault if you weren't having children?

It would be a problem for the both of us. It's both our job because as a wife I didn't work and was home having children while my husband was away working. He would be expected to send money back home because he knew he had children who needed to eat and be dressed. All of those things were his responsibilities.

When did you get to Cape Town?

To stay?

Yes.

Well I used to come regularly because my husband worked here in Cape Town. He lived in the hostels eMfuleni and I would go visit him. Back then when the fighting was going on and Mandela was in jail our husbands would run back home. The whole ugly situation (apartheid) happened while we were married and had children. I would have to sneak coming to Cape Town because if you were caught here you would be arrested. The police were always watching us because by law we were not allowed to come visit our husbands. If you came you would have to be very careful and you would have to avoid the police because you would be arrested and your husband would be forced to pay a fine. We

were not wanted here during that time when white people told us what to do. Mandela fought for us to be able to come live here and be able to stay with our husbands.

What years was it that you had to sneak into Cape Town to see your husband?

It was around 1966 or 1967.

Ok.

From 1966 or 1967 going forward. And then when Mandela freed us, declaring that we were all one I could come.

So, when did you officially move to Cape Town.

Quite recently now in 2013. My husband had passed away and I was staying alone with my two young granddaughters. But then crime picked up as old women were being raped so I decided to run away from that and move here.

Where was thing happening?

Oh, it was in the rural areas. I ran to come live with my sister in Makhasa and while there my late husband's niece said I could come live in her house here in Khayelitsha since her tenant of 14 years was moving out.

Oh ok. So, in 1967 you wouldn't stay?

No, I would just come to visit. From 1967 onwards.

How long do you think you would stay?

Here? I would stay about a year. I would even pay for an ANC membership card there in Mfuleni.

You were in the ANC?

Yes.

What did you do?

I would just stay as a woman coming to visit her husband.

You didn't work?

I never worked. I was just a wife until my husband got his pension then we lived back home. And he grew old and sick and died at age 83.

Ok. Do you know anything about contraceptives?

In what time?

In the 70s and 80s?

What was happening?

No... when did you first year about contraceptives?

Contraceptives?

Yes.

Oh ok, I heard it around those times. We already had contraceptives. We had the injection and the pill.

Who told you?

The nurses of course.

Ok...

I was now living with my husband so I had to protect myself as a result. Because you were now staying with him you had to sleep with him so you had to protect yourself.

How did you react to contraceptives? Where they a good thing? Or a bad thing?

It was good and bad.

Ok?

You were told that the whole treatment was a good thing. It was good and not bad.

Did you ever think that contraceptives were a way to kill black people by the white government?

No.

That never came in your mind?

Never.

Did you use contraceptives?

No, I never used contraceptives.

Even after you were told they were a good thing?

Yes. I never used them.

Why?

Because it wasn't available.

In the 70s and 80s? Your last child was born in 1984, right?

1984.

Where did you have your children? Clinic?

Yes.

Did you have them all this side?

You see, I had my first child in 1960 and finished in 1984 so I just never went to go get contraceptives. I was so old in 1984 already. I was already very old.

Uhm...

Is this for your job?

Yes.

You work?

Me? I'm a student.

Where?

UCT.

Oh, ok you're studying. So, you want to hear my story? What are you studying?

History.

History?

History of women.

Ok, you want to know my experience? Are you from Cape Town?

I was born here.

And your parents?

Originally from East London.

Oh ok. Both mom and dad?

My father passed away but my mother is still around.

Where do you stay?

My mom's in Kimberly and I'm here because of school.

And the man that brought you to me?

That's my uncle.

Really?

My mom's older brother.

Oh, and he's helping you?

Yes.

In what you want?

Yes.

Oh ok. Are you getting what you need?

Yes.

Oh, that's good. We're all from the Eastern Cape. Are you going to interview other people to?

Yes. Moving on...how did you experience apartheid?

You mean what the white people were doing?

Yes.

Back when we had to sneak here?

Yes.

Well, we were treated badly. We treated very badly. When your bus would arrive...back then we only had busses because we didn't have taxis. I worked for a bus company called Blue Line so I didn't pay when I would come to visit my husband. When I was back home, I used to organize people. And when I was coming to visit my husband, I would just get on the bus with no problem even if I didn't have money. I knew that I didn't have to pay with Blue Line. You see, we weren't treated well at all. You would leave the Eastern Cape on a Sunday and arrive on Monday but if you were seen by the

white people you would have to immediately turn around. You had to go back with bus or you would be arrested and you would have to pay a fine. It was not nice. It was very ugly because we had to steal visits to our husbands. It wasn't nice. Do you see that? I remember one time that my husband, who was staying eMfuleni and working...well he started in Brackenfell. Actually, I was almost arrested there in Brackenfell, we (as the wives) almost got caught but luckily this man helped hide us so that the white police officers didn't see us. When they came towards where we were with their dogs...people used to shout back then. Shouting that it was 'red' and the moment you hear shouts of 'red', all of us wives had to go hide. And the white police officers would come with their dogs. There was a place where we would be hidden. So, when someone would shout that it was red we would have to run. On this day as we ran, the man that helped us said that he had a hole that he had dug amongst the trees so we had to go hide there. We ran and hid there that day, we ended up having to sleep there. At night blankets were brought to us. There were four of use wives. The whole time it's 'red' and there's police with dogs everywhere, if you were caught you would end up in the hospital. Not a hospital here in Cape Town, you'll be taken back wherever you came from. You would be bandaged up at the clinic then put of the train or bus. You had to go to the hospital in the rural areas.

Where you not scared?

We were scared but we still came. We had to come to our husbands. It was a very ugly time, it was not pretty.

Would it not have been easier for your husband to come to you?

They could only come when they were on leave, you would just be waiting at home. A whole year would go by before he could get leave and come home.

Ok.

But you weren't supposed to come to come to him, he was supposed to go home when he had leave. That was what it was like back then. You would never see women here unlike today where husbands and wives live together here. We didn't have that. There were only men. Just black men and white people. There were no black women. You would never see them. Black women and children were never seen here. The only schools this side were for white children, there were no schools for black children. Schools for black people in Cape Town are new. There are so many townships here today, they weren't here back then. The townships started growing and expanding once Mandela freed us and we could come. The only township that existed was only for the black workers not children. Everything that we have now is new, the expansion started around 1969 or 1970. It was around then that there was seem relaxation regarding the law and people could build shacks. That's when that all started.

What happened in 1970? Because Mandela is not free yet.

There was just a huge influx of black people coming into Cape Town around 1970.

Was apartheid felt in Mount Fletcher?

It was known. And it was felt in that our husbands would run back home, escaping the oppression. Back then the fighting meant people dying. A lot was happening so when it got too much some men would get on the train and go home. At home they would tell everyone what was happening, that things were bad in Cape Town. Then those who had gone home would be called back when things calmed down but sometimes when they returned, they didn't have jobs anymore and they would have to find new jobs. It was really not a good time. Everything you see now is Mandela, we didn't have all these townships. It was just open fields. It was around 1969 that there was some relaxation and we could come and stay with our husbands.

Oh ok, well thank you for everything.

Yeah, it really wasn't nice back then. It was my pleasure.

Thank you.

Ntombiyenani

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

We'll start with what is your name? Where did you grow up?

My name is Ntombiyenani. Do you want my maiden surname or my marital one?

Both...

My maiden surname is Sam and I married into the Hawu family. I am from Mqaba eJames in Xhesi. My village is near Debe. Where did you say you came from?

East London.

Oh ok.

When were you born?

I was born 1965 on April 20th. I was the 10th child for my mother and father. We are 10 in total but 4 have passed away and there are only 6 of us. Just my one brother and 5 of us girls.

So, you were raised by both...?

We were raised by both our mother and father. But my father died quite early in 1979, I was still young. It was just as I was maturing. My mother then died in 1997. My father died of chest problems. He was stressed because his cattle were taken. I remember he had a severe asthma attack while he was walking with me.

Taken?

They were taken by force from him.

By?

It was a man from the village. His daughter was impregnated by father's nephew. And because my father was the oldest and only boy amongst his siblings he was seen as head of the whole family he had to answer for my cousins' actions. The girl from the village was impregnated by my cousin, my father's nephew and it became my father's problem. The situation really stressed my father out and he had an asthma attack. I'm telling you my history now.

Yes.

I was very traumatized by that as I watched my father being sick. He was sick right in front of him, he didn't live long after that. It was maybe a month and then he died. And I knew that it was the stress from his cows being taken. It was five cows...five live cows were taken as a fine for an out of wedlock pregnancy but five cows would have been lobola. It was tough but we had to get through it. My mom was then also stressed by my father's death and she wasn't ok because they did love each other. If you want proof, they had 10 children and none outside of their marriage. We saw that she really loved her husband. And she then died in 1997. For me, I was traumatized when my mother died in 1997, I was

already married but was still living in the rural areas. But I came to Cape Town in 1989. I'm leaving out a lot of things.

Ok, let's just go back to how you grew up. You grew up with 10 siblings. How many girls and how...?

Out of the 10 of us...well, I didn't get to know 3 out of the 10. The immediate two siblings that I was born after and one who was born in 1950 something.

What was your position?

I was the last one, I was the tenth child and the sixth girl. I am the number child, it's in my name...Ntombiyenani. My mother would also talk about how I was the tenth child in total and the sixth girl.

Oh ok. Growing up what were you told regarding the place of a girl in the home?

Back then what was important for a girl child was to get married. As a girl child your inheritance...your worth was not getting an education but to get married which is why I was married of in 1981. I already had my child who was born in 1980. I was still going to school though in the nearby village. I was married of to this older man but I didn't stay long because I remember I had upcoming exams that November. I was there all November and taken home in December. My boyfriend did it, he just caused a lot of trouble until I was allowed to go back. That boyfriend later became my husband.

You went back home?

I was kicked out of the family I was married off to and... I think my boyfriend just caused a lot of trouble for the family I had been married into so they told me to leave. I then went back home and my boyfriend and I continued to date. I also had to stop school for a while because my mother was sick. It was just difficult. The whole situation was just bad and I don't even know where to start.

So, when you were married of, were you asked if you wanted to get married?

I wasn't asked! I was taken! That's what used to happen back then. My older brother arrived home and... he and his wife were the people that pushed and organized my marriage because what I discovered when I got to my new marital was that my sister-in-law had wanted me to go watch after her sister's children who was also married into that family. She thought I could look after her sisters' children because that would be my duty as the youngest wife. My sister-in-law's sister and her husband fought a lot and when I went back home, her children actually ended up being raised in my family. My sister-in-law ended up raising the children she had wanted me to raise when she married me of to that family. I knew what had happened but I couldn't confront her because she was my elder. She was even much older than her own sister. The whole situation was just evil and reeked of witchcraft, they were just trying to separate me and my husband. They wanted me far away from him. You know it's still something I talk about today but the devil was stopped.

Can you talk about what happened the day you were taken?

It was a very ugly day. Yoh...uh. That day I had just come home from school, I still hadn't taken of my school uniform. And that's what I used to do, my uniform had a zip on the side so I would pull the zip down and nurse my daughter who was born in 1980. She was still a baby; I would open up my uniform for the side or even just lift the whole thing up because I was at home. I would breastfeed her; she wouldn't give me a chance to change out of my uniform before I had to breastfeed her. I had just got home and I noticed that there seemed to be some sort of celebration at home. I was confused and I went to go ask my mother what was going. I went to my mother's rondavel and I found a older man sleeping there, I recognized him from the village. And I noticed that he wasn't sleeping but he was

passed out drunk. That confused me further, why was he passed out drunk at my house? What was going on? Had people been drinking? Why were people drinking? It never once occurred to me that there was a wedding celebration happening. There was a child fixing the fence and I went and whispered to him, questioning him about what was going on. I asked him why there seemed to be a party going with people drinking and getting drunk. I tell him about seeing the old man sleeping my mother's rondavel and he doesn't tell me what is going on. Apparently, he had been told not to say anything, that I was about to be married of. Mind you, I had just come home from school. I had a small child; she was only 15 months. I was very young when I had her because I didn't know anything, I had sex with a boy in a field. My daughter is a field baby, she wasn't made in a bed. You see how long this story is?

Yes.

Anyway, I was then sent on an errand...my errand was confusing so I could be distracted from what was happening and I was also busy with my child because I had just come home from school. So, I finally changed and got dressed. I was told that my brother who worked here in Cape Town had arrived...but actually he wasn't there. He and his wife just dictated what they wanted done then they just left. They organized everything; negotiations apparently happened then they left while I was still away. I did have a slight inkling that I might be married of but I dismissed it because I was still in school and I had older sisters so they would be married of first. When there was alcohol and celebration at a house it meant that a wedding was about to happen. Anyway, I was then told that my brother was arriving from Cape Town and I had to go to Debe to go meet him. They told me that he had requested to be picked up by me. I was happy and wondered why but I was told to quickly get ready. I asked a friend of mine to accompany me, the two of left together. As we were walking, I was offered a lift from a bakkie because they said they were going near Debe. I walked myself into that bakkie, they didn't drag me I got in. I was told to get into the front and my friend was told to get into the back. The moment I got in the bakkie, next to the driver another man also quickly came in and I was trapped between the two of them. Then two other men jumped into the back of the bakkie, it didn't have a canopy. My friend didn't jump in, she was threatened to go back. The car started speeding. We were going downhill. And as we dipped in the valley then up a hill I was crying, not just for me but for my child. I kept asking them to at least let me have my child. I was taken to another village and dressed in the traditional bridal clothing. By the time I got to my new home I heard that there was a fire back at my village, when I looked into the distance, I saw that the fire was at my home. I asked to go home because I suspected that the fire was happening because of me. Turns out...I can't say it was my boyfriend because obviously I wasn't there but my family has told me that it was my boyfriend because I was being forced to get married against my will. I later asked them if they had seen him and they said no but thought that he had sent others to set the fire. I was in the new house and my heart was so painful. The next morning, I looked into the distance again to see what was happening back home and it was all dark, I couldn't even see the houses. I really wanted to go home and I asked but I was refused. That's when the news came that my boyfriend had set the fire, it was all being discussed and I just wanted to go home. And then my mother was in the hospital because she apparently almost died in the fire. A lot happened with me, I think you're just here to upset me. I want to stop.

Uhm...how about we go back and talk about when you were growing up.

Ok.

What are the differences you saw between how you were raised and how your brothers were raised?

With my mother and father, when he was still around, they were very good parents. We were all loved. And they were so caring. The reason I say my parents were amazing is that all my sisters had

children while they were still girls and were still unmarried but my father never had a problem. He took care of all those children; he would never even want them to be hit. And today, all those children are grown up and successful. And my mother continued that way once my father died. But with my mother, I know see that she was scared of my brother because he was her oldest son and she listened to him after our father died. Everything that happened to me happened when my father was no longer around.

When your older brother was now in charge?

Yes, my oldest brother. One of my sisters was also married of to an old man. Back then a girl child's future or destiny was in marriage. You couldn't stay unmarried, you had to get married and expand your husband's family. It didn't matter if you were happy or unhappy about getting married, you had to listen to your parents. I stayed in that house and the whole time I was telling that people in that family that I was not going to sleep with that man because I not only did, I just not want him he was an old man. I had my young boyfriend and a baby. I was actually helped by my supposed husbands' sister; she had just come home from Port Elizabeth and we were outside by the fence doing the laundry and she asked me if I loved her brother. I told her that I had telling everyone from the moment I arrived that I did not love this man and I will never even grow to love him. There were times where I wished I could kill him. I wanted to strangle him or poisoning him. I really didn't want anything to do with him but I loved my mother. I knew that if I did anything wrong it would maybe kill my mother. And I also didn't want to live with the sin of killing someone, I grew up in the church and the bible said not to kill. I really respected my mother, especially because my dad was no longer around. My parents loved me and when they died it really traumatized me. I think me and one of my sisters took it the worst. You see my sister is now my next-door neighbour because we love each other and we clung to each other when our parents died.

So, growing up now as a girl child, what did your mother say to you when you started your period? And just puberty in general?

Ok...puberty...you know I started my periods quite young because I think I had only just started my periods when I met my boyfriend. It was about 3 months after starting my periods that I met my boyfriend who later became my husband. I slept with him and immediately got pregnant.

Did you connect that you had reached puberty and what it now meant to sleep with a boy? Was getting your period and having a baby connected in your mind?

I did connect it but...what happened was that my sisters saw me as a child because I was the youngest and I wasn't telling them that I had a boyfriend. And even with my boyfriend he was pressuring me, I didn't agree to sleep with him because I wanted to have sex. I was still a child but...

How old were you?

I was 13 in 1978, I was young. I was born in 1965. I looked older and more mature because I had just come back from a holiday in PE visiting my sisters. I came back from PE looking more mature and I guess this boy thought I was older. But I wasn't, I was 3 years younger than him. I got pregnant very fast and I... I didn't even really have friends and the few friends that I did have were already sleeping with boys but they weren't getting pregnant. I would ask but they wouldn't tell me...I think the injection existed at that time but...actually the injection did exist because after I gave birth in 1980, I was given the injection. But I was still stupid when I started dating, I got pregnant very fast. I didn't get pregnant because I was sneaking around, most girls were sneaking around but I didn't. I only slept with my boyfriend once and I got pregnant. Then he left for Johannesburg to work. My mother was the one who figured out that I was pregnant, she dreamt about it and she asked me...she called me to her rondavel and asked me to take my clothes off because she had dreamt me naked. I was so shocked and it hit me that I had slept with a boy. I hadn't even told my sisters.

Did you know that you could end up pregnant if you slept with a boy?

I didn't know! I was still so young, I was 13. I was really young and I honestly didn't know. My sisters only told me after I was pregnant. If I had known that by sleeping with a boy I would get pregnant I would have run and fought my boyfriend off to the best of my ability. I was going to do everything I could to avoid it. The gap between my children was the one born in 1980 and the second one in 1991 so I learnt my lesson that sleeping with a boy without birth control would end up with me getting pregnant. School was difficult to finish because I had a child I had to take care of so I had to drop out to work. But then I also wanted to finish my schooling so I would go back but then things would get difficult. And I was the last child so my mother was already quite old.

How was the news of your pregnancy received?

In the village or at home?

At home.

Because my parents were kind...my mother believed that it was better to have a child rather than have an abortion. There were a lot of abortions back then. People would have abortions and pretend to be girls. My mother would...

Was it known that all these abortions were happening?

The fact that girls were having abortions? Yes!

Was it gossip or was it something that was just talked about casually?

It would be gossiped about but it was something that was becoming very obvious. My mother would say that even the injection was abortion because you are still killing your children. She would question why you were even sleeping with someone while you were unmarried. Why were you sleeping with a man? My thinking was that we lived in times when you could get raped and end up pregnant with your rapist child so you had to be protected, you had to get the injection. My mother would say that you should just have your child and she would take care of it rather than you having an abortion because she believed that children were a gift from God. My mother loved God and she trusted in him, she saw children as blessings from him. It was how God blessed her. I mean look, none of her daughters ever got married the right way. Among my sisters some ended up getting divorced and things just weren't good.

So, within your family there wasn't a difference between a child born in marriage and one born outside of marriage?

No. Never. My mother...you know all our children were...I want to tell you the truth, my sisters didn't or couldn't stick it out. I am the only one whose children all have the same father, maybe the Lord chose to help me out but even my sister, the one I come directly after, only had one child with a boyfriend before she got married and had three children with her husband. So, for her, it was only her first child that wasn't born in marriage. For me, when I had my daughter, I told myself that I didn't want to marry anyone else except her father because I was scared of abuse. There were already things like husbands sleeping with their wives' daughters and I did not want that. I heard those stories at school so I only wanted to marry the father of my daughter or not get married at all. I would just be a single mother because I had to protect my child, protect her from being abused by my husband when I was away.

How did you feel when your mother told you that you were having a baby?

It was not good. I was very shocked. I was so surprised because she called me to the rondavel and I remember asking her what I was going to do because I was scared of my brother, the eldest one. My

father had already passed away and she said it would be best if I went to go stay with my sisters in PE. Two of my sisters lived in PE, they had a small business selling alcohol and smiley's so they had money. I went to them, I left that January and stayed there. Then while I was there my mom wrote me a letter, we still wrote letters back then because we didn't have cell phones only landlines, and then she later did call me. She explained that my boyfriend's family had come to the house, he had sent his family to my house to accept my pregnancy as his fault. I was in PE while this happened. I then went back home; I was home for about 2 months before I gave birth. Everything was alright, my mom had forgiven me and she was also just relieved that my boyfriend's family had come forward to accept the blame. Then they paid the damages.

Damages?

There is a fine for breaking the breast. It cost five cows.

What does breaking the breast mean?

It means that the boy you have slept with has damaged you. He has broken your virginity (uqekeze ubuntu bakho). You were a girl and he has now broken your 'girlhood'.

Was your 'girlhood' (virginity) important?

