"You Rest, You Rust:" Intergenerational constructions of rest among Black women in Johannesburg, South Africa

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MA Clinical Psychology degree at the University of Cape Town.

by

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Abstract

Over the last decade, there has been a rise in reports within mainstream media about Black women reclaiming their agency through rest. However, despite this recognized importance of rest as it relates to Black women, comparatively sparse research literature has examined this relationship. More specifically, the literature has failed to address Black women's constructions of rest in the context of the strong Black woman schema as a dominant feature of their gendered racial socialization experiences. The purpose of this study was to explore how a group of Black mothers and daughters construct their ideas and experiences of rest while navigating life within the South African context, as well as how these are negotiated from one generation to another. Drawing on a qualitative research design, four mother-daughter dyads participated in a series of eight individual interviews and four joint interviews. Black Feminist-Womanist Thought was the theoretical framework applied, and the thematic analysis by constant comparison analysis approach yielded four overarching themes: Participants' definitions of rest, how rest cannot be separated from the material and psychosocial realities of a post-apartheid South Africa, adultification of Black girls as a hidden feature of the strong Black woman schema which impacts articulations of rest, and intergenerational conversations as a site of affirmation, negotiation and education. The findings discussed within the identified themes ultimately advocate that we consider how the adultification of Black girls manifests itself into the strong Black women schema. Additionally, it serve as a foundation from which further discourse around rest and Black women in South Africa can be explored and produced.

Keywords: *Rest, Black women, intergenerational conversations, mothers & daughters*

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Chapter One: Introduction

"But Black women and our children know the fabric of our lives is stitched with violence and hatred, that there is no rest." Published among Audre Lorde's 1984 essay collection, *Sister Outsider,* these words paint a picture of Black women's lives and the children who come after them, as primarily filled with toil and hardship, and simultaneously, their lives are painted as entirely devoid of rest within the context of said toil and hardship. During the apartheid era, Black women were placed at the bottom of the rung, and within the context of a post-apartheid South Africa, where racialized, gendered and classed inequities persist, Black women continue to be relegated to the margins of society (Ndinda & Ndhlovu, 2022).

Over the past few years however, there has been a rise in reports within mainstream media about Black women resting as an integral part of resistance and justice. A rudimentary Google search of the words 'rest' and 'Black women' reveals that almost four decades after Lorde's poignant assertion, the concept of rest is emerging as an increasingly prominent theme to advocate for the wellbeing of Black women. Although some scholarly literature has sought to explore the emergence of this theme, several aspects of this rest-Black-woman problem remain unresolved. Studies have not explicitly addressed the barriers to rest for Black women, nor have they examined how the location of Black women within broader society may demand that they neglect their own rest, and why rest seems to be gaining traction as a crucial part of resistance.

In 2020, US digital publication The Washington Post issued an article headlined: "For Black Women, Self-Care Isn't Just a Buzzword. It's An Act of Radical Resistance" (Ndugga, 2020). Several months later, Miller Littlejohn (2021) published another article in The Washington Post titled "Black professional women are exhausted. They're finally claiming the time to rest," while Watt (2021) echoed this with an article titled "For Black Women, Rest is an Act of Resistance and Radical Self-Care" for PopSugar. Since then, the likes of Dame Magazine,

Insider, Fortune Magazine and HuffPost - all USA based digital publications - have each followed with similar article titles and explorations: “Why Can’t Black Women Get Some Rest” (Epperson, 2022), “For Black Women, 2023 Will Be The Year of Radical Rest” (Holt, 2023), “How I Learned About the Power of Rest for Black Women” (Thompson Payton & Crowley, 2023), and “‘Permission To Not Be In Survival Mode’: How Rest Liberates Black People” (Wilson, 2023). These articles demonstrate an interest in a topic that has otherwise been sparse within the mainstream digital media domain.

Similarly, social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok have popularized topics like ‘radical self-care’ and ‘rest as resistance’ to challenge normalized ideas about Black women’s lives as centred around struggle. As in the articles listed above, these digital social movements also highlight how struggle and neglecting rest are passed down from one generation to the next. In order to engage with what it means for Black women to rest, one must first reflect on the complexities of being a Black woman, as well as the dominant stereotypes that govern Black womanhood. One must also reflect on the resultant influence of these complexities and stereotypes on over-arching ideas about the very definition of rest, and how these ideas may be passed from one generation of Black women to the next.

Research objectives

The primary aim of this research study was to investigate how a group of Black mothers and daughters in South Africa construct their ideas about rest and to gain insights about if/how these ideas differ across generations. In order to gain these insights, the study was guided by four main research questions:

1. How do Black women construct their ideas about rest?
2. In what ways do constructions of rest differ across different generations of Black women?

3. To what extent are Black women's constructions of rest mediated by the SBW schema?
4. How do younger and older Black women understand and negotiate their ideas of rest among one another?

Structure of the research report

The research report is structured as follows: Chapter two presents a review of literature across three themes related to Black women's experiences together with the rationale for the present study. These themes include the complexities of being a Black woman in South Africa, the notion of the 'strong Black woman,' and rest as an act of resistance. Chapter three outlines the methodology employed in this study. Therein, the theoretical framework, qualitative study design, sampling strategy, participants' characteristics, and data collection and analysis methods that were employed are discussed. This is followed by an outline of the power, reflexivity and ethical considerations. Chapter four is a discussion of the findings of the research. These findings are organized into four themes. The first theme, *defining rest* describes how the participants define the concept of rest for themselves and what they have learned from Black women around them. The second theme, *rest as a manifestation of racialized, gendered and classed positions*, speaks to the various ways in which rest cannot be separated from the material realities of a post-apartheid South Africa. The third theme, *the strong Black woman schema's impact on articulations of rest*, offers insights into the ways in which participants' ideas about rest are mediated by the SBW schema and further, exposes the ways in which identification with this schema can be a result of Black women being adultified in childhood. The fourth theme, *intergenerational conversations as a site of recognition, negotiation and education*, highlights the relational power of intergenerational conversations as a space in which participants were able to negotiate their ideas about rest, educate one another, and validate each other's lived

experiences. In conclusion of the research report, chapter five details a summary of the study findings, limitations of the current study, as well as recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Complexities of Being a Black Woman in South Africa

In South Africa where "racism is in the air we breathe" (Mahali, 2017, p. 31), not only do Black women learn and negotiate their gender roles within the context of race roles (McRae & Noumair, 1997), these roles also entail ongoing negotiations with the material and psychosocial consequences of an apartheid history. For instance, a recent study on racial disparities in psychological distress in post-apartheid South Africa found that Black participants experience disproportionately high levels of psychological distress regardless of socioeconomic status (Harriman et al., 2021). Much of this psychological distress was interwoven with significantly higher rates of chronic social stressors like economic barriers, crime, food insecurity and lack of safe housing. This psychological distress was also linked to more prevalent experiences of traumatic events including violent personal assaults and racial political violence.

For women, these experiences are further compounded by having to navigate gendered roles and the lived realities that may come with the other roles they hold. There are several universal prescribed feminine traits into which women and girls are socialized. Within the home, and then more broadly, this includes an obligation to facilitate the emotional and physical care of others, submission to male partners within intimate relationships and society as a whole, an emphasis on emotional expression and being overly focused on the maintenance of relationships, and having higher regard for the needs of others over one's own (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; Brody et al., 2014; Jordan, 2013; Louw & Louw, 2009). Together, these prescribed gender roles render women at greater risk of intimate partner violence and sexual assaults, HIV infection, and negative health outcomes including allostatic overload – all of which can lower women and girls' overall quality of life (Brody et al., 2014; Dale et al., 2015; Hayhurst et al. 2014).

In an essay on how the ‘cult of femininity’ and violent masculinities support endemic gender based violence in contemporary South Africa, Gqola (2007) highlights the contrast between public talk of women’s empowerment in a country where women are in fact not empowered. Gqola argues that women’s empowerment may be an asset for a select number of women; in the form of access to material resources and a few seats at the table in government and corporate offices. However, she also highlights that even then, the expectation remains on women to adapt and survive in the context of widespread discrimination, rape, gender-based violence, and sexual harassment within private, work and public domains – rather than on transforming those spaces in ways that are safe for women and support their needs and contributions.

In addition, a study on identity shifting in the workplace found that early career Black women altered their racial, gender, age, and professional identities to stave off negative attitudes and to assimilate to more dominant cultures within their workplaces – often with adverse psychological consequences (Dickens & Chavez, 2018). For Black women whose professional identities lead them into entrepreneurship, they must negotiate these identities within their homes, while contending with social identity biases which aim to exclude women from male dominated industries (Diale & Carrim, 2022).

In essence, regardless of whether Black women are formally employed or entrepreneurs, they are often relegated to the margins of management due to racial and gender inequality within workplaces and organisations (Dibobo et al., 2022). When some do succeed despite this adversity, their progression and subsequent numerical minority is then lauded as a demonstration of their individual resilience, rather than as a marker of organisational failure to develop and harness inclusive coaching, mentorship and sponsorship opportunities (Scheepers et al., 2018).

This is just one way the glass ceiling phenomenon, which has been described as “the perceptible and imperceptible hindrance that ruptures women’s professional and organizational hierarchical levels, placing them at a disadvantage,” functions (Mbuli & Sibindi, 2023, p. 128). In their study on how this phenomenon affects women in leadership positions in South Africa, Mbuli and Sibindi go on to highlight that for their participants, barriers to career advancement were often veiled behind gendered stereotypes. For instance, a gendered stereotype which states women cannot be trusted with power due to emotionality, can lead to the isolation and alienation of women leaders within the workplace.

By the same token, decolonial feminist scholars in South Africa have written about experiences of performing race within predominantly white institutions of higher learning. In particular, they have highlighted how transformation efforts toward eradicating institutional racism is not just about addressing the number of Black students and academics in institutions of higher education (Maseti, 2018). Rather, it is also about understanding these institutions’ practices, the values and beliefs that underpin them, and how together, these manifest themselves through interpersonal interactions and the affect that arises from them (Kessi, 2018).

