Mobilising restless radicals: the #AmINext movement and the formation of feminist digital counterpublics against gender-based violence and femicide in South Africa

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements....3
Abstract....4
1. Introduction....5
1.1. Background....5
1.2. Literature Review....6
1.3. Research Aims....7
1.4. Conceptual Framework....8
1.5. Methodology....9
1.6. Ethical Considerations....10
1.7. Limitations....12
2. Mobilising Feminist Rage Against GBV and Femicide in #AmINext....13
2.1. Introduction....13
2.2. 'To see is to know': Constructing Women Against the Coloniality of Gender in South Africa....14
2.3. Raging Against Women's Bodies as Property....17
2.4. Reframing Motherhood: Alternative Women's Rage Against Gendered Violence....21
2.5. Reclaiming Women's Rage: Feminist Rage and Contemporary Movements Against GBV and Femicide....26
2.6. Raging on the Margins: When Women Are Not Mourned....31
2.7. Conclusion....35
3. Negotiating Grievability and Recognising Queer Lives in #AmINext....38
3.1. Introduction....38
3.2. The Making of Ungrievable Identities in South Africa....38
3.3. Queer Resistance in South Africa and Struggles for Grievability....44
3.4. Contemporary Queer Resistance to GBV....49
3.5. The Commodification of Queer Bodies – The Narrative of Hate Crimes....54
3.6. Conclusion....58
4. Conclusion....60
Reference List....64

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ABSTRACT

The #AmINext movement in response to the sexual assault and murder of Uyinene Mrwetyana in 2019 reignited the public discourse of gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide in South Africa. The prevalent research on feminist hashtag activism has made critical links between the use of social media and the platforming of women's rage as a form of mobilising protests against GBV and femicide. However, less analysis has focused on the political significance of affects such as rage within feminist hashtag activism against GBV and femicide in South Africa. This research undertakes a literature review of feminist hashtag activism across the world to situate this form of mobilising in global feminist debates connected to how marginalised genders experience patriarchy differently in diverse contexts. A thematic analysis of 1,600 tweets is employed to investigate how affects form these movements through activists' responses to #AmINext. It uses theories of feminist digital counterpublics to show that digital responses to GBV and femicide may be new, but they are connected to histories of women's resistance. This study argues that #AmINext mobilises rage and grievability to contest the assumptions of how GBV and femicide operate within the coloniality of gender. It found that rage and grievability circulated by activists in #AmINext work to counter hegemonic discourses that render GBV and femicide as extraordinary, reflecting how stories of injustice are bound with emotions that make individuals act politically in ways they would not otherwise.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

The #AmINext movement in South Africa started in reaction to the sexual assault and murder of 19-year-old Uyinene Mrwetyana. The first-year University of Cape Town student went missing on 24 August 2019 after she was attacked fetching a package at a Post Office in Claremont by employee Luyanda Botha, who later discarded her body in Lingelethu West, Khayelitsha (Petersen, 2019). An outpouring of devastation and grief triggered several protests using the slogan. These culminated in a mass march by demonstrators to Parliament in Cape Town on September 5 2019, demanding accountability for gender-based violence and femicide (Payne, 2019).

Over the last decade, South Africa has seen a wave of hashtag activism against prevalent rates of gender-based violence and femicide. Resistance against GBV and femicide in South Africa is nothing new. Still, the expansion of digital and social media that connect people and offer ways of organising that did not exist has created a space for women and marginalised genders to forefront issues traditionally sidelined in mainstream media (Maluleke & Moyer, 2020: 874). Feminist hashtag movements, including #RapeAtAzania in 2015 and #RUReferenceList and #RememberKhwezi in 2016, #MenAreTrash in 2017 and #TotalShutdown in 2018, demonstrate that activists are finding alternative ways of organising against enduring lived experiences of gendered violence. What characterised these movements were the ways that activists centred their rage, pain and grief to confront the silencing of GBV and femicide in the public discourse.

Analysis of feminist hashtag activism has begun to identify discourses that work against the boundaries of gendered norms within these movements. Yet, the dominant focus on feminist hashtag activism tends to universalise discourses against GBV by making assumptions that all women experience gendered oppression in the same way despite significant differences. This research investigates how emotions are agitated, mediated and deployed by activists in #AmINext to show that even though marginalised genders are connected by global systems

of patriarchy, performances of emotive intensities against these systems are articulated differently in local contexts.

Furthermore, this research is interested in the affective strategies employed by activists within hashtag feminist movements that create the conditions for spaces that allow individuals to share stories on GBV and femicide that are traditionally marginalised in the public sphere and what they reveal about how feminist activists in South Africa contextualise their rage against GBV and femicide.

1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on hashtag activism has tended to focus on digital protests as supposedly transient and contained as 'viral' moments that quickly enter the public discourse but fade just as rapidly with limited impact beyond their initial visibility (Banet-Weiser, 2018 cited in Clark-Parsons, 2019: 2; Dean, 2009 cited in Chen, Pain & Barner, 2018). Similar critiques of feminist hashtag activism have been raised, with some authors arguing that the fleeting nature of online protests can over-simplify, distort or reduce the complexity of these issues to their visibility on social media without addressing the root causes of gendered violence by creating the illusion of solidarity (Dixon, 2014; Khoja-Moojli, 2015; Loken 2014: 1101 cited in Berents, 2016: 2). However, feminist hashtags that address the intersectionality of race, class, gender and location within movements challenge the assumptions of these movements being ephemeral and reduced to their visibility alone. Hashtags such as #iamfeminist in South Korea, #BeingFemaleinNigeria in Nigeria, and #JusticeForSharon in Kenya reveal that movements in these contexts problematise a homogenous view of feminist organising that extends past viral moments and that is connected to the political histories of these contexts (Dosekun, 2022: 2; Kim, 2017: 805; Okech, 2021: 1020). These hashtag movements in postcolonial societies simultaneously demonstrate that feminist hashtag activism surfaces enduring debates about the hegemony of Western feminist traditions against ways of organising extending past the conceptual limitations of protests against rape culture and patriarchy conceived in the West.

Feminist hashtag activism in South Africa is no different. #RhodesWar, #RUReferenceList, #MenAreTrash and the other digital mobilisations of activists against gendered violence are linked to an extensive history of women's movements. Women's movements in South Africa were traditionally entangled with histories of colonialism, slavery and apartheid. Women's

role in anti-apartheid movements was to mobilise grassroots anti-pass law campaigns, anti-brewing law campaigns, and worker's rights (Hassim, 2006: 47; Walker, 1995: 433). However, the historical silencing of women's rage against gendered violence was subsumed into the rage against racial injustice for women's movement within the national liberation struggle. This has situated feminist hashtag activism in South Africa as a way of platforming outrage that challenges the assumption that gendered violence is unrelated to the political context in which it takes place.

How rage shows up in these movements is therefore attentive to contexts of patriarchy, and scholars have argued it is shared emotive intensities produced by different conditions of injustice that push against dominant publics (Dixon, 2014; Khoja-Moolji, 2015; Hussen, 2021; Okech, 2021). Amanda Gouws (2018) situates the #EndRapeCulture protests as resistance against a historical colonial gaze that positions Black South African women's bodies as commodities that renders them sexual subjects by engaging in 'naked' protests as forms of defiance against restrictive gender roles. Awino Okech (2021) examines #JusticeForSharon in Kenya and #MenAreTrash and #Totalshutdown in South Africa to demonstrate how activists use rage to counter hegemonic discourses on GBV and femicide. Mbali Mazibuko (2018) examines fury in #RuReferenceList and loss in #RememberKhwezi and how these affects are defining features of recent protests against sexual violence in South Africa. What connects these analyses is a thematic understanding of what activists are doing when they express emotions against colonial conceptions of patriarchy that work to construct women as 'Other' that allows for the normalisation of gendered violence.

This research contributes to the literature that views feminist hashtag activism as challenging gendered violence by circulating affects including but not limited to rage, pain, fear and anxiety that form counterpublics by displaying performances of emotions that go against social and gendered norms.

1.3. RESEARCH AIMS

This study aims to explore how emotions produced by gendered injustice are integral to how feminist hashtags are built and mobilised in South Africa by asking what these emotions circulated in feminist hashtags reveal about how digital counterpublics are formed in South Africa. It investigates what emotions do within protests and how they are intertwined with

postcolonial conceptions of gendered violence. It examines the affective responses within the #AmINext movement and how they are articulated differently by diverse marginalised genders to understand the relationship between why activists express themselves in this way and how counter-discourses about gendered violence are constructed.

I attempt to locate feminist hashtag activism against gender-based violence within broader discourses of nationalism and citizenship in South Africa as a potential for a decolonial reading of #AmINext. It aims to contribute to an alternative understanding of feminist hashtag activism as a form of participation that subverts the conception of citizenship as purely a legislative relationship to the state (Gouws, 1999: 54; Stephens & Boonzaier, 2020).

1.4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Significant scholars in a range of research areas have developed and contributed to a unique analytical framework from which to critically engage with and examine the intersections between counterpublics and the emergence and rise of social media as one of the ways people on the margins organise (Dahlgren, 2005; Hill, 2018: 287; Hussen, 2021; Powell, 2015: 580 cited in Gouws, 2018: 7). Marc Lamont Hill's (2018: 287) definition of digital counterpublics are spaces of mediated connectivity where individuals "resist hegemonic power, contest majoritarian narratives, engage in critical dialogues, or negotiate oppositional identities" through building networked communities. Others have conceptualised digital counterpublics as unique mediums for channelling feminist subjectivities contained and distributed through hashtags that contest established gendered and cultural norms and build online communities containing oppositional knowledge that destabilises power (Powell, 2015: 580 cited in Gouws, 2018: 7; Thorsen & Sreedharan, 2019: 5). Expanding on Hill's theorisation of digital counterpublics and the ways feminist scholars have approached the problem of countering generalisations about how gendered oppression operates for different women, I approached this studying using feminist digital counterpublics as defined by Okech (2021: 1016) as a conceptual lens. Feminist digital counterpublics are described as online communities that mobilise against GBV and femicide by circulating counter-hegemonic discourses that challenge its justification (Okech, 2021: 1016). Okech (2021: 1017) cites two mechanisms of movement-building within feminist digital counterpublics: the encouragement of public deliberation and shaping public opinion through a sustained interest

in gendered violence as a social issue and the forming of solidarity networks with feminist movements across the world that are connected by these struggles. Movement-building in feminist digital counterpublics also holds the state accountable and calls attention to its role in maintaining conventional gender norms. This model is relevant for the aims of this research because it incorporates theories of affect that are important for the ways that #AmINext, as a movement in a society where publics have been complicated by colonialism, produces diverse standpoints in public spheres where perspectives are contested and remade.

Discourses that counter gendered violence are charged with emotions that subvert power, challenge accepted norms, and reveal something new about feminist hashtag organising when interpreted as spaces of subaltern knowledge for marginalised genders. This conceptual framework of feminist digital counterpublics allows for investigating how rage and grief against gendered violence counter hegemonic discourses that seek to sensationalise and trivialise GBV and femicide and what these emotions can tell us about how feminist movements are built in these contexts.

1.5. METHODOLOGY

This study gathered 1,600 tweets between 2019 and 2022 using the Web Data Research Assistant tool to scrap data from Twitter under #AmINext. This was to capture narratives that would otherwise be excluded by Twitter's algorithm bias when using the 'top' search results. It employed a qualitative research design to map interactions on the social media platform to examine how affects emerge (Creswell, 2013). I used a qualitative analysis because this research is interested in activists' responses, reactions and expressions through the conceptual lens of how discourses and affects circulate in feminist digital counterpublics through these Tweets instead of through numerical data as is the case with quantitative research. I selected Twitter as the base of this inquiry because of how it is distinguished from the other dominant social media platforms that are also notable for being used as movement-building platforms, notably Facebook or Instagram. In contrast to Facebook and Instagram, Twitter comprises large communities that usually have no personal or previous connection but mobilise movements through shared social objectives as a basis for organising. Ideas on Twitter are presented primarily as written, 280 characters (at the time of this study), as opposed to the dominant video and imagine-based nature of other social media platforms.

The rationale for following feminist movements generated by hashtags as a research objective is that conversations under hashtags are dispersed across time and space but are systematically organised and coordinated in ways that can be tracked and critically analysed within research. This makes hashtags relevant for observing the flow of these narratives, locating them in broader concepts, and selecting relevant information that speaks back to the discursive power of hashtags and the feminist digital counterpublics built from these categories of analysis (Bruns & Burgess, 2015: 14).

This research follows a thematic analysis of these tweets that were coded using the qualitative software, Nvivo. A thematic study systematically examines texts and other forms of mediated communication to identify patterns, assess similarities, evaluate differences and draw connections between diverse ideas in large bodies of data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021). This an appropriate method for research on feminist hashtag activism as it allows for collating and interpreting tweets according to emerging themes from diverse interactions that acknowledges the multiplicity of contradictions, constraints, and opportunities that arise from different standpoints coexisting simultaneously, emphasising the experiences, narratives and affects of activists who navigate digital spaces. For this study, coding was used through an inductive approach, referring to the research method of rigorously evaluating the data to generate theories, concepts, and a framework to build a foundation for interpretation (Thomas, 2006: 238). Coding involves the repetitive process of identifying recurring words, feelings, ideas, and messages from the texts and methodically ordering them into categories and is suitable for this research because hashtags themselves make use of repeated narratives that distinguishes movements from each other and accounts for the heterogeneity of responses within these repeated messages. I then interpreted these recurring ideas and affects, for example, ‘solidarity’ as a category. I repeated this coding process until ‘rage’ and ‘grievability’ emerged as the dominant categories extracted from the initial interpretations of codes.

1.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Previous research on feminist hashtag activism has raised ethical considerations connected to the safety, privacy and agency of activists who contribute to social media platforms as public mediums (Chen, Pain & Barner, 2018: 198; Dixon, 2014; Ganzer, 2014; Nakamura,

2015: 106). Activists who contribute to movements online are subject to threats, 'trolling', doxing and other coordinated attacks from anti-feminist, misogynistic and fundamentalist groups and individuals in retaliation for speaking out about gendered violence. The final research excluded user names, profile pictures and identifiable markers to protect users' identities and personal information. However, the anonymity of activists in this research does not render their ideas nor affects invisible but offers another perspective from which to view this research choice.