It was very important, especially to our parents. You were only supposed to break your virginity within marriage. You were only supposed to have children when you were married. That's what my mother preached a lot, she wanted us to have children once we were married. I am the one that listened to her the most because despite having one child outside of marriage I then made sure that any other children I had would belong to the same man as my first child. I knew myself; I was also quite rude and I knew that I would find it problematic to have 'choice assorted' children with different fathers. That's what I called having children with different men; 'choice assorted'. But shame, all the children my sisters had were very loved and we never made them feel bad. There're no problems.

Where you expected to keep your virginity as a girl?

That's what they said though with me, I was never really told...the problem with me was...ok, what I didn't mention earlier is that the reason I had a child so quickly was because my older sisters were getting pregnant and giving the children to my mother to raise. I was the one who was taking care of their children, I was still young but I got the calling (inimbha- hormonal imbalance) to have children. I think my body felt ready because I was already mothering children. I got pregnant almost immediately after I started dating, I only slept with him once. I helped raise all my nieces and nephews because I was the youngest girl and I was living with my mother. I love my mother and we lived together, so my sisters would give birth and once they had weaned the child of they would drop their children off at home. They knew I was there to help my mother so I grew up as someone who knew how to take care of children. To this day I tell my sisters that the reason I had a child while I was still so young was because of them. They give me their children and I learnt how to raise a baby.

Where were your sisters?

They were working. They lived in PE and selling things. They would send money for groceries and my mother...she really didn't struggle in that regard.

So was it common for someone to go work in the city and leave...?

And leave their children? Yes. And leave them with their grandmother. But there would always be someone else around like I was there. I went to school very nearby. After I finished primary, I went to high school and my school was very close to home so I took care of the children, I basically raised them because I was the youngest aunt.

You mentioned abortions, how were they discussed?

It was something that was gossiped about. When I got to PE and I was pregnant my sisters were very worried and they made me drink 'urharhaya' trying to...they kept saying I was too young and I was telling them how scared I was, especially of how our older brother was going to react. I would ask them to try because I kept thinking of everyone else's reactions. My biggest worry was stressing my mother, I was young and I didn't even know what I was going to do with this child. My mother was already quite old and I just didn't know...they gave me that 'rharhaya' and I just vomited it out. Afterwards I told them to stop, I didn't want to try again. I didn't even want them to ask around for ideas from other people. I just decided to have the child and that was their biggest worry, how was I going to give birth? I was so young, I was 13. They never got pregnant at 13. I was really young but thankfully the Lord...you know I ended up having a smooth natural birth. But did hurt for a long time afterwards and I couldn't do anything.

(0:25:10.2) In PE?

No, I was home by then. I went home to have the baby with my mother by my side. My mother helped me give birth.

Where?

At home! I had seen my mother helping others give birth. There was no transport in the rural areas, if you were having contractions you...my mother was a huge believer in the power of prayer and she was a prophet of sorts so she used to do check-ups on women and help them give birth, she was quite good. I wouldn't watch the actual birth but I would hear the child crying so I knew my mom was good. When she told me to go to the clinic I refused. I didn't want to go to the clinic because I was so young. I told her she would help me give birth because she was used to helping out other people. And really, the day I had started my contractions I went to her...I was taking a bath because my boyfriend was waiting for me outside, hiding in the garden because he had just come back from Johannesburg. That very day, I started having contractions. I had felt pain earlier in the day while doing chores with my sisters and they were laughing at him, they were also home on holiday and they were laughing at me. Two of my sisters had come to visit...it was around May...yes because I gave birth on 10 July. My sisters were home for a while. SO that whole day I was apparently in labour because I was experiencing pain and I constantly needed to sit down but I kept ignoring the pain. My stomach was big but not too big and I wasn't even sure how far along I was because I was so young. And my sisters also couldn't calculate it for me. After doing my chores outside, I went inside and started cooking...I was just busy and the whole time my sisters are laughing about how busy I was and how much of a good housekeeper I was being. And they kept asking if I wasn't in labour and they were just laughing the whole time because they knew all the labour tendencies. But I was just ignoring them because my boyfriend was arriving from Johannesburg and I was going to him. So, later that evening I'm taking a bath and my brother who was also there. Not the oldest one but the younger one. There was a story on the radio called Speedy...you won't know it, you're too young. It was something we used to listen too...that actually became my daughters nickname because it's what was being listened to that day. Anyway, I'm washing and my brother had just left...actually no, he was still there. I kept feeling pain and it was getting stronger and stronger but I didn't want to say anything. Everyone could tell though and they kept looking at me but I was determined to go, I went to go collect water outside. And my mother suggested I wash inside; she told my brother to leave. She then told me not to wash my bottom half and I was confused why not...so I had said to her that after I peed, there was just more pee coming out by itself and it wasn't ending. SO that's when she knew my water had broken, I still didn't know what was happening because I was still so stupid. So, my mother told me not to wash my bottom half the she told my brother to leave which was strange to me because I would wash and my brother would just turn his back to me. Back then it was normal, we used to walk around naked in front of our brothers and no one cared but today, girls can't do that anymore because of all the devil's

evilness. I actually washed my bottom half and then went to my mother...I was about to wash my top half while my brother was there because I didn't care, I was used to washing in front of my brother. So, my brother had his back turned to me and he wasn't even paying to me. I used to go in and out the rondavel naked preparing my water to wash with my brother there, I only started covering up when I got pregnant because I was embarrassed and I wanted to hide the stomach. My mother then told that my water had broken and that I was now going to have a child. I was so surprised and I immediately was thinking about my boyfriend who was hiding just beyond our garden probably being attacked by dogs. If I had gone with him I probably would have given birth at his home. My mother instructed me to lay blankets on the floor and she prepared to help me give birth. She kept asking if we should go ask our neighbours for their car, it was the only car in village. It was owned by this woman who was a nurse. I told her no, that I wanted her to help me give birth. I was in so much pain but I eventually gave birth. Everything went well and there were no problems.

And then you went to the clinic?

I went to the clinic after my child's umbilical cord stump fell off, she was about 2 weeks old. That's when I went to the clinic.

Where were you then given the injection? Was it when you took your daughter to the clinic?

For birth control?

Yes.

I think so or they told me to come back for it because I think they asked me if the father of the baby was around. I told them he was in Johannesburg...I think went to the clinic when...I don't know if they gave me the injection when I took my daughter or if they told me to come back when I was taking the baby for another check-up. What I do now is that I did definitely get the injection after my child was born.

Was that your first-time hearing about contraceptives?

Yes, it was my first-time hearing about contraceptives after I had a child. It was my first time hearing them and I knew that had I known before I would have perhaps used contraceptives.

Contraceptives weren't something that you were being maybe of in schools or in the community?

We didn't have that back then. This would have been in the mid to late 70s but we didn't have that back then.

In schools?

Yes, we didn't have the type of education. We're (the parents) the ones who are getting shocked by these children who know everything, you can't hide anything. You're trying to hide something they already know about.

So, you heard about contraceptives around 1980?

It was 1981...1981 or 1982. That's when I learnt about contraceptives and when I started going to the clinic regularly...well not that regularly because I wasn't dating around, I just had my boyfriend so I would go to the clinic when I knew he was coming home. It was annoying and a lot of effort to always take yourself to the clinic and... what I used was Depo because I like that it was in your system for 3 months. I hated the injection, I think it was called Nori, that meant you always had to go to the clinic. I was encouraged to use that one but it was too much effort for me, I preferred Depo because it would stay in my body for longer. You need to have your period before you get pregnant, you don't

just get pregnant without having your period first while you're on Depo. My sisters were also telling me at this point.

Where contraceptives a good thing or a bad thing? Was contraceptive use something to hide?

We as young girls would tell each other. I would also ask my sisters how they were spacing their children? And how they would give themselves enough time to take care of their babies before having another one. They would tell me that at the clinic you would get the injection and when you were ready for another child you would stop getting the injection. I connected that if you stopped getting the injection you would get pregnant so I decided to never stop using the injection. I decided to use it all the time so I think contraceptives were a good thing because what was the alternative? And it was the time where if you were walking in the forest to gather wood or just walking through to get to the clinic you could be raped. We used to walk long distances and rape started being a problem.

In the rural areas?

In the rural areas! It was ugly there, it still happens to today. We don't walk in forests anymore. You'll bump into a man and if he sees you walking alone he'll chase you and rape you. Then you'll get pregnant with this child who won't have a father, not that you even care for this supposed father. Disgusting things like that happened.

When you were married of, how long did you stay at there?

Just over two months. It was October and November then by December I was home.

So, when you came back, was it an ugly thing that you had been brought back from marriage?

For me it was a good thing. It's what I wanted, the reason I was happy was because there had been a fire at home and I didn't want my family to return the lobola because it had been used to re-build our home. Not that I had anything to do with the lobola. I really wanted to leave that house, I really pushed to go home with everything I had. I never did anything wrong, that's not why I was returned home. All I kept saying was that I didn't want that man and that I didn't want him from the beginning. I said all of this to his sister.

How did he treat you? Did he listen to what you were saying?

He did feel sorry for me because I was a child. And when I got there I was still nursing and my breasts were painful so when he would want to sleep with me I would lie about how painful my breasts were. Even when they stopped being painful...he would question if I was really in pain because time was passing by and I was just running time out because I knew he worked in Johannesburg and he would have to leave eventually. So, whenever he would try and sleep with me I would say that my breasts were still painful. Obviously, he didn't know anything about that because he was an old man, I would tell him about my painful breasts knowing full well that just didn't want to sleep with him. My breasts had recovered from nursing, I just didn't want to sleep with him.

And that worked? You never slept with him?

I slept with him once and it was by force. I was very lucky that I didn't get pregnant. I don't know how...I don't remember if it was because I still had the Depo in my body. I think I had received the injection...I don't quite remember but I only slept with that man once and thankfully I never got pregnant.

And then you went home?

I went back home.

And met up with your husband?

I went back to my boyfriend; this was 1981 and we continued dating. He then underwent initiation in 1982 and went to Johannesburg. When he came back...he was working so he would give me money so I could raise his child. We only got married in 1991 because I kept going back to school then dropping out, going back then dropping out again.

And this whole time you still lived at home? With your baby in the rural areas?

Yes. I lived at home and I would go to PE for the holidays to visit my sisters. And then they came to Cape Town in 1984 and I came in 1986 for the holidays. They lived in Paarl, eMbekweni. It was two of my sisters so I would come visit them, I came in 1986 and lived here for the year. I think it was because there was a strike so I just stayed here.

Strike where?

At school. I had to leave school for a while.

In the Eastern Cape?

Yes. In our village.

And so, you came this side?

My mother thought it would be better for me to come live with my sisters and maybe look for a few part-time jobs. I got a small job nursing a child in Hanover, I don't even know where Hanover Park is today...a woman in Gugulethu found the job for me.

What was the biggest difference you saw between Cape Town and East London?

What I noticed about the Eastern Cape was that jobs were scares, it didn't matter if you were educated or not. Even the education that side seemed poor. When you arrived in a big city with a report card from the Eastern Cape you would be undermined and you wouldn't be able to get a decent job. The reason I stayed in Cape Town was because of my husband, he started work here so he took me from...well he said I must come this side for a holiday and I arrived to stay with my sisters in 1989. I had done grade 12 in 1989 and he fetched me from my sisters. Then I would come to visit him, he still lived in Q block. So, I would come regularly to see him, he wasn't living with family. He was renting a house and I told him that he needed to find a place where he could build us a house because I was seeing a lot of shacks which I asked him about. He said that the shacks were temporary housing for those waiting to be built houses so I told him to also get in the line to get a house so we could live together. I hated the travelling I had to do to see him, I wanted to be near him. So, in 1990 we eventually managed to live together, I was selling stuff and we were supposed to get married December 1990 but his father passed away in September of that year so he had to go home to bury his father. I didn't have a problem with that and said we could get married the next year. We then did get married in 1991.

You said you were here in 1985 because of a strike, what was the strike for?

In 1985 there was a school strike. It was school children. I don't even exactly what the strike was for but there was one going on. Like, there were students who...in our village there would be children coming to our school from other places like Plettenberg Bay, PE, Grahamstown and Mdantsane. We were a mix there in the rural areas. So, what happened was that the township children taught us all their rebellion and showed us all the wrong things from where they were coming from because that whole strike came with those children. When it was just us village children, we didn't have strikes, it came with those children. I didn't even know what...look, they didn't want to study until all these things had changed. They wanted to do whatever and bully the teachers. They didn't want to be hit and all these things. Some of them were older. It was really a dumb strike and we were about to start exams.

How did you experience apartheid?

Yhu! I never...it was painful. I remember in 1986, we were staying eMbekweni and I was walking with my friend, Ntombiyekhaya, and we were being teargassed. I thought I was going to die. We were locked and squashed into a bathroom. The police were everywhere, shouting and they had these huge dogs. It was my first time seeing those big dogs.

(0:40:00.2) What was happening?

There was...I'm not sure what was happening but it had to do with passes. I think it was a protest to down our passes...in 1986 it...was it 1986? Yes, it was 1986 and we were living eMbekweni. I was with my friend. My daughter was with my sister. It wasn't working then or going to school. We were locked in and it was all so horrible. I don't know what was happening. Even if I did know at the time I don't remember now...I tend to forget. If you had given me a few days' notice, I would have tried to remember some things more properly. But apartheid was just ugly and it affected me greatly. I was really affected because I was never able to go back to school, it just didn't matter and my husband ended up telling me that it was better for me to stay at home, have his children and raise them. I have never worked. I failed grade 12 in 1989. I don't know anything, I can't speak English. If you only spoke English I would not have done the interview...I know a few words here and there when speaking isiXhosa. So, I felt the white people oppression and my sister, the one I directly follow, passed grade 12. And she had all these certificates but she was never hired. She ended up making do in her marriage and staying at home. She lives in PE.

In 1985 when you were here, how was the treatment of black people versus in the rural areas?

1982, 1983 in PE it was difficult. Bars were being broken into and shops were being burnt down, I was there, my daughter was 2 years. I was there and it was difficult for my sisters to sell (alcohol and smiley's). They had to hide. It was ugly, there were riots and the whole situation was just ugly. Houses would be stormed into because there would be searches for people whose names I don't even know. At night the white police officers would be banging on doors, you would have to lock, lay low and hide. It was a very ugly time then...1982 and 1983. I was in PE and it was ugly. A lot happened. I can't even tell you everything that happened.

Because it's too difficult?

The oppression was real and I felt it.

Did you feel it in the rural areas?

In the rural areas in 1981 my sisters...there was a search in my village and the neighbouring villages. There's a school there called Siseko and there was a search for all these children who were not from around the villages. The search was for all the children who were coming from the various townships. They were being hunted because they were blamed for bringing all the bad behaviour to the rural areas.

Who was searching for them?

The police! They were going to be shot or arrested. Vans were patrolling everywhere, even driving into the trees to look for them. They would be running. They were all staying in boarding houses so they would be rounded up from where they were staying. And at some point, the police just started taking even village children, they didn't because they said we were all the same. There was no difference. But my sister, the one I'm born after, was the most affected by this because it was her school specially that was targeted. This was the riot of 1981. I was still studying at Nonthuthuzelo, I wasn't at Siseko like her. But it was all ugly because I remember her walking with my brother, and she had to dress like a makoti because apparently everyone that went to Siseko had been

photographed. She ended up going away for school, her and one of my brothers. He actually just passed away, it's been 3 years. Anyway, she had to dress like a Makoti and when she was identified as a student at Siseko she denied it. She had on a **doek** and pretended to be a makoti. My mother eventually said it was best she goes away for school because our door was being banged on at night. The police were dragging people from their homes. The boarding houses were also in the village, amongst our houses so the police were going around knocking on everyone's door. We were not happy because of white people. But we give everything to God, he knows all.

Just quickly going back to something we talked about earlier. What would you say the value of a girl was while you were growing up?

A girl's value? It was to marry her off so the family could get cows. That's how I saw it back then.

And if you didn't get married?

If you didn't get married? You were forced into marriage! Like I was when I younger, you could come home if your marriage failed and your parent wouldn't have a problem in that happened. Well, I guess it depended so you might have had to go find your own place for you and your children. But the value of a girl was in marrying her off. There was no emphasis on her getting an education, very few girls got an education. Very few got educations where they ended up becoming successful. I don't even know if it was because they were smart or if...we used to call them 'amaqhobhoka' since their parents weren't educated and were 'amaqaba'. It was seen as ridiculous to educate a girl because she was going to end up married with that education of hers which wasn't going to do anything for her parents, if anything she would have ended up working for her marital home. That's what people believed.

Your home as a girl wasn't...

You were told that your home is not your home, you needed to understand that you would die in another home with another family. You'll change, you will get married and you will belong to them. You will be called by their name. And when you die, you die there. You become a visitor at home with your own family.

Have you failed in your job as a woman if you don't have children?

No, it depends on the type of marriage you have. If he loves you or if he'll listen to him family. It depends on whether he listens when his relatives call you 'inkabi' because you aren't having children. When you married you're told you must have children? If you don't have children it's like you're not married, it's like you're not a wife. And his family would be rude to you, shouting that there's a cow in the house that needs to be rounded up too. I don't know if...well I guess the key thing as a wife is to grow their family.

When you were called 'inkabi', was that a curse?

Inkabi! Yes, of course. It's painful to be inkabi...to be someone who isn't having children. When the cows were being rounded up you'd hear 'Don't forget the cow in the house'. You would also eventually hear them saying that about you. Then you would try your best, you'd start taking strange medication and just suffering all in an effort to have a child. A child you ended up not having.

Would it be your problem alone? Or was it a problem for both you and your husband?

If you got married already with a child then the problem was clearly your husbands. Or if you arrived and he had a child then it was your fault. But if you both came into the marriage with no children then one of you is told to go outside the marriage and check if they won't impregnate someone else. When that happens, your marriage is not on good terms because your husband is being allowed to be unfaithful.

So, who goes outside the marriage? The husband?

He would never allow for you as the wife to go outside the marriage. Your husband is the one that goes out, unless you want to test yourself out. But this is all based on what I heard because I had my children very quickly.

Oh ok.

You see it's a lot?

Yeah. Thank you so much.

Nozipho

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

Let's start with your name, where are you from? Where did you grow up?

I am Nozipho Sam. I am from eXhesi, my village is called eMqaba uJames. We grew up...

When were you born?

1956. June 14th. So, I'll tell you about how I grew up.

Yes.

I only didn't really go to school. I stopped after standard 2. I used to herd the cattle because we only had 2 boys at home. I grew gardening and milking cows. I could herd cattle. We grew up with a lot of poverty back home, we grew up in a rondavel. All of us in one rondavel. My father would sleep one side and my mom on the other side with us. We slept on the floor on a thatched mat. Then when my oldest brother grew up and started working, he built a second rondavel for us girls to sleep in since the boys always slept out. We slept in sacks. Do you know sacks?

Like for oranges?

No, like a real sack. The big ones used to store maize.

Oh ok.

Yes, those big ones. We slept in those sacks. We really struggled growing up.

You grew up in the rural areas?

Yes, our house was made of mud. We all grew up in one rondavel. We were all born in that one rondavel. My parents slept on opposite sides of the rondavel. Then when my brother grew up...my father suffered from severe asthma. He already had asthma when we were born but he was generally fine. He died when he was 65. We survived by gardening because my father worked in Johannesburg but he earned very little. We gardened, we had corn and beans and all types of vegetables. We just struggled a lot.

How many of you were there growing up?

There were 7 of us.

And you had both your mother and father?

Yes. While already living in that poverty my oldest sister got sick. She was born in 1945, she came after my brother who was the oldest having been born in 1943. My sister got sick just before she got married. She was 15 years old. That whole situation is the one that really hit my parents hard. We had sheep and cows so untrustworthy witch doctors came forward saying that they would heal my sister. By the end we had no cattle left because all the rituals performed by these witch doctors needed a cow or a sheep to be slaughtered but by sister was never healed. She started getting sick when she was 15,

she would have epileptic fits but thanks to Gods glory she is still alive today. It's because my mother believed in the power of prayer. We fell into greater poverty due to the loss of our cattle...and just the whole struggle of how sick my sister was, she would come home crying because of all the concoctions the witch doctors were giving her. Some of the witch doctors wanted to sleep with her and she would come home crying to our parents because how it worked back then was that you couldn't be healed living at home. You had to go live with the witch doctor.

Growing up, was there a difference in how you were raised as a girl versus your brothers?

How?

What was expected of you? What was the place of girl at home?

As a girl you were supposed to clean and cook. You were expected to do all that.

And your brothers?

Because I only had two brothers, I was relied on a lot despite being a girl. I was trusted and I was a hard worker at home. I herded the cattle, I took care of the garden...we ran out of cows at home because of my older sister so my father and brothers were working so I had to plant the garden. I had to go help out my mother's family when planting season came so that they would come help me.

Did you stay with your mother's family?

I needed to stay with my mother's family because we lived near each other. So, we planted pumpkin and maize, I would go help out at my mother's family so that they would come help me out at home since our cows were finished by witch doctors. So, I was both a girl and a boy. There was nothing I didn't do.

As you become a young woman, what did your mother say to you when you started your period?

That's the one thing she never talked to me about.