For instance, in her auto-ethnographic reflections on the psychological cost of being a ‘body out of place’ in institutions of higher education, Maseti (2018) recounts experiences of being interrupted by a white male peer during her own lectures, and working extra hard to constantly prove herself - as a Black student and later academic – in order to prevent or mitigate negative assumptions about her competence. This is echoed in Ndlovu (2014, p. 2045)’s account of being “determined to prove them wrong” when colleagues labelled her as failing to adjust to a university’s broader teaching and learning culture even though they had not provided adequate support upon her arrival. In their article on the unique position of Black women in academia,

Maodzwa-Taruvinga and Divala (2014) describe how universities interested in addressing the ongoing needs of both transformation and rigorous research often place Black women at the margins. It is here where both internal and external tensions arise and have to be negotiated at the cost of personal rather than institutional identity.

Notably, some of these tensions not only affect Black women academics, but have been reflected on by Black students too. In their photovoice study on the impact of racialising discourse on Black students' experiences at the University of Cape Town, Kessi and Cornell (2015) revealed a range of themes related to feelings of isolation and alienation, experiences of segregation, othering and inequality in everyday interactions with white peers and the institution as a whole, as well as occurrences of cultural and symbolic exclusion. For the participants in this study, not only did the experiences they described demand that they work extra hard to prove themselves worthy of their place at the university, but that they develop another set of coping strategies to specifically address the affective impact of exclusionary institutional culture.

Similar to the affective impact of exclusionary institutional culture that Kessi and Cornell describe, in their study on Black female managers' experiences in corporate South Africa, Canham (2014) argues that even when Black women are marginalized and consequently feel alienated within the workplace, they often self-discipline their tears and repress other affective expressions that may be perceived negatively. For Canham (2014, p. 156), this is important because "removing tears from public spaces is an important move for the maintenance of the status quo." In so doing, this allows institutions to justify excluding Black women when they do not conform, while simultaneously placing sole responsibility on them to censor themselves.

Altogether, the above literature has demonstrated the racialized and gendered complexities of Black womanhood. This is, by no means inclusive of all the myriad lived

realities of Black womanhood in South Africa. Rather, it presents just some of the barriers women have to negotiate within various spaces in which they exist – in their homes, the academy as well their workplaces. More specifically, barriers which may implore Black women to also neglect rest.

These barriers are important to explore because for Black women in particular, they also occur in the context of a range of stereotypes about Black womanhood. Reynolds-Dobbs et al. (2008) investigated how dominant representations of Black women impede their career development and found five stereotypical archetypes Black women often encounter within the workplace. Among these were the "caretaker Mammy" who only gets called up when workplace problems require a maternal touch, the "loud-talking Sapphire" who is perceived as bossy and thus difficult to work with, the "seductive Jezebel" who will likely "sleep her way to the top", the unstable "Crazy Black Bitch" who is overly aggressive, and the overachieving "Superwoman" who serves as the superior standard against whom all other Black women are assessed, and must strive to emulate.

Unlike the others, the overachieving Superwoman archetype – or strong Black woman (SBW) – developed in part as an affirming marker of resistance against some of the aforementioned negative representations of Black women (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). However, because symbols are an integral part of particular groups' cultural understandings, the strong Black woman archetype also functions as a representation of the most desirable attributes of Black womanhood (Harris-Lacewell, 2001).

In South Africa, studies on the SBW schema are not prevalent. Nevertheless, it is imperative to unpack this schema in order to more deeply understand its impact on Black women's experiences, and in the context of this study, their constructions of rest. The public

gender discourse and studies noted above have highlighted several themes which – like the SBW schema – can lend themselves to being liabilities even though they appear to be an asset. For example, prescribed feminine traits which are expected and celebrated, can simultaneously render women vulnerable to a range of physical and psychosocial risks. By the same token, identity shifting in the workplace may aid Black women's career advancement even though there are still personal psychological costs that they then bear from exclusionary institutional cultures. Another example is how calls for women empowerment may grant select women managerial positions, while still excluding and discriminating against a vast majority of Black women in South Africa.

The 'Strong Black Woman'

The SBW archetype is in many ways an asset because it has facilitated the survival of Black women, their families and their communities amid historical and ongoing oppression, poverty and alienation (Donovan & West 2015; Harris-Lacewell, 2001, Washington & Hoxmeier, 2021; Woods-Giscombe, 2010). However, it is also crucial to recognize that in the context of legalized disenfranchisement, Black women were forced to take on any role necessary to ensure said survival (Mullings, 2006) – regardless of the costs involved. Over time, scholars like Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2009) and Woods-Giscombe (2010) have interrogated the relationships between the SBW schema and the assets it presents, as well as the liabilities it holds. Woods-Giscombe has gone on to suggest that identification with the Superwoman/strong Black woman symbol may be linked to adverse health outcomes because, as Romero (2000, p. 225) states: "an overused asset that develops uncritically without ongoing evaluations and attention to changing needs and demands runs the risk of becoming a liability."

In their study on the stress and mental health outcomes of SBW endorsement, Donovan and West (2015) found that Black women who identify with this SBW archetype had higher levels of stress and reported more anxiety and depressive symptoms. This was attributed to the archetype's two primary tenets; strength and caregiving. That is, it defines the Black woman as naturally resilient and possessing a supernatural ability to independently hold trauma and stress with relative ease, all while working tirelessly, and still giving her emotional, spiritual and financial resources to both her family and her community at large. Amidst all of this, she is self-reliant, expects no reciprocation, and harbours no resentment. In essence, against these expectations, Black women must at all times display the following five characteristics;

1. Manifesting strength,
2. Suppressing emotions,
3. Resisting vulnerability,
4. Helping others, and
5. Succeeding despite any and all limitations or adversity (Woods-Giscombe, 2010).

Other studies like Castelin and White (2022) have yielded similar results as Donovan and West for stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms, with the addition of suicidal behaviours. Similarly, some Black women in Watson and Hunter (2016, p. 436)'s study on tensions in the SBW schema reported adverse physical health outcomes like high blood pressure and stroke, as well as negative coping behaviours including violence and drug use. Interestingly, while these outcomes were specifically linked to emotional suppression, participants reported that to renounce this expectation was not a "feasible alternative" – even when it had a negative impact on them, their families and their communities.

Given the contexts in which Black women are socialized into the SBW archetype, their hesitation to renounce it is reasonable. Research literature has highlighted the pervasive nature of the other archetypes noted above (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008). However, the SBW is one that is more explicitly passed from one generation of women to another (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2003; Mullings, 2006). Not only do Black mothers often feel compelled to socialize their daughters to be strong in order to survive, daughters also in turn continue the cycle and socialize their own daughters too (Nelson et al., 2016). They are also often taught that one must address any distress that arises independently and silently – and with dignity (Dawn, 2019; Washington & Hoxmeier, 2021). In situations where they are neither independent nor silent about their distress, they may be reminded to get back into character by others around them, as in the case of Danquah.

Having talked about her own depression, Danquah (1998, p. 19-20) recalls hearing a white woman say "It's just that when black women start going on Prozac, you know the whole world is falling apart." In reference to this, Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2007, p. 33-34) notes also, how "claiming that Black women are the last defense against human (read white) suffering and therefore the least entitled to fall apart, this racist response was paralleled by the lack of acknowledgement Danquah received from members of the Black community." The exchange Danquah and Beauboeuf-Lafontant write about demonstrates how Black women do not simply hold themselves to the SBW standard for the perceived benefits of themselves, their families and the Black community alone. As "a reflection of historical and economic hardship" (Abrams et al., 2014, p. 8), dominant society's gender discourse also stands to benefit from the SBW schema by lauding Black women's ability to survive despite being marginalized, while evaluating them against their ability to uphold their roles as strong Black women - without regard for their actual wellbeing.

Similar themes of independence, silence and survival despite adversity can be seen in the adultification of Black girls. According to Ngidi and Mayeza (2023), adultification is a process of socialization in which children are required to take on adult roles and responsibilities. These roles and responsibilities are mature in nature and thus do not match the developmental stage of the child at the time of performance, and often occur when situational factors and changes within the home necessitates it. For Black girls in particular, adultification often extends beyond the home and has an impact on how they are perceived within broader systems.

A report on the erasure of Black girls' childhoods demonstrated that there are several disparities in how adults perceive Black girls in comparison to white girls (Epstein et al., 2017). Among these perceptions are that Black girls need less comfort, less nurturing, less protection, and less support than their white counterparts. Additionally, Black girls are seen not only to be more independent, but also to know more about sex and adult related topics than their white peers. These perceptions have grave implications within the education system. Black girls are more likely to be perceived as 'sassy,' 'difficult,' or 'mean' in the classroom. They are also more likely to receive harsher judgments and more punitive punishment in the juvenile justice system. Literature on the adultification of Black girls is sparse, however, the available literature has highlighted that adultification renders Black girls vulnerable to being seen and treated as adults based on stereotypes that are associated with Black women (Crenshaw et al., 2015). It stands to reason then, that when the treatment of Black girls is based on stereotypes about Black women, they could also be expected to behave like strong Black women should.

Altogether, the above explorations of stereotypes and how they function within various domains of society are an important launching pad for the current study because the stereotype serves as a potent discursive strategy of colonial discourse. Stereotypes are "a form of

knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place,' already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated" (Bhabha, 2001, p. 388). In this sense, the strong Black woman is a vital one to investigate in order to form some understanding of how it may lock Black women 'in place' as concurrent overachievers and caregivers anxiously repeating patterns of strength even when they are detrimental to their health.

Rest as Resistance

Returning to the aforementioned headlines in contemporary digital publications, even though Black women have long been praised for their ability to survive and thrive despite hardship, this may no longer be a role that is readily accepted. Researchers mentioned above have highlighted some of the negative outcomes associated with adherence to the SBW schema. By the same token, one must explore the strategies Black women employ to mediate against these outcomes. It is especially important to explore strategies that interrogate SBW schema outcomes by centring rest – which is by its very nature, in direct opposition to the concept of the SBW, who works without ceasing.

Several writers have documented their experiences of rest as an act of 'radical self-care' (Hall & Bell, 2022; Nayak, 2020; Nicol & Yee, 2017; Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008). According to Nicol and Yee (2017), while 'self-care' is specifically related to health and lifestyle practices that are meant to prevent and manage chronic illnesses and stress, 'radical self-care' is an epistemological position in which one engages in practices that are about being in alignment with one's values. This entails being intentional about allotting time, energy and resources to those things that truly matter, rather than simply because they are necessary.