There is a contestation regarding what is considered public and private on social media for researchers of hashtag activism (Boyd & Crawford, 2012 cited in Nau et al., 2022: 6). Scholars including Tsay-Vogel et al. (2018), argue that users on social media platforms expect a degree of privacy even when they publish content on a public forum. The expectation of privacy and what distinguishes the public and private in hashtag activism is predicated on the context. Users that have locked their Twitter accounts through their privacy settings to control who follows their profiles and the permissions associated with who is allowed to view their content are considered private. In the case of public profiles on Twitter, it is reasonable to assume in the context of unlocked/open Twitter accounts where content creators contribute and publish their opinions on public hashtags on the site have a shared understanding that these narratives will travel between a range of internet actors on social media. Furthermore, the sharing or distribution of this material by the public aligns with Twitter's privacy policy and terms of use (Adrian et al., 2019 cited in Cilliers & Viljoen, 2021: 4; Social Data Science Lab, 2016 cited in Nau et al., 2022: 6).

Within this research, the perspective of tweets is that they are open-source cultural artefacts that are potential sites of feminist critique and evaluation because of what they communicate about power. This follows the logic of Moreno et al. (2013) that informed consent is complicated in internet-based research because of the number of participants and large data sets that accompany using web scrapping tools. Therefore, the category of analysis is the content and documentation of the dialogues within #AmINext to avoid singling out individuals and potentially exposing activists to harm. This reinforces ethical considerations for feminist researchers who study hashtag movements because the nature of these movements means countless activists contributed to the hashtag in some way without an identifiable leader or distinguished contributors. To mitigate replicating erasure within feminist movements that

individualise gendered violence, this research cited feminist activists when referring to media reports on feminist movements or activists' contributions as activists/scholars but otherwise attempts to avoid positioning the reactions within these movements as individualised contributions as an ethical consideration.

1.7. LIMITATIONS

This research primarily engaged with online texts and desk research to make empirical claims about how activists were affected by gendered violence, which affected others to mobilise against gender-based violence and the discourses that normalise it. It was conducted at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic with restrictions on movement and in-person interaction. A potential limitation because of the Covid-19 lockdown is that primary data from activists in the form of in-depth interviews or action-participatory methods to gain insight into how they interpret their reactions within the movement. However, research on digital cultures actively subverts what it means to do research. The Covid-19 pandemic magnified the research aims within this study to challenge what is considered immersion in contexts that virtually have no bounds, highlighting an essential aspect of this study that relates online contexts to the offline environments they take place in and not as separable.

Another potential limitation was employing a mono-method for this study instead of combining a mixed-method qualitative approach, including surveys and digital ethnography as evidence approaches. This approach was used to advocate for scholarship that takes feminist hashtag activism seriously, even if all these movements are not explicitly linked to discernable 'offline' protests, to validate that online texts do not originate or end within online counterpublics. Though the demonstrations cited in this research do have corresponding offline movements, choosing a thematic analysis over other research methods aligns with the interpretation of affects agitated within that #AmINext of not only why feminist activists generate hashtags and build movements from them but the messages, discourses, and strategies embedded within them.

2. MOBILISING FEMINIST RAGE AGAINST GBV AND FEMICIDE IN #AMINEXT

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The devastation from Uyinene Mrwetyana's sexual assault and murder on 24 August 2019 triggered a set of responses on social media. These collective responses, far from neutral or individualised, built the foundation for the movement that mobilised individuals to protest under the #AmINext slogan. Affects circulated in #AmINext as a reaction to Uyinene's story facilitated marches at select university campuses and public spaces in the country, where activists articulated a refusal to be complacent about the precarity and expendability of women's lives in South Africa who are kidnapped, sexually assaulted and murdered.

A significant theme that emerges from the tweets under #AmINext is the use of feminist rage to coordinate and organise protest action and build counternarratives to gender-based violence, femicide and the discourses that enable it. Rage as a discursive framework and affective response to dismantle the dominant assumptions and rhetoric of gendered violence in the public sphere is a distinguishing feature in contemporary feminist movements within South Africa (Gouws, 2018: 5; Gqola, 2021: 112; Ndlovu, 2017; Mathebula, 2022:11; Mazibuko, 2018). As Judith Butler (2009a: 39) argues, "Whether we are speaking about open grief or outrage, we are talking about affective responses that are highly regulated by regimes of power and sometimes subject to explicit censorship", and the networked outrage expressed by activists also labours against the prejudices and biases that seek to distort, dismiss and repress feminist rage against gender-based violence under the trope of irrational 'angry women' in the public sphere.

Alongside #RememberKhwezi, #TotalShutdown and #RhodesWar as a few of the prominent examples of digital protests that ran parallel to offline movements against rape culture and femicide, #AmINext channels feminist rage through conversations embedded in Twitter as a resource to disrupt patriarchy as an accepted mode of citizenship that enables gender-based violence to flourish with impunity.

2.2. 'TO SEE IS TO KNOW': CONSTRUCTING WOMEN AGAINST THE COLONIALITY OF GENDER IN SOUTH AFRICA

Tweets by activists in response to Uyinene's sexual assault and murder circulated feminist rage as a subversion of the socially reinforced expectations of women across race, ethnicity, sexuality and location to tolerate a subordinate position in the public and private sphere that manifests as gendered violence. In other words, feminist rage in #AmINext speaks back to and pushes against a historical and contextual way of 'knowing your place' as citizens who are raced, gendered and classed in ways that reinforce constructed hierarchies of difference and marginalisation.

> At this point, what's worse? Being found drugged and beaten and half alive? Or dead? Because none of these women will ever be the same again. And to rebuild a safe space for yourself in a world that doesn't give a damn about your safety is another type of hell #aminext (September 15, 2019).
>
> A reminder that South African women can't even go to the post office without being at risk of being brutally murdered. This country is hell for women (August 24, 2021).
>
> Ah ,our country. It gets worse everyday , no one is doing a thing to change it. There's nowhere safe for women. #AmInext (October 21, 2021).

The above tweets use rage to challenge the logic of gender-based violence against women in South Africa as a natural and necessary policing and disciplining of women's bodies and mobility. These logics are traced to the advent of colonialism and slavery in Africa that changed the pre-colonial social order through the racialisation and gendering of bodies into Western European conceptions of personhood (Oyěwùmí, 1997: 123; Oyěwùmí, 2005b: 106). Colonialism categorised a body politic of individuals as recognisable citizens and peripheral subjects occupying public and private realms separated and regulated by the state (Mamdani, 1996: 18; Oyěwùmí, 1997: 123). It institutionalised race and gender that naturalised white supremacy and patriarchal hegemony as a 'civilisation' project in Africa (Oyěwùmí, 1997: 129). Using discourses produced by Christian morality, Enlightenment-era justifications for 'progress' and the expansion of the Empire, colonialism was positioned as the white man's mission to be the saviour of the savage with the intent of a total reconfiguration of African societies (Etherington, 1988: 43; Gqola, 2010; Young, 1995 cited in Tamale, 2011: 21;

Oyěwùmí, 1997: 128). This system relied on a violent restructuring of language, knowledge and power to construct an administration based on a racialised and gendered division of labour that would deny African subjectivities and coerce colonies for a new hegemonic order of bodies that privileged the body over all else (Lugones, 2008: 4; Oyěwùmí, 1997: 150).

The concept of European biological essentialism underpinning this system describes the phenotypical and sexual characteristics, traits, behaviours and attitudes ascribed to the body as an indicator of gender roles predetermined by sex at birth. In this tradition, to see is to know and knowing your place in this paradigm is a fixed and immutable biological fact, where sex, gender, and sexuality are inextricably linked and inseparable in determining gender roles (Butler, 2009b: xii; Oyěwùmí, 2005a: 4). The visual, superficial surface of the body and its functions became an indicator of racial and sexual difference that produced and crystallised rhetoric about how bodies should be organised and maintained through systems of domination and white, androcentric hegemony presented as social norms (Legones, 2008; 15; Oyěwùmí, 1997: 5; Stephens & Boonzaier, 2020: 325).

The methodical exploitation of land, resources and people through brutality and the epistemic violence of marginalisation and forced assimilation of African knowledge systems and intellectual traditions changed the pre-colonial gender order according to the body and anatomy as something to be medicalised, pathologised, and sexualised (McFadden, 2003; Tamale, 2011: 35). Femininities and masculinities in Western Europe were presumed to have opposed roles and attitudes to be performed in polarising spheres of social life, and the colonies would be no different. Gendered regimes created a binary opposition of associated meanings between predominantly white men within the public sphere as civilians and civil institutions with civil rights and freedoms and the invisibilised private sphere of women who were associated with caregiving, nurturing and the unpaid labour of the domestic sphere that gave rise to unequal power relations (Oyěwùmí, 1997: 150). This division and their associations meant individuals who are more than the sum of their parts were reduced to their parts alone, stuck and reified into prescribed identities not of their own making and justified this hierarchy to enforce subordination.

The relationship between this form of nationalism and citizenship tied to the body and gender-based violence is the use of rape and femicide as a policing mechanism to enforce the gendered order of bodies that relies on the subordination of women as core to its

functionality (Du Toit, 2016: 243; Lewis, 2008: 105; Moffett, 2006: 132; Okech, 2021: 504; Gouws, 2016: 7). In Okech's (2021: 504) paper on the relationship between gender and nation-building discourses in Rwanda and Kenya she discusses the making of citizenship framed by expectations that women are the "carriers/bearers of collective identity" and that this process was not neutral or inevitable but enforced through violence. A similar trajectory in South Africa describes how violent masculinities wield fear, intimidation, assault, aggression and justificatory narratives to keep women in their place as either "respectable femininities [or] wayward sexualities" through postcolonial rhetoric and modes of respectability that build these boundaries (Gqola, 2007: 117; Moffett, 2006: 132; Lewis, 2008: 7; Stephens & Boonzaier, 2020: 325). In #AmINext, activists use outrage to connect the historical construction of women in South Africa to the current logics of gender-based violence that rely on similar scripts of respectability:

> What are [we] going to do to help reduce the number of rape and gender based violence victims? We live in fear everyday are we safe to walk alone? Can we be in an Uber without being sexual assaulted or hit on? Can we wear a skirt and not be catcalled? #AmINext #BreakTheSilenceke (September 8, 2019).
>
> Now pleeeaaasee don't tell us we can't wear bum shorts/skirts IN THIS HEAT because our appearances attract those rapists y'all defend so much 😉 #AmINext #stopviolenceagainstwomen (September 17, 2019).

The above tweets describe the recurring theme of defiance against the respectability politics imbued on women's bodies as justifications for rape and femicide. These politics of respectability and the systems of patriarchal regulation enable gendered violence through performances of violent masculinity control and sequester public and private space. The controlling of women enforces the enduring legacies of women's subject-status position within and outside of the private sphere through surveilling women's dress, expression and movement. The punishment for transgressing these social norms that maintain "the dominant gender-talk…that women must adhere to very limiting notions of femininity" is the 'spectacular' violence of rape and femicide (Gqola, 2007: 116). The idea of needing to regulate women's behaviour and roles links to how women's bodies, in the conception of building the nation, are sites of reproduction, commodification and consumption that tie to women's bodies being perceived as property.

2.3. RAGING AGAINST WOMEN'S BODIES AS PROPERTY

> I hate that men pillaging and plundering our bodies, the only things that are truly OURS, is applauded by other men, and overlooked in courts of law. I hate that he did this to you… (August 14, 2021).
>
> …Killed by lovers, family and strangers. Siyenzeni nna? I can't be asking #aminext through all the stages of my life (August 14, 2021).

Collections of tweets under #AmINext critically engage with feminist rage against gender-based violence as an affective response and refusal to know your place. The subject status of women was manufactured as a position through the weaponisation of sexual assault and femicide according to a colonial conception of respectability that governs social spaces, freedom of expression, and freedom of movement as an entitlement to women's bodies for violent consumption enabled by European bio-essentialism. As the precursor to the global capitalist market economy and the development of modern nation-states, colonialism constructed the idea of the 'biological' woman whose place in the nation-building project would be sexual reproduction tied to the family, land, and ownership: "this biological determinism connects the body with the capitalist production system, which promotes profit and accumulation" and created new forms of inequity and violence (Lugones, 2008: 6; Federici in Mohanty, 2011: 77; Magubane, 2004: 18 cited in Magoqwana, 2018: 81; Oyěwùmí, 1997: 123).

The view of women as solely reproductive labourers was a Christian heritage borrowed from an Edwardian nationalist ideology that privileged women as commodities to reproduce the workforce, protectors and sons of the nation as a duty to the Empire (Eales, 1983: 18). In the colonial imagination, one that privileged the white, heterosexual, nuclear family, the political elite determined and controlled social status and class through property, and these ideas were inscribed onto women's bodies as mothers of the nation who were custodians of the domestic sphere, cultural heritage, and lineages of the family (Etherington, 1988: 36). Victorian-era women's only claims to citizenship were through their marital status and their positions as mother's and relations as wives to look after men's homes. Through this subject-status position, women's rights (or lack thereof) were determined by settler masculinities through their proximity to their families, land and nationalist identity in the private sphere

controlled and surveilled by the state and, by extension, the individuals within the public sphere (McClintock, 1991: 105; Oyěwùmí, 1997: 6).

For example, the 1870s phenomenon of the 'rape scare' in the British colony of Natal constructed the racist root fears of white dominant masculinities around the rape of white women by Black men, but also suggests the link to the view of women's bodies as property because the rape of white women "amounted to an invasion of the property of fathers and husbands who controlled access to the bodies of the women in their care" (Etherington, 1988: 41). It spread discourses of moral panic and the perceived rape crisis through mainstream media about accounts of shadowy figures, strange noises and Black men trying to break into settler-homes, with the perceived intention of sexually assaulting white women without evidence or specific incidences to suggest its truth (Etherington, 1988: 40). Therefore, rhetoric such as the Natal rape scare in the public sphere obfuscated actual gendered violence within the settler-colonial home by inventing the racist danger of unconstrained Black male virility against the perception of women as property, creating a condition in which women's bodies became the landscapes over which different racialised masculinities are wrought and through which they vie for power and legitimacy (Gqola, 2015: 43).

The constructions of white women as representing the purity of whiteness and the chastity of femininity as the foundation of the 'family' were positioned as the antithesis of how Black women's sexuality was characterised (Gqola, 2015: 43). Signe Arnfred (2004), Pumla Dineo Gqola (2015) and Sylvia Tamale (2011) amongst other decolonial and feminist scholars provide a backdrop for how this context of European conceptions of sexuality, family and morality positioned Black women as hypersexual, deviant and opposed to the European constructions of virtuous, ideal femininity. Their analyses describe the making of gender and its concomitants with race and the layers with which sexual violence communicates myths about race, gendered and classed individuals and sustains the view of women's bodies for consumption.

> We must believe women and stand up for each of them. We need to stop victim blaming. We need to stop protecting the abusers. It is time to highlight the difficulties, fear, anger and shame that so often surround sexual assault. #aminext #enoughisenough #believeher (January 17, 2021).