Was it because it was something that wasn't talked about?

My mother, firstly, grew up without her mother. Her mother died when she was eight years old. Our parents grew up being told that girls must stay away from boys. That's how it was. You couldn't talk to your children, that's how we grew up.

So how did you learn...?

I had a boyfriend...when I first started dating I was still a child. We were playing around and he always wanted me to sleep with him.

Did you know what that meant?

You hear things. There're older kids who talk but I didn't really understand much of it. I heard what happens when you have a boyfriend, I was still so young and he was still young too so...one of my friends also had a boyfriend. We were all still young and my boyfriend said to me 'let's do evil things' after we saw my friend and her boyfriend having sex in the bush but I refused. I really said no.

Did you know exactly what he wanted you do you?

It was being done practically in front of me.

Oh. So, you were watching the others?

We saw them, they were also young like us. Maybe were around 12 but I'm not sure. Growing up we played with dolls and made them get married, that's what we knew. My friend also had another girlfriend...we started dating in 1969 so I was about 14 years old living in PE. But I never slept with him. In PE I was living with an uncle and girl cousin. My uncle used to work nights so my cousin used to sneak out and she ended up getting pregnant. The whole thing was exposed because my uncle came home early, I was asked where my cousin was and at first, I said I didn't know. Then when I was about to be hit I told the truth and she was searched in the middle of the night. I met another boy back home in the rural areas. We dated and he tried to convince me to sleep with him, he said we could go sleep at his house. I said no.

So, at this point do you know what he wants from you?

Yes.

Because you had seen it?

Yes.

And nothing was ever said at home?

No, nothing was ever said. My boyfriend then wanted to walk with me at night but I said no because my older sister already had a boyfriend so I knew what was happening. Then he forced me to walk with him but I saw my sister so I started walking towards her so she could intervene. That's how boys were back then.

Did you have to hide having a boyfriend?

It was something that you had to hide.

Why?

That's just how we grew up. I remember what my older sisters used to do when they wanted to see their boyfriends, they would go visit a family where the father had passed away or wasn't home. That's how they would get a chance to sneak out and see their boyfriends. It would be a big group of girls.

Why did they feel like they had to sneak around? Why weren't you allowed to just go?

We stayed alone. Sneaking out had nothing to do with parents. I remember if you slept over someone you needed to wake up very early and go home, fall asleep and pretend you were there all night. But my mother always knew because we would wake up in the afternoon. And she would say if we weren't careful our brothers would hit us. She never threatened us with our father who was there, it was always our brothers. That's the kind of situation girls grow up in, we are forced to date.

What was the value of a girl?

For girls back then -though not all did this- when you played with a boy you had to make sure that you didn't disappear behind the bush. We had to be good or we would be hit using sticks.

Did you get married?

I was never married because there was jealousy involved. I was supposed to marry a young man before I had a child, it was organized by my mother's family but my uncle told his neighbour which ruined everything because the neighbour's daughter then found out and was jealous of me getting married. She said that I was too young but she was actually trying to get the young man to choose another girl who was also my age. She knew that I was dating her cousin.

The person you were going to marry and the cousin weren't the same person.

No.

Did you want to marry the other guy?

Men looked at all the girls that were available and chose the one they wanted. The neighbour's daughter was jealous of me getting, she said another must be found because I was still too young even though I was already dating.

Did you want to marry her cousin?

It wasn't up to you back then. They weren't going to ask me my opinion.

Could you say no if you didn't want to get married?

Your parents told you what to do. I didn't have a choice, I was just going to get married. Even the other girl who was my age that eventually married the guy I was going to marry didn't love him. Everything to do with marriage back then was filled with jealousy. You know a few brides died after getting married. Others weren't wanted by their mothers-in-law. All those types of things. Everything to do with marriage was bad and filled with a lot of jealousy.

-----interruption-----

Ok, sorry about that.

What was I saying?

You were talk about having a boyfriend.

Oh yes, so I had a boyfriend. The man I was supposed to marry married the other girl. Then my boyfriend got me pregnant and there were two other men from the village...so in total there were three guys. One of the two guys wanted me even though I was dating someone else...ok, then I had a child...and the other guy wanted me...

When did you have a child?

I was about 14 years.

What year is that?

It was 1971.

That's your first child?

Yes, my first child was born in 1971. In December.

How did you know you were having a child?

I was very young when I got pregnant...I just started not liking things that I normally liked. My mother wasn't around at that time and we were just living with our dad. But we slept in a separate rondavel and that's how you would get the chance to sneak out. Anyway, there were things I suddenly didn't like, it was during the winter and we had a lot of maize. And I did not want maize. The other boy that was interested in me wanted to sleep with me but I was already pregnant and I didn't want to sleep with him.

Where did you meet him?

They were village boys. So, I was visiting my aunts' home and she called me aside. She undressed me because she noticed my stomach. She then exclaimed in shock that her brother's child was pregnant. She told me that I would have to tell the truth.

Were you scared?

I was scared but I was mostly going of her reaction. She told me I was 3 months along. My mother wasn't around. She asked me who my boyfriend was and I told her. Apparently, my cousin who was born in 1952 had been the one to tip my aunt off. We then went to my grandmother's house, she pulled me aside and asked me if I knew I was pregnant. I denied it and she told me I was pregnant. I guess my aunt had talked to my grandmother. Later that day my boyfriend he came to talk to me. I then confronted him, I told him that I had been told I was pregnant and that he had impregnated me. He was shocked because didn't think it was possible. He then said we should go have sex again and I told him I didn't want him to get me pregnant again. I didn't understand that you couldn't get pregnant while pregnant so I didn't go with him. And he left after he gave up trying to convince me.

How did your family react? Particularly your father?

He told my boyfriend's family and my boyfriend was sent to Johannesburg to work.

He didn't deny that it was he child?

My father took the case to his family and my boyfriend didn't deny it. The two families negotiated how much damages would be.

Why did he need to pay damages?

Because when a boy impregnates a girl his family needs to pay.

Where?

To the girl's family because you have damaged someone's child. That was Xhosa law.

In Xhosa law a girl getting pregnant outside of marriage means she's ruined?

Yes, damages need to be paid. The boy that impregnated her needs to pay damages. Other families go to extremes...my situation was...while I had this boyfriend, I also had two other bachelors from the village who wanted me. When I think about that whole situation today, I think God didn't want me to get married because one of those guys wanted me despite the fact that I had a child. But I didn't love him. The other one...well he never loved me, he just wanted to make me his wife so he could go away to work. I then had another child in 1975.

With who now?

Uh...

The father of your first child?

No. It was someone else. I had a baby boy.

How did your family react to a second child?

He also had to pay damages. That's how it worked.

Why didn't you marry one of your children's fathers?

There was a lot of jealousy involved. The father of my first child was working here in Cape Town, it was before I had the second child and I was living in PE. He was going to go back to our village so we could get married...but there was jealousy. My uncle and his wife...my uncle's wife was related to my boyfriend.

This is the father of the first child?

Yes. My uncle's wife was then was jealous because of how big the wedding celebrations were going to be. This was also her family if you remember, she told the mother of that girl who had ruined my previous engagement they were cousins. When my boyfriend announced he wanted to marry me the whole thing was twisted by my aunt and her cousin to find my boyfriend another wife, a wife he didn't even know. When I arrived from PE he was already married.

Was the father of your second child also from the village?

No, he wasn't from the village. He was from PE.

Oh yes, you spent a lot of time in PE.

Yes. I had another child in PE.

Why didn't you marry the second one?

I didn't want to marry him.

So, at this time you could say no?

You could say no.

What changed? Because earlier you said you couldn't say no when you were being forced into marriage?

I was more mature; my brain was working in 1975.

Your maturity allowed you to say no?

Yes.

And you wouldn't be forced?

No.

When did you first hear about contraceptives?

When did contraceptives arrive? Uhm...you know we would always forget about things like contraceptives. I used the pill and I would forget because I was still young and the boys were everywhere...you would forget to sometimes take the pill. And by the time you remembered you would be already pregnant. I'm remembering one time in PE there was a lady who was a nurse. I went to her because I missed my period and I wanted her to give me the pill so that I could...you know, clinics were quite far away.

Did you hear about contraceptives first at the clinic?

Yes.

Did you see contraceptives as a good thing or bad thing?

They were a good thing...what I first heard about even before contraceptives was water. If you had slept with a boy you were supposed to drink 8 glasses of water to clean out everything that was in your body. That's what I heard about a lot.

Who did you hear that from?

I heard it from my sister, she was the one going to school. Others would get pregnant and get abortions. Abortions used to happen.

Were they common?

Yes! Very much so, a lot of pregnancies ended in abortions.

Was it something that was gossiped about or did people casually talk about their abortions?

You know...there was a lady in the village...actually there were a few people who performed abortions.

Was getting an abortion a secret?

There was someone who helped you terminate your pregnancy.

Because you weren't married?

Yes.

Why was it important for a girl not to have a child before marriage?

It was Xhosa law and practice. A girl child was not supposed to have a child while still at home. That was not supposed to happen. Even the bible says so in Genesis that Adam and Eve should be fruitful and multiply. They had children who did the same but outside of marriage. And the bible says that those children grew up to do bad things. God then looked at the world and regretted creating humans, he then decided that it was best for women to only have children with one man when married. This is good because you don't really know this man. When he is chasing you, he makes himself seem nice but when you end up pregnant, his real character comes through. That's how you have children by mistake and you must learn from your mistake and not have children with the same idiot. And you know which men are using you because they'll want you to have lots of children outside of marriage.

How many children do you have?

I have 6 in total.

And the first was born in 19...

1971.

Ok. And the last one?

1991.

And you used the pill?

I used the injection the most. I used the pill but it used to give me cramps.

Did you get to choose?

You picked what worked for you. The pills were red and white.

Did you have to hide that you were using birth control?

Who would I hide it from?

Your partner?

No! We didn't live together so I was free to take the pill.

Why did you choose to use birth control?

To ensure that I didn't have a child.

Were you working?

Yes.

Did you use birth control to give yourself a chance to work?

No, my mother raised my children. They lived with my mother in the rural areas.

Was that common? Sending your children to the rural areas?

Yes. If you had a child you gave it to your mother to raise while you were away working.

This was because you weren't married?

It depended. If you were married your mother could still raise your children. Or if you didn't have parents you raised your own children.

Where did you work?

I was always a business person.

Where?

In PE. I started in PE...I was in PE for the longest time.

When did you get to Cape Town?

I arrived in 1984.

What made you move here?

I came to Cape Town....

-----interruption-----

I came to Cape Town in 1984. The reason I came here in 1984 was because of the fun we had in Cape Town....I mean in PE. We could drink and have friends but we couldn't stay. My older sister was already this side.

So, you came for work? How was Cape Town when you first arrived? Was there a difference compared to PE?

There was a huge difference when I got here, even with business. I had to be serious unlike the party atmosphere that was PE.

How was business?

Very good this side. There was another lady...Khayelitsha wasn't around back then, it was a Nyanya. I met this lady from back home who was selling alcohol to the farm labourers so I would go with her.

Helping her?

No, I had my own stock. She had been doing it for a long time and she showed me.

Oh ok. How did apartheid impact you?

When I arrived in Cape Town there was already apartheid in 1984. There were hostels in Paarl, you couldn't walk around the hostel. If your husband...when wives came to visit their husbands they would spend the whole at the clinic and wait until their husbands came home at 5pm so that they could go to the hostel. There was apartheid in PE too. I remember once the police van came to house in the early hours of the morning and I had to leave through the window. I was arrested once, I was selling fish to people working in the factories and there was a police van picking people out. They demanded my pass and I said I didn't have it, they then arrested me and took me to jail because I didn't have a pass.

What year is this?

It was maybe 1982.

In PE?

Yes, around 1982. It wasn't my first time getting arrested for not having a pass. I even had to change my name because I didn't want to keep coming up on the system. We were arrested regularly back then.

Were you scared of getting arrested?

Yes! Of course. I was scared of staying prison.

How long would you stay in jail?

I wouldn't stay long because when I didn't get home my family would start to wonder where I was and back then you would always check the police station. We were taken in huge police trucks with the rooms: one for men, coloured people and women. We were taken to court in PE.

Were you ever arrested here in Cape Town?

No. I was never arrested here.

Oh ok, despite arriving in the 1980s?

No. There were a lot of protests here in Cape Town. Well, there were protests in PE too. I remember coming from work and there was a place called New Brighton, there houses there but also a lot of it was bush. I was coming from working and I just saw people running. I was confused as to why they were running and then I just saw a lot of white people everywhere. There was a bus on fire, I was told to run but I didn't run because I hadn't done anything. I just continued on my way, as I passed Mew Way I saw the white police officers with guns. I was just walking home, I turned into the 'ilali embomvu' and a bar was on fire. There was also a lot of looting happening. On this day, I got home and dropped my purse before going back out to watch was happening. There were police everywhere and there was teargas. We to run. That was the life we lived in PE. We would be arrested at night too because we threw a lot of parties in PE during the 1970s. Friday nights would be parties, there would be alcohol and sometimes chickens would be slaughtered. It was loud and the parties would go on until the mornings. Then Saturday night again until Sunday. The police would arrive at night, they would line us up with our hands in the air. They would tell us they were searching for certain people, they were looking for the people who were burning down the bars and the buses. We would say we didn't know and we would then be all arrested. There would be two vans and they would take us to the police station. We would be asked questions and asked who was burning things. We would say we didn't know, after being asked questions we would then be released. Even though the police took us to the police station, we would have to then walk back home. We would go to where the party was and start it again. So, everything to do with the riots I knew in PE.

Was there a lot of this upheaval in the 1960s? The riots and police searching for people, did it only happen in the 1970s?

I only experienced riots in the 1970s.

You don't remember anything from the 1960s?

I only know what my parents told me. They were in PE during that time. The man in charge back then was Verwoerd. He was in charge of South Africa. A lot of people were arrested with Mandela. There was a local man from our village, he was also arrested. When he was eventually released, the police

were always checking up on him. So, I heard a lot of this from my parents. Our parents cried for Bontsi while we cried for Mandela. We wanted him to be released so he could lead us.

Going back to children, was it important for a woman to have children?

To have children? Yes.

Was it her duty?

Yes. It was very important for a woman to have children.

Why?

Because she will eventually get old.

And if she doesn't have children?

When she's married?

Was there a difference if someone had children within marriage or outside of marriage?

Yes, there is a difference because a child is supposed to be born within marriage. People have ended up having children outside of marriage but the rules of Xhosa and God have always preached for women to have children with one man. But as you can see things didn't happen the way God and our elders wanted.

What's the importance of children?

For people...when one has children the goal is...you're going to grow old, you'll get weaker so that's when your child takes over.

Was it bad not to have children?

It was a bad thing, especially in a marriage. Sometimes women ended up taking children from their family to raise since they didn't have their own children in their marriage.

Would you be treated badly if you didn't have children?

If a woman was not having children she would be called 'inkabi'(cow).

And that was bad?

It was ugly. It was something very rude, for example if the younger wife had children and the elder wife didn't then to be rude the younger wife would call the older wife a cow because she wasn't having children. People would say don't forget the cow that is the wife, she must also be taken outside and tied up with the rest. Women would be treated badly if they weren't having children and were married.

Does it become the wife or the husband's problem?

If you've both never had children then your husband would be encouraged to go try impregnate another woman. He'd be encouraging to have a girl on the side. Then through that the cause of the infertility would be exposed.

Would the wife ever be encouraging to do the same?

Maybe after it became clear that the husband wasn't having any luck then the wife would be expected to do something so that a child could be produced.

The wife would also be encouraged to go outside of her marriage?

Not really...the whole thing was insane because you would be expected to somehow produce a child. It was up to the woman to use her brain and try have a child. Your husband and family would be suspicious about the paternity of the child but you would have to be strong and ignore their suspicions.

Because children were important?

You had to have children.

What was the reaction at home when you had children outside of marriage?

Oh no...my father loved me very much. He had a forgiving heart so I wasn't treated badly. My mother would shout at me but my father never did. My oldest brother also always had something to say. You know, children are important. It's not good to...the bible says that a child is God's will no matter how they came to be. The book of Jeremiah Chapter 1, verse 4 and 5 says 'I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb' so for there to be a child in your uterus is through God's will. No matter how it happens, even if you were raped...it's God's will. So once someone abuses you about a child or treats you badly because of a child God will make them suffer.

Did you grow up in a Christian home?

Yes, in the Zion church but we also performed rituals so it wasn't like church in that way. Also, the priests were evil.

Were you raised in the church from the beginning or did your family convert?

Christianity has always been there, it was just on my mother's side of the family. They were Methodists. And there was an uncle on my dad's side who lived in PE and he was a Christian. At home with my immediate family my mother continued to go to the Methodist church because it was family's church. My father started going to church when he was away working in Johannesburg, he joined the Zion church around the 1960s. My mother then asked my father about what type of church was the Zion church. He said it was a church where people went around in circles. My mother exclaimed that no one in her house would attend a church where people went around in circles. She said that our house was too close to the road and that people would laugh at us. My father then ended up quitting the church. My family ended up being a fully Christian family when my older sister, the one that was sick that I spoke about earlier, had a dream. She was a prophet, she dreamt about other prophets dressed in white. Turned out that those prophets were members of the Zion church, she saw them going to visit a neighbour of ours where the daughter was sick. Her family had called the church for her. This is when my mother started going to the Zion church. My sister who was sick was prayed and prophesied over. The Zion church is very strong and firm in those things. That's when my mother converted to the Zion church because my older sister was sick.

Was Christianity popular in the rural areas?

The Zion church!

Only the Zion church?

We also had a Methodist church.

Was your whole village Christian or were there still 'abantu ababomvu'?

It was mostly 'abantu ababomvu', my mother was 'ubmntu obomvu', she wore 'umbhaco'(traditional clothing).

When did people start converting?

The years?

Yes...approximately.

I grew up with the Methodist church present and there were old women who attended. Versus now, there aren't any old women around who still carry 'intsimbhi'. Our grandmothers went to the Methodist church and also the Zion church in our village. Some people did convert though a lot of them did it so they could be buried in the church and they didn't stop drinking or performing rituals. And if a church lady came by they would run away and avoid them.

Going back to your childhood...you said your mother never talked to you about....

About boys? No.

And when you reached puberty?

When I started my period, I was in PE.

Staying with your sister?

No, with my aunt. She was 69.

And did she talk to you?

Yes. I told her that I was bleeding down there.

And what did she say?

She told her oldest daughter, Lungiswa, to organize strips of cloth for me to stuff in my underwear.

Where you ashamed?

I was shocked...it had never happened to me before.

When you were talked to was it something to be ashamed of? Or was it explained that you had done nothing wrong?

I was told not to worry because I had received such a shock.

Oh ok, I think we're done. Thanks for talking to me.

Ok.

Is there anything else you want to add?

Just that we grew up very poor, my father was sick because he had severe asthma. And he was stressed by my older sister being so sick. We were just poor; my father's cows were taken and our house was burned down. The devil was always chasing my family.

In the rural areas?

Yes, but my mother believed in prayer and she prayed over us. And we stayed and trusted in God too for our children. The devil tempts the young ones. We are now living near the end and we are fighting all the bad things the devil is doing to our children. We fight him with the word of God, people are dying today because they don't know God's word even though that is what protects us and helps us. We have to believe in God and pray over our children because the devil is always fighting. And we are always thankful to God.

Nontobeko

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

What is your name? Where did you grow up? When were you born?

I am Nontobeko Ngezi.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Mount Fletcher.

When were you born?

1994.

You were born in 1994? How?

Yes.

You were definitely not born in 1994.

I'm never sure...that's just how it is with us old people.

It's ok. Did you grow up with both your parents?

Yes, I had both my mother and father.

Did you have siblings growing up?

No, I grew up as an only child then my parents had my siblings after a while.

You were the first born?

Yes.

How would you describe your childhood? Did you stay in the rural areas? Or in the township?

We stayed in the rural areas.

When you were growing up what was the place of a girl in the home?

A girl child was supposed to clean, you were expected to cook and do the laundry.

Was a girl child called the flower...?

As a girl you were the flower of the home.

Was that to prepare you for marriage?

A traditional wedding? Yes.

So, growing you knew...

You knew you had to get married and grow your husband's family. You needed to get married and have your own children.

That was your job?

Yes.

As you grew up as a girl child, and you reached puberty and started your period what did you mother say to you?

When she talked to me?

Yes.

She told that I was now grown up and that I had to guard myself. She said that I should avoid sleeping carelessly with boys.

Did you know what she meant by that? Sleeping with boys?

Sleeping with boys?

Yes, did you know what she meant that when talking to you?

I didn't know anything. She told me.

Was it something scary? Or...?

It was very scary, especially when I had my first period. I was scared by what I saw and I ran to the house crying.

Because you didn't know what was going on?

Yes, I didn't know what was happening. I got to my mother who then told me that I was now grown up. I was told that I was grown up, that I was a woman now and that I was not ready to be a mother. I was told that my period would come and go during a certain period of the month. I was told to pull myself together and sit very carefully because I was to make sure that men never saw what was going on.