Hall and Bell (2022) demonstrate this in their article about being Black women academics who are interested in – and intentional about – engaging in radical self-care by

incorporating acts of self-care into their academic teachings and outcomes. One way of doing this was by designing a “contract agreement” assignment into their course content wherein they, together with their students, documented the self-care practices they engaged in. The implications of this were two-fold: First, the classroom is a space in which course content must be taught - regardless of personal values. However, by adding an assignment that explicitly required students to engage in self-care during the course of a semester, Hall and Bell ensured that their personal value of incorporating care in academic outcomes was also actively engaged. Secondly, in a space where Black women are often seen as inherently able to work without pause, designing a contract assignment like this between teachers and students allowed acts of self-care to be embedded into necessary labour of academic life and in so doing, extend to life outside of the classroom (Melonas, 2021).

While this is only one example of how radical self-care can function as a form of rest, it does reflect Moore’s (2018) assertion that any movement which concerns itself with the freedom of Black people holds at its core the value of communal care. Additionally, earlier writings about rest such as those of hooks (1989) contend that radical self-care can only be radical if it aims to dismantle the institutions that warrant it in the first place. And later still, by Morrison and Walker (as cited by Melonas, 2021), who mark radical self-care as allowing oneself to be loved, open to receiving affirmations from others, and in so doing, playing an active role in unlearning socialized ideas about Black women’s inherent value as disposable. These writings are concerned with the inward wellbeing of the self, but more than that, they are also outward reaching ideals which recognize the need to engage with the care of one’s community, as well as the institutions in which these communities are housed.

In South Africa, feminist scholar Mahali (2017) has written about three collectives that have created spaces for Black women to cultivate and nurture radical self-love as well as communal care, namely; For Black Girls Only, Feminist Stokvel, and iQhiya. Having started as a small monthly gathering hosted in Cape Town by Sivu Siwisa, For Black Girls Only grew into a national movement when it relocated to Johannesburg in 2016 with a vision to affirm "Black women's experiences, desires and dreams" while also sharing "methods and strategies for survival and thriving." In their inaugural Hair Soiree event in 2016, Feminist Stokvel hosted a hair care workshop focused on Black women loving their – and their children's hair despite discourses which devalue it. iQhiya, was made up of 11 Black women artists who met at the University of Cape Town's Michaelis School of Fine Art. They formed this collective as an act of resistance against white male dominated commercial art galleries in Cape Town. Interestingly, the name of the collective, which is a Xhosa word that translates to head wrap, also speaks to both the strength and the burdens that generations of Black women have weathered as they at once hold families together, and still "embody servitude" (Leiman, 2016). Altogether, each of these collectives have uniquely positioned themselves in ways that also echo the principles of rest as radical self-care as well as communal care.

Radical self-care and communal care are just some of the principles which the founder of The Nap Ministry and author of *Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto*, Tricia Hersey champions through her curated sacred spaces, immersive workshops and performance art work. According to Hersey (2022), The Nap Ministry is rooted in four primary tenets:

1. Rest is resistance because it challenges white supremacy and capitalism
2. Rest is resistance because Black bodies are a site of liberation

3. It is through napping that Black people can reclaim their time to imagine, heal, and create new ways of being
4. It is through resting that Black people can reclaim the memory, wisdom and grounding of their ancestors through their dreams.

For Hersey, rest is not only an act of resistance, but a birth right for all marginalized people. This is a message that art collectives in other parts of the world have drawn on to centre art as a crucial form of resistance. In February 2023, Black feminist thinkers Tahirah Rasheed and Autumn Breon curated the *Resting Our Eyes* exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art in San Francisco. Centred around Black women's joy, freedom, and expression through adornment, the exhibition featured works from 20 multi-generational Black artists with the aim of celebrating and memorializing these parts of Black women's lives which are not usually represented in museums depicting the lives of Black people (Rasheed & Breon, 2023).

Months later, the *Rest Is Power* exhibition opened at New York University. Curated by Joan Morgan, Deborah Willis, and Kira Joy Williams, this exhibition featured more than 30 Black artists whose works depict Black people in various states of stillness, calm and restfulness, with the aim of challenging historical representations of the Black body as only valuable for the emotional, physical and sexual labour that it can be exploited for (Lordi, 2023). Reflecting on art exhibitions like these is important because "the who, how, when and where of public artworks is a political engagement with the past and the present, its role in sustaining colonial relations of power and normalising and legitimising continued acts of violence against the historically oppressed" (Kessi, 2019, p. 82). Thus, when the who, how, when and where of art is centred on Black joy, freedom, and rest, so too is it a potent site of liberation.

Ultimately, while all of the above have been helpful in starting to form an understanding of the complexities of being a Black woman, the dominant stereotypes that govern Black womanhood, as well as principles and strategies that Black women have employed to define and access rest, there is still much to be explored.

Rationale for the Present Study

The emergence of rest as an increasingly prominent theme among Black women within mainstream media may be a manifestation of Black women reclaiming agency through rest. However, despite the recognized importance of rest as it relates to Black women within mainstream media, comparatively sparse research literature has examined this relationship. What the literature has shown is that the complexities of being a Black woman in South Africa play a significant role in compromising the wellbeing of Black women. The literature has also shown that while there are a range of dominant stereotypes of Black womanhood which contribute to adverse physical and psychosocial health outcomes for Black woman – the SBW stereotype is one that is explicitly passed from one generation to the next, and celebrated as an asset despite the liabilities it presents. Additionally, scholarly literature has demonstrated that the emergence of the strong Black woman schema can be an economic and social asset for Black women and their communities.

What the literature has failed to address is how Black women construct their ideas of rest in the context of their racialized and gendered socialization experiences. The literature has also not addressed the strong Black woman schema as a dominant feature of their socialization and experiences, as well as the ways in which it might mediate their constructions of rest. Addressing this gap is important because identification with the SBW schema has been associated with negative health outcomes. Moreover, even though the SBW archetype has received much

attention in the research literature, research on Black girl adultification is lagging behind significantly. This is a notable gap because it means the relationship between Black girl adultification and the strong Black woman archetype has not been explored. Given the lack of this research, very little is known about how these experiences may impact subjective constructions and articulations of rest, i.e. what it means to be a Black woman resting.

In addition, the literature on the relationship between Black women and the concept of rest as resistance has defined rest as an act of radical self-care and as communal care. The literature has also described rest as a form of resistance against dominant representations of Black women's lives as marked by the survival of struggle and hardship only, i.e. being strong regardless of all circumstances. Given these conceptual frameworks of rest as resistance and reclamation of communal agency, as well as the intergenerational nature of the SBW schema, it is imperative to address the above gaps about Black women's constructions of rest from an intergenerational lens.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The present chapter outlines the aims and methodology employed in this study. I will first present the aims and research questions. Next I will outline the theoretical framework in which the study was situated. Subsequently, I will provide a brief overview of the qualitative study design, followed by an overview of the sampling strategy, participants' characteristics, and the data collection and analysis methods employed. Finally, I will discuss my considerations pertaining to power, reflexivity and ethics.

Aims and Research Questions

The overall aim of this research study is to investigate how a group of Black women in South Africa construct and articulate their ideas about rest. 'Black women' in this study refers to all women of the African diaspora. By exploring the meanings that younger and older Black women attach to the concept of rest, the study seeks to gain insights about if/how these ideas differ across generations, and what strategies are employed to negotiate them within a South African context.

In order to gain these insights, the study was guided by four main research questions:

5. How do Black women construct their ideas about rest?
6. In what ways do constructions of rest differ across different generations of Black women?
7. To what extent are Black women's constructions of rest mediated by the SBW schema?
8. How do younger and older Black women understand and negotiate their ideas of rest among one another?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is primarily located within Black Feminist-Womanist Thought. The study aims to explore the ideas and experiences of Black women, across

generations, who are situated within a prominent African city. On the one hand, Black Feminist Thought is especially useful because it regards Black women's standpoints as rooted in an Afrocentric worldview as well as a feminist consciousness that Black women define for themselves (Collins, 1990). This framework is governed by four principles:

1. Participants' lived experiences serve as a criterion for meaning making;
2. Dialogue is used as means to assess knowledge;
3. Caring is an ethic; and
4. All people are recognized as having the capacity for personal accountability (Collins, 2000).

On the other hand, Womanism – as a form of Black Feminist Thought - explicitly explores the use of dialogue, mothering, self-help practices, and spirituality as strategies of both identity formation and survival which Black women pass from one generation to the next (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). That is, Womanism implores researchers to view Black women's socialization as an intuitive practice that Black mothers and other maternal figures employ to teach younger Black women how to move through the various spaces they will occupy within contemporary society. Moreover, African Womanism specifically asserts that women's experiences of gender constructs must be addressed in the context of their unique location in Africa (Kobo, 2022).

A Black Feminist-Womanist framework can be seen to be especially useful for feminist research in psychology because it draws upon epistemological critiques of the more prevalent masculine ideas of knowledge production (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Honing in on Black people and more specifically, Black women's experiences through a feminist lens not only foregrounds the various ways in which race, class and gender have significant influence on their experiences of marginalization, but also interrogates normalised manifestations of violence and

oppression (Boonzaier et al., 2019). Additionally, given the myriad ways in which the discipline of psychology has silenced and stigmatized those it has historically relegated to the margins, feminist approaches to psychological research are necessary in order to maintain its relevance within contemporary South African society (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018).

In this sense, drawing from a Black Feminist-Womanist framework guided this study along the "both/and" spaces in which people who have historically been relegated to the margins are located. Rather than placing research participants within dichotomous "either/or" categories, it recognizes that both academic knowledge and the lived realities of Black women occur within the context of race, gender and class oppression (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). Thus by locating Black women at the center of analysis, "knowledge, consciousness and politics of empowerment" could also be understood from the position that all groups of people hold some privileges and penalties, albeit to varying degrees.

Study Design

The present research study seeks to understand the individual and collective ideas and experiences of Black women in relation to practices of rest. In order to do this, one has to take into account how participants make sense of their worlds and their subjective experiences. While quantitative research seeks to measure and confirm hypotheses, qualitative seeks to explore and understand phenomena (Cleland, 2015). Further, qualitative research designs are useful for interpreting the meanings that participants associate with subjective experiences being explored (Wilson & MacLean, 2011). In line with the qualitative nature of this study, a series of individual and pair interviews were used.