Activists such as in the above tweet point to the implications of sexual violence silenced in the private sphere and made spectacular in the public sphere when used to deploy racialised and gendered myths. Sexuality was sequestered within the private sphere, where sexual violence carried cultures of shame and silence as a private matter and has propagated an enduring belief that rape is not a human-rights violation related to political violence (Du Toit, 2016: 243). Sexual violence was not acknowledged as the system of patriarchal power affecting women of all races and locations by reinforcing violent masculinities. Instead, it was framed to disperse prejudiced and racialised myths of the insatiability and hypersexuality of Black women and men that instilled a "colonial sexual hierarchy" that racialised sexual violence by positioning white women as legitimate victims of sexual violence and white men as incapable of perpetrating such violence (Gouws, 2018: 6). This constructed significant social cleavages in which "race was made by rape" through manufacturing discourses assigned to raced individuals saturated with prevailing social norms, with gender at the heart of it (Gqola, 2015: 44; Gouws, 2018: 6; Lugones, 2008: 13).

The above analysis does not draw a direct comparison between Black and white women nor assume that these categories are stable enough to interpret all Black and white women's experiences as homogenous and tied to victimhood. Instead, critical analysis shows that though women experienced the effects of nationalism in the making of gender under colonial occupation differently and were not universally oppressed by men in the same ways, women's experiences across race are connected by systems of patriarchy, capitalism and nationalism that reproduce marginalisation through gendered violence, producing, as McClintock (1993: 64) argues:

> The metaphoric depiction of social hierarchy as natural and familial - the 'national family', the global 'family of nations', the colony as a 'family of black children ruled over by a white father' - thus depended on the prior naturalising of the social subordination of women and children within the domestic sphere.

In #AmINext, feminist rage is used as a tool of resistance to a colonial tradition that has seeped into the contemporary understanding of gender in South Africa that highlights the connections between nationalism's constructions of women as property and gender-based violence: tweets by activists echo similar recurring themes surrounding the violent and unmitigated access to women's bodies.

> The issue starts with how GBV is being dismissed and victims being denied protection. Perpetrators get comfortable knowing that they can get away with murder, no accountability or consequences. I guess it's just a matter of time before it's someone you know or yourself #AmInext (May 9, 2021).

These tweets, such as the one above, reflect rage as a response to the rape and femicide of women in South Africa as a gendered form of violence contextualised by a history of racialised and gendered stratification. Feminist rage in #AmINext acts as an intervention to the ways that sexual violence (and the responses to it that are often labelled as the excessive, self-indulgent, unjustified impulses of 'angry women') is historically framed in South Africa: as Gqola (2021: 110) argues rage in feminist movements has a legacy of being attuned to women's wrath as a constructive response to injustice and welcomed rage as a resource, going against a culture that has labelled women's rage as excessive and self-indulgent "in defiance of 'the power of patriarchal taboos against women's anger'". This dominant conception was manifested through concepts of citizenship and nation-building inherent in forming modern nation-states through imperialism. These implications have shaped and entrenched a culture of the commodification of women according to race, gender and class that defined South Africa's framing of gendered and racialised sexual violence. Knowing your place as a woman was synonymous with being confined to the private sphere and relying on performances of gendered norms as subservient reproducers. To deviate from the gendered template of respectability meant social sanctions and marginalisation in the form of gendered violence that is considered natural and ordinary to the extent that the connections between this regulation of bodies and longstanding patriarchal beliefs about the family and the nation have seeped into all institutions of all institutions as a structural form of violence (Lewis, 2008: 105).

Activists within the #AmINext hashtag, in responding to this part of Uyinene's story, rupture the bio-essentialist logic underpinning how women are socialised, perceived and recognised and use feminist rage attentive to power that counters narratives of women knowing their place as perceived voiceless, victimised bodies by calling out and naming patriarchy and its rationales.

2.4. REFRAMING MOTHERHOOD: ALTERNATIVE WOMEN'S RAGE AGAINST GENDERED VIOLENCE

Protestors across the several coordinated #AmINext disruptions and marches over September 2019 demanded cultural, social and economic accountability from patriarchal institutions and businesses for producing the violent masculinities that augment and manifest gendered violence. The protests ultimately demanded President Cyril Ramaphosa declare an official state of emergency in response to the crisis (Tembo, 2019https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/watch-am-i-next-protest-hits-amsterdam-32746986). The parallel calls on Twitter to the offline #AmINext protests urged activists to:

> March for you. March for your sister, friend, aunt, mother, daughter. March for our men to change. March for our government to change the flawed Justice System that is failing us and the victims who have lost their lives to Gender Based Violence. #EnoughIsEnough #AmINext (September 5, 2019).
>
> Because we are tired of dying! Because we are tired of being hurt. Because we are tired of saying #metoo Because we are tired asking #aminext (May 22, 2021).

Women across race, ethnicity, and class have always contributed in multiple ways to liberation movements and struggles against imperialism, colonialism and capitalism throughout the country's history. The contemporary organising against continued assault and violence on women's bodies and the call to mobilise women not as 'women' but from their social relations as 'your sister, friend, aunt, mother, daughter' generated a fury from activists within #AmINext that examined and interrogated Uyinene's sexual assault and murder through a lens that links gender-based violence to the historical policing of women's behaviour, movements and bodily autonomy that mirror experiences of women across South Africa. Sexual violence against all types of women was normalised through colonial occupation and apartheid's influence on nationalism and citizenship in the making of gender as a primary ordering structure, "since women were seen as producers, the principles of control and protection applied to them throughout their productive period, whether as daughters, wives or mothers." (Reid, 2018: 58).

Colonialism and later its codified counterpart in the form of apartheid profoundly affected the multiple meanings of motherhood in South Africa. In African pre-colonial societies, there

were various ways of being a mother unattached to the biological act of reproduction and associated with the “rich matriarchal histories of pre-colonial Africa and how women used to influence armies, religious institutions, national economies and political leadership” (Steady, 2011 cited in Magoqwana, 2018: 76). Motherhood was not an isolated, singular event marked by birth, but a communal and expansive role defined by kinship, seniority, hereditary inheritance and context where women from grandmothers and aunts could be potential mothers (Maseko, 2018: 50; Magoqwana, 2018: 80; Oyěwùmí, 2015: 10).

Palesa Maseko (2018) and Babalwa Magoqwana (2018) discuss the implications of approaching African epistemologies with Western language that rendered African mothers in the image of European ideals that negated and undervalued the profound roles of mothers in African societies. The assimilation into the ideal trope of mothering and motherhood by African communities was an attempt to validate African identity as just as valuable as European identity through abiding by European colonial rule's citizenship parameters. Prominent political activist John Tengu Jabavu in the early 20th century, said that if Africans were to escape marginalisation, they had to elevate the status of women by revering them as mothers because “'no nation can rise higher than its womenhood'” (Eales, 1983: 18). Violent settler-occupation and the responses to it by subject-citizens in colonial states that were given customary power in primordial publics superimposed the image of Western European women as the antithesis of citizen. Women were only intelligible when viewed from their position as auxiliary to men, and this was dispersed to femininities in Africa whose diverse gender roles as knowledge producers, cultural custodians, workers, community leaders and matriarchs were reduced to the emblem of motherhood alone (Eales, 1983: 18; Stacey and Price, 1981:38 cited in Fouche, 1994: 84). The customary public sphere circulated the narrative that to align with European celebrations of motherhood and become recognisable as ‘proper’ citizens, Black communities should reject traditional marital practices and gender roles (Eales, 1983: 18).

The above points to the shifting nature of motherhood, which is less a fixed biological role that evoked ideologies of nurturing, subservience, puritanism, and piety. Motherhood for all women across race and class became mediated and deployed by the contested ideologies of Afrikaner nationalism and African nationalism (McClintock, 1991: 110; McClintock, 1993: 71). The silencing of women’s rage and the adoption of motherhood as an alternative form of

resistance built by the pressures of colonialism and apartheid was primarily focused on responses to the shifting contexts of the time.

Uyinene was a young, Black, middle-class, cis-gendered woman pursuing higher education at one of the country's most prestigious institutions. As a victim of rape and femicide in post-Apartheid South Africa, where legislation formally but not tangibly protects women's rights to safety, autonomy and bodily integrity, she came to represent the 'face' and the symbol of the movement in ways that engendered a significant virality on social media and within the public consciousness. Activists evoke Uyinene as the catalyst for this movement:

> Uyinene, sweetheart. You started a powerful movement 💝. Watch over us as we fight for you and the many many others 💝 #Aminext will be changed to #iamnotnext in 2020! We have had enough!! #EnoughIsEnough 💝💔 (December 28, 2019).

Activists in #AmINext evoke Uyinene as kin in the African sense of belonging, contrasting the dominant idea of women only being recognised as citizens if they are biological mothers. Therefore, they render Uyinene grievable and appropriate for our affective outrage because we can see parts of ourselves in her story. By positioning her as a catalyst for the movement, the tweets disseminated within #AmINext don't associate women's social positions with obedience or victimhood but deploy them in ways that counter-narratives to gendered violence in the public sphere. The tweets by activists that evoke Uyinene as the 'mother' of the movement use rage to embody her as 'your sister, friend, aunt, mother, daughter' and therefore carry a tradition of the resistance of women in political movements in South Africa that strategically use their social roles and context to mobilise.

Gender-based violence as a critical political issue was secondary to the political violence in the public sphere over contested dominant ideologies between Afrikaner nationalism and African nationalism during Apartheid (McClintock, 1995; Salo, 2007). Because of this erasure and the constraints and limitations of how women could engage politically because of a sequestering to the private sphere, women's roles as mothers in the anti-apartheid movement strategically worked within and around their circumscribed position in the home to bolster grassroots activism that would become integral to the liberation struggle (Gouws, 2005: 7; Hassim, 2006: 14; Lewis, 2008: 2; Salo, 2007: 189). As a social position in political movements, mothers were not the passive accessories of male political leaders. Still, they

used their roles to draw attention to the asymmetries of racialised, gendered and classed power "and the materiality of these inequities in their own and other women's lives" that acted as a springboard from which they engaged with grassroots resistance and not simply as the appendages of men and volunteers within these dominant movements (Bonner, 1992 in Salo, 2005: 189; McClintock, 1991; 118).

Women's rage was forged from the political and social context that constitutes these identities. The silencing of this fury and regulating it to be only expressed in specific conditions throughout South Africa's history is influenced by a dominant bias of motherhood that did not always apply to these groups and that becomes subverted in #AmINext. I use women's rage and not feminist rage here because not all women's anger or how they organise is or should be labelled feminist. For example, Afrikaner women were militant and resistant to British colonial occupation, organised around the suffrage movement in the late 1890s, marched to the Union Buildings in 1915, and advocated for rights through the Garment Workers' Union in the 1930s and 1940s (McClintock, 1993: 71; Salo, 2005: 189; Walker, 1995: 433). Yet this 'women's rage' and motherhood as its conduit was often in service of the preservation of the white, idealised *voltmeter* within Afrikaner nationalism, showing how as McClintock (1991: 110) argues, Afrikaner mothers are not absolved of their role of perpetuating an idea of white nationalism from which they benefited because of how they strategically upheld Afrikaner motherhood as preserving the 'pure' nation and are therefore accomplices to validating the ideology of apartheid. However, I follow Cheryl Walker's (1995: 423) analysis that all types of motherhood cannot be labelled as inherently patriarchal or in contradiction of feminism when these roles are deployed to interrogate the matrices of power embedded in the social relation in women's lives.

> breathers of life, first to die. Why does there have to be a next? Am I going to be the next? I can't express how much my heart tears and cries every time I've heard YET another woman has died. That YET another woman has passed at the hands of femicide. #AmINext? (24 September, 2019).
>
> Of all the presidents that I know, ours is sure the quietest!!! Does he not have a wife/daughters/a mother/grandchildren? Are our struggles below him? Is our plight not worth the attention? (September 13, 2019).

> #IAmSorryFor not Meeting my future husband,Knowing him and giving him children,in fact please apologize on our kids on my behalf for not bringing them to life in case I am next #AmINext (September 16, 2019).
>
> What will become of a nation that preys on its women and children? Stop the femicide, child trafficking and gender based violence. #stopkillingourwomenandchildren #aminext #metoo #enoughwiththesilence (September 3, 2019).

The above tweets by activists of #AmINext emphasise the social relations of women as a contradiction: as 'breathers of life' yet 'first to die', as essential components of the nation and yet as second-class citizens subject to multiple forms of interpersonal and structural harm that manifests as gendered violence and femicide. This points to the pitfalls of valorising motherhood even within the confines of using this identity as a mobilising force, as it reinforces the perception that "women are seen not as independent members of the national community, but as wives responsible to the nation through their service to individual men", wherein the ties between womanhood, motherhood, and being a wife become interchangeable in the public gender discourse (McClintock, 1991: 117).

The inseparability of women from being wives and mothers created the conditions that construct victims of gender-based and sexual violence according to a hierarchy of grievability in the public sphere. Outrage is reserved, and selective affects are deployed for individuals and stories that align with cultural perceptions of certain women's bodies as consumable, available and therefore permissible to be disciplined through violence. Therefore, some cases of gendered violence are not perceived as such if the victim is assumed to not fit with normative social standards and norms that privilege patriarchal notions of respectability. Where victims of gendered violence evoke rage in the public sphere, it is under conditions that ultimately link to the historical constructions of women and, therefore, mothers – if you are a mother or seen to be a *potential* mother and consequently an 'authentic' citizen, who is assumed to be heterosexual, cis-gendered and carriers of tradition in the nation, rage as an affect in the public sphere against gendered violence separates the divisions between who are recognised, mourned and raged for and who remains marginalised.

Here, the schisms between how the outrage against Uyinene's death was represented in the public discourse in the media that positioned her as an 'ideal' victim and the feminist rage that built the digital counterpublic differ. The feminist rage used by activists challenged the

construction of Uyinene as the ‘mother of a nation’ trope, i.e. an ideal victim, representative of the aspirations of the public sphere and responsible for gauging the moral compass of a nation through martyrdom. Activists instead use counternarratives that recognise Uyinene as more than a victim and, in being the catalyst for the movement, was not a ‘mother of a nation’ or positioned as ‘mbokodo’ (from the 1956 Women’s March slogan, “Wathint’ abafazi, wathint’ imbokodo, uzakufa! / When you strike women, you strike a rock, you will be crushed”) (Gqola, 2021: 110). In this way, rage is expressed at the collective marginalisation of women who are only recognised when they are ‘mbokodo’ or ‘mothers of the nation’ in the public sphere.