It was something you had to hide?

Yes. You had to hide it.

Were you told why?

She told me to hide it when I had my period because it wasn't something that men were supposed know. Even my own father was not supposed to know when I had my period. Only my mother would know.

Did you get married?

I got married the traditional way (isiXhosa), I never had a white wedding where I left home in white dress.

What's getting married the Xhosa way?

My husband just brought things to my home...he brought gifts.

Did you know your husband before marriage?

No, I didn't know him.

So...

His family went to ask for my hand in marriage because they saw me. That's how things were back then, girls were seen by potential husbands and then her hand in marriage would be asked.

Could you reject the marriage?

Yes, you could.

And you wanted to get married?

I couldn't say no, I was asked to give the marriage a chance and I ended up giving in because the demands increased.

How?

The whole wedding was suddenly happening. It was a Xhosa (traditional) wedding. Lobola was paid for me.

Lobola was paid for you?

Yes, lobola was paid for me.

What would you say is the role of lobola in Xhosa tradition or marriage is?

It was meant to be an understanding between the two families, to ensure that there would be no disagreements. Well...I think anyway, I'm not sure.

Did you ever feel like you were being sold?

No.

It was a good thing?

It was nice to have lobola paid for you. It was something very nice.

You said you didn't know your husband?

I ended up getting used to him and I ended up staying with him because I got used to him.

Why did you agree to the marriage but you didn't know him?

Huh?

Why did you say yes? Did you want to get married?

It's what the adults wanted.

You weren't asked?

No, the adults made the decision.

Did you have children?

I would have children but they wouldn't live, they would die.

Where were you and your husband living?

We stayed in the rural areas, in a village called Sundwano. Then we left Sundwano and moved near his family in Elliot, eKhoba.

How many children did you have in total?

I had 4.

Did you remember the years you had them?

No, not really.

When you got married, what was expected of you as a wife? What were your duties?

I was told I was now a wife and that there would be no other men.

What did it mean to be a wife?

What did it mean?

What was expected of you? What was your job? What did you have to do?

You had to grow the family...you were expected to help grow that family. You were not a daughter in that family, you were a means to expand that family. I had to cook, wash children, do the laundry and cook. I had scrub and smear cow dung in and around the house. You would go scoop some from the kraal and as a wife you had your own special bucket. You would also do the outside and make sure everything was cleaned. It needed to show that there was a wife in the home now.

When did you move to Cape Town?

I don't remember when I got to Cape Town, I came to stay with some of my husband's family as he had a few relatives this side. They stayed in Site B here in Khayelitsha.

What was the biggest difference you notice between the Eastern Cape and here in Cape Town?

In the Eastern Cape I had a lot of health issues. when I first got here, I was also sick and my sister-in-law who was the oldest took me to traditional healers. Then I was healed and I got better.

How did apartheid impact you?

Apartheid?

Yes.

Apartheid did oppress me but not a lot.

When you say not a lot, what do you mean?

I was treated badly.

Where you arrested of anything like that?

No.

Were there police officers in the rural areas?

Not really, the police would only show up if something was happening. We would see them watching from the distance. And if something was happening we would also be curious about why they were there. And sometimes they would even explain to us what was happening.

You weren't scared of them?

The police? Of course, I was, they were scary?

Back then?

Yes.

Is there anything that has changed since apartheid?

Things have changed, they not like how they were before.

How? Do you have any examples? How was it back then?

I think it's better today than it was back then but sometimes I don't think that's true. Back then there wasn't as much crime but today there is a lot of crime, you're always worried. Today, you're always hearing about scary things happening. In some places it seems really bad but at least here in this part of Khayelitsha things don't seem that bad. At least our doors haven't been kicked in yet like in the other areas.

Do you know anything about contraceptives?

Contraceptives?

Yes.

No!

Nurses in clinics never talked to you?

No. We didn't even use contraceptives back then. Contraceptives are a new thing.

So, you don't think contraceptives were used back then?

No... I think there were people back then who used contraceptives.

Was it something to hide?

Contraceptives use was something you had to hide because if you did it as a wife your husband probably didn't want you to be using contraceptives. Your husband wanted children and as a wife you feel tired of having children back to back so you would then be forced to hide your contraceptive use.

Could you talk to your husband and explain that you were done having children? Or that you needed a break?

No.

No?

No, wives were forced to hide it if they were using contraceptives. You would have to make sure that you hid the pill if that's what you were using. And if he did find them you would pretend they were painkillers for a headache. You'd say it was Disprin while knowing full well it wasn't Disprin and that you were actually on contraceptives.

When did clinics arrive? Did you grow up with clinics? And hospitals?

No.

-----Interruption-----

So, you were saying that contraceptive use was something women had to hide?

You hid it if you were using contraceptives.

Are children important kwaXhosa?

KwaXhosa?

Yes.

Oh yes, they're very important.

Why? What is the role of a child?

Kwa-Xhosa people need to know...you have to prove that you're a woman and you do that by having children. If you aren't having children when the cows are being tied up outside...the family is probably tired of you because you aren't having children so you'll hear shouts of 'don't forget the cow in the house, it must come outside to be tied up with the rest of the cows'.

Being called 'inkabi' was a curse

You're being cursed at...more than that you're being insulted and made to feel bad about yourself.

So, the common thinking was that you weren't a real woman if you didn't...

If you didn't have a child. You weren't a woman if you didn't have a child. It's like...back then if there was a pregnant woman and she went into labour and was about to have the child. You couldn't just go to the house where she was having the baby.

Why?

Because as a girl you didn't know anything about a woman having a child. You weren't allowed to see anything.

What was the value of a woman?

It's very high because she is very important.

Because she's the one who has the children?

Yes.

Is the value of a woman in her children?

Yes. You're not a proper woman if you don't have children. It's like when you're trying to send a child on an errand...or you see children playing outside and you need something. Like you're cooking and you realize that you don't have beef stock, you'll see a child to ask to go buy it for you but you'll have to go ask their mom first. You can't just call the child and send them on an errand.

Were women who couldn't have children judged by those who did?

Yes.

Were women separated between those who had children and those who didn't?

Yes. It's obvious when you don't have children.

How?

For example, during 'umgidi' (when a boy becomes a man) some women cook, others look after the children and everyone asks about the husbands. And then the conversation always turns to whether you have children or not. You constantly have to field question about not having children.

How were you treated if you never had children?

You weren't treated nicely because you were a wife and you were expected to have children. And with others you would...maybe you would be lucky and have a boy. It was always welcome news and people would talk about how so and so's wife had a boy.

Was there a difference in the value of girl children and boy children?

Boys and girls? No, it was the same I think.

A child is a child, boy or girl?

Yes. You were just treated very well if you had a child.

When do boys and girls start to be separated in what is expected of them?

It's different and it depends. Your child will be compared to others in the neighbourhood and you'll be asked why your child isn't growing at the same rate, why is you child taking long to work for example. You would be accused of being a negligent parent or on being with your husband too much while your child was still so young. You would be told that '**utsiba iziko**'

What does 'utsiba iziko' mean? It slows down your child's development?

Your child is growing but they're weak. Even when the elders hold your child they don't have any energy.

What is 'utsiba iziko' exactly?

It was sleeping with your husband while still nursing your baby.

You weren't supposed to sleep with your husband...?

It should not have been a regular thing. You had to spend time apart and miss each other. You were not supposed to sleep with your husband all the time.

Did you and your husband live together?

We lived together with his family.

And you moved to Cape Town together?

No. We only lived together in the Eastern Cape. He then got sick and ended up dying.

Did you move to Cape Town for work?

Me? No. I was here to visit my husband's relatives but they didn't treat me good so I left them and I found myself a job. I would get a few jobs here and there, I was staying with various people until I got myself a shack. I stayed in my shack in town two and I was doing various little jobs until I got a job at a creche. I then worked there for a while then I moved out of my shack and got a small one room place.

What differences to did you notice between here in Cape Town and in the Eastern Cape, like in Elliot?

Living in Elliot was a big adjustment because I had only lived in the rural areas before. I wasn't sure about anything and I ended up coming to Cape Town. I really struggled here in Cape Town.

Did you get to Cape Town during apartheid? Or afterwards?

I got to Cape Town when...I arrived the month before Mandela was released...people were saying he was going to get released the next month.

Oh ok. What was the name of your village?

It was Rhubusa.

Did you experience apartheid there?

No. There was nothing going on there. I only started experiencing apartheid as I grew up. We didn't know anything back home, we just lived peacefully and we could outside. We really didn't know anything.

Where there any white people around?

There were no white people.

No?

I only started seeing white people when I got to Cape Town.

Did you go to school?

No, I was never educated.

You were at home?

I used to herd the cows, sheep and goats.

Yeah? Did you do the garden?

Yes! Yho! I had to plant everything.

By yourself?

I used to garden in our garden near the house and then I would have to go to the field. I would have to hold the plough out in the field...I would just be stumbling about...

-----interruption-----

I was asking you about your chores. So, it was your job as the child to herd the cattle and plant in the garden?

I used to plant in the garden and in the fields.

Where you working alone? Or did you have help?

I worked alone. I planted alone in the garden. I would be given the tools. I would then be shown what to do once then I would be told to then do it on my own. I would agree and then do the work all on my own.

Who was showing you what to do? Your mother or father?

It was my mother.

When you're working what are your parents doing?

My father worked in Johannesburg.

How often did he come home? When would you see him?

My father? You would just see him around and know that he was back. Then you would be told he was leaving again, for example you would be told that his bus was leaving that Thursday. He worked in Johannesburg.

And at home it was just you and your mother?

Yes. And my grandmother.

And your grandmother...your...?

My father's mother.

Oh ok. Was it common to be an only child?

Huh?

Was it normal to be an only child?

It was only because the others weren't born yet so it was me alone for a while.

Did you eventually have brothers or sisters?

The next child after me was a boy then after him it was a girl. There were three of us. I then left because I was being treated badly, they were hitting me.

At home?

Yes. They don't even know that I'm still alive. They don't know where I ended up. I don't think they would recognize me and I don't care about them either.

Where did you go when you left home?

I hid, I left in the early morning while everyone was asleep.

Yeah?

And I was gone. They looked for me the first time and found me, I was really hit and slapped around. They said I wasn't their child anyway, they said I had been given away by my mother. So I left saying I was going home in that case. I didn't even know where I was going. I looked for a place and I stayed at some house for a while.

-----interruption-----

So, who exactly treated you badly? Your mother?

Yes.

When you left, where did you think you were going?

I was just leaving, I didn't know where I was going. I said I was going home, I was just leaving.

Where you still in the village?

Yes. But then I ended up walking to another village. And that's where they found me, in the other village. I was then taken back home. When we got home I was really beaten. I couldn't even sit properly.

Why were you beaten? Did you not do your chores properly?

I was beaten for many reasons, if I did anything wrong like the garden. I would be in trouble if the ploughs path wasn't smooth, so you had to be careful.

So, when you left for good where did you go?

I just left. And I was doing a few jobs. My family moved to another village and that was the last I saw of them.

When you got married where you still in contact with your family?

No.

So, when you got married, who did your husband's family talk to?

They talked to the people I was staying with. We had the same clan name so we were distant relatives.

And your family never tried to look for you?

No.

So, your distant relatives became your new family?

Yes.

And they went through the whole process of your hand being asked in marriage and lobola negotiations?

Yes.

So where did the cows go?

They went to my new family.

Oh ok. And you never saw your father either?

No.

And no one looked for you?

No, they never looked for me.

You said earlier that when you got married you had never seen your husband before, was that normal?

Huh?

Was it common not to know your husband before marriage?

Yes. And honestly, I didn't want to further inconvenience people who had already taken me in so I thought it was best that I just allowed myself to be married off. I trusted that my husband would treat me well.

Where you not scared?

I was scared, how could I not be?

And then you stopped?

I husband was a good man. He was very calm and he never hit, not even once. He died having never harmed me.

But you got married because you didn't want to be a problem to your relatives?

Yes.

What is the biggest difference in how things are done today compared to back then?

Today it's not like how it was back then. Things have changed and they're not the same as they were before.

Oh ok. Thank you so much. You've really helped me.

What's your clan name?

Me? Mambanjwa...Gebane...Thikazi.

Where do you live?

Rondebosch.

That's far, how did you get here? By car?

Yes.

Is it just you?

Yes. Thank you again.

Faith

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

Thank you for sitting with me. What is your name? Where were you born? Where did you grow up?

My family is from the Eastern Cape eTsimoni.

You were born and raised there?

I was born in Kensington.

Where's that?

Kensington is here in Cape Town.

Oh, but you were raised that side?

I grew up in the rural areas because my parents were away working my grandmother raised me. My grandmother was from the Eastern Cape so her children were born and raised there. My siblings and I were born this side but we also grew up in the Eastern Cape. We left Cape Town to go stay with our grandmother.

You were still children when you left for the Eastern Cape?

We left Cape Town while we were still young children to go stay without grandmother. We grew up there until we were adults.

So, your grandmother was your primary parent?

Yes.

And your mother and father lived and worked here in Cape Town?

Yes.

School?

I did all my schooling in the Eastern Cape.

Did you go to university?

No, I never went. I stopped school after high school.

And did you work after finishing school?

After I finished school I got married then we eventually moved to Cape Town.

Oh oh...was that common...how old were you when you got married?

Yhu...I think I was about 25 when I got married because I had already been married a while when I turned 30.

By the standards of the time you were living in, did you get married early? Or late in life? Or was that a common age?

Uhm...I think it was the common age but I'm no longer sure of when I got married exactly because I remember that we had to forge my ID for the marriage certificate because I was underage...I was too young but...

So, you went to home affairs to change your ID and what?

Yes...wait no. I didn't need to go to home affairs to change it because when I went to get my ID done I just adjusted and increased my age. That's all.

You moved your age to 18? Do you think perhaps you were 17 and not 25?

Back then you didn't have your ID done when you were...uh...how old did we have to be back then to do our IDs? I remember we had to do something at 15 but they didn't take your picture. I don't quite remember how it all worked.

You just remember that you were too young to put down your real age?

I just know that I had to change my age when I was getting married.

Oh, why did you get married at a young age do you think?

I wanted to get married. Nothing and no one forced me. I loved my husband.

You loved him?

Yes.

How did you and your husband meet?

My husband?

Yes.

Uhm...how did I meet him? We met while I was still a school child...he was finished with school but we had a few friends in common. His sister's daughter was actually my friend, we were in school together. So, we came home from school on the weekends...on Fridays I would always stop by his house to spend time with my friend and he would always look at me and try to talk to me. So that's how I knew.

Growing up what were you told at home about boys and everything to do with them?

Back then there was none of this talking to your parents about boys. If you had a boyfriend you kept that information to yourself.

Why do you think it was something that wasn't talked about?

Yhu! No... I don't even want to lie, I don't know.

When you were raising your children did you talk to them about such things or did you raise them how you were raised?

Who?

When you had your children?

Oh, with my child. My daughter got a boyfriend.

And you knew about it?

Yes, but I've never met him and I don't want to because I have nothing to say to him. Honestly, she didn't even really tell me about him. What happened was that her friends would come over and they would all be talking loudly and I would overhear them talking about it.

Did you know they were talking about her boyfriend?

No, I didn't and sometimes he would also come over as part of her group of friends. I just knew him as one of her friends. That's how children are right? Always hanging out with friends from school, right?

Do you think your reaction and handling of the situation was because of the way you were raised?

I don't know about that, all I know is that my daughter and her friend hung out here at home I would go to the other room.

Why did you never ask her?

Ask her what?

About her boyfriend?

No! What am I going to do with that information?

Just for you to maybe know who she was spending time with perhaps?

No, that information has nothing to do with me. I would just see her with her friends and I just figured that one of them was her boyfriend. I never asked anything because her having a boyfriend or not having is none of my business. What am I going to do with that information? I'm not going to do anything with her boyfriend. I never asked her about him or what he wanted or what they did. I never did that. I never asked her anything.

Because of how you were raised?

I was...at home growing we would also spend time as friends, we would visit each other at home as school children too. You would go to them or they would come visit you. Parents were never concerned really and they never asked questions. In fact, at home we never had that rule that friends weren't allowed on the property.

How did you grow up? Growing up, how were you raised as a girl child? In comparison to any brothers for example?

At home there were lots of us. There were a lot of us children, we were more than ten. There were lots of us...between my siblings and cousins...we were all always together and playing together. We grew up in the rural areas so growing up you generally stayed in your own yard and didn't go visit friends. You would see your friends when they were walking by and they would tell you that they were going to collect water at the river and you would be invited to go along. So, you would also get your bucket and go with them. We used to collect water at the river and that's how you spent time with friends. And when you came back home you would drop off the bucket of water and if you still wanted to spend time with friends you would then you would all perhaps decide to go out to gather wood or any other chores that required us to leave the yard. Growing up you could spend time together but you had to be doing something constructive too. You had to make sure everything was clean, you couldn't just go visit your friends. Then when we grew up we didn't go to high school in the village. Some of us went away to boarding school and others went to day schools but had to find places closer to the school than home, then that's how you made more friends like how I became friends with my husband's niece. We would all study together and do homework together like how children do today.

So, since your parents never talked to you about boys how did you know about boys and maybe sleeping with boys and getting married?

No one ever told.

So how did you know?

I guess I just figured out everything but no one told me anything.

You don't remember?

No, I think I ended up just figuring things out on my own, having a boyfriend was just something that happened...as school children we would have boyfriends. Most of us girls had boyfriends but it was very innocent. We would buy each other sweets and just write letters to each other, that's all it was.

When you got married, did you mother talk to you about what would be expected of you as a wife now?

No. You have to understand that things are different today, you can't apply what happens today to what happened back then. We...our parents never talked to us about anything, you couldn't talk to them about boys or sex or all those things. You never did that at all.

Could you talk to your friends? Since you couldn't talk to your parents?

At school there was never any conversation about boys, you couldn't talk to teachers about boyfriends. We could only talk to our friends about it, like if you were interested in a boy you would talk to your friends about it. That conversation was limited to them, that's all.

You only talked and listened to each other? Could you verify in any way that what you all talked about was correct and that you weren't coming away with bad information?

I grew up with older sisters and they had their boyfriends. I still didn't talk to my sisters about boyfriends but I could see things.

Did you have children when you got married? Did you have children immediately or did you wait?

Oh ok...I actually got pregnant with my first boyfriend but I ended up having a miscarriage. I got married afterwards.

Did your family know that you were pregnant?

Yes.

What was the reaction? Was it a bad thing or a good thing?

It was a bad situation because I was still a girl...it wasn't a nice experience for me too.

Because...

Because I failed but at the same time it happened.

Was the problem that you weren't married?

That was a problem...it was really a problem to have a child while you were not married.

Why? Why is it a problem?

It's a problem...in my experience it was a problem and even today my daughter has a child but she isn't married and I find that to be a problem. She was still in school and even after she finished

studying she still relied on me because she was still so young. Your own children are already your load to carry and now by having a child outside of marriage another load is being added to me, I'm the one that has another mouth to feed.

Is it a problem for you at home or within the community in general?

I wouldn't know about the community, I don't care nor do I pay attention to what is happening in my neighbour's house. I am concerned with what's happening in my own home.

Yeah...?

My getting pregnant while I was not married had nothing to do with anyone outside of my family just like a neighbour's daughter getting pregnant was that family's business. It was my family's problem, it didn't concern everyone else and so I don't know how they felt and I don't care. I only know how I felt and I knew that I would be adding another load to my family, my parents would have to worry about my child on top of everything but at the same time it was something that happened and I needed to accept it and move on with my life.

Do you think your parents saw it that way?

Back then? I would say that they had similar views to me but what else could they do? I was pregnant already. I wasn't married. What were they going to do? It was done already, all they could do was wait until I had the child and then raise it. There's nothing else they could have done.

Do you still remember how you told them?

Yhu...I don't remember anymore. It had so long ago.

Do you remember feeling scared? Or were you resigned and had already accepted what had happened?

I no longer remember how everything happened. It was so long ago. I'm really struggling to remember how my family found out...I remember I didn't go home that December, I remember being sick and I was in Durban...I was sick and I was taken to the doctor. And the doctor told me I was pregnant.

You never suspected anything?

I never suspected anything because I had only just started menstruating at the time...I was only...uh I don't remember but I had just started menstruating and I still didn't quite understand...

You hadn't yet grasped at what menstruating was and what it meant?

Yes. I still didn't even know when my time of the month was and I would just be surprised when it happened.

Who did you talk to when you first started your period? Your grandmother? Your mother? Did they explain anything to you? Or was it also something that was not discussed?

No one said anything to me.

So, when you found yourself menstruating what did you do?

Firstly, I was very shocked the first time it happened.

You didn't know it was something normal?

At home I wasn't told anything, I only talked with my friends about what had happened. I had seen some girls buying pads so I just followed their lead. I used to use my pocket money to buy myself pads.

So, you didn't even...

My mom was also here in Cape Town working so what eventually happened when she found out was that she bought me new underwear.

Oh ok.

At school what would happen was that if you started your period you would be allowed to go home.