This research design is especially useful for a fully qualitative study because it primarily focuses on understanding the content of the data, that is; "the actual opinions themselves, the life

experiences themselves, the participants' reflections themselves" (Percy et al., 2015). Given that intergenerational articulations of rest among Black women is a phenomena that has yet to be explored, particularly within the South African literature, it is appropriate to first establish some understanding of the content of the data by engaging with the qualitative nuances of it, and thus explore what perspectives will emerge about an under-researched phenomena.

Sampling

Given the qualitative nature of the study, a purposive sampling strategy was used to recruit participants (see Appendix A for invitation). Because of the study's aim to gain insights from an intergenerational perspective, Black women who lived and/or worked in Johannesburg, and were aged 20 to 27 - or had daughters between the ages of 20 and 27 - were invited to participate in the study. This age range was chosen because emerging adulthood can be linked to one's career and professional identity development. The literature review has outlined the various ways in which Black women's experiences are influenced by the academic institutions and workplaces in which they are located. It was important to explore participants' intergenerational experiences with this in mind. The literature has demonstrated how some dominant representations of, and socialization into Black womanhood are explicitly passed down from mothers and other maternal figures within the family. Recruiting participants who are related allowed for in-depth investigation into this particular dynamic.

A total of four mother-daughter pairs (n = 8) were recruited and participated in this study. Participants were primarily accessed through personal networks using purposive sampling within the Developmental Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA). The DBSA was specifically chosen for the ease of access it provided to potential participants. The invitation to participate in the study was circulated through personal networks in the DBSA, after which seven mother-daughter pairs

signed up. Among the seven pairs, three were unreachable – via email and text messages, and one pair withdrew after an initial call to discuss details of the study and to schedule appointments for interviews. The sampling frame was then modified to include participants recruited outside of the DBSA (criteria for them to still reside in Johannesburg was upheld), which resulted in two more mother-daughter pair signing up for the study. Of these two, one mother-daughter pair also withdrew after an initial call to discuss details of the study. Recruitment was then concluded with a sample of four mother-daughter pairs (n = 8) in order to allow for in-depth data collection and analysis within the allotted scope of the Masters minor dissertation. An initial call was scheduled via email or text messaging to discuss details of the study, and once the participants agreed to continue, their individual interviews were scheduled.

The rationale for participants to either live and/or work in Johannesburg was two-fold. First, I could travel to the participants to conduct interviews and thus impose no financial implications on them. Secondly, the city of Johannesburg was in itself quite an interesting landscape in which to explore the experiences of Black women. Intricately tied to South Africa's apartheid history (and its longstanding ramifications across racial, gendered, and class lines), Johannesburg remains a city that is synonymous with fervent pursuits for material wealth, and aspirational dreams of upward social mobility among its inhabitants (Englund, 2022). However, these "dreams and hopes clash with a reality not quite so forgiving and promising." One could assume that a majority of Black women who are situated within an institution that functions within the governmental and private sector are vying for their own upward mobility. Yet no assumptions could be drawn about the class status from which they came. It was against this backdrop of pursuit, within a city known for its harshness, that the study sought to explore the

ways in which participants construct their ideas about rest, and the strategies they employ to access it.

Participant Characteristics

The participants were eight self-identified Black ciswomen who live and/or work in Johannesburg, South Africa. Other characteristics are recorded as they were reported at the time of data collection in the table below. Pseudonyms were allocated to each participant.

Table 1: Participant details at the time of data collection

Name	Age	Mother/ Daughter	Birth order	Marital status	Profession	Dyad living together?
Candice Courtney	38 21	Mother Daughter	Last First	Married Single	Accountant Final Year BCom Student	No
Sinegugu Siphokazi	55 24	Mother Daughter	Middle Last	Widow Single	Project Manager Creative Services Intern	Yes
Tendai Thayanda	46 24	Mother Daughter	Middle First	Divorced Single	Operations Lead Web Developer	Yes
Zingce Zintle	45 26	Mother Daughter	Last First	Married Single	IT Manager Multi-media Journalist	No

Data Collection Tool and Procedure

Data was collected across eight semi-structured individual interviews and four joint interviews. In-person interviews were initially chosen for this study. However, even though I indicated that the interviews could occur in-person at a location of each participants' preference, all the participants opted to have online individual and joint interviews. As such, although in-person interviews lend themselves to a number of advantages (Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021), some of these advantages were still present during the online interviews. Firstly, the interviews were synchronized in both time and space; both the researcher and the participants were able to offer unfiltered responses without being mediated by a time delay. In addition, this synchronization of

time and space was largely maintained because there interruptions in internet connectivity were minimal during the interviews. Another advantage of in-person interviews is non-verbal cues like facial expressions and body language can provide added information about the verbal answers that participants give. While the researcher's visual scope was limited during the online interviews, attention could still be paid to other cues like facial expression and varied intonation. Finally, in-person interviews may feel more comfortable for participants as they mimic a more natural way of engaging. However, given that the participants chose the medium of interview, one could deduce that this was more comfortable and convenient for them than in-person interviews may have been.

Before the interviews formally started, each participant was emailed an informed consent form (see Appendix B) along with their calendar invite for the chosen day and time of their interviews. I introduced myself, outlined the purpose of the study and discussed the consent form at the beginning of each interview. Once the interviews began, participants were asked a series of questions, while responses were recorded on a digital recording device. There was time provided at the end of each interview for participants to ask any questions relating to the study and to discuss scheduling for the joint interviews.

A maximum of 60 minutes was allocated for each interview to ensure that the content of the interviews were explored in sufficient detail. Both the mothers and daughters within each pair were interviewed individually first, and only once both their individual interviews were concluded were they scheduled to be interviewed together. The individual interviews phase delved into each participant's particular context and experiences. On the other hand, the pair interviews were specifically employed in order to explore the intergenerational aspect of the study by focusing on each person's position within their social world (Kitzinger, 1994).

The joint interview was also utilized because it presents other key advantages and opportunities to add a richness to the data that may not be as easily accessible in individual interviews (Bjørnholt & Farstad, 2015). For instance, within the context of a joint interview, interactions between the participants could introduce topics that may otherwise not have been explored during their individuals interviews. Whether the participants agree or disagree on a particular topic, these could actively be probed and engaged within the interview situation. Additionally, as a co-created space for reflection, joint interviews present an opportunity for me to take on more of an observer role and instead witness the communication patterns between the participants as well as the nuances laden therein. All interviews were conducted in English, and the data collection phase of the study was concluded within seven weeks after the first interview.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach was used to analyze the data. This approach is a method of identifying, analyzing and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006). One of the key advantages of this method is that it allows for detailed description of the data, as well as diverse interpretations of the research topic (Ritchie et al., 2013). Additionally, by recognizing that narratives that are shared and form part of the data are socially constructed (Murray, 2013), themes can be drawn and interpreted while holding in mind the particular social contexts in which they were constructed.

Further, while thematic analysis could appear to be atheoretical, on the contrary, its rigor lies in its versatility as it can be employed across a range of theoretical frameworks and research (Clarke et al., 2015). It is imperative that rather than simply noting “emerging themes,” researchers pay attention to the active role they play in identifying said themes, and interpreting them from their own theoretical standpoints. In light of this, given the nature of this study - a

Black female researcher engaging with Black female participants - thematic analysis was employed from a reflexive standpoint in which my position was actively engaged throughout the study.

The analysis was guided by the following six steps as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. The researcher familiarizes herself with the data by reading and rereading the complete transcribed data set, and noting early impressions.
2. Initial codes are generated in order to organize the data and note potential patterns.
3. The search for themes begins by collating various codes into broader, overarching themes.
4. Overarching themes are reviewed to determine if changes need to be made, collapse some themes into others, and broken up etc.
5. A thematic map is established, with each theme named in a way that identifies the essence of the "story" it tells about the data.
6. The themes are used to analyze and interpret the "full story" that the data tells, and then to produce a final report.

In addition to recognizing the usefulness of thematic analysis for qualitative research, it is imperative to be clear about the kind of thematic analysis that will be utilized (Percy et al., 2015). Because this study aims to explore the ideas of younger Black women, and then those of older Black women, and finally, of the participants together in order to understand inter-generational overlaps and/or dissents, thematic analysis by constant comparison is most appropriate.

Given that the data collection protocol was dictated by the varied availability of the participants, the thematic analysis by constant comparison approach was modified to

accommodate the protocol. Rather than following an interview and analysis sequence in which all the daughters were interviewed and their data analysed first, followed by the mothers, and then the joint interviews, this sequence was instead applied during the data analysis phase – in line with the thematic analysis by constant comparison that is outlined below. That is, only once all the data was collected was the daughters' data analysed, followed by that of the mothers against which the daughters' data was compared, until finally all of the participants' data was analysed together.

Power and Reflexivity

According to Malterud (2001), the researcher always enters their chosen field of research with some ideas or judgements about what the details of that field may entail. Thus, it is vital for the researcher to acknowledge and consider her own subjectivity and the limitations of her objectivity (Willig, 2008). Though I did not intend to interfere, I nevertheless remained aware of the impact that my particular presence may have had on the research process. There is an inherent power that is allotted to the researcher who collects, analyses and writes up the data. Not only did I distil the data into a set number of themes and establish which parts would be included in the research report, I also used my own judgement to shape the knowledge that was produced based on the content of the interviews.

With this subjectivity of experience in mind, reflexivity implores the researcher to acknowledge, reflect on, and interrogate how their role may have implications for the research process (Shaw, 2010). It allows qualitative researchers to explicitly observe both the personal and the theoretical aspects of the research project, without ignoring one at the expense of the other (Kleinsasser, 2000), while also acknowledging that within qualitative research, power can be challenged in some instances, and reproduced in others (Parker, 2005).

In this research for instance, my race and gender may have presented an advantage in building rapport with the participants. The upside of this is that the rapport could have enabled the participants to more readily engage with me in an informal manner, and by extension, facilitated more disclosure. On the downside, rapport based on race and gender may have inadvertently implied cultural similarity. This was demonstrated in some participants' use of phrase like "you know, mos" or "you know, thina as women," and switching from English to isiZulu and isiXhosa – both languages which I only have a rudimentary proficiency in - thus implying shared contextual experiences and understanding. While the perception of shared contextual experiences may have encouraged participants' candour, it may also have disregarded the need for said candour to be as detailed as possible.