2.5. RECLAIMING WOMEN’S RAGE: FEMINIST RAGE AND CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENTS AGAINST GBV AND FEMICIDE

Rage as a discursive framework and affect against injustice in South Africa was primarily seen as being embodied by masculinities, either using it as justification for repression within Afrikaner nationalism or as a force against the disfranchisement and dispossession of anti-Black racism on their masculinity and dignity within African nationalism. Political mobilisation was dominantly understood as racial and class redress held a limiting expectation that the public sphere should revolve around racial liberation, creating silences around gendered violence even within liberation movements. This reinforced that "while women are socialised away from expressions of their anger except under limited conditions, they are also conditioned to fear men’s volatility” (Gqola 2021: 107; Hassim, 2003; Albertyn and Hassim, 2003 cited in Hassim, 2006: 179). This was a continuum of the public sphere as a patriarchal, masculinist space that marginalised rage directed at gender injustice stemmed from these nationalisms. Women’s rage against their experiences of gendered discrimination was sidelined as illegitimate against racialised oppression and divisive to the more significant cause of dismantling white minority rule and class dispossession during apartheid (Gqola, 2014; Hassim, 2006). Caught in a paradox where their struggles for citizenship, full recognition and membership within dominant political movements contrasted their contributions to civil society as political activists, combatants, unionists, and community leaders; they were only seen as honorary men and not as individuals capable of engaging with the political substance of rage in their own right (Magadla, 2015: 394; McClintock, 1991: 118; McClintock, 1993: 73).

Goldblatt and Meintjes (cited in Britton, 2006: 149) examined the sexual abuse and gender-based violence of women in South Africa's liberation movements, where regardless of activist status, women were sexually assaulted by their partners, friends and kin as well as by soldiers of the South African Defence Forces, opposition groups and their comrades in the guerrilla forces of which they were also part of. In this way, women's bodies continued to be a site of contestation over power both inside and outside liberation movements.

> The BIGGEST hypocrites of all time always in sheep skin when they are WOLVES, the CHURCHES, the PASTORS, the RELIGIOUS fraternity is SILENT on the matter of FEMICIDE & Gender based violence. We see you bloody hypocrites we see you #AmINextPROTEST #SAShutdown #AmINext #ShutDownSA (September 3, 2019)
>
> So in no time when another Gender Based violence victims are brought to the fore Government will STAGE a show of SHOCK. President will annoyingly convey a nauseating APOLOGY yet SEXUAL VIOLATION & killing of girls and women is like a state sponsored agenda. #AmINext (October 7, 2019)

The above tweet points to the use of feminist rage to highlight the enduring hypocrisy of the nationalist movement that absorbed and utilised women's rage yet stifled these affects against the gendered violence of these institutions because of the enduring colonial legacies that constructed respectable and wayward women. In the public discourse, men who rage are revolutionary, women who rage are irrational, and the complicity of preserving nationalist discourses under the guise of tradition often reinforces patriarchal norms of the family and women's subordinate position within it.

The insistence on prioritising racial identity as one that would unite all Black people despite vastly different experiences with gender, class, ethnicity and location assumed a collective Black rage that was male, traditionalist and assertive of an 'authentic' African identity more reminiscent of colonial customary power than a pre-colonial truth. Gqola (2001) described the construction of Black women in these liberation movements, which presupposed institutionalised racism as "the primary oppressive force for all those racially subjugated in South Africa" without being receptive to the ways that Black people across gender, class, location, sexuality, ethnicity and other cross-cutting identities experience marginality differently (Gqola, 2001: 134). Consequently, women in the BCM, as in various movements, were constructed and positioned as ideal 'struggle' figures and 'honorary men' because they

were Black, with militant and radical politics against apartheid, but still within a highly gendered framework as women who were also expected to stay within the confines of their relational roles to their husbands and families, while their intellectual contributions and activism as individuals with a capacity to act autonomously outside of the parameters of nation-state imaginaries remained silenced (Hassim, 2014: 177; Ramphele, 1991: 216 cited in Gqola, 2001: 138).

Women categorised as reproducers and 'mothers of the nation' (despite the forms of agency in using this slogan as a form of political mobilisation) and the consistent silencing of women's rage against gendered violence had implications for the cultural view of women in South Africa's post-apartheid and postcolonial era. When new forms of citizenship during South Africa's transitional justice process signified instituted women's rights and electoral representation in the new democracy, effectively giving women newly defined roles in the workplace and government that reconfigured the composition of civil society and this hierarchy (Britton, 2006: 150; Gqola, 2007: 114; McFadden, 2005: 5).

When women refuse or defy these limiting beliefs by subverting traditional gender roles, sexual violence is used to reinstate the social order perceived as natural. It is argued that gender-based violence is the "reactive or defensive responses" to this shifting of the scales of power and a policing mechanism in private and public spaces, where adhering to respectability politics cannot undo this paradigm (Britton, 2006; Gqola, 2007: 116). Contemporary organising against gendered violence represents the departure of women's movements from the national liberation struggle. The offline protests linked to #AmINext are an essential intervention in the use of feminist rage to generate political action, where "anger is constructed in different ways: as a response to the injustice of racism; as a vision of the future; as a translation of pain into knowledge; and as being loaded with information and energy." (Ahmed, 2014: 175). As Mbali Mazibuko (2018) argues, the nature of feminist organising in South Africa's post-apartheid era contrasts the activism within women's movements during apartheid because it explicitly names and situates forms of Black, decolonial feminist theories and praxis into contemporary social movements. This is not to erase the history or contributions of feminists in South Africa who fought for wide-ranging gendered rights under hypermasculine conditions and were subject to gendered and racialised brutality by not only the repressive apartheid state and police but by comrades

within liberation movements, friends and family. Instead, this is a suggestion to stay curious about the ways that citizenship in the democracy for women was predicated on the silencing of feminist rage in exchange for a political stake in the new democracy, with women strategically negotiating for political survival but not necessarily challenging the power structures of the state they were now a part of.

Black women activists within the Rhodes Must Fall, and Fees Must Fall movements of 2015 and 2016 challenged the dominant conception that mobilisation around worker rights and decolonial education was separate from the gendered violence within and outside of tertiary education. This includes the most notable case of the #RapeAtAazania where Zola Shokane, a young woman active in the Fallist movement, was raped by a male activist and sparked a significant divide within the movement. African feminists and scholars at the forefront of this movement and who have inserted a Black feminist consciousness into a body of scholarship about this era include Wanelisa Xaba (2017), Simamkele Dlakavu, Sandile Ndelu and Mbali Matandela (2017), and Hlengiwe Ndlovu (2017), among many others. These contributions have aimed to make visible the intellectual and physical labour of women who have been erased in the movement and critiqued as fundamentally co-opted by patriarchal hypermasculinities with little attention to the intersectionality of oppression at higher education institutions.

The attempt to silence Black feminist rage and co-opt the movement as a purely racialised one while ignoring the intersectionality between these struggles left African feminists to critique the privileging of male figures within the campaign at the exclusion of the labour and significant contributions of trans women and non-binary activists in laying the groundwork for the Fallist movement as a radical, decolonial Black feminist movement. These erasures and exclusions created the space for interventions such as the UCT Trans Collective, #PatriarchyMustFall, #RUReferenceList and the #OneinThree movements at UCT, the University of the Witwatersrand and UCKAR. Uyinene was a cis-gendered woman whose education at one of these institutions represented South African gender redress, where women gained more comprehensive access outside of their historical limitations to the private sphere. Activists used rage to confront the inconsistencies of the narrative that abiding by the rules of modernity guarantees claims to full citizenship and protection against gender-based violence. They highlighted that even when victims do reflect the democratic

values of a ‘new’ South Africa, namely upward mobility, socio-economic redress and gender reform, the normative stories of respectability expected of women are misaligned with the framework of the Constitution, and the underlying structures enable gender-based violence to prevail. Okech (2021: 1017) argues that feminist digital counterpublics use networked rage to carry transnational dialogues against gendered violence by not only countering discourses that enable it but also by holding the state to account, as seen in the below tweets:

> #Uyinene This hashtag and the #AmINext left me feeling angry and pissed off at our parliamentarians for not legislating harsher minimum mandatory sentencing! All they do is talk but they don’t do what they are paid to do which is to legislate! (December 28, 2019).
>
> The sloganeering and PR exercise for cheap headlines clips done by government on each announcement of a death of a Gender based violence victim is proof that because their families are safe from such crimes ordinary citizens will continue to suffer! What's to be done? #AmINext (October 7, 2019).

The public discourse and media conveyed considerable outrage at Uyinene’s sexual assault and murder as random, extraordinary violence. Activists in #AmINext, by contrast, highlighted the cyclical nature of patterns of gender-based violence, expressing just how normalised and commonplace gender-based violence and femicide is in everyday life for multiple women who are erased within the dominant public discourse and demanding state accountability while simultaneously challenging these norms. In setting strict boundaries between bodies based on racialised and gendered hierarchies, this assumption of women as a biological, monolithic fact (rather than reflective of women as a social and historical construct that mirrors the socio-political and economic relations between individuals and their communities, it is context-specific and contingent on cultural ideologies that may shift across time and space) produced and reproduced imaginaries of women being inextricable and synonymous with motherhood that women either rejected or reinforced as a form of resistance.

2.6. RAGING ON THE MARGINS: WHEN WOMEN ARE NOT MOURNED

> The people who keep on speaking about slay queens are really out of touch with the reality, WOMEN FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE GET KILLED AND ABUSED Uyinene , Dr Thandi, baby Lee The list is endless #AmINext (November 12, 2019).
>
> We're a week away from the one year anniversary of #Uyinene's murder in a postal office and the start of #aminext and it's just, there's been too many women to put into a hashtag, there's too many being killed, raped, left for nothing, in veld fires, burning in their homes (August 19, 2020).
>
> I am touched AF because I can see our government has potential. They fucken visited Uyinene's family. How did that help? How the fuck did that help? Adverts on TV of #AmINext sponsored by Gov. How did that help bathing ba kreste? So the whole time they had the means? (April 12, 2020).

The #AmINext movement was triggered by Uyinene's story and the rage against the normalisation of sexual violence and femicide. After this initial wave of protests, Botha pleaded guilty to all charges and was later sentenced by the Western Cape High Court on November 25 2019, to three life sentences for the rape and murder of Uyinene and an additional five years for attempting to destroy evidence. The Uyinene Mrwetyana Foundation was established to advocate and raise awareness of gender-based violence in South Africa and the tragedy of her death that "brought to the fore the GBV debate across the country and internationally" (Uyinene Mrwetyana Foundation, 2019). However, the movement was carried after Uyinene's perpetrator was brought to justice in the legal system to highlight the variegations in gender, race and location across the range of victims of gender-based violence that impact the lived experiences of violence for femininities and non-binary individuals who are not considered 'grievable' because their identities go against a perceived social function of womanhood.

> T.W: rape. . . . This is partly why I had/have so many issues with #AmINext ... ey bethuna. Our politics and collective outrage against sexual violence cannot be reliant on our proximity or experience with said issue. It undermines so much (January 18, 2021).

> South Africans are hypocrites, They will choose which dead/missing people trend and which don't... I remember Thoriso and Uyinene's #'s, all over timelines, even got state funerals.. Anyway go well young soul, Hope you're at peace now (November 29, 2019).

Uyinene was the catalyst for the movement, but activists evoked the stories of women who were sexually assaulted and murdered that fell below the radar of mainstream media and the public sphere. Activists use feminist rage to highlight the significant differences between women, even within the #AmINext movement, as victims of gender-based violence and femicide are placed in a hierarchy of grievability. Our 'proximity' to Uyinene as someone who could have been a sister, daughter, mother, or friend engendered particular responses and affects that informed *'Our politics and collective outrage against sexual violence'*. But what happens when we do not *feel* our proximity to individuals who face all forms of gendered violence, visible and invisible? In her discussion on the archiving of feelings in online activism that produce cultural artefacts of affect, Jennifer Pybus (2015) argues that different bodies elicit different affective responses because of what we associate with bodies that are raced, classed and gendered in ways that overlap with matrices of oppression. These responses are:

> An important space of interpretation and contestation that has the power to make meaning through its ability to privilege certain discourses over others. Who and what gets remembered and who gets to make these existential decisions, are issues with important social, political, and economic ramifications (McDuffie & Ames, 2021).

These differences between 'who and what gets remembered' were seen in similar cases of cis-gendered, Black women under the age of 25 who were studying at universities or Technical Vocational and Education Training (TVET) colleges and pursuing tertiary education as the targets of violence received a degree of attention on Twitter under #AmINext, yet received less traction in the broader public discourse than Uyinene and were not positioned as kin and therefore grievable in the same ways. The contrast of these lived experiences of different women illustrates the specific commodification of stories about violence against women according to race, gender and class that defined South Africa's framing of gendered and sexual violence:

> WAZE WANGINYANYISA WENJA! How can you be so stupid and insensitive. Why do we have men like this, a woman died in the hands of men like you who think women

> owe them something. Yekela ukuba isdididi. WOMEN DON'T OWE YOU ANYTHING!! #SinethembaNdlovu #AmINext (September 23, 2019).
>
> What have women done? Should women perish? Will that be sufficient? Should we cease to exist coz everyday a woman is dying in the hands of a man. Womens rights no longer matter currently. #AmINext #RIPSne (September 23, 2019).
>
> Another #woman was stabbed to death in #SouthAfrica for refusing to have sex. Another voice was silenced but we will continue to speak loud about it until it stops!! ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. #ripsne #AmINext #WithoutUs #MeToo #GBV #EndGBV (September 27, 2019).

Less than a month after the Uyinene's disappearance and murder, Sinethemba Ndlovu, a 22-year-old UKZN student and model who was stabbed by an unknown assailant, later found to be 20-year-old Buhlebodwa Zakahle Mntungwa, after he attempted to sexually harass her and the group of friends she was within the rural area of eMsinga in Sidakeni Reserve while she was working at a motorsport event (Bambalele & Sobuwa, 2019).

Precious Ramabulana was a 21-year-old Capricorn TVET student who appeared under the #AmINext hashtag with less virality than Uyinene. She was raped and murdered on November 24 2019 in Polokwane, Limpopo. Her assailant Aubrey Manaka forcibly broke into her rented home in the Ga-Ramokgopa Village in Botlokwa after silently stalking her for some time (Molefe, 2021). Though Precious appeared under tweets by activists within #AmINext, activists also highlighted that some victims of gender-based violence were subject to a hierarchy of victimhood despite being disproportionately young Black women.