Why did you have to leave school?

If you were on your period you could tell the nurse and she'd let you go. It wasn't strict in school.

Was this at your normal school or in Boarding school?

(interviewee nods head)

Not boarding school...that makes sense.

You had to go home because you needed to change, especially your underwear.

Oh ok...I had thought you got sent home from boarding school.

No. You just needed to go home, take a bath and change your clothes.

At this point did you or could you see the connection between having sex, your period and possibly having a baby?

No, I didn't put any of that together. I never understood that if you were menstruating and you had sex you could end up pregnant. All I knew was that if you slept with a boy, even once, you would end up pregnant. I could see that the people who got pregnant were the ones who I knew were having sex with other people.

And all of this you know through talking with friends?

Yes, we would try piece things together.

There were no adults to talk to you? Or explain anything

No, never. Back then things weren't done like how they are today where you can talk to your children if you want to about sex and pregnancy.

How many children did you have in marriage?

I have one child. One.

Did you plan for one child?

No, I had a few miscarriages.

Did you as a married woman understand that you had to have sex to get pregnant.

Explain.

When did you realize that sex meant pregnancy?

I fully understood it when I was married because when I got pregnant before I was married I wasn't aware of what had happened. I didn't know how I ended up pregnant.

Did you have your child in the Eastern Cape?

No, I gave birth to her here in Cape Town.

Here in Cape Town?

Yes, I had all my children here in Cape Town.

Oh ok. What were any differences you noticed between how things were done in the Eastern Cape and here in Cape Town?

There was a difference in how people carried themselves and... I'm going to talk to you about how things were back then. I don't know much about today.

Ok.

Because today when I go to the rural areas I've noticed that a lot of things are the same there as they are here. There isn't much difference anymore. What happens here is what happens in the rural areas. But back then there was a difference how life was lived in the townships and in the rural areas. Many things that happened in the townships would never have happened in the rural areas. Back in the rural areas it was unheard of to hear that someone was living with a boyfriend. It was just unheard of to do that, people going to sleep at their boyfriends' houses? If you had a boyfriend back then you kept it to yourself so that's a difference I noticed between the rural areas and Cape Town.

People were living with their boyfriends in Cape Town back then?

I'm saying it happens a lot today when it didn't happen back then.

You're comparing then and now?

Yes. A lot of things that would have been unthinkable are now happening today. I'm giving you a comparison of how things were before, what we believed in and how that is all gone today. It's not the same, even in the rural areas. And here in the townships.

How would you compare life in the rural areas back then versus in the townships? Was there a difference in morals? Was it more traditional in the rural areas versus the urban and more modern township life?

Now or then?

Back then. When you're thinking about your experiences in the rural areas and in the township.

We grew up in a very strict environment in the rural areas. But honestly, I'd say it was also strict here...at home we...with my grandmother raising us it didn't make a difference where we were. In the township or in the rural areas we could just do anything. And as adults...I'm going to talk to you about the 70s because I was quite a big girl by then...

Ok.

I was maybe you age or slightly older. I couldn't do what I wanted. I could never stand around talking to a boy in front of my house for example. It was the same rules in the rural areas and in the townships, you couldn't be seen talking to boys. If you had a boyfriend you would wait until it was night-time, you would have to wait until everyone at home was asleep...you'd have to bide your time, sit through prayers around 8pm, sit at home as whatever night-time routines are performed the when everyone goes to bed that's when you get your chance to sneak away. If you left through the window you would have to wait until everyone was asleep. If you crept through the house to leave through the door you would have to wait until everyone was asleep. The you would go and meet up with your boyfriend. Then once again very early the next morning before anyone was awake you had to sneak back home. That's what we had to do back then. Now? Young girls just stay with their boyfriends all

day and all night. The boyfriend's mom wakes up to her son's girlfriend sleeping there, she leaves for work and the girlfriend is just lying around her house. Things like that didn't happen back then. Even in the rural areas it was the same. It was unheard of for a girl to go sleep over at her boyfriend's house. Or to stay there. There would be questions about whose child was busy staying out in other people's houses. Why were you there? Where would your parents think you were? Today, young girls can go and stay with their boyfriends all day with no concern.

Do you think this change in how things are done is a signal of a change in society? And if so, is that a good thing or a bad thing? What does it say about our society?

I don't want to lie...I really don't want to lie to you. I won't say it's good. I won't say it's bad. It all depends...I will say that for me it all depended on how I felt and I couldn't compare to what other parents were doing. For me, I couldn't compare my daughter to the child next door. Just like how my daughter should not do something she knows I will not like because the child next door is doing it. Children can't do whatever they please.

What year was your daughter born?

She was born 1981.

1981? Oh ok. You were here in Cape Town?

Yes.

Why did you move to Cape Town? Was it for work?

I was coming home when I moved to Cape Town because my parents lived here.

You came to live with your parents?

Yes.

And then did you work?

Yes.

Did you meet your husband here? Or did you meet in the Eastern Cape?

I met my husband here in Cape Town because my parents were here in Cape Town. And my husband and I were from the same village back home in the Eastern Cape.

You were married by 1981?

Yes.

How was Cape Town at that time during apartheid?

It was such a long time ago back when it was apartheid. It wasn't like how it is today, those were dark days especially for black people. I remember even getting on the bus was not simple. There were places on the bus that you couldn't go as a black person because they were only for white people. There were even separate toilets, we couldn't go inside the toilets for white.

Did you have your daughter in a hospital or a clinic?

I gave birth in Groote Schuur.

Was it a hospital for black people? Or...?

I don't think it was only for black people...I don't think that hospitals were divided like everything else. I never heard of white only hospitals or black only hospitals. Maybe there were separate wards...but I don't know. I'm not sure. I don't want to make up something I don't know.

Did you have your regular check-up...?

Maybe it was divided by wards...but they were also mixed because I remember the ward I was in had black people and coloured people...so yeah it was a mix.

And white people?

Uh...I don't remember but maybe?

Oh ok...you always went to Groote Schuur.

Yes.

Where your check-ups at a local clinic?

I had everything done at Groote Schuur, I never went to a clinic.

Where your doctors black? or white?

There weren't any black doctors back then...at least in my experience. All my doctors were white. There were some black nurses who helped take care of me.

Post-1994, did you notice a difference in how you were treated?

Yes.

Can you speak to it? What was it like before 1994 and what was it like post-1994?

Firstly, back then it was not easy to be black...it was especially not easy to be black and be in Cape Town if you weren't born here. You didn't have peace...you really didn't have any. We couldn't raise our fists in the air. We couldn't even have houses and we weren't allowed to live in certain places. So, I would say that there is a difference today compared to back then because you can at least get a house from the government or build your own on a piece of land...you can live where you want to live which didn't happen back then.

Oh ok, how was it in the Eastern Cape during that time?

We didn't have apartheid in the Eastern Cape. It's just black people only that side.

So, you didn't feel the impact of apartheid when you were there?

No. Even seeing white people there was very rare...I think you could count them. I think the only white people around were shop owners. We have a few shops in the rural areas.

Oh ok. Moving on to contraceptives...when did you first learn about contraceptives?

I only heard about contraceptives here in Cape Town.

Nothing in the Eastern Cape?

No.

Who taught you about contraceptives?

I heard about contraceptives in the clinic.

In the clinic? How was the topic introduced? And what here do you think you first heard about contraceptives?

What I'll say about family planning is how I experienced it. After I had my daughter I got the injection.

Did the nurses tell you...?

I heard it from the nurses and decided that I should use get the injection. It was done immediately after I gave birth, before I was even discharged from the hospital,

Where you asked if you wanted to use contraceptives?

I was asked and I said yes.

Did you talk to your husband about that decision?

I made the decision on my own.

Why didn't you talk to your husband about your decision to use contraceptives?

I had a baby.

And you felt you couldn't tell him that?

He would have understood my decision because I had just given birth and that I had a young baby.

That's why you chose to get the injection? To create a gap between your children?

Yes.

Did you go to the clinic regularly?

I went every 3 months, that's how the injection worked.

How many years did you use the injection for do you think?

Yhu! I won't know how many years I used it for...I don't even remember when I started exactly. And I only stopped using the injection very late in my life. I was already not having any children by the time I stopped getting the injection. I can say I probably started using the injection in the 1970s because that's when it became available and I got the injection from then on. I only stopped when I decided to be sterilized.

You chose to be sterilized?

Yes.

Oh ok. Did you husband know that you were using contraceptives?

He knew that I was on birth control.

Did you have to go to Groote Schuur every three months?

Uhm, where did I get my injections? Uhm, for my regular injections I went to the local clinic. I only got the one injection at Groote Schuur after I gave birth. There was no need for me to go to Groote Schuur once I had my child, I only went to the clinic. It was also convenient for me because my daughter also had her check-up appointments at the clinic.

Did you get to choose which form of birth control you used? The injection or the pill?

You got to choose. There were three options: the injection, the pill and the loop. I never used the pill or the loop. I chose the injection.

What made you choose the injection over the others?

I just liked the injection better.

Was it perhaps the easiest? Because you didn't have to remember it every day like the pill or have something inserted like the loop?

The injection was easy for me because with the pill and having to take every day, what would happen if I forgot it? I didn't like the pill and I felt the injection was easier. I knew with the injection that I just needed to go every three months and I would be protected. I didn't have to constantly remember to take the pill. If I got the injection that was that, I didn't need to worry and stress about it every day.

Where there lots of people at the clinic also there for family planning...did you all talk as women? Was contraceptive use something you could talk about? Or was it something you kept to yourself?

I don't know. I was married and I didn't really have friends. All I cared about was looking at my clinic card and going to get my injection on the required date.

Yeah? You didn't pay attention to anything outside our situation?

Uh...I don't think it was something that women had to hide because a lot of people went to the clinic so you couldn't really keep it a secret. And your husband knew about the clinic too. Clinics and nurses were very open about family planning. There were signs everywhere and the nurses talked about all the different forms all the time. Family planning was especially emphasized to women who had small children or a lot.

When was this push for family planning really happening? Do you remember when it started?

I don't think there was that big of a push towards contraceptive use until recently.

Really?

Back then it wasn't a public campaign like it is today. All that happened back then was that before you were discharged at the hospital after giving birth you would be asked to choose which form of birth control you wanted to use since you had a child. The nurses knew that you would be sleeping with your husband again quite soon so you had to be protected from pregnancy. You only needed to choose which of the options presented to you would work best.

Could you say no to all the options.

I think so...because I don't think anyone was forced. I was never forced, I had already been using contraceptives. I've never heard of anyone saying that they were forced to use contraceptives.

It made sense to you? Using birth control after giving birth?

Yes, I didn't want to get pregnant again soon after having a baby. So, I got the injection and from my clinic card I knew to go back to the clinic in 3 months. You had a date and you went on that date.

Was birth control for married women?

It was for whoever wanted or needed it.

Unmarried women were not judged?

I wouldn't know anything about that.

In the Eastern Cape, do you know when contraceptives were introduced?

I don't know. I don't know how anything worked in the Eastern Cape.

Why?

I never went to the clinics in the Eastern Cape.

Really?

Back then clinics in the Eastern Cape were very rare. There weren't many and honestly, they're still rare today. There were no clinics in the Eastern Cape and there still aren't many unlike here in Cape Town. The Eastern Cape is a very rural place.

Is that a big difference between here and the Eastern Cape? Is healthcare quality different?

Yes.

Did you ever wonder why the apartheid government was providing birth control?

I never even thought about that.

You never thought of family planning for black women as a way to kill of black people?

I never heard that. Family planning made sense to me. I never saw it as a bad thing.

Family planning was good?

Family planning was a good thing in my opinion. I don't want to lie to you, I did what was right for me and I think contraceptives were helpful.

Oh ok. I think we're done. Thank you so much.

Rebecca

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Interlocuter (1)

1: When were you first introduced to contraceptives?

I don't know much about it; all those things came when I was already married.

1: Oh ok, so you were already married when contraceptives were introduced.

Back home in the rural areas we really struggled and we didn't have access to a lot of things. You would only get information once you left the village so we were always behind, you see? Just like how you're here interviewing me, this would never happen back home. There has always been a gap in information. We don't know anything. And if you had left the village and you came back with new information or a different way to do things you would be almost shamed for it. With people locally questioning why you wanted to change things and not generally trusting in a new way to do things, especially if they felt that the old way was working perfectly fine. Everything is so far from the villages in the rural areas. You know a taxi costs R35 one way to go to town. And even the clinics are so far away. In most places in the rural areas for you to get to a clinic you need to go to town. And this whole up and down costs more than R70.

1: And it's probably more expensive today. So, information took a long time to reach you?

Yes.

1: In your opinion why do you think information took a while to reach you in the rural areas?

The reason it took long for information to reach us was because there were no brave or curious people who wanted to learn about how things were being done in the cities. And no one in the cities cared to transfer information back to the rural areas.

1: What is the youth in the rural areas doing? Should they not be the one helping in the transfer of knowledge from the cities back to the villages? Where is the young people? Because contraceptive use is something that should have reached your village through the youth. And if you had clinics nurses should have been spreading the word about contraceptives. Why was there such a gap in the knowledge?

I think apartheid played a role but when I really think about why rural areas got left behind in development I look to the leaders. The leaders, within the village itself and in the whole country, did not care enough about development in rural areas so we were left behind. Information just never reached people in the rural areas. Even things like taps for water...as a people we are supposed to help each other but...in rural areas you just didn't know what existed and what didn't know.

1: How old were you when you got married?

Uh...you know I was a bit long in the tooth by the time I got married.

1: How old were you?

Me?

1: Yes. How old do you think you were? Try and remember.

I don't remember all I know is that my father loved cows and I loved my father. Do you understand? And so, I listened to everything my father said. I never wanted to disappoint him and I made sure that everything he wanted done was actually done. I loved my mother too but for me my father was number one. He was the person I trusted the most and the person I cared about disappointing the most out of anyone. It used to be the most horrible feeling when I did something my father did not approve of, I would know immediately that I had messed up badly. I'm not going to lie, the person I cared for most in my life growing up was my father. I loved my father very much and I always wanted to make him happy.

1: Regarding marriage, how old were you when you got married?

Yhu! Uh...I was 18 I think.

1: You were 18. Ok, so why did you say you got married when you were older but you were only 18? At what age where people generally getting at back then?

No... I don't know. I can't say I know that. I don't want to lie to you, I don't know. You hear me? I don't know. I just remember overhearing my aunts always gossiping about who was marrying who in our village.

1: You said you got married when you were older but now you've said you were 18. At 18 you're not old, you're still coming into being a woman. When did you start your period? How old where you?

Yhu! I can't tell you that...I don't think I have that information anymore.

1: And you never heard of contraceptives? You never heard anyone talking about contraceptives to you?

No, I was a long-married woman by the time they were introduced. Out of all the things, that's one of the things that we were never taught about.

Did you talk to your children about contraceptives? Did you teach them?

No! It's very difficult to talk to your children in general but even more so if you don't even know what you're talking about. So, I never talked to them about anything because it would be lying to them in a way. I didn't know anything. I imagine they would have learned and gained that knowledge at school.

When did you children have their own children?

In all honesty regarding my children, I did not stay with my children a lot. They were away a school for a long time and we were far apart. There was always distance between us...my children spent a lot of time away at school.

1: They were at boarding school?

Yes, they were at boarding school so I did not stay with them.

1: When your daughters reached a certain age and millstone did you teach them anything about puberty? Did you sit them down and talk about their period? And explain what was happening?

No, I won't lie. I never talked to them. I again will say that I imagine everything they knew was from school.

1: Did you talk to them about anything regarding how to carry themselves?

No, I don't want to lie and take credit for something I didn't do because I would separate from my children when they were about 12 usually.

1: Yoh! At 12?

I separated from my children when they around 12. I don't want to lie because I didn't talk to them about anything. When they went through puberty they were away at boarding school. You know it was so difficult back then and it's funny that children today don't understand the value of education when so much was sacrificed for them. We used to have to go get water from the river, you would get home from school and there would be no water. And guess who would have to go down to the river? And then there were times where there was just no water if a draught was happening. Today? You just open a tap.

-----interruption-----

1: You were married, did you children get married?

Some of them did and some of the didn't...it was up to them.

1: So, there were outside influences...

Of course, there was, I couldn't teach them everything because there a lot of them and we didn't stay together.

1: So, it was the outside world that interfered with your teachings? You parented them until 12 and then periodically when they came home for the holidays?

Yes, they would come home for the holidays. I think I was just blessed in that everything generally worked out, they managed to finish school. It's not like that for everyone. My children started school young and therefore finished early, when a lot of things were happening, they were already finished with school.

1: Why did they start school early?

The school was near our house and all their friends were school children so in the end it just made sense that they also started. It just worked out that way. At first, they were just visiting their friends and then they were just in school, the teachers said they just started interacting and participating.

1: Can you talk to me about your childhood and how it was growing up as a girl. And everything you might have experienced as a girl child? For example, a girl getting pregnant outside of marriage.

Let me say...your question is a difficult one because I can't analyse my own childhood. We weren't encouraged to talk to our parents about things like sex or pregnancy, it was a matter for the adults and that's all it was. It was adult's business.

What does 'adult business' mean?

Adult business was things like who was pregnant and whether or not that pregnancy was appropriate.

1: But you saw unmarried pregnant girls, right?

Of course, you were seeing unmarried pregnant girls but it had nothing to do with you. And you were told if you dared to ask that it was grown people business and your curiosity was not welcomed.

1: Because they were older than you?

Not necessarily. Back then we were divided...there were things we didn't know as young girls. Even if you saw something you couldn't ask about it. You especially couldn't ask your parents, and for me especially my mother. If you tried asking about things that they deemed as adult business you were

seen as inquisitive which was not a good thing. Why did you want what was considered adult information? What were you going to do with it? So, I never asked anything about anybody or what I saw...I won't lie to you. We never asked our parents anything.

1: Despite seeing it?

You could see whatever you wanted to see but you were never allowed to ask about it.

1: What happened to unmarried pregnant girls? I know that in some places they would be taken and hidden, only coming back after they gave birth. Did that happen in your experience?

How would I know about any of that? I wouldn't know because...listen we were raised on very simple rules. As children we had our place and we didn't question it. One of the rules was just that if you saw something and you had questions about it, you kept those questions to yourself. Just because you saw something it didn't mean you could speak on it. You were a child, you had to know and keep to your place. It was none of your business. You see something with your eye but you could never listen to something with your ear. And back then adults generally didn't just start talking in front of children.

1: So, you grew up at a time where there was a lot of secrecy.

Which wasn't a bad thing, it was adult's business and you were a child.

1: Do you think the secrecy around certain issues had a negative impact?

No... well I don't think I can really speak to it except that back say that of course there were a lot of secrets when I was growing up. But I don't think adults back then were trying to cause harm by keeping secrets and killing curiosity from us children, they didn't realize the negative side effects of raising children in this sort of environment.

1: Do you think there was a lack of affection and trust shown by adults back then to young children?

We were measured as young girls; I think our parents thought we couldn't handle much and as such we missed out on a lot of knowledge.

1: You were cheated out of information and knowledge

Yes.

1: How?

The reason we were denied information and knowledge was because it was easier to keep us naive, they didn't see a reason to give us any information. What was important back then was raising your children, making sure that they were well fed and outside not listening to what adults were talking about.

1: Not realizing that children perhaps needed to be privy to some of that information?

Children didn't need to know anything, I don't think giving children any information was ever considered.

1: Growing up was it common for girls to have boyfriends?

How would I know? I was a school child.

1: You didn't have friends?

You see at home my mother...for her your friend after school was the bucket you used to go get water from the river. My mother was a tough woman, afterschool...you see we farmed. We had everything in our garden...at home we never bought potatoes. It's like I'm lying when I say things like that. We

lived of the land. So, you would see other children playing but we were busy doing chores. Even if my mother wasn't there we knew what to do because she would always check when she got home that everything was done. If it wasn't you would have to come forward and my mother would make you do the work, it didn't matter if you had to wake up early before school to get your chores done. Back then we didn't need to be told, you knew what to do and it wasn't playing. You played at school if you wanted to play.

1: Do you think you were being prepared for marriage? And being taught how to run a household?

No. It wasn't like that. I went to school too and in fact I passed when my brother didn't. But in some ways, you right because I remember my older brother who was living in Cape Town finding out that I had passed our brother hadn't he said it didn't matter because I was going to get married anyway. I remember him saying that he didn't understand why our parents were educating me. And I remember thinking that it wasn't useless because we had some women teachers. I still remember all of them. I remember one teacher who would say that it was important for us girls to get an education and be able help support our families. Because out of everything in life you never wanted to be in a position to beg for food. My father also used to say something similar. There were lots of us at home, it was my siblings and my cousins. We all grew up together being raised together there were lots of us.

1: How many siblings did you have exactly?

I grew up with a lot of my cousins too.

1: Yes, but how many actual siblings did you have?

My mom lost a few children so I'm not sure but I remember nine of us growing up. My mother says there were 11 of us.

1: How many brothers did you have in that nine?

I had three brothers.

1: With 6 girls, do you think your parents saw the potential cows?