Similarly, my pursuit of a postgraduate qualification may have drawn various assumption about my age, and further, about my ability to relate – or not - with the ideas and experiences of either the mothers or the daughters. For instance, some daughter participants referred to me as "girl" and "friend." Markedly, in each instance, this occurred while the participants were in the middle of sharing and emphasizing a particularly animated response. From my observations with other Black female peers, when used colloquially with newly met strangers and acquaintances, these phrases can sometimes be employed to emphasize or confirm shared contextual understanding.

On the other hand, my perceived age seemed to draw assumptions about my inability to relate with the mothers. This was marked by statements like "you guys" to highlight intergenerational differences in work ethic and willingness to speak about topics the mothers would not have broached with their own parents. Others seemed to take on more of an advisory role, with statements like "you should add this" and "maybe you need to look into that for your

research." On the one hand, this could signify these participants' ownership of the authority they hold over their own stories. On the other, these advisory attempts may also have limited them to provide information which they deemed most helpful, rather than that which was most reflective of their particular ideas and experiences.

Ultimately though, while my presence may have had extensive implications on several aspects of the research study, the interactions described above demonstrate the candour with which participants were able to engage with me. My identity seems to have had an overall positive impact on the interview process – especially given that intergenerational conversations were a central aspect of the study. If for example, I had been an older woman, there may have been concern about power dynamics with the participants. However, it was advantageous for the daughters to relate to me as a peer, and some mothers as somewhat of advisors because this seems to have allowed all participants to engage with the study as the authority over their experiences, ideas and opinions.

Ethical Considerations

In order to conduct this study, ethical approval was obtained an Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Cape Town (see Appendix B). Researchers must be mindful of a number of basic ethical considerations pertaining to the treatment of participants in both quantitative and qualitative research (Donalek, 2005). This is crucial because researcher have a responsibility to protect participants from harm, while safeguarding their dignity and psychological wellbeing as far as they can at every stage of the research process (Willig, 2008). The following ethical considerations were applied over the course of this study: informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and risks and benefits of participation.

Informed Consent

Before a person can participate in research, it is vital that they fully understand the scope of the research, the details of what their participation will entail, as well as the details of any risks or benefits involved (Corbin & Moore, 2003). Therefore every participant who took part in the interviews received a consent form which outlined the nature and purpose of the study (Appendix C). They were given details about all aspects of their participation and informed of their right to withdraw at any point without any negative consequences. These details were also discussed at the beginning of each individual interview.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

In order to maintain the anonymity of participants, all excerpts used in the research report are quoted with pseudonyms. In addition, only I and my supervisor had access to the audio recordings and transcribed data (which were stored on the UCT Google Drive per the Data Management Plan), thus participants were informed that their responses in both the individual and joint interviews would be kept confidential as far as possible. While complete confidentiality could not be guaranteed – particularly during the joint interviews – all participants were also asked to sign a commitment to confidentiality of the joint interview discussions. Other limitations to confidentiality, like writing up data as part of this minor dissertation, were noted.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks to participants associated with this research, whereas the benefits of participation may include the following: Participants had an opportunity to share their experiences and opinions related to how they access rest as Black women. They may also have been a cross generational learning experience and opportunity to engage with issues that affect other Black women. Participants also received rest journals for them to keep.

Overall, all the above information was conveyed to the participants prior to the interviews, and the ethical standards of the aforementioned ethics committee were adhered to throughout the scope of this study.

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

The findings are organized into four themes which emerged from the individual interviews and four joint interviews. Each of the themes presents how the participants construct and articulate their ideas about rest. The first theme, *defining rest* describes how the participants define the concept of rest for themselves and what they have learned from Black women around them. The second theme, *rest as a manifestation of racialized, gendered and classed positions*, speaks to the various ways in which rest cannot be separated from the material realities of a post-apartheid South Africa. The third theme, *the strong Black woman schema's impact on articulations of rest*, offers insights into the ways in which participants' ideas about rest are mediated by the SBW schema and further, exposes the ways in which identification with this schema can be a result of Black women being adultified in childhood. The fourth theme, *intergenerational conversations as a site of recognition, negotiation and education*, highlights the relational power of intergenerational conversations as a space in which participants were able to negotiate their ideas about rest, educate one another, and validate each other's lived experiences.

Defining Rest

Given that the study sought to understand how participants articulate their personal ideas and experiences, no formal definitions of rest were provided to the participants in order to allow them to offer their own. Each participant was asked to talk about how they define rest for themselves during their individual interviews. They were then asked to also reflect on some of the conversations they had had together – if any had occurred at all – about rest prior to or during the course of their participation in the study. This theme presents how first defining rest served as an entry way into exploring participants' personal, and later, joint engagement with the concept.

From the definitions that each participant provided during their individual interview, it was clear that there was a distinct generational difference in how rest was defined. For a majority of the daughters, rest was defined in terms of the cessation of work, whereas for the mothers, definitions of rest were centred around reaching a particular state of mind. This can be seen in Thayanda, Courtney and Zintle using phrases like "doing nothing," "sleep 8 hours," and "doing absolutely nothing." All three go on to list various tangible activities that they associate with ceasing work, like sleeping, watching television shows and movies on online streaming sites, spending time with friends, and going out to eat or to go dancing. In contrast, the mothers; Tendai, Candice and Sinegugu defined rest as having "peace of mind," being "consciously there for myself," "relaxed," and "calm both emotionally and physically."

Apart from simply defining rest, participants spoke about the external factors that have influenced their definitions. During their joint interviews, they delineated differences, challenged, and negotiated the meanings they each attached to the concept of rest. For instance, Tendai conceptualized rest in terms of integrating work with other areas of her life since she started working from home. On this, she says:

> "When I say I get excited about the fact that we're working from home, it's because I get to do some work life integration. Not because necessarily, I think before COVID it was literally spoken to as work life and work life balance. You cannot balance. I think we've learnt that we need to integrate life with work, life with school, life with kids, life with yourself."

Thus for her, working from home means she now gets to engage in practices of rest as an integral part of her day, rather than as an added activity she has to engage in in addition to her

workday. Tendai's daughter, Thayanda, based her definition of rest on her position as a first born child with a single parent:

> "As an older sibling, I really, I help my mom because my mom is a single mom. I help her out with my siblings; if they need something, I make sure that they're taken care of so it's in a sense of like, I take the load off my mom. So I think simply, rest for me is just sleep and being in my own space basically."

Interestingly, even though no questions were asked about either of their birth orders during their respective interviews, this is something they both speak to. At the beginning of her interview, Tendai commented on her birth order, saying:

> "I guess the beauty of being a middle child with girls… I've been always, like, the middle child. I guess you've heard it, we kind of like find our way in this life because everybody is busy doting over the firstborn, or the last one. We are loved in between but we become over-achievers."

While neither Tendai nor Thayanda explicitly names it as such, it does seem like their birth orders inadvertently influence how they show up in the world. Additionally, these seem to also have an impact on the different ways in which they each engage in rest, which is highlighted when Thayanda challenges Tendai's ideas about rest during their joint interview:

> Thayanda: "I feel like she's jealous of me because I'm able to sleep in the afternoon… I don't wish to live her type of rest ever in my life. She wishes she could sleep in the afternoon. She can't sleep in the afternoon, just her body, her brain overworks."
>
> Tendai: "So for me, I guess it's an escape from corporate. Like, in my job rest is an escape… I would say if I'm feeling unwell, I will sleep or lay down but not necessarily

> really shut down completely. I feel like if I do that, then I'm missing out. But also I suppose I wish I could… I wish I could."

Here we see that even though Tendai initially conceptualized rest as work life balance, as a self-professed middle child who has had to find her own way through overachieving, she may not necessarily be able to "shut down completely," even though she wishes she could. Similar to Tendai, Sinegugu also situates her definition of rest in having peace of mind because she has achieved specific milestones – for herself but also for her daughters:

> "I think that is rest to me… You know, achieving the things that I've always wanted to achieve, right. Having my own place to stay, which is like my place of rest. You know, when I have that peace of mind, then I think I can say that is restful for me. I have reached that place of rest, right. Yeah, I do have my own place which I bought, right, I got my own house, I've got my own car, my kids, I managed to send the kids to school. They all graduated, they all graduated with distinctions at school, right. So the fact that I managed to do that singlehandedly, then I can always look back and say now I have reached my place of rest."

Interestingly, her daughter Siphokazi offered a stark opposite definition which positioned rest as not only inaccessible, but as non-existent for Black people. Unlike all the other daughters, she offered no information about any external practices that would signify rest for her, and instead framed rest as a "myth" that is located outside of her realm of experience. In the following extract from her individual interview, Siphokazi says:

> "Um, that's, that's tricky, you know? Rest. What is that? But I, let me say this first, I think like, because of like my grandma, my mom, who are like the two main people that raised me, and I was always around. If I wasn't with my mom I was with my grandma, if

> I wasn't with my grandma I was with my mom and they're like, they don't sit down, basically. And I think we can say that for a lot of Black parents… you know, you always have to be doing something. So rest starts seeming like, this is a myth. Like, it's not a real thing."

Zingce, the only mother who also offered no information about external practices or achievements that would signify rest for her, shared similar ideas to Siphokazi about the concept of rest. She says:

> "You know, to me, rest – it's hard. Let me tell you straight. It's very hard. I'm a workaholic. I have apps that I have in my laptop, in my phone. So for example, on Friday I'm going on leave, but then my teams they know they can call me at anytime, I'd pick up because I'm a fixer. But rest is very important … So for us to be honest, hai, it's a taboo. There's no such word *laughs*. Especially Black female. It's a taboo."

While Zingce suggests that rest may be difficult for her because she is a "workaholic," like Siphokazi, she also draws on the racialized experiences of Black women to frame rest as a "taboo" for this particular group. Zingce is a mother, and Siphokazi is a daughter; their similar definitions of rest highlight how intergenerational perceptions of what rest means can be shared across generations – particularly when these perceptions are interrogated from a racialized and gendered lens. Zingce's definition of rest is also in sharp contrast to how her daughter, Zintle defined rest. This may – at least in some part – highlight the intention with which Zintle charges her own ideas about rest:

> "Man, rest for me is just doing absolutely nothing. Because when I was younger, I was raised in, you know, obviously, in a Black family where it's like, you can't be sleeping until 12. As a woman, like as a girl child like oh, that's an atrocity. Don't sleep until 12.