The above tweet engages with a range of GBV hashtags alongside #AmINext that highlight rage expressed at gender-based violence and femicide are not evenly distributed even when victims share commonalities. These tweets travel through different feminist hashtags to visibilise how the differences in class and location impact how victims are perceived and the organisation of struggles are built. In contrast to Uyinene, Sinethemba and Precious both attended historically disadvantaged institutions without the same prestige or clout accorded to UCT as a traditionally white, affluent university and shows the exclusionary ways in which outrage may isolate and individualise cases of gendered violence that occur outside of elite spheres of public interest. Geographical location was wrought by the stratifications of race

and class and is relevant in activists' struggles to forefront women on the social periphery of discourse on gendered violence because, as Gouws (2021) argues, perceptions of communities outside urban centres and the complex challenges of marginalised genders who live in them reveal a negotiation of citizenship determined by social class that produces unique barriers to access.

Connecting to these stories where activists rage on the margins for bodies positioned on the periphery of public discourse, the University of Fort Hare 23-year-old law student Nosicelo Mtebeni was murdered by her partner, Alutha Pasile on 19 August 2019, who dismembered her body dumped and remains in a suitcase in Quigney, East London (Dayimani, 2021). Where these stories differ remarkedly from Uyinene are the relations in class and location as UKZN, Capricorn, and Fort Hare are historically Black institutions placed on the peripheries. Protests at higher learning institutions taking place at urban, affluent universities receive more media attention and traction than the protests occurring in universities that are perceived as less prestigious than UCT, Stellenbosch University and Wits University.

> Umoya wami uphantsi💔 It's just another victim, another hashtag, yet nothing ever changes. We live in fear of strangers and loved ones. When will it end? We are in hell😭 #JusticeForNosicelo #AmINext #femicide (August 20, 2021).
>
> She and many others are not just a statistic, they are innocent souls whose lifelines have been cut short. South Africa, let's do better! #JusticeForNosicelo #AmINext #OrganizingForSurvival #femicidePandemic #SouthAfrica #NoToGenderBasedViolence (August 24, 2021).
>
> In 2019 when uyinene was murdered and we marched we thought it would make a difference. Two years later and nothing has changed. Every year there's more young women brutally murdered while the police and the government do absolutely nothing. #JusticeForNosicelo #AmINext (August 20, 2021).

The extreme description of violence and the graphic nature of the crimes committed against Nosicelo circulated in the mainstream media point to what Boonzaier (2017: 478) calls the shock and awe response that reduces victims of sexual assault and murder to body parts. The 'shock and awe' response creates a culture where gender-based violence is viewed not as patterns of predictable violence but as sporadic, disconnected events perpetrated by social

anomalies that have deviated from the nation's values, concealing "just how very "normal," how every day, violence is'" (Judge, para. 10: 2013 cited in Boonzaier, 2017: 479). Where outrage in the public sphere was circulated at Nosicelo's murder, it pointed to a commodification of women's bodies that only report on cases of gendered violence when it is sensational and spectacular or when victims are positioned as grievable. The above tweets use feminist rage to disrupt the shock and awe response by evoking the #JusticeFor hashtag to emphasise the injustice of Nosicelo's murder and reclaim the humanity of victims who are more than statistics.

2.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on how activists building a feminist digital counterpublic engage with rage as an affective response to gender-based violence. It examined the historical makings of gender in postcolonial society and the division of the public and private spheres according to a bio-essentialist arrangement of bodies in the nation. Activists in the above tweets critically engage with feminist rage as a rhetorical device to dismantle prevailing discourses in the public sphere reflective of the respectability and morality politics that render rape and femicide as culturally inevitable ways of disciplining femininities and subjugated masculinities. Knowing your place as citizens in South Africa, and the relationship between this way of knowing and gendered-based violence, has a long history constituted by the country's legacies of Western European colonialism, slavery and apartheid.

This section elaborated on the influence of nationalism as a result of imperialism and colonialism on the makings of gender as a context for how women came to represent a subordinate position in South Africa. The institutionalisation of socially constructed differences during these eras defined the boundaries between legitimate citizens and unrecognised subjects who are always raced and spun narratives enforced as truth to create gender regimes between femininities and masculinities as scales of dominance and subordination, with nationalism driving the centre. A necessary intervention to this framing of rage as the legitimate platform of men is the contemporary movements such as #AmINext that utilise feminist rage, anger and fury to speak back to the sexual violence and the matrices of patriarchal power to produce counter-hegemonic spaces. I argue that feminist rage in #AmINext was used to reframe the position of women from helpless victims of patriarchy to

a conception of the collectively within #AmINext that recognises women as more than limited notions of womanhood. Because of its explicit focus on gender-based violence that nationalist struggles sidelined, activists use feminist analysis to reframe conceptions such as womanhood as solely a product of women's repression in the private sphere that disrupts the bio-essentialism associated with women's bodies.

As a continuum of women's resistance, the relation of Uyinene as the catalyst of the movement and the rage expressed at her murder reflects earlier conceptions of mothers as formidable and militant in anti-apartheid campaigns. However, this is not always an easy role to fit in, and in valorising Uyinene as the mother of the movement, the voices within #AmINext that speak to the stories of women who were not viewed as mothers of the movement because of their social positions, rage within the margins. This is characteristic of the algorithms, affects and virality of social media that only renders 'ideal' victims we can see in ourselves as deserving of our outrage. Digital activism has these pitfalls to replicate exclusionary practices and amplify silences and erasures characteristic of all social movements. Still, even when raging on the margins, I argue that activists contribute to an understanding of citizenship as an organic, social process by which meaning is made and unmade within the feminist digital counterpublic. Highlighting these responses is in no way meant to replicate a hierarchy of women or victimhood, nor to reduce any of their identities as sole victims, but to show how struggles against gender-based violence can become individualised and the humanity of victims deprioritised when they are placed into a dichotomy of grievability that obfuscates everyday gendered violence.

The #AmINext demonstrations can be seen as lying on a continuum of women's resistance to gender-based violence in South Africa, and digital media cannot be separated from the socio-political context in which it happens. Digital media has a unique ability to channel emotions, reactions, discourses, and narratives across time and space that are reproduced and circulated in ways that compel, incite, or quell mobilisation (Papachrissi, 2015: 7). Through the historical silencing of rage in movements against gender-based violence where the outrage was only legitimate under certain conditions in nationalist struggles, the emergence of a feminist digital counterpublic insists on platforming and consolidating of feminist rage as a justified response to gendered violence that subverts the 'angry women' trope that positions women's rage as irrational, random and individualised by contextualising the causes

of gender-based violence and offering an oppositional gaze to those assumptions. Therefore, rage as an affect is not exclusively private and, in these contexts, initiates particular emotive responses showing "how [emotions] work, in concrete and particular ways, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective" that ushers in a form of citizenship and participation that goes beyond its neoliberal democratic framework (Ahmed, 2014: 118).

All types of women have contributed in multiple ways to liberation movements and struggles against imperialism, colonialism and capitalism throughout the country's history. The emergence of digital media technologies through social media in the 21st century as tools for organising activism has altered how rage can move through and between bodies and online interfaces across time and space. By responding to the belief of rape as a 'natural' subordination of women enacted through the rigid policing of public and private space that limits women's mobility, autonomy and bodily integrity, activists built a feminist digital counterpublic that uses feminist rage to renegotiate what it means to 'know your place' as a social construct and way of belonging as citizens who occupy multiple positionalities in South Africa.

3. NEGOTIATING GRIEVABILITY AND RECOGNISING QUEER LIVES IN #AMINEXT

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous section of this research analysed the use of women's rage against gender-based violence as crucial to forming a feminist digital counterpublic in South Africa. The mobilisation of rage against gender-based violence has been a historically elided but persistent feature of political movements in South Africa. The silencing of rage as a form of women's activism against gendered violence stems from cultural norms that have rendered violence against women inevitable. This perceived inevitability is a result of social expectations that devalue the contributions of women in civil rights movements, deny the intersections of gender, class and race in the making of women as citizens, and link women's vast identities to motherhood with women's bodies treated as sites of commodification in nation-building projects. The development of affects within #AmINext aimed to cultivate rage as a vital resource of resistance against violence against women and as a legitimate mode of women's citizenship. Rage in the hashtag movement was a productive technique to counter discourses in the public sphere that relies on a policing of femininities when reified gender roles are subverted.

As discussed in the previous chapter, even within the movement, race, ethnicity, class, and location hierarchies engender selective responses from activists and to the hashtag. These hierarchies set the boundaries between how victims of violence against women are avenged in the digital counterpublics and which narratives get lost in the algorithm. Rage as an affect was primarily mobilised around cis-gendered women who were viewed as potential mothers and fit into the normative social markers of womanhood under South Africa's neoliberal democracy at the expense of connected stories of gendered violence that remain on the peripheries.

3.2. THE MAKING OF UNGRIEVABLE IDENTITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

> They do struggle but no one cares to listen to their cry because they are nobody until they are killed then they will be #Aminext or #stopGBV (May 7, 2021).

> They are coming after us daily. They are silencing our voices. They are taking away our freedom to live. They are killing us. #EnoughIsEnough #JusticeForQueerSA #AmINext #queerlivesmatter #PrideMonth2021 (June 6, 2021).

Where rage carried #AmINext concerning Uyinene Mrwetyana, Sinethemba Ndlovu, Precious Ramabulana and Nosicelo Mtebeni, the references to being "nobody until they are killed" and "taking away our freedom to live" in the above responses represents a critical reflection of how bodies are made ungrievable in South Africa. The above tweets are part of the responses on Twitter to the violent assault and murder of Andile 'Lulu' Ntuthela in April 2021. The 40-year-old Black queer person from KwaNobuhle, Eastern Cape, left home during Easter weekend to visit a friend and never returned (Igual, 2021). Andile was missing for over a week before their remains were found in a makeshift grave in the backyard of their friend's home (Marais, 2021). After the suspect attempted to destroy the evidence by burning Andile's remains, the police were called to the scene and found Andile's body with visible signs of physical trauma (Maurice, 2021). Though the suspect had a personal relationship with Andile, the justification for the murder in the public discourse was believed to be a 'hate crime'. The hate crime was argued in the media to be motivated by Andile's sexuality and sexual orientation as a visibly queer person living in a township outside Uitenhage. The #JusticeForLulu hashtag, and several other online campaigns, including #queerlivesmatter, attached to #AmINext to protest against Andile's assault and murder. These collections of tweets that deal with the relationship between gendered violence against queer individuals and the political distribution of life and death centre on the murder of Andile as a manifestation of the socio-political ordering of life in South African democracy.

The unprecedented legislative rights enshrined in the Constitution define the boundaries of citizenship. This binding document enforced a set of negotiated protections and limitations applicable to all South Africans to establish a unified, coherent national identity guided by egalitarianism. This inadvertently left a political conundrum "where 'the citizen' is signified by an 'abstract, ungendered individual who can lay claim to certain (natural) rights'" despite significant cultural, social and political implications from colonialism, slavery and apartheid (Gouws, 1999: 55). These constructed differences and their ramifications in the shaping of South African identity remained unaddressed through the catch-all, vague terms of the universality of 'human rights' in the Constitution that become divorced from notions of

power, justice and equity (Stephens & Boonzaier, 2020; Hassim, 2005; Van Zyl, 2005). This is not to suggest that the Constitution is not inherently transformative nor that its contributions should be undervalued or dismissed. But #AmINext becomes a site of continued negotiation of the assumptions in the Constitution that do not account for the lived realities of cisheteropatriarchy in the contemporary construction of citizens. Who may live a recognised life as a legitimate citizen and publicly grieved at the extinguishing of that life, and which subjects are condemned to die an unacknowledged death is an overarching theme of #AmINext (Butler, 2009a). Tweets in response to Andile's death reveal the dynamics of certain bodies being unrecognised and unintelligible as human over others. When these individuals are not recognised as human and, therefore, citizens, their death is not mourned as the loss of life. Tweets concerning Andile's assault and murder attest to the ways that "make clear the norms by which the 'human' is constituted" through activists' mourning (Butler, 2009a: 33; Mbembe, 2003: 174; Van Zyl, 2005: 223).

Colonialism and apartheid, as an architecture to regulate recognised citizens and relegated subjects, codified and administered strict sanctions on existing queer identities and diverse sexual orientations in the public and private spheres (Posel, 2005; Stephens & Boonzaier, 2020: 327). To maintain political power, colonial states relied on the reproduction and preservation of the empire through racialised compulsory heterosexuality and the vilification of same-sex desire that "conjured up notions of individual sexual sin or perversion by which Africans were hectored, in the name of civilisation, toward an explicit and dogmatic lack of tolerance for same-sex erotic behaviour." (Epprecht, 2001: 1092; Tamale, 2011: 22; Stephens & Boonzaier, 2020: 328). The surveillance and censorship of sexualities outside the binary, reinforced by an essentialist viewing of gender and race, stemmed from European settler anxieties over the perceived lascivious sexualities of African communities (Epprecht, 2001: 1092; Oyěwùmí, 1997: 122; Tamale, 2011: 22). This perception was rooted in a rejection of African pre-colonial perspectives and experiences of sexuality, family and kinship that were methodically 'Othered' for not mirroring enforced monogamy and heterosexuality as ways of defining gender in the colonial project (Posel, 2005: 128; Oyěwùmí, 1997; Osha, 2004 cited in Steyn & van Zyl, 2009: 5). Within South Africa's racialised and gendered regime, dominant white femininities and masculinities were at the epicentre of who was considered human and therefore grievable, and "functioned to construct and position white, male, heterosexuality

as the most powerful within the socially engineered hierarchy." (Butler, 2009a: 33; Posel, 2005 cited in Stephens & Boonzaier, 2020: 327). To control and protect the integrity of the white, monogamous, heterosexual, nuclear family and the production of the nation as a central project of modernity, discourses such as the Black Peril discussed in the previous chapter and the perceived danger of miscegenation instituted rigid forms of Christianity and morality as justifications for the continued subjectification of African subjectivity (Epprecht, 2001: 1093). These racist and cisheteropatriarchal ideologies were superimposed onto publics in the indigenous sphere and to gain customary authority a modicum of autonomy and to avoid continued brutal subjugation, diverse African genders and sexualities that were not inherently phallocentric conformed to the patriarchal, heterosexual and monogamous European norms of respectability (Epprecht, 2001: 1092; Oyěwùmí, 1997: 124; Thornton, 2003 cited in Steyn & van Zyl, 2009: 5). This embodied a form of African fundamentalism that persists and that adheres to these social scripts as a survival strategy to validate African humanity as 'just as valuable' and as equal to European life (Epprecht, 2001: 1093). To assert that African lives are grievable meant submitting to the idea that "a life has to be intelligible *as a life* has to conform to certain conceptions of what life is, to become recognizable" (Butler, 2009a: 7; Epprecht, 2001: 1093). Therefore, grievability in South Africa became entangled with settler-colonialism and, as a result, is highly raced and gendered.