Not really...

What was the place of a girl in the home?

Place of a girl?

Yes, where there any differences in how you and your sisters were raised in comparison to your brothers?

At home...when one of my brothers wanted to come study here in Cape Town and stay with the older one who was already working my father allowed it. He would never have let one of us girls come to Cape Town like that. And my brother came home with a zero anyway having failed. My older brother encouraged the whole thing because he loved his little brother. My father was hesitant but he allowed it. At home we grew up being told that we were our fathers' children (Sikhule kusithwa' ngutata wethu osizalayo- 0:29:40.7), there were no chores for boys and there were no chores for girls. We all had to help.

1: Really? So, since you and your sisters had to be friends with your buckets, regularly going to the river to get water did your brothers do the same? Since there were no boy chores and girl chores.

Exactly! It's only now as an adult that I realize how unequal and unfair things were growing up. My father always said that we all had the same chores but I remember that when it was time to go home

after school my heart would break and I would get a headache because I knew what I was facing when I got home. You know I used to have to plough the fields myself sometime.

1: All by yourself?

Yes! I would have to tie the cows to the plough and guide them to get the ground ready for planting.

1: You would have to do that all by yourself? As a girl?

Yes!

1: How old were you do you think?

I don't even know anymore. All I know is...do you understand that would be coming home from school and I would have so much work to do.

1: Do you remember how old you were? Or which grades you were in?

No... but I know I had the most chores when I was younger because I didn't have as much to do when I was in higher grades.

-----interruption-----

1: You know when I think about everything that went on back then and the way we were raised I blame apartheid. Our parents were tough on us because life was tough. Under apartheid they were oppressed and abused by the white people. Our fathers were me grown men who were treated like boys by their white bosses. Our fathers were physically abused by their white bosses and they could not retaliate. Who do you think was on the receiving end of all that frustration? When our fathers would come home we as their children suffered. At least that's what happened in some families I think.

I really don't like that. Taking out your frustrations on innocent people was not right.

1: Yes. Which is why we had to change things with our children and send them to school. And make sure that they were prepared for life.

I agree with that. In raising my children, I wanted to have a better life than I did and that meant getting a better education. You know, as a parent you notice your children's struggles more than your own and all you want to ease their way in life. I never got the chance to get a good education but I wanted one for my children. It was important to have a heart about your child, to want more for them than you had. To not want your children ploughing land after school. I remember my brother coming home from Cape Town and being shocked at seeing my driving the plough with 12 cows. My father was a proud man and as such a hard worker. In some ways I'm thankful for him because he instilled that work ethic in us. Without it I don't know where I would be. You understand?

1: He could have taken you to school but chose not to and instead married you off.

No, it wasn't like that. You know it wasn't easy being one the oldest girl in the family. I had to get married.

Why?

You couldn't just stay at home as a girl once you were grown up.

Why?

Back in the day that was just how things were, that's the life I lived. It's only when my generation had children that we realized that girls should be encouraged to get a better education versus pushing the importance of marriage like how it was with us.

(0:38:39.9) Why was it important to get married?

You're asking me something from a long time ago and I honestly do not know because that's just what happened when you had a girl child. Uhm...my father had cows, it's not like he was lacking...we honestly had a lot of cattle growing up. However, he did welcome the cows that came as my lobola payment. I guess it was...if I have to justify anything I would just say that I think back then people wanted to have a lot of something. It wasn't about not having enough. And after you were married off you had to get used to marriage. As a wife you wake up very early. You're married now so you have to wake up around 3am to start your duties of taking care of your husband's family. The best situation you could be in as a wife back then was if had a mother-in-law or a father-in-law or both so your table could be full. To not have any elders in the household was not good. Back then we used to wake up in the very early hours, got out and start working the fields. It would be just me and my husband, though someone from the house could come by later to help out. During harvesting season, I was also out there working alongside my husband. My in-laws were completely shocked, they had not expected me to be such a hard worker. I came from a home where I never went to bed hungry and yet I still had a work ethic which surprised me. I think they thought they would have to show me what to do step by step but I never once needed to be prodded to be useful.

What was the role of a wife in a home?

For me it was a hot situation. I grew up working the land and taking care of cattle. I sat my husband down at the very beginning and told him that we needed to work together. I didn't get very far in school but my children did because I worked hard at what I knew, farming and cattle. We sold our produce to farmers and our cattle to butcheries, it was a business agreement with some white people.

Did your children help out with the 'family business'?

I'm saying that my husband and I put our children through school with farming and cattle only. My husband and I were at home working while the children were away at boarding school. Your child's education depends on you as a parent caring enough about them, if you don't care your child will never study. They'll go to school but it'll mean nothing if there's not encouragement and care from home.

1: Did the children help with the actual work of running things?

A little when they were home from boarding school. What I hated was a child who didn't want to work and wanted to go away on holiday. I'd tell them coming home was the holiday. Where did they want to go? To who? During the holidays the money we made was to prepare for the next school year. You know we had to pay the full amount at the beginning of the term. Your child had to take a receipt of fees paid when going back to school. As black parents we were never given the benefit of the doubt, I would walk hours to the nearest post office to pay the fees for the school because if you were late...sometimes not even late but the post office delivery was late your child was sent home. And then you would have to pay even more money to send your child back to school because you had paid the fees and there was just a small delay. The white man really denied us a lot of things. And I think there was one reason, as black people we sold the white man our cattle for a mirror when they first arrived from the ocean. We had a prophet uNtsikane, he for saw all of this and that's what white people hated. That we had the prophet. It's no wonder we were oppressed because the person the for sow all and declared prosperity for black people for generation was a black man. The white people were threatened and through oppression they have tried to ruin the traditions and practices of KwaXhosa but I believe that they will never end because of Ntsikane's prophecy. Our traditions, like those long pipes, will never end even if they feel distant here in Cape Town (0:54:34.2). Honestly when I think about the whole thing I feel that we were very stupid as black people.

1: I agree with you on that. Long ago girl children were looked at as means to get cattle through lobola. Parents didn't look at their daughters and see a doctor or a lawyer, they saw cows which is why we married of so young. I have a theory that young girls kwa Xhosa for the longest time were used as a means to get back the cattle we essentially gave away for a mirror. Black men lost their wealth and they dealt with that loss through oppressing their daughters and using them to try get back what had been lost. We were sold, there was no care about how you might be treated in your marriage.

As long as your family received cattle for you. Oh...you are saying a lot of big and scary things. You know I worked for a few white families when I was still working.

1: How was it? How were you treated?

It was still during apartheid but it wasn't completely bad.

1: Were you allowed to use the bathroom?

No, there were two bathrooms. One for the madam and baas while the other one was for us workers.

(1:00:56.6) 1: And just going back to how white oppression realities, black made the mistake of giving away their cattle to the white people who were far smarter in interactions and then tried to fix it by selling of their daughters through lobola.

What is the place of lobola?

Lobola is paid for you when you've been chosen and taken as a wife.

But why? What is its importance?

The importance of lobola was that it was a way to thank your parents for raising and taking care of you. Your raised you, by the time you leave to get married they have cost them a lot. Lobola is a way to compensate your parents for raising you only to have you leave once you get married. Your new family is gaining you so your parents must get something back too. Cows even as young calves are very valuable, there is no one who doesn't want cows. They were our wealth.

1: How exactly does lobola help? What is its contribution? Because, how I see it it's nowhere near enough. You give up your child for a few cows or maybe it would about R100 000 today. Raising a child cost more than that. You get R100 000 in exchange for your daughter...do you understand how much you change as a woman. You have a new name and a new family; your parents don't have a say in your life anymore.

You everything you're saying is really painful. You're saying a lot of upsetting things. A lot of what you're saying is true but I've only realized it now in my old age, I never considered or thought of it growing. I never said anything to my father...and I loved my father very much because he always tried to make me understand. He would even bring in my aunts to talk to me so that I wasn't upset about whatever was happening, he never once asked my mother to speak to me or explain why something was happening. I loved my father and my aunts very much because they always at least talked to me.

1: Your mother wasn't compassionate?

You know, even after I got married and I would come home upset about something in my marriage I never went to my mother. I would seek out my father. my mother would always be asking him "What's your child doing here?". My father would try to explain to her that I was having problems in my marriage and he would try and mediate. He would tell me to go back to my husband and that he would come visit soon to try council us. My father would always come through, he would come and

talk to my husband. He tries and council us. Oh, I loved my father very much. Much more than my mother.

1: Was there a difference in attitude and manner between the rural Eastern Cape and Cape Town? Your brothers were here right? Did their attitude change?

The younger one came home having failed at school here in Cape Town. My oldest brother for all his faults really cared about his children and the type of education they got. He and his wife live here in Cape Town. And once their children were about a year or a year and a half they would send them to the Eastern Cape to be raised by my mother because they didn't want them raised in Cape Town. To this day, I don't trust Cape Town because people changed here. You lived in Cape Town and when you got back home you didn't know how to work anymore.

1: So, Cape Town ruined people?

What nice things can I say about Cape Town? Nothing. There's nothing nice to say about Cape Town.

1: And it's funny how the resources are here in Cape Town.

Oh, there are none or very limited in the Eastern Cape.

1: I think the government withheld resources from the Eastern Cape because people in high places didn't care about the people.

-----interruption-----

You know what I've noticed today with young people is that there is no foundation. Oh...when I look at my granddaughters I just don't know. I grew up going to church every Sunday. We respected our teachers. My mother loved God and she instilled that in us. And tried to do the same to my children.

1: Did you raise your children in the Eastern Cape or here in Cape Town.

They only moved to Cape Town as adults.

1: So, their childhoods were in the Eastern Cape?

Oh yes. I raised them back home (ekhayeni). Their father and I raised them at home in the Eastern Cape. I actually think that they were very naive when they moved here as a result. And they were easily susceptible to bad influence. I really don't like this place, I have nothing positive to say about Cape Town. Cape Town? No, I have nothing...absolutely nothing nice to say. Cape Town changed my children, and not for the better,

1: How many children do you have in total?

I had 8 children in total, but I only have 6 alive today.

KwaXhosa was it important to have children if you were married?

Yes.

Why?

Children are your future.

Continue...

Children will help you in the future when you no longer have money. IsiXhosa say your children will take care of you.

So, you have children because they'll work for you?

You know, your children can spread out and live in different places but wherever they go they take the lessons that they were taught growing up with them. And that is to take care of you, children are your way of ensuring you are taken care of in your old age.

(1:30:56.4) Was it your job as a wife to have children?

Yes, of course yes. Children are the seeds that will grow your new family. Children are 'imbewu'.

Imbewu?

1: Children are the future. You are required to have children for the future of the family.

Yes. In many ways you are making sure that the family continues and does not die out.

And if you couldn't have children?

You'll then stay childless, that's your lot in life I guess.

Was that a bad thing?

It was a very bad thing. You didn't have a family. There would be nothing for people to compliment you about. We used to take pride in having families and that's what you were complimented about. You were an example.

Your worth is based on your ability to be a mother? And without that there's nothing else to compliment?

No, there's nothing to compliment. You don't have a family, you didn't grow and extend your husband's family.

So, you could work on the family's land, do all the cooking and cleaning at none of it will matter because you can't have children?

If there are no children who is going to do what you're doing when you're too old? All that hard work doesn't mean much if you don't have children to follow in your lead. Without children, who is going to care about the family? Once you're dead, you're dead. Hard work in life only matters if you can pass it on to your children who will take over from your efforts.

Oh ok.

(1:45:52.4) That's how it kwa-Xhosa, you don't just give away your things. You give the fruits of your hard work to your children to continue what you have started.

What does being a mother mean to you? What role has that played?

In being a mother I... the role it played in my life is big. I wanted to have children because my life is reflected in them, you see? To find out what I like or don't like or who I am, you only have to look at my children. They are my hope...that is being a mother. Even when they disappoint you.

1: I'm just thinking about what we talked about earlier, girls were really raised only to be wives and mothers back then. We weren't raised to work.

But there is work in marriage. When you get to your new home you had to work.

1: But you weren't given a real education or a real chance. Only a lucky few women got a good enough education so that they could stand on their own.

If your husband worked you stayed at home. That was the law. Once you got married you couldn't teach anymore if that's what you did.

Because your job is now to be a mom?

I'm telling you how things were. I grew up at a time when that's what happened. If you got married you had to stop working, whatever you were doing. Cleaning houses or teaching.

1: So, the teachers you mentioned earlier...

They were not married. Married women were not hired back then. You could not be married and still teach; you would never get hired if you were married. No.

Why?

No. That wouldn't happen. You would not get hired if you were a married woman.

Ok, I think we're done. You'll just need to sign a release form.

Key:

Bold: Interviewer

Normal: Interviewee

Italics: Thoughts and explanations

You know I never struggled. I worked. My husband worked. We helped each other and we were true partners in raising our children. I had my children in 1978, 1979, 1982, 1984 and 1991. I never had a problem raising my children and taking care of them because my husband and I worked hard.

Did you have your children here or...?

I had all my children in the Eastern Cape.

Were you raised there?

I grew up in the rural areas. I'm from eQonce.

How would you compare the Eastern Cape and Cape Town? Then and now.

Things were so much easy back home. Yho...life was just easier. The way things were so easy my child, I would have R100 and feel like it was too much money.

Life was easier? Even though it was during apartheid?

You know with apartheid and all that my child, I did not take apartheid which was outside of my home and bring it into my home. Just because something was happening, it did not mean that you should let it affect you and your home. You know, I never wanted for anything when my husband was still alive. I never struggled, my children never went to bed hungry. To show you how fulfilled we were I'll tell you this; my oldest child grew up thinking she had a lot of siblings because there were always people at our house. We fed everyone that came into our home, there was never any worry or stress about food shortages or costs. We could plate up for any and everyone who came to our house. My children grew up with extended family members from my family and my husband's family living with us over the years. My children see their cousins as siblings, they never questioned having so many people at the house. It was normal to them.

You're saying you never felt impacted by apartheid laws?

You see, back in my time...our priorities back then were different to today. We dealt with things differently. If my children were hungry I would cook them maize porridge with amasi and I would cook samp and beans for the adults. Everyone was well fed, no one was hungry. We solved our own problems and didn't look for outside help. Things like apartheid and oppression and whatever else was happening did not concern me. Worrying and stressing about things I have no control of, especially something that was so far removed from me that it did not affect my daily life or ability to take care of my children. I was concerned with what was happening in my house.

Apartheid did not affect you? It had no impact in your life?

I worked. I had a good job that allowed me to take care of my family. I would not have survived to this age if I was concerned with apartheid. I only worried about my family which made me care about my job. That is all.

Your memories of that time aren't painful?

You know when I think back to apartheid today...when I think back to when the white people were in charge I honestly think it was the better period of time compared to today. Today, people can kick your door in and do as they please. Back then we didn't have any of that, the law was strong. If someone was arrested, they were arrested...finished. People were actually scared of getting arrested back then, around the 1960s, because they knew that if they were arrested it was really serious. Crime was low, the law was strict and just everything was generally much tighter. You were scared to break the law back then, you knew you couldn't just do as you pleased. If my husband was away I was never scared that someone might break in because they know there's no man in the house. Or rape me. Or whatever unthinkable things that happen today.

(0:05:02.9) How did this change come about in society?

You see today? It's not like that anymore. People stopped caring once black people came into power. Especially us as black people. When the white people were in charge you knew what to expect. I believe that life is difficult today while it was just easier back then to be honest. When the white people were in charge, life was good and simple. There was law and order. We were strict as a society. Today? There's no strictness and yet we are supposedly free. This freedom that we wanted I just don't see.

Things changed for the worst for you post-1994?

Oh, my child, so many things went wrong ever since this democracy came. No...I... under Mandela or Mbeki or...you know long ago life wasn't a joke. If you committed a crime you were sent to hang. After apartheid Mandela abolished the death penalty, the argument being that the death penalty had directed at black people and that white people rarely did. The reason of course was that white people had good lawyers and could afford long court cases. White people were spared from the gallows while we didn't have money so if you were sentenced to death your sentence was carried out...1,2,3 finished. So, the death penalty was abolished because of its prevalence within the black community but I think that Mandela should have left it alone.

And keep the death penalty?

Yes.

Oh ok. How many children did you have?

I have five children.

Five? It that a small number or a big one? How big were families back then?

What do you mean?

For some Xhosa people big families were welcomed with over ten children in some cases. Did you want that many children? Or did you and your husband plan to limit your family size?

No, no. That's the one thing I can't lie to you about. I just had children...I never planned anything and never knew if the child I just gave birth to would be my last. I would always just be surprised when I found out when I pregnant. Even with my last child, the fifth one I have a feeling that had my husband not died I would have had another one definitely. But sadly, my husband died and shortly afterwards while still a baby my child born in 1991 also died.

Were children in a marriage important?

It was very important...very important.

Why?

Because we as Xhosa people believed that in marriage you needed to have children to make sure that your husband's family did not die off. For example, my child died but because I had other children the legacy and bloodline of my husband's family has been able to continue.

And that's important?

It's very important...at least it was to us at that time. That's what we believed in. It was fine if you...back then we didn't have things like contraceptives. If you wanted to family plan you didn't use contraceptives, you just made sure that you didn't sleep with a man.

Abstinence was the only form of contraceptive?

Yes.

And your husband would be fine with that?

Yes. You two get along, you are partners and you both know that you shouldn't sleep together because you'll end up pregnant. You're understand?

Oh ok. When did you learn or first hear about contraceptives?

My clinic introduced contraceptives in 1982.

Where?

Back in the Eastern Cape.

You heard about contraceptives for the first time at the clinic?

I heard talk about contraceptives and such at the clinic...even then...I got married in 1974 and I didn't have a child until 1978, I was very late. After 1978, I got pregnant quickly and had another one in 1979. I went back to the clinic when I was having my third child in 1982 and that's when the nurses told me to stop having children because I had just had one and my children were already close in age. I just told myself that I would stop doing what I was doing with my husband, and therefore chose not to get on contraceptives.

(0:10:14.0) You declined using contraceptives because you decided you would just stop sleeping with your husband?

Yes, but in 1984 when I had a child again I realized it that it would be best if I just used contraceptives. I did it after I had my baby.

Did you use the injection or...?

I used the injection.

Was the injection the popular choice? Could you choose with method of birth control to use?

You would be asked if you preferred the injection, the pill or the loop. It was to you.

What made you choose the injection?

The injection...I chose the injection because...well my husbands, as the head of the family did not like me using contraceptives and I just thought that the pill would end up being a problem. With the pill there were rules you had to follow, for example you had to take it at the same time every day. And it would mean I was rubbing what he did not like in his face. What was that going to do?

So, you were hiding the fact that you were using contraceptives?

Yes, I was hiding it...yeah.

Why was your husband against it?

As a married woman you have no right to prevent pregnancies.

Because your duty as a wife is what exactly?

As a wife you are supposed to have children...that's all.

And you can't...

My husband also subscribed to the belief that if you did those things...if you used contraceptives you probably were hiding a secret.

Like an affair?

Yes, because contraceptives were used to hide the consequences of stepping out in your marriage. Before, if you went outside of your marriage there would be proof and because of contraceptives husbands were unsure of what their wives were doing.

Did women publicly talk about using contraceptives or was it something one would keep to themselves?

You could go to the clinic to talk to the nurses, they'd explain everything to you and show you what was available then you'd decide for yourself about what you're going to do.

Would you discuss it with friends? Perhaps fellow married women?

Yes...you know we would talk about it and you would discover that...well it depended because some husbands supported their wives while others did not. Some women were against the use of contraceptives because they'd had a difficult time conceiving the child or children they already had. So as women we would talk about it in that sense, women would explain that they could afford to use contraceptives after the having a difficult time conceiving, they would rather take the risk of getting pregnant soon after having a baby.

In discussing contraceptives did the subject of oppression ever come up? Or was there any thinking about the white government using family planning programs as political weapons to slow down the black birth rate?

That never entered my mind because I was doing what I needed to do to cope with my family and have a break from having children.

Oh ok, you needed a break from having children? Did you not feel like you were then not fulfilling your duties as a wife?

You need to understand that...you have a brain, right? I'm talking about myself now...

Yes.

I had a child 1978 then another one in 1979. I knew it then that I needed a break, I was not willing to be constantly pregnant. In 1979...wait I had a child 1978 and another in 1979 so I knew that if I didn't take a break I would most likely be having another one in 1980. I was sure of that so I had to make the best decision for myself which would be the best decision for my family.

Despite the idea that your job as a wife was to have children?

I knew what my job was. I knew what was expected of me.

And yet you still...did you talk to anyone about any of this? About what you were thinking?

Not really, I mean I guess I might have had a few casual talks with other women. But it was just casual chatting.

Could you talk with your mother or mother-in-law for example?

No. You didn't talk about such things with our mothers. You also have to remember that they were a very traditional generation, you couldn't talk to them about such things.

Why couldn't you? Growing up, did you and your mother ever discuss...

I never did that.

Why?

I don't have an answer to that. If I had a boyfriend I kept that to myself. We didn't discuss things like that with our parents, I don't know why but we just didn't.