> You have to wake up early, you have to be constantly doing something. Being lazy was something that was like, literally beaten out of me… I had to relearn and reparent myself in what rest looks like for me. And right now what it looks like for me is just doing absolutely nothing, because I wasn't allowed to do nothing when I was growing up."

Here we see that for Zintle, rest was framed as an act of resistance against the messaging she received as a girl child who was not allowed to display laziness. The above-mentioned definitions and ideas were highlighted again during Zingce and Zintle's joint interview where they each challenged each other's ideas about what constitutes work and work ethic. In the below extract, they say:

> Zintle: "I think we disagree on work ethic, and I think that's sort of like, subliminally that has to do with a bit of rest. I think for me, personally, I don't think work is important *Zingce chuckles*. I don't think the current work system that we have of 9 to 5 and authority and all of that is healthy. I think there's alternative ways. I think uMaZingce is a bit more traditional, I think structure is important."
>
> Zingce: "Yeah, that's true. I think maybe uZintle is coming from a culture of gigs, you know, we call them in this era. I'm not sure if you guys call it that, or is it only old people, but we call it gigs. So I think she believes in gigs. Mina, I believe in working 8 to 5, but also commit on during that 8 to 5, you must commit because there's a target."

Work ethic is an important theme to explore in definitions of rest because there are meanings attached to the ways in which Black women are expected to show up as labourers – whether this is in the home or in the workplace. Interactions like the one between Zintle and Zingce highlight how intergenerational conversations can serve as a space to challenge ideas held by individuals. In exploring participants' individual and collective definitions of rest, these

findings builds on the foundational work of Cromer (2021), who asserts that radical self-care – as a form of rest - is a generational process. It is clear The data from Candice and Courtney also suggests this as they used their joint interview to reflect on a conversation they had following their individual interviews:

> Candice: "After Courtney's interview with you, we had a chat and I think something that stood out from her side is that the dads should do more. I think from her experience, she's seeing the mothers are doing more than the father. Am I correct, Courtney?"
>
> Courtney: "Yes mommy"
>
> Tshegofatso: "And what did you think about that, Courtney?"
>
> Candice: "But I was also telling Courtney I think we as women, we also tend to spoil the guys and I know if I can reference back to our interview, I said that our past and our cultural upbringing. So when you meet now your partner, you're just the lady doing everything for them and so they get spoiled."
>
> Tshegofatso: "Courtney?"
>
> Courtney: "After I spoke to my mother she said that she would get more rest if she's a stay-at-home mom, she would have more time on her hands. And I totally agree with her, although I still stand by my point that the fathers should do more."

For Candice, who defined rest as taking some time to be alone and reflect on anything that may be making her anxious, the conversation between her and Courtney allowed them to interrogate how women's cultural backgrounds and upbringing may have an impact on the expectations they have of themselves with regards to the labour they engage in. This conversation is also notable because Courtney's insistence on the need for fathers to do more challenges broader patriarchal notions of parenting and household labour as primarily a mother's

responsibility. The consequences of adhering to notions like this are two-fold; they exclude women from participating in the labour market, while also making them more financially vulnerable (Benya, 2013).

Overall, the participants' various definitions of rest and the symbols they draw on to describe what rest means to them suggest that all such ideas are constructed in relation to the ways the participants have had to show up in the world as Black women. Additionally, by describing rest as resistance, a myth or taboo for Black women, time for reflection, or peace of mind from financial stressors, the data contributes to Smith's (2022) conceptualization of revolutionary rest as a form of rest that goes beyond the more simplified definition of rest as just sleep. Revolutionary rest is specifically for historically marginalized people, and must include some reprieve from the stress of discrimination, exclusion, and inequitable power relations. Participants in the current study highlighted their race and gender to articulate what has informed their ideas and experiences of rest, while others emphasized birth order within the context of single parent households and obtaining material assets for basic human standards – which they did not necessarily have in childhood. This allows me to conclude that at the very least, their constructions of rest are in some ways influenced by their racialized, gendered and classed experiences as Black women. In order to include all the relevant data, this is unpacked in more detail in the second theme: rest as a manifestation of racialized, gendered and classed positions.

Rest as a Manifestation of Racialized, Gendered and Classed Positions

The relationship between a range of racial, gender and class issues are quite tightly woven together in how participants engage in dialogue about rest. This is demonstrated in the excerpts below; some are recollections from childhood and interactions with family members, others are observations and experiences from university and corporate workplaces. These

intricacies within the participants' recollections, observations and experiences not only impact their realities within the familial home, but often carry over into their workplaces and other activities of daily living like trips to the mall. Within the home, three salient themes emerged, namely: domestic violence, single headed households, and the distribution of household labour. Within the workplace and beyond, three other related themes emerged: gender based violence, the gender pay gap, and dominant narratives of Black womanhood in media.

Domestic and Gender-Based Violence

A population based study on gender based violence in Gauteng province, South Africa, found that 51,3% of women had experienced domestic violence in one way or another over the course of their lifetime (Machisa et al., 2011). Within the home, socio-economic status remains a significant contributing factor to gender based violence, particularly when food insecurity and lack of other basic provisions are prevalent (Mahlangu, 2022). In the following extract, Sinegugu highlights the importance of financial resources when she reflects on her experience of witnessing her mother struggle and thus have no access to rest:

> "She was the breadwinner, you know, when you're the only one who's working and you're looking after six kids. Maybe then things were a little bit better, but I think she was struggling a bit, financially. Yeah, she was struggling, but she had no choice. She had to do it, you know, so yeah, she was not at a place of rest… I think also what contributed to her not being at a place of rest at that time is I think that divorce with my dad. It was also… it sort of like took a toll on her, because I think her marriage was a bit abusive. Right, my dad was abusive."

This reflection is important because it not only highlights the relationship between material inequality and domestic violence, but also how access to employment opportunities, and

in turn, financial resources are a crucial protective factor for Black women as well as their access to rest. Sinegugu further contextualized her limitations by sharing more on her family history. Her parents got divorced when she was a child, which resulted in her and her brother going to live with her uncle and his family – where she reports being mistreated by her aunt. It is thus not surprising that for Sinegugu, having the financial resources to purchase her own home has established a sense of safety, which is in itself, rest:

> "And as Black women, we tend to be, we all, we are not safe. You know, even when you're walking in the mall, you're always looking over your shoulder. If you see a man passing or walking behind you, you sort of like skirt, you know? It's like, we are not safe. So if you're not safe, you cannot say you are at rest."

Outside of its links to domestic violence, material inequality remained salient in participants' reflections on rest. Among the other mothers, Zingce – who asserts that rest is a taboo for Black women, - says: "…people who rest are people who have everything. You cannot rest while you poor." Similarly, Candice says: "Our people are not resting because of, I think the economical issues also have an impact." Tendai also speaks to this, and like Sinegugu, she highlights the added responsibilities that single mothers carry: "It's really, really hard, you know, the economics. The economical effects of that is… yeah, I think I'm really talking for many, that it's really hard for women, especially single women." With this, Tendai may be talking for many, as 40% of mothers in South Africa are single parents (Human Sciences Research Council 2019).

Single Headed Households and Distributions of Labour

While divisions of labour along the gender line have constantly shifted in South Africa, women have continued to engage in caring and other forms of domestic labour while economically leading households with minimal contributions from men (Ranganathan et al.,

2022). However, it is important to note that even when households are not single headed, gendered divisions of labour remains pivotal to Back women's access to rest. According to Parry and Segalo (2017), dominant social constructions of gender do not exempt working women from unpaid labour within their homes; instead, Black women are often expected to bear the double load of household and earning responsibilities. Courtney, whose mother and father are both employed, highlights this when she asserts: "If our fathers step up or the men in our families steps up more, they assist more in daily tasks, then maybe our parents - my mother - would get more rest than she usually get, you understand?" Here Courtney explicitly draws a link between the division of household labour and access to rest because for her, her mother would rest more if her father – and other men within her family – shared in the double load of household tasks and wage earning.

Similar to how access to financial security is a form of rest, Zingce asserts that one can only have rest when they have "everything." What is intriguing about her assertion is that she later equates the "strength of a man" to his ability to provide for his family, and that of a women to her ability to do the same "with limited resources":

> "I believe in power because the strength of a man ne, is shown… is seen by how much he can take care of his family. That's where his strength is. Whereas the strength of a woman is, is seen on how you take care of your family with minimum resources.
> It's one of those ills that are shielded by the money. It's the money that make us not to rest. It's the money that makes us not to enjoy being women because nowadays women are paid more than the Black man you see?"

Zingce's statement highlights how Black women are socialized to believe that their success is only worthy of celebration when it has been amassed through hardship and the

endurance of dire circumstances (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). She laments how Black women cannot have access to rest when they earn more money than Black men. This is interesting because given her belief that one can only rest when they have everything and are not poor, one would assume that earning more money would allow her to edge closer to said everything. Instead, there seems to be a gendered tension here that rubs up against that belief.

These reflections suggest that having multi headed households does not automatically reconcile the amount of labour women are responsible for. Interestingly, Candice, and Tendai demonstrate an added layer to this when they reflect on the tension that can arise when Black women navigate the workplace through the lenses of the cultural norms into which they were socialized. A now single mother who highlights how women's ambitions may be driven by the financial hardships of raising children alone, Tendai asserts that while women may be carers within their homes, it does not serve them to function under the same obligations to care while in the boardroom among equals.

On this, Candice says: "that thing, even unconsciously, it stays with you that you want to be on top of your game in family affairs, ensuring that everyone is taken care of." Tendai asserts this is unnecessary in the workplace:

> "I realized that some of it is self-imposed because of culture that women take into the workplace as well. You've got colleagues in the boardroom, you want to offer people tea? You're not at home. You're not the wife. Just get yourself a cup and sit down. They must sort themselves out, but you're always wanting to be the carer."

As Candice and Tendai assert, taking on a carer role may indeed happen unconsciously and be self-imposed. However, this notion of caring may also be a signifier of the previously noted dominant representations of Black womanhood against which Black women are evaluated.

On the one hand, in line with stereotypical archetypes of Black women in the workplace, some Black women may be situated as Mammy figures whose leadership is only recognized when a maternal touch is needed in problem-solving (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008). On the other, women are expected to be more concerned with the concerns of the team, to be generous and nurturing, lest they are perceived to be self-serving, which may impact on performance appraisals and considerations for more senior positions (Sandberg, 2016).