> #AmINext Queer lives are being taken at a rapid pace in SA! Why do we have to live in fear for being different! Senseless. Pointless. #GLITTERKISSES (April 18, 2021).

The above tweet exemplifies the themes in #AmINext that deal with having "to live in fear for being different" and the impact of colonial difference on the grievability of queer lives. The perceived difference of same-sex desire that became framed as a threat to the family and the nation resulted from measuring African gendered and sexual norms against European conventions during the colonial era (Aarmo, 1999: 268-9 cited in Morgan & Reid, 2003: 376). Naming this difference as the pathologised English definition of 'homosexuality' meant that forms of same-sex desire that were not traditionally demonised and accepted under certain conditions of kinship in African cultures that relied on a social script of silence, became openly vilified (Epprecht, 2008: 9; Morgan & Reid, 2003: 378; Morrissey, 2013: 80). European and later Afrikaaner settler laws criminalised same-sex desire using justifications which Africans did not deem as indigenous to the continent, but as a Western import unintelligible to their

languages of gender and sexual identities not centred on the corporeal body and sexuality, but on a set of context-specific relations (Gunkel, 2010: 2; Reddy, 2001: 83 cited in van Zyl, 2005: 236). This historical background is where the ties to same-sex desire as an 'UnAfrican' byproduct of Western imperialism and the normalisation of "queer lives…being taken at a rapid pace" as a recurring theme find expression in contemporary conceptions of grievability in South Africa that confront "a specific exploitation of targeted populations, of lives that are not quite lives cast as "destructible" and "ungrievable" as an injustice (Butler, 2009a: 31; Mbembe, 2003: 161).

Where activists protested the assault and murder of Andile under #AmINext, they challenged the prevailing nationalist discourses of queer identities and sexualities as the antithesis to nation-building. They uprooted the assumptions of gender-based violence as solely targeting cis-gendered women who are made grievable in the public sphere. The tweets acknowledge the normalisation of violence against queer bodies by underscoring that who may live and who is vulnerable to sanctioned death is a political preoccupation:

> Dear Homophobes. It is heart breaking and sad to try explaining myself. I only chose my partner and to be happy. I WAS BORN GAY. This is the only life I know. You can choose to ignore me. BUT PLEASE DON'T KILL QUEER NATION IYOOOOO....AOWA HLE #AmiNext (April 18, 2021).

The above tweet references killing the "queer nation" for being born gay and living "the only life I know" affirms the grievability of queer individuals as citizens belonging to a reimagined nation where queer lives matter, and the recognition of that grievability when queer people are victims of gender-based violence. The authority to define and implement socially constructed difference lies in the power of political elites, and instrumentalising difference as a mode of governance to distinguish between populations was a strategy from the advent of the nation-state to regulate, manage and maintain life and affirm modernity. These tools for ordering citizens are used to decide which categories of life are expendable, disposable and can be extinguished to maximise 'valuable' lives and serve a purpose giving it political meaning (Mbembe, 2003: 163). Gender-based violence is just one of the devices of social and political control that relies on evaluating the value of life to render some bodies in a state of sanctioned vulnerability (precarity) that produces the severe inequities present in the nation-state (Butler, 2009a). As Butler (2009a: 31) argues, bodies bearing the brunt of this precarity

are reduced to ungrievability by their lives being perceived as not conforming to the culturally recognisable forms of humanity (white, cis-gendered, heterosexual, able-bodied) necessary to form institutions and be considered valuable:

> They are cast as threats of life as we know it rather than as living populations in need of protection from illegitimate state violence, famine, or pandemics. Consequently, when such lives are lost they are not grievable ' since, in the twisted logic that rationalizes their death, the loss of such populations is deemed necessary to protect the lives of "the living."

The nation-state, conceived in South Africa after the transitional period in the 1990s, was established to introduce all South African people as free, rational, rights-bearing citizens participating in the global capitalist market economy as a democracy. This feature of modernity represented a commitment to the growing dominant lens of human rights law of which "'[r]espect for homosexuals is regarded as a "litmus test" for human rights in ... democratic societies'" (Reddy, 2001: 83 cited in van Zyl, 2005: 236). But history is a hard thing to shake. The makeup of South African society, fragile from centuries of gendered and racialised oppression, remained deeply fragmented with conflicting ideas shaped by "'alternative modernities" about who is considered South African and under what conditions is still considered a primary political problem despite the omnipresence of the Constitution (Comaroff, 2001: 64 cited in van Zyl, 2005: 232). On the one hand, South Africa's transition positioned the country in the global community that prioritises "the liberal ethos of universal human rights, of free, autonomous citizenship, of individual entitlement human rights" as the prerequisites for those that are recognised as 'legitimate' nations with sexuality and sexual orientation superficially being regarded as indivisible, inalienable rights (Comaroff, 2001: 64 cited in van Zyl, 2005: 232). On the other hand, the political elite of the new South African democracy is informed by the same African nationalism shaped by postcolonialism and the largely masculinist anti-apartheid movement that aimed to reclaim the distortion of 'authentic' South African values by white supremacy and the desire to return to the perceived traditional values of the heterosexual, nuclear, family with distinct gender roles "assertive of group rights, of ethnic sovereignty, of primordial cultural connection"(Comaroff: 2001: 64 cited in van Zyl, 2005: 232; Morgan & Wieringa, 2005 cited in Morrissey, 2013: 75).

The violence against queer people as individuals who do not abide by the dominant cultural understanding of heteronormativity as a prerequisite for the rights-bearing citizen in postcolonial South Africa is central to this nationalist schism. The tension present between performing obligatory modernity and nostalgia to return to the 'real' South African identity that never truly existed but was manufactured through colonialism represents the limitation of Constitutional democracy in a complex condition where "a person's rights are not unitary and are always balanced against other people's rights, set against a background of struggles for hegemonic dominance" (Morgan & Wieringa, 2005 cited in Morrissey, 2013: 75; van Zyl, 2005: 224). Gender-based violence is a significant by-product of these contextual and historical social norms built over time that render some lives as valid South Africans and others as illegitimate and ungrievable and therefore permissible to violate because of the perceived threat to 'the family' of the nation-state struggling to define who it is against who it (perceives) it is not (Butler, 2009a: 42; Morrissey, 2013: 75).

3.3. QUEER RESISTANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND STRUGGLES FOR GRIEVABILITY

Collections of tweets by activists that mobilised against the murder of Andile reflect a queer resistance to gender-based violence enabled by social media technologies previously unavailable in the arsenal of organising against GBV. The #JusticeForLulu movement on Twitter generated an offline protest in Cape Town where queer activists marched from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology to Parliament on 17 April 2021, and similarly to the #AmINext offline protest two years prior, handed a memorandum to Parliament to address the lack of progress in implementing the 2018 Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill and to adjust the Bill for inclusivity of crimes not currently considered as hate crimes.

One of the organisers of the demonstration addressing the media outside Parliament, queer activist Tutu Zondo (Charles, 2021), said:

> There is not one emotion that we are feeling, and I speak not only for myself but for the collective that's here. We are scared and we are angry. We are grieving and are in mourning. Our history has been ignored for too long. We have been erased and we feel these emotions.

Zondo's description of the affects that evoke responses to Andile's death and the institutional marginalisation of queer individuals references "we are grieving and are in mourning", which becomes inextricably linked to the use of grievability in #AmINext. This reference to the life and death of queer individuals and its links to digital protest forms a resistance to gendered violence against queer people and the invisibility of queer resistance to marginalisation. Visible queer identities destabilise prescribed gendered norms and roles, and the comprehension of queer lives as grievable is a resistance to gender-based violence as a punishing scheme for subverting these norms. Social media enables counterhegemonic discourses to mobilise protest offline, with such tweets in #AmINext using grievability to incite political action against the murder of Andile:

> YOUR VOICE MATTERS NOW MORE THAN EVER, WE NEED TO SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT! OUR COMMUNITY IS UNDER ATTACK AND WE NEED TO STAND TOGETHER! Its Time!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! #queerlivesmatter #queervisibility #StopHomophobia #StopKillingUs #AmINext #GLITTERKISSES (April 21, 2021).

Historically, the voices of queer identities and sexuality were marginalised through the propagation of colonial myths to the extent that these communities only emerged as distinct political identities in South Africa during the height of anti-apartheid activism in the 1960s (Jara & Lapinsky, 1998: 53 cited in van Zyl, 2005: 233). Apartheid legislation as a colonial prototype repressed any behaviours that fell outside the white, heteronormative and patriarchal gaze of Afrikaner nationalism, with punitive laws against homosexuality described as vague "immoral, indecent or unnatural acts" in terms so broad that [the state] would have been empowered to harass private social events and to imprison errant men and women for up to three years." (Epprecht, 2001: 1094). The criminalisation of same-sex desire and gender-diverse identities during apartheid constructed queer bodies as non-human and ungrievable. The division of the private and public spheres kept discourses about sexuality, sexual orientation or gender sequestered in the confines of the home and therefore, issues of marginalisation at the intersections of queer identity and gender-based violence were firmly rooted in invisibility and silence in the public sphere (Posel, 2005: 128).

The women's movements discussed in the previous analysis chapter, and the resistance of LGBTQ+ activists are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Suppose it is generally understood that all oppressions are linked and not isolated from one another and that the heterogenous

nature of women's movements has a diverse set of aims and is organised around a range of identities with the purpose of gender transformation. In that case, these movements have several overlaps and connections even when they make distinct contributions. Dominant women's movements in South Africa were historically bound to the ideals of the national liberation struggle, and those values were decidedly heteronormative (Hames, 2003). There was a struggle to see the intersections of sexuality and gender and their expression in different women's lives because of the idealised image of the 'mother of the nation' within women's movements that cast politically active women (despite their militancy) as displaying and performing normative gender roles, automatically heterosexual, and the responsible for couching the cultural identity of the nuclear family through reproducing the nation. As a result, LGBTQ+ movements were isolated from forming alliances and coalitions with dominant women's movements and virtually all prominent social movements within the anti-apartheid networks that were decidedly heteronormative and committed to a vision of nationalism that carried traditionalist tropes of sexuality and gender.

The LGBTQ+ rights movements in South Africa then emerged from the need to formally recognise the persecution of queer identities in the political agenda of the anti-apartheid movement and organise around including the right to sexual orientation and sexuality in the Equality Clause in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution (Cock, 2003: 36; Gevisser & Cameron 1994; Murray, 1998). As queer identities were criminalised and severely stigmatised even within dominant civil rights movements, LGBTQ+ organisations sought to highlight the connection between all oppressions in South Africa without assuming racialised oppression as the primary mode of discrimination (Gevisser & Cameron, 1994; Hames, 2003: 2; Murray, 1998; Palmber 1999 cited in Epprecht, 2001: 1094; Van Zyl, 2005: 231). In this way, queer mobilisation sought to be included in the lens of grievability in the same ways that grievability for Black lives was advocated for by anti-apartheid movements and became a political prerogative where "what is at stake are communities not quite recognised as such, subjects who are living, but not yet regarded as 'lives'" and the connection between those communities by systems of domination that create conditions of precarity and solidarity against this vulnerability (Butler, 2009a: 32).

In 1972, the South African Gay Liberation Movement established at the then University of Natal-Durban became the first mass coordinated effort at an LGBTQ+ movement in South

Africa (Epprecht, 2001: 1094). However, the movement's propensity towards non-racialism and non-partisan politics failed to recognise the intersectionality of queer lives (Epprecht, 2001: 1095). With the South African Gay Liberation Movement leader's apathy towards the racialised oppression of apartheid, the Rand Gay Organisation comprising Black LGBTQ+ activists and the Lesbian and Gays Against Oppression of "white radicals" merged to form the Gay and Lesbian Organization of the Witwatersrand (GLOW) as a distinctly political movement (Epprecht, 2001: 1095). GLOW tactically integrated itself with political organisations, including the UDF and the ANC to leverage socialist discourses to support the inclusion of LGBTQ+ issues in these political organisations (Cock, 2003: 36; Epprecht, 2001: 1095; Thoreson, 2008: 680). LGBTQ+ movements increasingly became embedded in the anti-apartheid movement. Through strategic advocacy that relied on lobbying for legislative rights, the activism of the National Coalition of Gay and Lesbian Equality (NGCLE) formed in 1994, and in recognition of the contributions of LGBTQ+ activists in the liberation movement, the sexual orientation clause was included in the Constitution despite pushback (Cock, 2003: 36; Gibson & Macleod, 2012: 5; Epprecht, 2001: 1095; Jara & Lapinsky, 1998: 52 cited in van Zyl, 2005: 232).

The inclusion of the Equality Clause in the Bill of Rights directly resulted from the activism of LGBTQ+ movements who tactically forefronted their objectives in anti-apartheid campaigns (Hassim, 1999: 6; Van Zyl, 2005: 232). However, because the LGBTQ+ movements content and form were predominantly a struggle for inclusive legal rights, "the terrain of struggle for rights has moved largely from the political organisations and movements to legal subjects" and gender-based violence against queer individuals in public spaces as disciplining mechanism and within the invisibilised, everyday experiences in the domestic sphere especially were left out of the fray in ways that have marginalised gendered violence queer individuals as irrelevant (Lister, 2003: 136 cited in van Zyl, 2005: 227-232). Outside of the critical gains for legal recognition and tactically lobbying in courts over the negotiated sexual and gender rights in the Constitution being weaponised by conservative, religious groups and smaller political parties, the LGBT movement remained side-lined (Jara & Lapinsky, 1998: 52 cited in van Zyl, 2005: 232). This was a result of lasting legacies of the spatial nature of apartheid that racialised public spaces made organising a collaborative movement challenging, and the movements were primarily dominated by white, middle-class masculinities in urban areas

inaccessible to the majority who minimised class, race and location as drivers of discrimination against queer individuals (Cock, 2003; 36; Croucher, 2011; Gibson & Macleod, 2012: 5; Morgan & Reid, 2003: 376). This lack of cohesion and the inability to garner continued solidarity from most political organisations meant that queer resistance to gender-based violence took a backseat to the battles of contestation over sexual rights as an avenue for recourse.