When do you then learn? When you get married? Or as a school girl?

Learn what exactly?

About your period and what it meant, how you could get pregnant or just about boyfriends in general.

You know, let me tell you a story I remember when we were little and we would play house or something like that. At some point in the game you would be expected to choose a 'husband' despite none of us really having boyfriends. And you couldn't ignore the question, you had to pick a boy that would be your 'husband' or 'boyfriend'. And I never knew what it all meant, that was my problem.

Yeah?

Because I was confused about what exactly we were supposed to be doing, a boy was picked for me and everyone started saying that I had a boyfriend.

And this whole time you were completely unaware of boys and dating?

You know, I just remember everyone saying that some boy was my boyfriend. I kept denying it and telling them to stop saying it. Pretty soon everyone was gossiping about me and my so-called boyfriend even though I was insisting that I didn't want or love him. I hadn't even started my periods when this started, I would hear some older girls talking about how you had to be careful and not get pregnant once you started your period. The boy who was supposedly my boyfriend asked me to date me, I said yes but the whole thing was still so very innocent. Back then we became boyfriend and girlfriend so we could buy each other sweets like toffees or fudge. It's funny when I think back now because when I really started dating I quickly realized that what I had been doing earlier with the sweets wasn't what I had been warned about. With my period, I remember being shocked when it happened and quite scared. I remembered hearing the older girls talking about it but I was so worried about how I was going to tell my mother, how was I going to explain what had happened.

There was no one to tell you that periods are natural? And that you hadn't done anything wrong?

I didn't know anything.

It was never discussed beforehand? That when you reach a certain age your body will start changing?

Oh ok, listen...I got my period and I was scared right? So, eventually I worked up the courage to go tell my mother. I told her that I didn't know what was happening but that I had seen you know what in my panties. And that's when she talked to me, explained that I needed to make sure I kept my underwear clean during that time of the month and that I wasn't allowed to play with boys anymore especially when I was actually on my period. You understand? She then prepared strips of cloth for me. And that was all.

So, she never told you...

She explained how I was to use the strips of cloth and told me that this meant I was grown up now. I was a young woman and that anything I did from then on had real life consequences and wasn't a game anymore. She also explained to me that I wasn't sick...I had thought I was sick but she told me I was fine. That all that had happened was that I had reached an age where my body was changing and I was becoming a woman. She repeated that I shouldn't play with boys especially when on my period because the boys might see. And your period was something you were meant to keep hidden. I think it was only three days later after having that conversation that I ...so my mom went to work and other children were playing outside. You understand that I had stayed home for the past few days and I was desperate to go out and play so I went. I wasn't even outside playing for long when I felt my strip of cloth fall out. I picked it up and quickly ran home and changed. I was still so anxious to go back out that I stuffed the soiled cloth under a bucket instead of washing it. The game we were playing was really hot and fun, I didn't want to miss out. So, I went back to play. We had a dog back then, Mbombela, he had a really strong sense of smell. Apparently, Mbombela sniffed out my dirty cloth and decided to take it. Just as my mom came home that evening from work Mbombela went to greet her, in his mouth my dirty cloth. My mom saw it and quickly grabbed it...she was so angry. I remember being so scared of my mother, I immediately went back to the house. The first thing she did was ask me what was happening. She asked if she hadn't been clear enough in explaining what was happening. She questioned why I was outside playing when I had been told not to go play. She also shouted at me for not washing the cloth, asking me why I had just carelessly thrown it away. I tried to defend myself saying I had hidden it but then she asked how the dog had got a hold of it. I told her I had hidden it under some buckets which did not make things better and I couldn't even explain why I had stuffed the cloth under a bucket because I had done it for a stupid reason. To go play...so I was stuck, I couldn't answer her. You understand?

Did you understand why you weren't allowed to go outside and play?

She told me that if I was outside playing with boys they would see what was happening, even by accident and no one was supposed to know when I was on my period. And if the boys noticed that I was on my period I would then be the subject of gossip.

Now as an adult looking back on that time in your life or the conversations your mother had with you, why do you think something like having your period was treated with so much respect and reverence? Why was it such a big event in a girl's life?

Well you're a woman now.

Yeah?

Back then for Xhosa people you were not allowed to even drink or eat *amasi* when you were on your period.

What the connection? Why can't you eat amasi on your period?

You have amasi after you're done with your period...well maybe wait for about five days after you finish then you can have amasi.

Rules like this are something you grew up with?

Yes. You couldn't go near the cows or calves. It would bring bad luck to your family.

What was the place of a girl in the home kwaXhosa?

As a girl child you are expected to keep your home clean. There can't be a girl or girls in the family and the house and yard aren't clean.

And your brothers?

Your brothers would take care of cattle, making your sure they were taken care of. At home there were four girls and we only had one brother. His job was taking care of the cattle. He was expected to make sure all the cows were accounted for and go look for one if it was lost, we as the girls couldn't be expected to do so because we were scared.

Ok.

Even when we had a traditional ceremony that required a cow or something he and other boys in the family would go get the cow. For example, for ceremonies like 'intonjana' for girls where a cow had to be sacrificed. The boys would go fetch the cow, not us girls.

Were you raised in preparation for marriage as a girl?

I would say yes...when we were growing up the goal was to make sure we were good. You had to be good and you had to carry yourself well so that a bachelor could see you. According to the beliefs back you needed to be seen as a good girl by potential husbands.

So, what was expected of you as a girl was for you to take care of yourself so that you could marry well? The cleaning and taking care of yourself was all for your husbands benefit?

There is no person who would want to marry of their daughter and send them to their new home knowing that they can't cook or wash dishes. That they can't do the laundry or anything at all really. The marriages of those types of girls would never last because they became burdens. As a wife you are not supposed to be a problem.

The husband couldn't do household chores? Was it a wife only job?

No... not exactly, cooking for the family was your duty as a wife. But this does not mean that my husband can't cook if I'm not there. He's allowed to cook. then when you get home you can check over it and make sure that he did alright. My husband would seek out my opinion because he knew it wasn't his role. So, he would cook but then I would take over when I got home because he didn't know what to do in the kitchen just like I wouldn't know what to do in the kraal. Talking care of the cattle and the kraal was a husband's department.

(0:26:06.8) Regarding children, you said earlier that it took you 7 years into your marriage before you had them Was that ever a problem?

You know, clearly in those 7 years the time for me to have a child hadn't come.

So, you were never treated badly because you weren't having children?

No.

Yeah?

Well, I won't know if they ever gossiped about me but to my face I never felt like I was treated badly. Everyone just seemed to understand that it just wasn't my time to have children yet.

Did people think like? That they would conceive when it was the right time?

Yes.

So, there was never any need to treat women who weren't getting pregnant badly?

Well...I can't really speak to that because it depended. One woman can get married, spend 4 or 5 years childless with no problems but in some other families, you'd only be married for a year and you'd be treated badly because you haven't had a child yet. So, you see, one doesn't really know until they're married. Families differ. Honestly, in my case no one could tell me to have a child because it wasn't my decision. A child is a gift from God, a gift you don't even know you'll be blessed with until they're there. No one knows if God will give you the gift of a child so for someone to harass you about getting pregnant or insult you about your infertility make no sense.

Was your thinking common?

No, no... there was none of that. If you weren't getting pregnant you would stay married but then your husband would be expected to go out and find what we called 'isithembhu' back then. If a wife wasn't having children, she would be sat down and elders would explain to her that she had been married for a while (kudala ulapha ungafumani umntwana) and hadn't conceived so your husband would take another wife. You won't be kicked out because you can't have a child though.

Oh so...but...

The main reason of you being there [in your marriage] was to have children. Your husband and his family wanted children, they needed children for their family to continue. And if you aren't having children they need to come up with a solution.

So kwaXhosa children are important?

Very much so. Children are really important.

Yeah?

They're very important. For example, if it's just you and your husband with no children...well there's something lonely about that.

Is having children still important today?

Today? Yoh...uh. I don't think it's as important.

Why?

Things are bad today. And having children is just...no.

What's changed?

The world is evil today. And there's a lot of hunger. We didn't starve back then? You had your garden and the fields to make sure your family was well fed. Today? For your children to eat you need to buy food. And what are you buying it with? We don't have money. Then what are you going to do? We live in a world where you need money to do anything, something we didn't need before. We never had to stress about food. We were well fed with good healthy food. You never really ran out of anything because there was always something in the garden.

Money is the biggest problem today? And the main reason against having children?

Yes.

What does being a mother mean to you?

I was so surprised when I had my first child because it took so long to get pregnant. Then I had my second child. At that point I had a girl and a boy which was quite nice. I had my two children, my son and daughter and I really enjoyed being a parent. What happened next was that I got pregnant again and had another girl. So, then I had two girls and one boy so I got pregnant again and had a boy again. So, it was then 2 boys and 2 girls. I was really happy about that, having 2 of each. I was honestly just happy to be a mom and happy about how it worked out.

Was having children a societal or cultural pressure? Especially perhaps having boy children?

No not really. You see I had my first child while being a believer...I prayed to God to have children so I was just grateful to him. It didn't matter what I wanted, I was just happy that God had blessed me with children, boys or girls.

What's the difference between believers and non-believers kwaXhosa?

Believers and non-believers are...well long ago with believers it was...actually I guess there was nothing really difficult with non-believers too. Both believers and non-believers did things the right way. For example, my family were non-believers. At home we practiced rituals, if a cow had to be sacrificed then that's what would happen. My family did things the right way according to the beliefs of kwaXhosa. I then married into a family that believes. Where they didn't have rituals or make traditional beer like they did at home.

Yeah? Was that a cultural shock to you?

Not really, at home ceremonies would be performed and animals would be sacrificed. Traditional beer would be made and all that but growing up I always went to church.

And your parents were fine with that?

Yes, they didn't mind despite being non-believers.

Was church something new? Or had there been churches around for a while?

Church is something that has been around for a long time, but obviously people who want to go to church would go. If you don't to go to church then you don't go. I just happened to marry into a very Christian family where you didn't really have a choice, no one could stay behind on Sunday. Every Sunday the house would be locked and the whole family was expected to go to church.

And you raised your children...how?

I raised all of them in the church.

You grew up in the Eastern Cape?

Yes.

What are the biggest differences you noticed between the Eastern Cape and the city, specifically Cape Town?

What I see now, compared to then...back then you...well today people go to church occasionally, every Sunday they get to decide because what is prioritized today is drinking and getting drunk. Alcohol seems to be the most important thing.

Is that a city problem?

Yes. Drinking and getting drunk is what is done in the city, there's nothing else to say. People here don't understand how to stop.

And in the rural areas?

There is order there. There is respect even if someone is getting drunk. In the rural areas, alcohol is rare unlike here in the city where alcohol seems to be available everywhere and there's constant parties for no reason even during the week.

Was it like that back when you were growing up and later having your children?

No, this type of behaviour did not happen. People would only drink during the weekend.

Even here in town?

I didn't grow up in city so I can't say for certain.

Oh...

My father who worked, he worked for the railway company and got paid on the 24th of each month. I remember he would buy himself a bottle of brown liquor every month and put it away. Then when he would come home or a friend would come visit you would see him take it out, they would drink a little then leave to go wherever something was happening to drink somewhere. His bottle would be at home in the cupboard, none of us kids ever touched it even though the key to the cupboard sat out in the open. My father and his friends would drink and have fun. But it was not a n everyday thing, it only happened on a Saturday or a Sunday.

So, for you the problem with society today is a lack of respect?

Oh...oh...my child. Respect is not just lost today but it has flown away like a butterfly.

Yeah...what changed? When you think about how you were raised and how you raised your children?

It's just different, not even my own children will ever turn out like me because of the times they were raised in. They won't have the same order I had and they aren't even scared to tell me that they think some of my beliefs are old-fashioned and how things are different today. I am MamNtande. My mother is Mampondo, uManyawuza. My father's mother is Mamlamba, you understand?

Ok...

My mother's mother is MamTshawe, you see how many people that is? My father's mother is Mamlambo while my mother's mother is MamTshawe. You see? All those people were my family and you would be allowed to date in that circle n matter how distant the relation is because you have the same clan name or you are related to that clan...I might not be uMamTshawe but that was still my family, same with my grandmother's family. We had that respect which doesn't exist today.

Is there no respect in general? Or no respect with black people and how Xhosa traditions have evolved?

Yhu! It's all gone. Even in the rural areas? Today, people just talk about their immediate families and ignore everything else. The unity and familial acknowledgement are gone, for example I have grandchildren whose mothers are clan name is MamNtande, what am I supposed to do with that? Back in the day this wouldn't have happened, there would have been a familial respect and acknowledgement. I respected all my family no matter how distant, we were all cousins in some way. But today that respect is finished, and when I try to speak about it I get told I'm creating drama...what is that?

So, the problem is what exactly?

It's this new generation, this educated generation. And honestly, it's just easier to then keep quiet because when you open your mouth you're told you're old. And that what you saying has no relevance anymore.

Yeah.

We had respect. It was so important to be respectful. Today? There's no respect for anyone or anything.

Has the place of a girl in the home changed?

I'm quite old now, I'm 64 and boys never saw the inside of my home. Even my husband who was a man never came to my house. Today, boyfriends just come into my house. My daughter's boyfriend can come into my house. My son's girlfriend also comes around. That sought of thing never used to happen back then. It just didn't happen. If you had a boyfriend you wanted to see you would have to get your bucket and go down to the river to collect water. That's when you would get a chance to see your boyfriend, at the river. And the whole time you were at the river you would be on the lookout in case any adults were around. You weren't just scared of your parents, we respected all adults. If you wanted to spend time with a boy you would go down by the river under the excuse of maybe doing the laundry, as girls we knew that the boys would come by pretending to look for cattle they'd lost. I remember even walking to the river with the intention of seeing your boyfriend and just passing by one of your neighbours, you'd immediately feel embarrassed and turn back because there was a level a respect. We respected all adults, not only our parents.

Was being respectful or at least appearing to be respectful important? Was the image of purity an important one for girls? Was there a pressure on girls to remain as flowers?

We were even scared to walk past the field where you'd met up with your boyfriend previously. Like, I avoided the field where I used to meet up with my boyfriend.

Why? What's going to happen?

I was just really embarrassed. Every time I walked past there I knew...what was I going there to do? It was just really embarrassing.

And once you're married, does that embarrassment go away?

So, when you've been chosen and you're married, there's no issues.

But could you walk past the field without feeling shame once you were married?

You know, when you're dating someone and meeting up with them in strange places you don't know that you're going to end up married to them. Let me use myself as an example, I was in a relationship with my husband. When we were still dating I never imagined that I would be his wife and he never said anything about marrying me either.

So how did you end up married?

He sent representatives from his family to my family and the elders from both families had a meeting.

He didn't say anything to you?

No. I was just taken (ndathwalwa qha).

And if you didn't want to be married?

It's not up you, who cares what you want? Your families aren't going to wait on you. You would just be taken, it doesn't matter what you want or you don't want it's not your decision. No one would trust you with that decision.

Seriously? You would just be married of just like that? Whether you wanted to or not?

Yes. And not only would you get married, it didn't matter whether you knew your husband or not. It was done, you were married and that was all. Whether you were dating someone or not, if a man came to ask for you and your parents agreed then you'd be taken. No one cared about you or what you wanted. You wouldn't just remain unmarried while there were men who wanted to marry you just because didn't want to get married.

Uh...wow.

Back then, it wasn't about marrying someone because you love them. You were lucky if the person you were dating also wanted to marry you or if you even knew the man who you were going to marry. Of course, when you're taken you're scared and crying because it's all so sudden and you don't know exactly what's going on.

So, no one talked to you? Not even your mother?

What was she going to say? It was none of my business.

But you were the one about to be married?

And what was I going to do with that information? It was none of my business. Why did I need to know?

(0:45:01.8) You're the one getting married.

No! No... ok, I'm the one that was getting married and so what? What I supposed to take charge just because I was the one getting married? What else? Was I supposed to decide how many lobola cows I was worth? And whatever else was discussed in negotiations? No, there was no such thing. I'm telling, I knew my husband and we were in a relationship but I never knew that I was going to get married until I was taken. I was taken, he never told me anything.

Does that still happen today?

No, I guess you'd get arrested.

Yeah, I'm pretty sure it's kidnapping.

You'd get arrested today. And it's rape too. You can't go around forcibly taking people. You try that and you'll be arrested, especially if you don't know them. Things have really changed. Back in my day, we didn't have that.

Was the process of ukuthwalwa good or bad?

It was very good because it was based on respect. If you were taken and married of to a family you would get to your new home and stay.

Stay how?

Once you spent the first night there you would have no choice. You couldn't decide to just leave. Where would you go? You don't have friends or anything. You have nothing. You slept at that house. Some women ran away the same day they were taken, in the midst of the busy of the day they would slip away and just run. In those cases when people talked about what happened they would

acknowledge that you ran away before you spent the night so you were still a 'girl'. But the moment you sleep there then...no, you staying there. You're no longer a girl. You're a married woman now.

Was there a big difference in being a girl and a married woman?

Between a married woman and...?

And a girl. Can girls and married women still be friends for example.

What are you going to talk about?

You were friends before marriage. You'll talk about the same things you talked about before I would guess.

Married women can advise girls on things like getting a job or how to save money once they do get the job. That's the only conversation I can think of between married women and girls. What else could you talk about? Beyond married women giving advise on how to get a job, there's nothing else. And to just emphasize that if you're working there must be a difference. You need to help out at home. You need to take care of yourself and look professional. Don't look like you're being given money, you need to look like you're working. That's the only conversation between married women and girls. I don't know what else.

Oh ok. I think we're done. Thank you so much. You've helped me a lot.

I have? But yeah, that's the only conversation that's really allowed between married women and girls.

Actually, on that, has there been a shift regarding the place of girls? Before girls were raised to get married versus now where girls are encouraged to get an education and work.

You see I have 2 daughters and 3 sons, getting married isn't really a priority for any of them. And it's not something I push. I want my children to work and to buy their own houses. To me it doesn't even matter if they have children outside of marriage, as long as they are able to take care of themselves and have their own house.

So, marriage isn't as important?

Getting married is no longer something I would consider important because men these days are abusive towards our daughters. I'll be sitting at home being all proud that my daughter is married meanwhile she's scared of her own shadow as her husband beats her. And all these other horrible things, the sanctity of marriage died with my generation. You know, in my time if your husband wronged you somehow you wouldn't even need to go back home to your family to report him, you could tell your mother-in-law because she was your mother. If it was something really bad and I felt the need to really go home, the same group of people who had originally come to ask for my hand would be sent to fix whatever the problem was. Today? There's none of that. I mean, men don't even come ask for your daughters' hand in marriage. You just see two people together telling and now asking you that they're getting married. You know when I got married, it was because of my father. He agreed to the marriage, he was uneducated but he knew what he was doing. You see?

Uh I think so...uhm so...

Do you hear me? But look at me? I'm still here. My father and father-in-law made the decision and I was married until my husband died. When my husband's family went to ask for my hand, the men talked and came to an agreement. It had nothing to do with me, they came to agreement by themselves and that was that. I remember very soon after I got married my husband's aunt made me mad, and I told myself I wasn't going to tell my husband or my mother-in-law instead I slipped away and went home. Right? I was so angry so I left. When I got home...the whole way home I was telling myself

that I had a family that cared about me so I didn't have to stay somewhere where I wasn't wanted which is how my husband's aunt made me feel. I told myself I was not going back to that house because my husband's aunt was mean to me. I remember I arrived home on a Saturday and my father wasn't there. My mother asked me what was wrong and I started to explain what had happened but she stopped. Telling me I shouldn't say anymore. Why? I was so confused. My father eventually came home but he was a little drunk, he was surprised to see and asked me why I was there. My mother told him that I was feeling sick which my father was surprised by but my mother assured him it wasn't anything serious.

She didn't want you tell him the real reason you'd come home?

She didn't want me to tell my father that I apparently abandoned my marriage because I had a fight with my husband's aunt. The next day, my father was sober and he called my aunt. He told her to go to the kraal to get a cow and prepare for some sort of ritual for me because remember my mother had said I wasn't feeling well. So, the ritual was done. My in-laws arrived the following Saturday because 'umakoti' had gone missing. When they arrived, they knew the real reason about why they had left. They went to talk to my father, almost apologetically which confused my father because he assumed responsibility for me being sick. I was then called; everyone was there from my father-in-law to my husband to his uncles and cousins. My father then in front of everyone told me that he wanted a long and healthy life for me, he wanted me to have a happy marriage because relationships between the two families had already been built. He told me that I had to stay in my marriage, stay with my husband's family, be happy and healthy and have no problems. He didn't even know what the problem was but it didn't really matter. Afterwards, my mother and I prepared tea for my in-laws, they were allowed to rest a bit because they'd come a long way. My in-laws had come with some alcohol as an apology. The men all drank and we all had a nice time; it was a Saturday and my father then asked my in-laws to let me stay until Wednesday because he wanted to get me a gift on the Monday. He asked them and they agreed, then they left. On the Monday my father was paid and on Tuesday we went to go buy me shoes, a jersey and a towel. Then I got back to my husband's family Wednesday evening, the men met and my father-in-law sternly told me that I was to never go back home for something inconsequential again. If I had a problem, my mother-in-law was my mother now and he was now my father too. He told me there was no need to run back home if I had a problem, although everything had gone well when they got to my family because clearly even my family realized that my problem was silly. He told me that from that day forward, if I was made to feel unwelcome, I should be strong and respond that I had married into the family, and I was now a part of it. I was chosen to be a part of the family and if my husband's aunts or sisters told me it wasn't my home; they could go find husbands like I had. I was told to never do what I had done. And I really listened to him that day. So, that's the time period we come from where marriage was taken seriously and there was a familial respect. Whenever my husband's sisters and aunts gave me problems, I would tell them to go get married and leave me alone. That's it.