In essence, being overly generous may very well be imposed, but there may also be penalties for rejecting this role. Nevertheless, for Tendai, this refusal to "offer people tea" seems to be a form of resistance against workplace cultures in which women work "twice as hard" and still get undermined by their male counterparts. Sinegugu and Siphokazi expand on this during their joint interview when they reflect on Black women's "place" in the kitchen:

> Sinegugu: "We are not like people of other races. We're not born with a silver spoon in our mouths. We have to work for everything that we desire in this life, you have to put that extra effort, because I think also it has to do with our background, our upbringing as Black people or as Black women, you know. And also, there's this old adage where people probably say, women should, are the ones who are supposed to do this and this and our place is in the kitchen."
>
> Siphokazi: "And also, like going back to the our place is in the kitchen, I think it's not only like in Black families, but also, you know, a lot of Black women work as like maids, and you know, so even for other races, our place was in the kitchen, it was doing domestic work. So if that's like, if that's how things were, resting obviously wasn't really a priority for most of us."

The conversation between Sinegugu and Siphokazi calls attention to the ways in which Black women's labour – and by extension, their access to rest - is baked into the remnants of South Africa's apartheid history. Sinegugu maintains that despite Black women being relegated to domestic labour, they are still "bending the arc of history" by becoming more and more educated and taking on more leadership roles within spaces they historically had no access to. Whereas Siphokazi highlights the racialized nature of domestic work and its function during apartheid in South Africa.

Invisible Labour in the Workplace

In a chapter on representations of domestic workers in South Africa, Ena Jansen (2019) comments on the prominent use of family relationship terms among white people describing the domestic workers they employ. In particular, she highlights that domestic workers being 'like family' (hence the title of the book), 'like a mother to me' etc. is not so much about the actual relationships as it a marker of the many hours they spend at employers' households – often at the expense of own families. Institutionalised domestic work in South Africa is mired in exploitative practices and dehumanizing treatment of Black women (Bronner, 2016). In this sense, going back to broader representations of Black womanhood, some parallels can be drawn between the domestic workers in South Africa and images of Mammy, whose fullness and humanity is not acknowledged beyond her infinite commitment and willingness to nurture members of the white households she serves (Shaw, 2005) – and at the expense of their own children.

As Gqola (2007) asserts, there is a significant contrast between public talk of women's empowerment in a country where women are in fact not empowered. Siphokazi, Zintle and Thayanda echo this when they illustrate how structural racism continues to have an impact on the financial and material resources Black women have access to – even when they are part of the

few who get seats at government offices and corporate tables. The following excerpts presents their reflections on how Black women receive minimal recognition, inequitable compensation and engage in substantial invisible labour within the workplace – while also contending with peers who have generational wealth to lean on.

> Siphokazi: "I just feel like we are the bottom of the barrel. And also like, as Black women, as Black African women, people don't really see you. You always have to do much more than the average person for them to see your contribution."
>
> Thayanda: "Everything that our grandparents may have now is something that they built off themselves, not because their parents gave them that… With white people, it's generational. Generational wealth in the sense of also just also not working as hard."

For Siphokazi, Black women's contributions not being seen not only occurs within the workplace; it is an experience she has known since she was a university student: "You kind of feel out of place also, like when you start, when I started doing like certain disciplines. For example, if you took at directing, you know, a lot of the time the boys or the men in those classes will always feel like oh, I know more." Whereas for Thayanda, generational wealth provides a cushion of material resources, but more importantly, it provides an employment opportunity as well that never runs dry: "We work ten times harder, like my mom says, to make an impact because Steve can go to a company and the company's run by the dad's best friend. Like he doesn't need to work as hard because I mean, he's in it." According to her, "Steve" – a presumably white man – not only has a guaranteed inheritance, but is likely never going to be unemployed because he can work for his father's friend. Similarly, Zintle indicates that Black people "literally cannot afford to rest:"

> "With the context of rest and race, it has to do with classism as well, right? Because a lot of Black people or non-white people literally cannot afford to rest… so it's a classism thing as well like that, you know, as a Black child, you know that you don't have a trust fund, you know that there is no business, family business that's been there for years in the family."

In addition to her assertion that Black children do not have financial head starts like their white counterparts, Zintle shares her experience of witnessing an "overworked, very underpaid, underappreciated" Black female mentor who discovered that a male colleague – with the same educational qualifications and background experience – was being paid more than she was. In their joint interview, Candice and Courtney also highlighted that given the economic status of a vast majority of Black South Africans, they cannot have as much access to rest. Like the mentor Zintle mentions, Candice shares her own experience of going the "extra mile" and still being underappreciated by her immediate manager:

> Zintle: "I remember this one mentor of mine, u[female name redacted], she was the most hardworking person I knew, and she was brilliant. She was a brilliant producer, and I remember her finding out that her colleague, which was [male name redacted], which was like, same age, same role, same everything, was getting paid more than her."
>
> Candice: "But this year, I really started to be conscious about it… when you see that my immediate manager is not, not appreciating what I was doing. So it made me even more conscious, just do what you must do, because this, they don't even see the extra mile that you go in."

These accounts not only highlight how women are often paid less than men even when they hold the same positions. A recent study on occupational segregation and the gender pay gap

in the South African formal sector found that out of ten industries, the average salary men received was higher than women's in all but four industries (Adeleken & Bussin, 2022). These accounts also speak to the invisible labour that women often perform within the academy and the workplace – much of which may often go unrecognized.

Furthermore, Black African women in academia are often obligated to be role models to their students and colleagues, and are at the same time pressured to engage in care work (Magoqwana et al., 2019). Regardless of whether or not Black women actively reject or comply with racialized, gendered aggressions in the workplace, negotiating their presence against a myriad of stereotypes and negative perceptions still constitutes invisible labour for which they will not be compensated (Melaku, 2022). Thayanda goes on to draw on an example from *Power*, a popular television series:

> "There's a white kid and he's friends with this guy. But now he got expelled from school for, he got expelled from school because he was selling drugs in his university. But then he moved into his father's company or his uncle's company, and he had a job, everything was smooth sailing."

According to Thayanda, had it been a Black kid in the same position, the outcome likely would have been different because "unfortunately, no matter how much we've fought for freedom, in a sense, that fight never ends." Siphokazi echoes this when she highlights that even when women do get the seat, the "fight never ends" in the sense that rest remains inaccessible because they have to defend their place on those seats:

> "I still feel that in as much as you know, we are, there's starting to be some, like efforts towards equality and you know, people also reaching levels that they never thought that they could reach as women, rest still becomes like a luxury because now even if you get

> to a certain position – say you're the CEO, people always criticize that: oh, because you're a woman, that's why things are going in this direction."

What Siphokazi is describing here is in line with Mbuli and Sibindi (2023)'s argument about gendered stereotypical notions of not trusting women with power, which lead to feelings of isolation and alienation. Moreover, the same authors argue that stereotypes can have the material consequence of hindering women's career advancement. Siphokazi goes on to comment on mainstream media's representation of Blackness, particularly how images and narratives can be internalized. While Sinegugu applauds women for breaking glass ceilings within the workplace, Siphokazi counters this by highlighting that Black women are often depicted in roles where one is pitted against another. This means that success can only be accessible to one Black woman at a time, while others nip at her heels in competition for that single spot:

> "I think it's also like a media thing… whatever it is, they always pin Black women against each other. It's like you can't both be successful at the same time… And the more that we see those things, the more we're conditioned to believe that we always have to be in competition with each other. So, goes back again, to you actually never rest because no one's, there is no other woman that looks like you that's on your side. And you don't have the luxury to kind of sit back and relax and have that peace of mind."

This is an important reflection because while the participants' stories have shown how their constructions of rest are influenced by racialized, gendered and classed subjectivities, it also highlights how these subjectivities are depicted within mainstream media. Overall, the above data has offered insights into the different ways the participants' ideas about rest cannot be separated from the material and psychosocial realities of a post-apartheid South Africa. Nevertheless, gendered stereotypes are an integral part of those subjectivities. In the next theme,

the SBW schema's impact on articulations of rest, I discuss how this archetype may influence the ways in which participants further conceptualise their ideas about rest.

The Strong Black Woman's Impact on Articulations of Rest

A substantive body of rsearch has been done on the strong Black woman (SBW) schema. In particular, the literature has shown that while it can be an asset to Black women and their communities, the SBW is also a liability given the adverse physical and psychosocial consequence on Black women's wellbeing. In this study, it was anticipated that the SBW schema may, to some extent, mediate Black women's articulations of rest. However, the data brought to the fore the various ways in which identification with the SBW schema may begin long before Black women are adults. In light of this, the following data presents the ways in which constructions of rest may first be mediated by adultification, and in turn, play a pivotal role in articulations of rest.

Birth Order and Adultification

A study on relatedness, gender and the intra-household allocation of work and leisure in South Africa found that on average, women spend about 50 minutes more on different types of labour within the home, and consequently, dedicate about 50 minutes less to leisure (Wittenberg, 2009). These discrepancies were in part attributed to power imbalances and altruism. Fathers and sons have more time than mothers and daughters because they "either extract more leisure by force, or they free-ride on the altruism of their women" (Wittenberg, 2009, p. 18).

In the present study, participants stories reveal similar disparities in time spent on labour and leisure regardless of the order in which they were birthed into their families. It is worth noting that I do not explore this sub-theme for the purpose of arguing that children should not have responsibilities. Rather, I highlight how the participants seem to have taken on caregiving

duties because the contexts in which they were located dictated that they do so. This caregiving responsibility was reported by all participants except for Candice, who is the youngest of several daughters and actively took on more responsibilities because of her own curiosity (perhaps as a result of being buffered by older sisters).

While none of the participants was explicitly asked about their birth orders, they all mentioned it during the course of their participation in the study. More important were the links the participants each drew between their birth orders and the senses of responsibility that emerged from it. Below are some excerpts from all the participants' individual interviews which illustrate their ideas about their birth orders and some recollections of taking on more responsibility for themselves or others in childhood.