This is exacerbated by campaigns for inclusion and diversity, such as Pride, originally a commemorative event to honour the Stonewall Riots in the late 1960s in New York that sparked retaliation against police brutality and was first initiated in South Africa in the late 1990s. Because of the dominant discursive terrain of same-sex desire as unAfrican and homosexuality viewed as only experienced by white, cis-gendered men, Pride is largely inaccessible to marginalised genders across race and class who encounter significant socio-economic barriers in these spaces (Morrissey, 2012: 75). One activist in #AmINext highlighted this discrepancy as one of the underlying challenges of confronting the cultural perceptions of gender, sexuality and location that construct queer lives as ungrievable and therefore viable targets of gender-based violence:

> The Queer feels unsafe in SA and I can safely blame it on the Pride March/celebrations being done in big cities only. #JusticeForLulu #GBV #AmINext #AllLivesMatter #TransRightsAreHumanRights #sexualassaultawarenessmonth (April 16, 2021).

Because Andile lived in an area where the large-scale advocacy of Pride is untouched, and the reach of this advocacy only permeates the central regions of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, activists' tweets highlight that it was not his context and location itself that induced a social vulnerability, but prevailing structures that enable it. These tweets refute the common myth perpetuated by the public sphere that crime and interpersonal violence only happen in poor Black communities by poor Black men and instead turn the lens to a political situation where these communities are excluded in profound geographical ways that reflect the disproportionate ungrievability of Black, working-class queer lives living in historically disenfranchised areas. As one activist tweeted:

> As #LGBTQ people in many parts of the world celebrate the beginning of #PrideMonth #SouthAfrican #LGBTQIA people ask: #AmINext in light of the ongoing horrific murders

of members of the community. When is this hate going to end? It must end! #NoHate #nohateneededjustlove (June 1, 2021).

This may also suggest that initiatives such as Pride do nothing to radically transform the conditions of queer lives nor adequately address the differences within the queer community that impact how queer lives experience grievability differently. These variations have significant consequences for the constructions of grievability in the public sphere between queer individuals in ways that reflect earlier conditions of the LGBT movement that side-lined gender-based violence against queer individuals as a political imperative in favour of mobilising for representation. Where Pride is in the public sphere, and representative of only a particular kind of queer individual that fits normative descriptors of the South African citizen, the intervention of #JusticeForLulu under #AmINext as a rhetorical question of grievability forms a feminist digital counterpublic to these descriptors by making visible marginalised queer lives who do not benefit from the limited advocacy of initiatives like Pride and are still pathologised in their communities.

3.4. CONTEMPORARY QUEER RESISTANCE TO GBV

During the #FeesMustFall movement in 2016, the UCT Trans Collective was formed as a countermovement against the erasure of trans feminists within the Fallist agenda whose contributions built the basis for the movement. One of the more prominent interventions of the UCT Trans Collective was the disruption of the Rhodes Must Fall exhibition "Echoing Voices from Within". The art exhibition featured only three images of trans activists amid a visual onslaught of the heterosexual, masculinist leaders of the movement, some of whom were accused of sexual assault within their movement, including Chumani Maxwele. Trans activists, including HeJin Kim, Nigel Patel, Sandile Ndelu, and Thato Pule, engaged with naked protest as a decolonial practice to critique what they said was hypocritical and unethical ways of archiving the movement. They smeared red paint on their bodies and the framed photographs in the exhibition as a protest, with placards posted over the photos reading, "We will not have our bodies, faces, names, and voices used as bait for public applause" and "RMF will not tokenise our presence as if they ever treasured us as part of their movement" (Hendricks, 2016). The resistance of the UCT Trans Collective to the gendered violence of erasure within political movements pulls into focus the silencing of queer lives in the public

sphere that demands violence to be physical to be visible, and that has meant discussions of queer lives at the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation who experience multiple forms of violence both epistemic and physical are side-lined, as one activist in #AmINext reflects on this continuum, "The struggle of the LGBTQI community continues. Alutha Continua. #no2homophobia #AmINext" (April 22, 2021).

As mentioned, the visibility and legal gains of queer individuals received widespread condemnation from religious and anti-feminist movements that reflect global trends of fundamentalism, conservativism and nationalism (Jara & Lapinsky, 1998: 52 cited in Van Zyl, 2005: 232; Morgan & Reid, 2003: 376). This is because of the tension between the perceptions of same-sex desire as a Western import with no place in the traditional South African identity and "to claim rights around sexual orientation, Westernized identities of homosexuality have to be adopted, while Africanized behaviours and practices continue to be marginalised and people ostracised from homophobic communities" (Van Zyl, 2005: 244). Anti-queer discourses proliferated by right-wing Christian groups and minority political organisations are justified by these groups using the narrative of the 'duty' of real citizens to reproduce the nation and preserve the family and use the stereotype of queer individuals never genuinely being able to marry or to "promote kinship ties, understood to be the point of marriage" (Reid, 2010: 41). As Reid (2010: 41 cited in Moreau, 2017: 208) citing this justification by religious groups argues:

> As children are the "embodiment and confirmation of family alliances," gay marriage cannot "bring two families together"…Same-sex sexuality also challenges gender roles because marriage between a man and woman and reproduction by a woman are necessary to the definition of these roles.

Uyinene was grieved because of her status as a cis-gendered woman who represented an aspiration of the 'traditional' South African identity where women are still revered as mothers and reproducers, and outrage in the public sphere is expressed when gender-based violence ruptures the potential of the family. Victims of gender-based violence in the public discourse are only perceived as being capable of victimhood if they are regarded as a grievable life and a 'recognisable' citizen whose life had political meaning in the first place. Queer individuals mourned in the #AmINext counterpublic do not illicit rage in the public sphere because of their perceived gendered and sexual unintelligibility that disrupts conventional aspects of

mothering, family, and kinship necessary for citizen recognition in South Africa. In disrupting these narratives, activists conceive of a different perspective and a feminist reading of family and kinship by referencing the 'queer nation' as its socio-political site of belonging that appeals to the grievability of queer individuals who are embedded in unique family and kinship structures:

> We say Rest in Peace to yet another Queer body, we are just waiting to find out who will is next coz clearly these are targeted attacks. It could be me next, it could be you a Queer individual or it could be your Queer friend or close Queer family member. #AmINext #RIPLonwabo (April 18, 2021).

Despite the significant gains strategically won by queer activists, the political question of the grievability of queer lives and the sustained violence against queer individuals reflects deep-seated perceptions of same-sex desire and masculinities and femininities that destabilise gendered binaries. But as with the case of Andile, queer individuals are still penalised in everyday lived experiences of marginalisation; for example, one user tweets: "We continue to die at the hands of hateful people. When will it stop? Will we ever live without fear? #AmINext #BlackQueerLivesMatter #SenzeniNa" (April 20, 2021) as a way of affirming the continued assault on queer bodies that has an enduring history in the country. This violence is unrecognised specifically as gender-based violence because of how queer bodies have been constructed as ungrievable. Activists highlight the contradictions of systematic violence against queer people and the tenets in the Constitution as orchestrated attempts to reclaim a form of nationalism that ties back to South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid that categorises gender and sexual identities that do not conform to heteronormativity as problematic to the continued survival of a nation, as one user puts it:

> @GovernmentZA and @PresidencyZA have NEVER prioritized the LGBTIQA+ or the issues they face! Yes they (ANC) have allowed us our rights in a Constitution, but living the experience is different! They are failing us! #queerlivesmatter #StopKillingUs #AmINext #glitterkisses (April 22, 2021).

The unrecognition of the violence against queer individuals who "continue to die at the hands of hateful people" as gender-based violence is sewn into the making of grievable bodies in South Africa and inextricably linked to the making of citizenship and the invisibilisation of queer lives in the public sphere who "do not appear as "lives," but as the threat to life (a living

figure that figures the threat to life)" where queer individuals are disciplined through gender-based violence in ways that are not recognised as such in the public discourse (Butler, 2009a: 42).

Andile's story generated attention in mainstream media through #JusticeForLulu and the march to Parliament and sparked an increase in reporting of gendered violence against queer individuals. Though this increase in coverage could be argued to bolster awareness of the extent of assaults against queer individuals, it also has a contradictory effect. Framing violence as random spates of crime and unrelated to gender-based violence through selecting specific individuals and only the most extreme acts of violence over other forms and instances of violence against queer people "reflect an approach by media practitioners that this kind of violence is isolated from the heteronormative society in which we live; that homophobia and heteronormativity are not linked" (Sanger, 2010: 120). During April 2021, several stories of gender-based violence targeting queer Black men were reported suggesting April was a specific month of random acts of violence without contextualising gendered violence as systemic and hinged on historical constructions of grievability.

One such story is of Sphamandla Khoza, a 35-year-old Black queer man from Ntuzuma, eThekwini in Kwazulu-Natal, who was stabbed to death and found in a sewerage maintenance hole a week before the discovery of Andile's murder. Sphamandla's shoes were placed at the front gate of his home as an apparent signal that the violence was intentional, with Khoza's cousin, Ndumiso Daluxolo Ngidi, saying he was attacked by men within his community whom he knew. In similar ways to #JusticeForLulu, which had a distinct legal dimension to recognise the ungrievability of queer lives that make violence possible, #RIPSpha was a call to the mourn queer lives that addressed the underlying narratives of gender-based violence against queer individuals:

> THERE IS A WAR AGAINST QUEER BODIES IN SOUTH AFRICA! THERE IS A WAR AGAINST QUEER BODIES IN SOUTH AFRICA! THERE IS A WAR AGAINST QUEER BODIES IN SOUTH AFRICA! THERE IS A WAR AGAINST QUEER BODIES IN SOUTH AFRICA! ...nobody cares#AmINext #RIPSpokgoane #RIPLulu #RIPSpha (April 15, 2021).

The same week, 39-year-old Nathaniel Mbete, also known as Spokgoane, was stabbed in a tavern in Tshirela, near Vanderbijlpark in Gauteng. Following similar patterns from the Andile and Sphamandla cases, Spokgoane was a Black queer man from a township and historically

marginalised location, murdered by another man with whom he had an existing relationship. Activists circulated #RIPSpokgoane in similar ways to publicly grieve his untimely loss to gender-based violence:

> It's not even about The person's Sexual Orientation anymore what I'm trying to understand is what right do you have to take another person's life regardless of whether they're straight or Gay. You have no right to take someone's life period! This needs to stop. #RIPSpokgoane (April 15, 2021).
>
> I don't even know what to say anymore the lack of humanity, the lack of knowledge. AmINext 🌈🌈🌈🌈 #RIPSpokgoane (April 15, 2021).

As in the above tweets, activists make an inextricable link between life, death and sexual orientation as neither random nor neutral but as the foundations of political life by highlighting gender-based violence as a mechanism of power "to take another person's life". These tweets assert the grievability of queer victims of gendered violence and subvert the public discourses about violence against queer people. Analysing these tweets, activists who contend with their precarity also affirm that their sanctioned death through systematic marginalisation has meaning and significance because of the inherent value of all life and therefore can be mourned: "In case I die unexpectedly, or before my time, I want you to know that I've lived a full and good life. #AmINext" (April 19, 2021), defying the ways that queer people's lives have been constructed as 'ungrievable' in the building of modern nation-states via gendered norms of respectability, moral panics and hierarchies of difference.

Queer resistance to gender-based violence at the intersections of race, gender, class and sexuality is far less documented than the mobilisation of LGBTIAQ+ organisations to claim sexual orientation and sexuality as human rights imperatives during South Africa's transition. From organising around solely around practical legislative struggles in the 1980s and 1990s within the national liberation struggle to claims over the erasure within the public sphere in the new South Africa, queer mobilising has found new resonance in the feminist digital counterpublic through exercising the political power of grief as a way of countering narratives that enable gender-based violence against queer individuals and as a point of departure from organising around litigation and instead mobilising for the mourning of queer lives as a claim for full citizenship.

3.5. THE COMMODIFICATION OF QUEER BODIES – THE NARRATIVE OF HATE CRIMES

This discussion has focused on the resistance by queer individuals against gender-based violence under #AmINext. It follows stories of crimes that involve graphic, physical violence against queer Black men by other men known to them in their communities. The focus on visible crimes and centre the body as a site of violence at the expense of different forms of daily violence that are not as visible can be traced to how queer lives are made ungrievable when framed as hate crimes. In the most simplistic terms, to hate something implies an affective response, desire or indifference towards its destruction, "which means that we do not feel the same horror and outrage over the loss of their lives" (Butler, 2009a: 42). Grief only becomes possible for those we love and those whom we value, whom we must necessarily protect from those we hate. Therefore, the label of hate crimes reduces the gendered violence against queer individuals to a state of ungrievability because of the framing of 'hate' as a decontextualised, individualised and justified response to perceived gendered and sexual difference. Activists in #AmINext do two things with the discourse of hate crimes: they both reinforce the idea that centring the body gives stories credibility and currency in the public sphere and may use the term hate crime as an advocacy tool to amplify awareness even when it may replicate harm, but they also discursively uproot the framing of hate crimes in the public sphere that commodifies violence against queer bodies through the selective circulation of content with a hyperfocus on the sensational violence itself rather than its cause, by displacing the ambiguity of what motivates these crimes and naming it as gender-based violence:

> And we are being harassed, abused, violated, and raped. When do ya'll stop? This is another evidence of how real homophobia in South Africa. #JusticeForAndileZondi #GayLivesMatter #AmINext #JusticeForAndileZondi #JusticeForAndileZondi #JusticeForAndileZondi (October 6, 2021).

I am interested in the collections of tweets that address the specific violence of gender-based violence against queer individuals by naming it as assault, harassment, abuse, violation and rape as opposed to the public sphere narratives of 'hate crimes' or 'LGBT-related crimes' with no connection to this violence as motivated by cisheteropatriarchy and heteronormativity.

One such feature of hate crimes that gained prominence in the early 2000s has had profound consequences for how violence against queer individuals is commonly understood in South Africa as a stripping of grievability. Violence against queer individuals, predominantly documented as Black lesbian women, emerged in the public sphere under the discourse of corrective rape in early post-apartheid (Nkambule, 2018: 10). Black lesbian women challenge gendered norms of womanhood and are perceived as permissible to discipline through a "public discourse [that] constructs black lesbian women as being deviant, due to their perceived gender and sexual nonconformity" and therefore ungrievable (Morrissey, 2013 cited in Stephens & Boonzaier, 2020: 328). Because these groups subvert the view of the 'idealised' South African identity that is heterosexual and femininities that comply with normative gender roles, rape and sexual violence is used as a tool of terror for "the purpose of supposedly 'curing' a person of their real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity" and to maintain the racialised and gendered status quo (Isaack, 2007: 2 cited in Thomas, 2013: 5). Gender-based violence is used to perform violent masculinity and police and surveil marginalised sexualities into compliance, but the term corrective rape "implies that if lesbians performed their sexuality 'correctly', within the appropriate bounds defined by patriarchy, they would not be subject to sexual violence" in ways that ignore how rape is always a "hetero-patriarchal policing of sexuality and gender" (Judge, 2017:68; Thomas, 2013: 5).