And that worked?

I never had a problem again, even when someone would try to make me mad, I remembered my father-in-law telling me I was home too. That was family and I refused to be made to feel like I didn't belong. And if I really had a problem then I could go to my mother-in-law.

Was this an example of how important your place was in family?

Yes! I was the probably the most important, I belong there. And I'm still a part of the family today, there's nowhere else to go. I'll only leave by coffin.

You were important because the future of the family depended on you?

Yes. And if you're unhappy how are you going to have children? In everything, it was important to work hard to be happy. Simple as that.

Oh ok. Thank-you so much.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Personal

What is your full name?

Is that your maiden or married name?

What do you prefer people to call you?

Why do you prefer being called {x}?

How old are you?

Where and when were you born?

Are you married?

Do you have any kids?

Do you have any grandchildren?

Do you work?

What's your job?

How long have you worked?

Has it been the same job?

Do you enjoy your job?

Do you have a dream job?

What is your dream job?

Has your job ever impacted your health?

If yes, were you ever reimbursed for your health?

What makes you, you?

Khayelitsha/ Lwandle

How long have you lived in Khayelitsha?

What year did you get here?

Why did you move to Khayelitsha?

Do you think the township has developed?

Did you have your kids here (Khayelitsha)?

If yes, why?

If no, why?

Have you raised your children here in Khayelitsha?

Do they still live here?

If yes, is there a reason you think that they still live here?

Do you love this place?

How many of your friends from the beginning are still here?

What was the essence of the community in your opinion?

Do you think it's still the same or has it changed?

Death is inevitable, are you happy spending your last years here?

If yes, why?

If no, why?

Do you think of yourself as a community matriarch?

Is this community run by women?

Under Apartheid what was Khayelitsha like?

After Apartheid?

Do you think Khayelitsha has changed since 1994?

If yes, how?

If no, why do you think that?

Clinic

Do you see the same doctor at the clinic?

How long has he/she been your doctor?

Do you trust the doctor?

Do you trust the nurse?

Do you think your doctors and nurses care?

Do you like your doctors and nurses?

How often do you go to the clinic?

Why do you go to the clinic?

What time do you wake up to go to the clinic?

What time do you get home?

Do all the machines work when you're there?

How long do you stand in the queue at the clinic?

Have they ever closed while you were still waiting?

Have they, doctors and nurses, refused to treat you?

Have you ever witnessed anyone being refused treatment at the clinic?

If there is an emergency, do they prioritize the emergency?

Do you feel safe and comfortable at the clinic?

How does the staff talk to you?

Do they know you?

If I said you could go to any doctor in the world, in any hospital would you go?

Do you have a file at the clinic?

How big is it?

Have they ever lost your file?

Are you scared that they will lose it?

Have you ever been misdiagnosed or given the wrong medication?

Do they always have your medication?

Does your medication cost money or is it free?

Is there a separate line for medication?

How long is that line?

How many doctors and nurses do you think work at the clinic?

Is it the same doctors and nurses?

Do you they ever look tired to you?

Is the clinic open every day?

What are the hours that the clinic is open?

How many people do you think go to the clinic on a daily basis?

Do you think it's big enough to accommodate everyone?

Do you think its accommodates everyone who needs to be there?

Would you like a bigger clinic?

What's the clinic like? New Building? Old? Made out of stone?

Do you think it needs an upgrade?

In your opinion what is the standard of the clinic?

Do you think it could be improved?

Why do you think the standard is where it is?

Have you ever thought of a more efficient manner to run the clinic?

Law

Do you know you have the human right to health and access to health care?

Do you think you are being given your human right?

Do you feel like you can use it?

Have you ever been barred from accessing health care?

Do you think the government has done a good job of letting you know your rights?

Do you know who the current minister of health is?

Do you care?

If yes, why?

If no, why?

Do you know it's legal in South Africa to have an abortion?

Is having the right to abort a good?

Do you agree with the principle of abortion?

Have you ever had an abortion?

Do you know anyone who has ever had one?

Is there a social stigma to abortion?

What is the social stigma attached to abortion?

Do you think a woman should consult the father before she has an abortion?

Do you look at someone who has had an abortion differently?

Do you think hospital staff treats women coming in for abortions differently?

Are the women taken care of?

What does the community think about abortion?

Have you heard any gossip regarding abortion?

Do you think there is a disconnect between what the law says and what actually happens?

Do you trust the law?

How do you feel when trying to exercise your right to health care?

Do you feel like you have a rights?

Do you feel like you have the right to health care?

Do you feel as though the law has ever failed you, public health wise?

Public Health Ministry

Was there a big shift in 1994 within the clinics?

Or did things remain the same for you?

Did you feel like you had the right to health under apartheid?

What was the clinic like back then?

Has it improved?

Many freedoms came in 1994, did you feel them?

Was there a shift from Apartheid policy to democratic ANC policy?

Was the shift in just knowing that Apartheid was over or did you actually see change in the clinics?

Do changes in the law impact you in any way that you can see?

Abortion was illegal in Apartheid South Africa; did you know that?

Do you know of anyone who had an abortion back then?

Do you think abortion is viewed in the same way?

If it has changed how has the view changed?

If you could say one thing to the minister what would you say?

Do you feel as though the law takes care of you?

What law regarding the health of a woman would you like to see passed?

Have you ever been involved in a community project to try make a change to the clinic? Or something to that effect?

Do you believe the government listens to the people when making policies?

Appendix 3: Interview Release Forms



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Signed on: 12 / 04 / 2018

Signatures Removed

Interviewee signature: _____

In the presence of (Interviewer) _____

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Room 216 1st Floor Building
Tel: (021) 530 4738
Fax: (021) 650 3511

*"People in South Africa live, a dynamic, but often unrecorded, lives.
The Centre creates spaces for these stories to be heard, seen and remembered."*

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I ZINGISA Z. NAKANI (Interviewee) agree that:

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I Nomakhosazana, Sihle (Interviewee) agree that:

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I Nephtie Mthiyane (Interviewee) agree that:

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Note for money

Signed on: 17/05/2016

Signatures Removed

Interviewee signature: _____

In the presence of (Interviewer) Zola Maria

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Zola Lwidi (Interviewee) agree that:

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The use of the recording is subject to the following restrictions: (if any)

Not for Money

Signed on: 19 09 5-16

Interviewee signature: _____ Signatures Removed

In the presence of (Interviewer) Zola Nbinda

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I Gloria Nenehle Sishuba (Interviewee) agree that:

- Lynette Nompundiso Nefotype
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Signed on: 19 / 05 / 2016

Interviewee signature: _____

Signatures Removed

In the presence of (Interviewer) _____

Zola Manda

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INTERVIEW RELEASE FORM¹

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I Carlie Mfusi (Interviewee) agree that:

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The use of the recording is subject to the following restrictions: (if any)

Signed on: 10 / 04 / 2018

Interviewee signature: _____

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Cat Number:

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I NOMBENANI GLADYS HAWU (Interviewee) agree that:

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Signed on: 06 / 08 / 18

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Interviewee signature: _____

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INTERVIEW RELEASE FORM¹

Cat Number: _____

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I, Notiphio Caroline Magxaki (Interviewee) agree that:

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Signed on: 9 / 04 / 2018

Interviewee signature: _____

Signatures Removed

In the presence of (Interview _____

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I Nontobeko Mvezi (Interviewee) agree that:

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The use of the recording is subject to the following restrictions: (if any)

Signed on: 24 / 07 / 2018

Interviewee signature: X

Signatures Removed

In the presence of (Interviewer) _____

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Cat Number:

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I FAITH NISHINGA (Interviewee) agree that:

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NOT for money

Signed on: FAITH NISHINGA

Interviewee signature: 29 10 / 2018

Signatures Removed

In the presence of (Interviewer) _____

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I Nomkyiselo Mguzdo (Interviewee) agree that:

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Interviewee signature: _____

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Cat Number: _____

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I Nombuyiselo Mguzdo (Interviewee) agree that:

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Signed on: 29 / 01 / 2018

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Interviewee signature: _____

In the presence of (Interviewer) _____

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Appendix 4: Informant Biographies

1. **Thandie** was born in 1964 in Lusikisiki, Transkei. She spent her childhood and adolescent years in East London, then part of the Cape Province before moving to Cape Town in the mid-1980s while she was in her early twenties. She had three children between 1982 and 1993. Thandie used the pill and injection as her contraceptives of choice after having her first child in 1982 until finally deciding to get sterilized in the mid-1990s after having her third child.
2. **Sheila** was born in 1945 in Kwelerha, Ciskei. She spent her childhood in Tsholomnqa before moving to East London at age 19 in 1964. She eventually moved to Cape Town in 1983, stayed for a year and moved back to East London. Sheila permanently moved to Cape Town in 1992. She had four children between 1965 and 1974. Sheila used the Depo-Provera injection from 1969, after the birth of her third child, until 1973 in order to get pregnant with her fourth child. After the birth of her fourth child Sheila did not use contraceptives again because her marriage fell apart and she eventually divorced in 1988.
3. **Nokresmes** was born in 1953 in Cala, Transkei. At age 19 in 1972 she moved to Klerksdorp, a city in the former Cape Province. She then moved to Cape Town in 1996 when she was 43 in 1996. Nokresmes had three children between 1981 and 1990. Nokresmes first started using the injection in 1981 after giving birth, her birth control use was irregular as the nurse at her local clinic injected her regardless of whether she had asked for it or not.

4. **Vuyiswa** was born in 1942 in Queenstown. She first came to Cape Town in 1960 at age 18 to work. Vuyiswa had two children between 1966 and 1970. Vuyiswa did not use contraceptives, she explained that she only heard about contraceptives later in life.
5. **Ntombi** was born in 1940 in Lady Frere, Transkei. From 1965 when she was 25 years old Ntombi moved around various farms in the current day Eastern Cape, then a part of the Cape Province. She eventually settled in Burgersdorp in 1973 when she had her only child, a daughter. She first came to Cape Town in 1987 regularly for seasonal work on farms before permanently moving in 1994. Ntombi never used contraceptives and did not recall nurses ever mentioning them to her.
6. **Thandiwe** was born in 1937 in Kirkwood, Ciskei. She moved to Port Elizabeth in 1963 at the age of 26 and she moved to Cape Town in 1995 when she was 58 years old. Thandiwe had six children between 1965 and 1983. She started using contraceptives, specifically Depo-Provera because it stayed in one's system for three months, in 1975 after her fifth child as that was the first pregnancy, she to the clinic for care. Thandiwe used contraceptives until 1981 and had her last child in 1983 at 46 years old.
7. **Nomangesi** was born in 1964 in Dikeni, Ciskei. She first moved to East London in 1981 at 17 years old before moving to Cape Town in 1994 when she was 30 years old. Nomangesi had three children between 1979 and 2002. Nomangesi was given the injection after she gave birth in 1979, she recalled that she was told it was protocol by hospital staff. She stated she never went back because she chose to be celibate until

her son was a teenager as her mother told Nomangesi that he would die if she interacted with boys again.

8. **Zingisa** was born in 1948 in Lady Frere, Transkei. She moved to Pretoria, then a part of the Transvaal, in 1969 when she was 21 years old for nursing school. She moved to Cape Town in 2012 at 64 years old. In the intermittent years she also lived in Kuruman, Volksrust and Port Alfred, living in both the former Transvaal and Cape Provinces. Zingisa had two children between 1975 and 1986. Zingisa first knew about contraceptives as a result of her nursing career in the early 1970s. She had an intrauterine device, the loop, inserted in 1974 but had it removed almost immediately due to excessive bleeding. She then started using the pill but would forget to take it so she ultimately decided to not use contraceptives.
9. **Nomakosazana** was born in 1944 in Tsomo, Transkei. Nomakosazana first moved to Cape Town in 1958 when she was 14 years old for a year before she returned to Tsomo. She then came back to Cape Town to live permanently in 1970 when she was 26 years old. Nomakosazana had three children between 1971 and 1974. She started using contraceptives in 1972, after having her second child. She first used the pill and then switched over to the injection when she realized the pill was incompatible with her body.
10. **Nozipiwo** was born in 1948 in Corhane Village in the Transkei. Nozipiwo moved to Cape Town in 1972 when she was 28 years old. She had three children between 1971 and 1989. Nozipiwo started using the Depo-Provera injection in 1974 after having her second child. She used contraceptives for approximately the next ten years, stopping

when she felt old though she ultimately ended up having her last child in 1989 at 45 years old.

11. **Ida** was born in 1938 in Nonyikila Village in the Transkei. Ida first moved to Cape Town in the early 1960s when she was approximately 27 years old to live with her husband though she would make regular trips back to the Eastern Cape in the beginning before settling in Cape Town more permanently. Between 1958 and 1973 had four children that survived into adulthood, from 1956 she had a few miscarriages and children dying in their infancy. Ida had an intrauterine device, the loop, inserted in 1965 after she gave birth to her second living child. Despite having the loop inserted Ida did get pregnant in 1969.

12. **MaDlamini** was born in 1958 in Nqamakwe, Transkei. She moved to Cape Town after 1994 while in her mid-thirties, having moved to Stutterheim in 1990 at 32 years old. MaDlamini had five children between 1976 and 1994. She never used contraceptives, explaining that the first time she even ever went to a clinic was when she was pregnant with her last child in 1994.

13. **Nomhle** was born in 1942 in Kamastone Village, in the outskirts of Queenstown which was a part of the Cape Province. Nomhle spent a majority of her life in Queenstown but would often visit her husband in Port Elizabeth in the 1980s while she was in her thirties and in the 1990s when she was in her late forties, she began to live part-time in Cape Town with her children. Nomhle had seven children between 1966 and 1977. Nomhle used contraceptives briefly in 1977 when she was given the

injection after giving birth and was told to return three months later but did not due to her husband forbidding contraceptive use.

14. **Nomzana** was born in 1940 in Mount Fletcher, Transkei. Nomzana started coming to Cape Town in 1967 to visit her husband when she was 27 years old. The duration of her visits would vary from a few months to a year depending on the political situation and police presence in hostels. Nomzana officially moved to Cape Town to stay permanently after the death of her husband in 2013. She had eight children between 1960 and 1984. Nomzana first heard about contraceptives in Cape Town in the late 1970s but did not use them. When she had her last child in 1984, she considered using them but ultimately decided against it as she felt at 44 years old, she was too old.

15. **Ntombiyenani** was born in 1965 in Mqaba, near Debe Village in the Ciskei. She first moved to Port Elizabeth in 1979 but ultimately went back to the rural areas within a year. She then moved to Cape Town in 1989 when she was 24 years old. Ntombiyenani had two children between 1980 and 1991. She used contraceptives, specifically the Depo-Provera and Noristerat injections, for approximately ten years from 1980. She admitted that in those ten years contraceptive use was sporadic sometimes because she also practised abstinence.

16. **Nozipho** was born in 1956 in Mqaba, near Debe Village in the Ciskei. Nozipho moved to Port Elizabeth in 1969 when she was 13 years old and then she moved to Cape Town in 1984 at 28 years old. Nozipho had six children between 1971 and 1991. Nozipho started using contraceptives in the 1970s but was not consistent. She

started with the pill but ultimately preferred the injection switching to it as her contraceptive method of choice.

17. **Nontobeko** was born in 1950 in Mount Fletcher, Transkei. Nontobeko moved to Cape Town in the 1980s while in her early thirties. Nontobeko had multiple miscarriages throughout her marriage, she was even taken to a traditional healer by her in-laws but ultimately never had any children. She knew of contraceptives but never used them.

18. **Faith** was born in 1947 in Kensington, Cape Town but was raised in Tsomo, Transkei. She moved to Cape Town in 1975 when she was 28 years old. Faith had a miscarriage in 1964 and eventually had one child born in 1981. Faith started using the injection as her chosen contraceptive in the 1970s, had a child in 1981 and went back on the injection until deciding to get sterilized while in her forties.

19. **Rebecca** was born in 1948 in Tsholomnqa in the Ciskei. Rebecca regularly visited her brothers and eventually her husband in Cape Town from the 1960s onwards. She moved to Cape Town in the 1990s while in her forties. Rebecca had eight children between 1968 and 1977. Rebecca never used contraceptives and only heard about them when in Cape Town in the 1980s, stating that there was limited to no information regarding them in her village.

20. **Nomawethu** was born in 1954 in King William's Town in the Cape Province. Nomawethu moved to Cape Town in 1994 when she was 40 years old. She had five children between 1978 and 1991. Nomawethu started using the injection as her

chosen birth control method in 1984 after having her fourth child, she used for approximately five years before stopping because she felt ready to have another child.

Appendix 5: Glossary

Abantu abaBomvu: Pagan Xhosa who often wore red ochre hence being referred to as ‘Red Xhosa’

Umntu oBomvu (*singular*)

Ububomvu: the act or culture of ‘red’ people

AmaQhaba (*synonym*): illiterate and uneducated people

Amaqgoboka: Xhosa people who were westernized

abantu basesikolweni (*synonym*): School Xhosa

abantu abafundileyo (*synonym*): Educated Xhosa

Ukuzala ukuzelula amadolo: To have children is to extend oneself

Umkhonto WeSizwe: The armed wing of the African National Congress

Lobola: A bridal price that is traditionally paid with cattle from the groom’s family to the bride’s family

Ukuthwalwa: To be carried off in an abduction and married

Ukuthwala: To be carried off during an abduction and married off

Ukurhuqwa (*synonym*): To be dragged during an abduction to be married off

Ukutsalwa (*synonym*): To be pulled during an abduction to be married off

Ukulalwa: Custom of having sex with a male family member of one’s in-laws, typically brother-in-law or father-in-law, in order to have children if one’s husband cannot impregnate them

Ukungenwa: Custom of a widowed wife being given to her brother-in-law or any males within her deceased husband's immediate family

Umakoti: A new wife

Umtshekazi: a traditional bride

Umfazi: A wife

Ukutonjiswa: A ritual performed during the childhood years of girls meant to open up her uterus.

Rondavels: Round or oval shaped houses in rural areas

Intombi yityatyambho yekhaya: A girl is the flower of the home

Abantu endihleli pakhathi kwabo: People I live amongst

Amasi: Sour milk

Selwa: Calabash for sour milk

Amarhewu: Brewed maize porridge

Ukumetsha: Limited form of sex, avoids penetration

Hlobonga: Zulu translation for *ukumetsha*

Unomgcana: A married man or a man who has impregnated a girl and is therefore off limits for *intombi*

Intombi: A girl child

Uqgaqgadekile: A person with no manners

Inyumba: Derogatory term for married women who cannot have children

Idlolo (*synonym*)

inkabi yenkomo: Ox

Mayikutshwe lankabi isedlini: Get that ox out of the house

Ingalityalwa lankabi isedlini: Do not forget about the ox in the house

Amabhulu: Afrikaans people

Abelungu bazobulala inzala yethu: White people have come to kill the children of the Xhosa Nation

Umtana ozalelwe ekhaya: A child born to an unmarried girl

AmaGcina: An ethnic group within the Xhosa Nation, typically found in the villages, settlements and towns such as Lady Frere and Engcobo in the present-day Eastern Cape

AmaFengu: An ethnic group within the Xhosa Nation, typically found in the southwestern portion of the former Transkei in the present-day Eastern Cape

EmaMfengweni: The land of the AmaFengu people in the southwestern portion of the former Transkei, formally called Fingoland

AmaGqunukhwebe: An ethnic group with the Xhosa Nation, their territory is historically recognized as West of the Buffalo River in the Eastern Cape

AmaMpondo: An ethnic group within the Xhosa Nation, their traditional homeland was the former Transkei region

Pondoland: A natural region on the coastal belt of the present-day Eastern Cape

AmaGcaleka: An ethnic group within the Xhosa Nation which is the senior royal house

Gcalekaland: The home of the Gcaleka people, in the former Transkei region around the towns of Kentani and Willowvale

Umqombothi: A traditional Xhosa beer made from maize meal or crushed corn with sorghum malt

Ama-vrouvrou: Women in the community that helped pregnant women deliver their children

Iyeza lesiXhosa: African medicine

Izibonda: Headmen or community leaders in township or rural areas

Ukuqekwezwa ibele: The breaking of the breast through getting pregnant while still *intombi*

Uwiswa ibele (*synonym*): The fall of the breast through premarital pregnancy