Black lesbian women at the nexus of racialised, gendered and sexual marginalisation are perceived to represent non-compliance to gendered norms of heterosexual reproduction and dominant ideas of femininity and womanhood that subvert the making of women in the nation (Thomas, 2013: 5). These historical underpinnings have come to sanction the gendered and sexual violence of Black lesbian woman that constructs victims of gendered violence as ungrievable through the categorisation of hate crime and corrective rape. By commodifying the stories of Black lesbian women who have been victims of gendered and sexual violence, the public discourse only views Black lesbian women through a lens of perpetual victimhood, fear and risk, obscuring the other ways Black lesbian women experience violence but also their complex lived experiences that are not defined by it in neat and simplistic ways (Judge, 2017:78 cited in Reid, 2018: 3; Thomas, 2013: 5).

Gendered violence is also experienced by multiple genders across race, class and ethnicity whose stories are not generated in the public discourse, and by only paying attention to gender-based violence when it can be framed as a hate crime and corrective rape, violence in the private sphere experienced by all types of masculinities and femininities stays invisibilised.

> #SueAnnKlaasen as much as I am afraid to be a WOMXN in South Africa, I also can't be an openly Lesbian. Because #MenAreTrash feel entitled to think that raping a lesbian will make her straight. I survived the first, wat if I won't be lucky again. #AskAMan #AmINext (September 12, 2019).

SueAnn Klaasen was a Coloured 21-year-old lesbian woman from Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape who was sexually assaulted by a group of men in her community in September 2019 during the #AmINext protests against Uyinene's assault and murder. SueAnn died by suicide five days after being hospitalised for a prescription drug overdose. Where activists express rage at the death of SueAnn as a direct result of her sexual assault, the discourses of 'correctional rape' seek to gain credibility and currency in the public discourse, whereas tweets that express grievability as an affect contextualise gendered violence against queer women as rape connected to cisheteropatriarchal norms and modes of discipline enforced through violence:

> In South Africa, being a woman or being queer is not only about #AmInext its a matter or when am I next... And the only thing government wants to entertain is its own corruption... I'm shattered (June 18, 2021).

The media, in particular, tends to individualise gendered crimes as sporadic and unconnected by framing gendered violence against queer people as 'hate crimes' *because* of their sexuality. These categories of crimes in the public discourse have come to assume violence enacted against gendered minorities is motivated by hate against a particular discriminated group because of what this group represents and perpetuate justifications for gender-based violence that fail to explore the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and class that are concomitant motivators and drivers of violence shaped by historical constructions of these categories of difference. The term 'hate crime' and its variations are, therefore, an ambiguous term that obscures everyday, structural and private manifestations of violence against queer people, including intimate partner violence between queer individuals as a form of gender-based violence.

The one-dimensional perspective of hate crimes means the narratives circulated in the public discourse rarely critically analyse the causes of gender-based violence against queer communities and reinforce that queer sexualities and gender identities are assumed to be transgressive and non-conformist, and gendered violence is inevitable: “At this point I have no words to express how sore, distraught and defeated I feel by the femicide in this country. Rest in peace #SueAnnKlaasen” (September 12, 2019).

Activists highlight stories of gendered violence that counter popular myths about queer individuals and their relationship to gender-based violence by emphasising the grievability of lives that are considered ungrievable, as in the above tweet that places and names SueAnn’s death as a form of femicide when placed in context. Interestingly, there is no designated hate crime category for the murder of queer individuals, whereas one exists for femicide as the deliberate killing of women. Activists remain defiant of these narratives, in tweets that make an argument that sanctioned death cannot subvert or undo the realities of queer identity, nor does it negate queer lives as intelligible: “#AmINext killing me won't make me ungay #LGBTQIAgang” (April 22, 2021) and “We are powerful and we coming for everything that you bitches said we will never be and will never have. Killing us will not erase US🏳🌈✊ #justiceforqueersa” (April 25 2021) assert the queer grievability in this way.

Activists call for the grievability of queer lives by asserting that though death is aimed at the extinction of queer people, queer lives are lives that are lived and are therefore grievable. Not only does the public discourse of corrective rape as the only form of gender-based violence keeps Black lesbian women ideologically frozen in a state of perpetual victimhood without attention to the complexity of their lived experiences, but it also seeks to obscure the multiple forms of violence across femininities and masculinities, including violence against trans men and women and non-binary people.

> the power of #aminext comes in its ability to personify (and thus make grievable) target persons and populations. It’s not that the hashtag makes one empathize with another social position, but instead that it makes such empathy possible through personification against ideology (December 24, 2021).

The above tweets allude to the ability of #AmINext to mobilise “empathy possible through personification against ideology” by using grievability to displace dominant narratives of hate

crimes by making the connection between the particularities of power in South African society to decide who is 'nobody until they are killed' and 'taking away the freedom to live' as the concealed justification for gendered violence against queer individuals.

3.6. CONCLUSION

Where rage as an affect could galvanise certain bodies and ostensibly exclude others in the resistance to gender-based violence in the previous section, another significant theme in #AmINext is the negotiating of grievability. This chapter has described grievability as a socially constituted interaction involving public performances of mourning individuals and groups of people that are not explicitly remembered or grieved in the public discourse as a "presupposition for the life that matters" (Butler, 2009a: 8). Its affective use in #AmINext reinscribes the boundaries of citizenship and foregrounds victims of gender-based violence on the margins who do not fit the normative descriptors and codes of grievable bodies. Tweets by activists disrupted the prolific discourses of gender-based violence as a singular form of physical violence solely enacted against cis-gendered women. Their discursive interaction with the hashtag inserted a queer resistance to gender-based violence in the public discourse, asserting the grievability of queer lives that matter but that which are constructed as unmournable victims of 'hate crimes'.

Activists who protest against gendered violence targeting queer individuals affirm queer subjectivities by expanding the recognition of queer lives who only appear in mainstream media, and the public sphere it is informed by, as subjugated 'special victims' of 'hate crimes' and not as complete individuals with complex lived experiences positioned on the margins in ways that are always fluctuating, "open-ended, fluid and constantly in a process of being constructed and reconstructed as the subject moves from one social situation to another, resulting in a self that is highly fragmented and context-dependent" (Mkhize, et al., 2010: 15; Zegeye, 2001: l cited in van Zyl, 2005: 236). In this way, grievability problematises the hierarchy of 'deserving' victims of gender-based violence.

The above discussion centred grievability as an affect that uses grief as a political tool of resistance against gendered violence targeting queer communities. Through the regulation and enforcement of binary gender in the division of the public and private spheres during colonialism and apartheid, the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and sexual orientation

and location became the political terrain on which boundaries of citizenship and nation-building are wrought through the policing mechanism of gender-based violence. The struggle for grievability as a site of defining the full citizen in South Africa is placed at the forefront in #AmINext when queer victims of gendered violence are sidelined in the public discourse only as hate crimes because violence against queer individuals is framed as permissible.

The extension of #AmINext to protest gendered violence against queer individuals represents a significant shift in how the hashtag was used for Uyinene, Precious, Sinethemba and Nosicebo in response to the pervasive culture of violence against women to include conversations on the erasure of queer lives in generating the same public outrage and to assert the grievability of queer victims of gendered violence. As Hugo Canham (2021: 305) argues, "mourning is a queer feeling because it is an affect that is out of time", and the insistence of activists to recognise queer lives as always grievable ties into the discussions of affects as the building blocks of feminist digital counterpublics. The negotiations and claims to citizenship through the online protesting against gender-based violence this research is concerned with form a spectrum of resistance against gender-based violence articulated in #AmINext that disrupts narratives of hate crimes. Where the hashtag has a thematic scope of grievability, it complicates rage as a given for all victims of gendered violence. It disrupts the gender essentialism of grieved bodies, destabilising discourses of 'hate crimes' and 'corrective rape' as rationales for gender-based violence.

4. CONCLUSION

The digital interventions of #AmINext form part of South Africa's long history of organising against forms of gendered violence. It represents the contemporary nature of "protests within protests", where feminist activists use digital media to coordinate these movements (Maluleke & Moyer, 2020: 872). This research investigated the mobilisation of affects to protest against GBV and femicide within the #AmINext movement as integral to contemporary feminist movements. It examined how these affects provoked an intimacy between feminist activists that destabilises traditional avenues of public participation and protest as the potential to map new ways of political mobilisation that overlap with existing forms of protest against gender-based violence. Activists enraged by gendered violence and mourning for the lives it extinguishes can share values, beliefs and visions produced by gendered inequality in ways conventionally pushed out of mainstream public discourses.

It used a thematic analysis of tweets within the #AmINext movement to identify what motivates activists to use emotionally-charged narratives to counter discourses to gendered violence and provoke protest action. It drew parallels between feminist hashtag activism as just one iteration of women's movements and LGBTQ+ organising by tracing the deployment of affects connected to different stories of gendered violence that were less prominent in the public sphere. Its conceptual framework lays the groundwork for interrogating how activists contextualise their rage, fear, pain and grief and the ability of feminist digital counterpublics to not only centre the stories of different women and marginalised genders but draws the connections and disjuncture's between them as they occupy different locations and contexts within similar systems of nationalism and cisheteropatriarchy in South Africa. To show these patterns, I situated feminist hashtag activism against gender-based violence within broader discourses of nationalism and citizenship in South Africa as a potential bridge for transnational dialogues on systems of gendered violence on the continent and globally.

This research demonstrated that emotions work to generate and sustain counter-discourses in feminist movements online by evoking outrage for violence against women and grievability for violence against queer individuals, Where anger was expressed at Uyinene Mrwetyana's sexual assault and murder because of a social position that made her grievable in the public sphere, in the feminist digital counterpublic, this research argued activists' engaged a feminist

rage against the underlying justifications for GBV and femicide stemming from a colonial perception of gender that emboldens violent masculinities to commit the highest acts of brutality against all marginalised genders. The analysis section on rage showed how activists reconstruct the idea of 'knowing your place' in a gendered and racialised ordering of postcolonial society. Activists engaged with feminist rage to resist a colonial conception of women's bodies as property and reframed perceptions of women's bodies as reproducers by defying the entitlement of violent masculinities over the surveillance and control of marginalised genders and sexualities. Responses demonstrated the forms of exclusion even within feminist digital counterpublics that replicate the conditions of inclusions and exclusions within all feminist movements as heterogeneous spaces. By inserting stories of women on the margins who did not engender the same fury as Uyinene, activists within #AmINext confronted the assumptions of GBV and femicide and who this paradigm of violence targets. This analysis chapter, therefore, argued that Uyinene was a catalyst for the movement. Still, her specific social location enabled proximity to her story and rendered her grievable and mournable in the public sphere. In contrast, other stories of gendered violence evoke different responses when they do not express the same levels of proximity and, therefore, evoke diverse political reactions for lives living on the margins.

The second analysis chapter threaded the connections between feminist rage and queer grievability by tracing how ungrievable bodies are constructed against colonial conceptions of sexuality and non-conformist performances of femininities and masculinities. The struggle for LGBTIAQ+ movements to gain a foothold in dominant conversations about GBV and the murder of queer individuals as a form of gendered violence is integral to the affects that carried #AmINext. This chapter discussed the commodification of queer bodies only recognised in the public sphere when violence is sensationalised as 'hate crimes' without connection to cisheteropatriarchy as the norm. In this way, this study showed how #AmINext began with Uyinene's story but travelled far beyond its inception in 2019 that demonstrates it has far-reaching impacts beyond the offline protests it initially mobilised; it surfaces old and new debates within feminist movements about negotiations of power, challenging the assumption that feminist hashtag activism is ephemeral.

This research included the responses in #AmINext to the stories of Sinethemba Ndlovu, Precious Ramabulana, Nosicelo Mtebeni, Andile 'Lulu' Ntuthela, Sphamandla Khoza,

Nathaniel Mbete, and SueAnn Klaasen to show how activists engaged with the power dynamics across social location and difference to expand the mobilisation of affect against injustice as a mechanism to protest against all forms of gendered violence. It showed how the recent use of social media technologies in contemporary campaigns against gender-based violence collates online responses through hashtags that enable the organising of protests and the distribution of discourses across time and space in ways that connect experiences of gendered violence to a transnational dialogue dedicated to its dismantling. Here, the relationship between gender-based violence and nationalism that produces the division between citizens in the public and private spheres, and the strict enforcement of normative gender roles and sexuality, are reflected in the affects circulated in counterpublics that engage with the power dynamics across social and geographical locations, within movement and solidarity building against GBV.

Furthermore, this research argued that all forms of gendered violence against women and marginalised genders reveal a fracture in the public discourse between the institutional framework of the Constitution and its legislative protection of all genders and sexualities as citizens of the Republic and the material realities of these subaltern groups as citizen-subjects normalised through unequal power relations between femininities and masculinities within institutions, policies, procedures and homes. Contextualising this schism as a product of colonial legacies of how race and gender have yet to be addressed, this research examined the affective contours of these formations, how they are shaped and the oppositional knowledge they produce. Different experiences, encounters, ideas and stories of gendered violence shared within #AmINext mapped unique perspectives of how activists strategically deploy affects. It showed how activists further reject the justification of GBV as a righteous punishment for 'wayward' gender identities and sexualities in the public sphere who may not meet expectations of gendered social norms.

This research contributed to a decolonial perspective of feminist hashtag activism that allows for forms of protest that use affective intensities that defy social constructs expected of masculinities and femininities by reframing issues of gendered violence. This research, therefore, demonstrated how activists make sense of their social and political realities implicated in nation-states with histories of colonialism. The political significance of feminist hashtag activism is reflected through sequestering marginalised genders and sexualities into

the private sphere and the invalidation of the anger, pain, grief and defiance that challenge a masculinist view of nationalism that informs the public sphere. Therefore, I argued that feminist hashtag activism in postcolonial contexts such as South Africa mobilises against a colonial perception of gender norms influenced by an imperial gaze that intersects with race, ethnicity, sexuality and social and geographic locations that affects the conditions of women and marginalised genders in ways that extend past the conceptual limitations of rape culture as it is conceived in the West that ignore the unique matrices of power and contextual understanding of patriarchy embedded in manifestations of postcolonial gendered violence.

Love and hate, joy and disgust, fear and pleasure, fury and grief are intense phenomena that are not isolated or personal but deeply social experiences that have a direct impact on people's political lives and choices when triggered and deployed as political tools against injustice that reinforce unequal power relations. This research articulated the affective intensities of restless radicals who provoke the status quo, disrupt an accepted way of knowing one's place, challenge conventional organising methods, and produce oppositional knowledge to harmful public discourses on all forms of gendered violence.

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