> Tendai: "And I guess the beauty of being a middle child with girls, I've been always, like, the middle child, I guess you've heard it, we kind of find our way in this life, because everybody's busy doting over the firstborn, or the last one. But we are loved, but we become overachievers."
>
> Sinegugu: "I said to myself, I have to discover myself, and shine at what I'm good at so that I can look after my mother."
>
> Candice: "Maybe it's how we were brought up. I think then, that then plays a big role. As a child, you were, you were, it [household labour] was a must."
>
> Zingce: "So growing from that family of the older people, I knew the things I can trust them that they will do, there are that things I can't, okay. When it comes to certain things, I have to make sure that I become a manager and attain those things."
>
> Thayanda: "I think sometimes you don't actually choose what responsibility you take because I feel like older siblings is, it's more like, you don't choose. I think it just

happens naturally, as an older sibling to just take care of the ones that are created after you, whether they're planned or unplanned *laughs*"

Siphokazi: "I've always felt like since I was young, like, I need to take care of other people. If I feel like my sister's not okay, I feel like oh no, I don't feel okay with it. And I was always trying to do something to, you know, like give you comfort and kind of put my feelings aside for a minute."

Courtney: "So I feel like you have more responsibilities as a older child. You have to help your mother, who's gonna help her?"

Zintle: "So that being called lazy manifested itself in me always having a full plate, not even a full plate, like an overwhelming plate like always having, like I was always overwhelmed."

Out of all eight participants, three are first born children (Thayanda, Courtney and Zintle), three are last born children (Siphokazi, Candice, and Zingce), and Tendai and Sinegugu are middle children. It is worth noting that despite their birth order, each of the participants felt some sense of adult responsibility since (their) childhood. In fact, some of them seem to understand this sense of responsibility as directly influenced by their birth order. For instance, Thayanda's parents are divorced, and she recognizes the toll of being raised by a single mother when she says:

"Sometimes you just look at other parents and just like, *shakes head* but sometimes that's why I think also this way you realize that sometimes people just take the backseat, and that's absolutely fine for them if they're at peace with it. But is it the right thing to do? No."

While it can be assumed that some part of her taking on more responsibility within the household could be a consequence of "other people" taking the "backseat," she nevertheless describes her having more responsibilities as "natural" because she is an older sibling.

However, Tendai seems to recognize that her daughter Thayanda carries some bulk of the household labour because Tendai is a single mother, saying: "I feel like she has taken a lot of – and I've tried to say to her, you don't need to try and be your dad, because she tries and take the weight off me and try so that we can sort of like be a team." Not only does Tendai recognize that her daughter is trying to fill the gap that her ex-husband left, she also considers how this may impact Thayanda's ability and willingness to rest, saying:

> "So maybe her exhaustion also, which also I feel I need to consciously make sure I pull her back and give her the space to be a child and not be a co-parent with me… Ngoba umntwana ends up taking on a responsibility that's actually not necessarily - actually, thank you. Thank you for this session. It makes me think because I'd like to think maybe her rest is not, is not normal for any child who, who's growing up with a mom and dad in the same house at age 24."

Sinegugu and Siphokazi are another mother-daughter pair for whom adult responsibility came to the fore following a major change in family structure. For Siphokazi, her "need to take care of other people" arose after the death of her father. She reported that her mother, Sinegugu had to move to South Africa shortly after his death, after this, Siphokazi reports: "I've always just felt that sense of responsibility, even over my mom when she was far away. I would just always feel worried and like really concerned." The youngest of two daughters, Siphokazi simultaneously felt an increased sense of responsibility for her older sister because "I think we handle grief differently, and we handled the change in different ways. She was a teenager, a 13-

year-old, but yeah, she was like, puberty phase. And you know, that's a whole different life to an 8-year-old."

Siphokazi went on to describe how she would "mediate as [her] younger self" when conflict would arise between her older sister and her grandmother. Interestingly, when she was probed about from where this heightened sense of responsibility to care for and mediate the relationships among older women in her family came, Siphokazi described it as "a character thing." While Siphokazi tended more toward increased emotional labour following the death of her father, her mother, Sinegugu, tended more toward intellectual labour. Her own parents divorced when she was about seven years old. As quoted above, Sinegugu chose to detach herself from her parents' relationship and instead poured herself into her academic and career ambitions after witnessing the financial strain her mother experienced.

Like Thayanda, Courtney and Zintle are first born children. While Courtney echoed Thayanda's sentiments about older siblings taking on more responsibilities, she was also quite explicit about the need for fathers to assume more responsibility within the home as a way to facilitate more access to rest for mothers. For Zintle, laziness was simply not an option as a child, particularly because it was "literally beaten" out of her. As a Black girl child who could not rest at home, she carried the messaging behind those beatings with her when she went off to university.

Here we see that even when Zintle was no longer under the watchful eye of her family, she still filled her plate to the point of overwhelm as a student. Not only did this have an impact on her own sense of wellbeing, but on her friendships as well; "I didn't have great friendships because of that, because being productive." It was only when she started working and struggling that she paused to re-evaluate her relationship with rest:

> "I think the moment that I guess I realized that okay, something was up was how depressed I was. I was genuinely very depressed and crying every day and low-key high-key – not suicidal – but also just like, why are we here? Like, what's the point?"

For Candice and Zingce – both last born children – taking on more responsibility within the home was an act of admiration and necessity, respectively. While Candice describes household labour as "a must" growing up, she also describes it from a place of wanting to emulate her grandmothers, saying:

> "I admired my grandmothers a lot, how they will cook and especially from my father's side, it was a house that there's always all children and that children and she was just busy on, on, on her legs the whole day ensuring that there's food, everyone is sorted out. So now you have this thing, I want to be like that, I want to be like my grandmother."

This is perhaps where her desire to be a stay-at-home wife and mother is rooted from.

For Zingce however, being "a solution orientated person" is largely influenced by the limitations of her brothers. They are all significantly older than her – aged 65, 63, and 59. However, these limitations are primarily financial as she notes that they receive social grants, saying "I have to make sure because we can't be, all of us be just imbecile like that, and then not provide the solutions for our family. So I'm that one."

Scholarly literature is yet to explore how adultification influences Black girls' experiences within the home. Nevertheless, the data above has presented some insight into the messaging the participants received about what it means to be Black girls and the responsibilities that they were inclined to take on based on the contexts of their childhood homes – even when they were not explicitly instructed to take on some responsibilities. As previously noted, when Black girls are adultified, they are more vulnerable to be seen and treated in ways that mirror

stereotypes about Black women (Crenshaw et al., 2015). Thus they are also expect to be independent, silent, and to survive in the face of all hardship. With this in mind, the following sub-theme shifts the lens to participants' general awareness of and identification with the SBW schema and explores the impact this has had on their articulations of rest.

Emergence of Identification with the SBW Schema

Originally coined the Superwoman Schema by Woods-Giscombe (2010) in her study on African American women's views on stress, strength and health, the conceptual framework of this schema has been used to describe a strategy that Black women employ to resist negative characterizations of their womanhood. I has also been used to describe Black women's unsung resilience they have developed in the face of oppression. As previously discussed, the Superwoman schema – used interchangeably with the strong Black woman schema – rests on five primary tenets, namely: to manifest strength, suppress emotion, resist vulnerability and/or dependency, succeed no matter the barriers, and to help others. The following excerpts presents some of the messaging participants have received about Black womanhood which simultaneously demand and celebrate strength above all else.

In their individual interviews, Tendai and Zingce offered interesting insights into their ideas about Black womanhood. Tendai first describes how she has noticed that her own mother is more considerate of Thayanda's mental health. She also explains that unlike Thayanda who can assert her need for rest, it was unacceptable for Tendai to tell her mother that she wanted to rest. On this, Tendai says:

> "I guess what I'm trying to emphasize is the approach would have been di- I wouldn't have, to my [mother] then, been able to approach and say ngikhatele [I'm tired], I want to

> rest. She'd have said uk'phumula yini [what's resting]? Impilo inzima [life is hard]. Vuka [wake up]!""

Tendai went on to elaborate on this by reflecting on how a squabble between her son and daughter prompted her to have a conversation with the daughter about mental health and the need for her to be prepared for how people will treat her outside the home. She says: "And then later, for dealing with rest and mental health, I called my daughter, which is something that I think my, how we're raised, it was never going to be like that. I say to her, you know, you must realize that life gets very dirty and messy. And you'll get a lot of people like your brother out there, who will play the man and not the ball, and how you react to it, and how you balance your mental stability is in how you consume it. You must learn to have selective hearing, for your, for your mental health and for your balance, you need to just try and get that emotional intelligence."

On the one hand, the exchange Tendai described is an example of how mothers and other maternal figures may use everyday interactions to impart knowledge about the realities of navigating womanhood within broader society. What is interesting about the lesson here, is that Tendai places the onus on her daughter Thayanda to employ selective hearing as a coping strategy, rather than confronting the external factors that demand selective hearing as a coping strategy in the first place. This is reminiscent of the instances noted above in which participants attribute responsibilities that they had as children to their own characters and internal processes, rather than to the external contexts that demanded them in the first place.

Similarly, Zingce spoke about the expectations that came with being a girl child in a Black household:

> "Remember that time when we grew or before our parents, the aim was for you to be seen as the strong female character, whom if one family pays lobola for you, then you're going

to, you know, you're going to have a big family, your kids are going to be active because you are active."

For Zingce, being a strong female character seems to have been commendable not just for her own family, but would extend to the family she would marry into and the children she would have. She later suggests that this also extends to the ways in which she would conduct herself in the workplace when she says: "And if you are given a chance as a female to be part of the pack… you work ten times hard so that you don't feel like they have to pull you up or help you every time."

Together, what Tendai and Zingce are describing here speaks to three of the five tenets of being a strong Black woman: an obligation to manifest strength even when one is exhausted, to help others, and to resist being vulnerable or dependent in any way. There seems to be an undercurrent in both their statements which highlights that for them, life would be difficult. The other suggestion in their statements is to ensure that they never show any weakness in order to hold on to whatever opportunities they do secure. As Zingce says, "if you are given a chance as a female to be part of the pack;". This means that, for her, the pack indeed exists, she is outside of it, and becoming a part of it is a matter of chance rather than what she may or may not have done to earn her place.

Siphokazi and Zintle's individual interviews also offer some insights into how the strong Black women schema functions within the workplace. On this, Siphokazi says: "I just don't want there to be a doubt in anyone's mind that I'm not capable of doing what I know I'm more than capable of doing." Zintle described how older Black women told her that struggling to keep the pace of work was natural. For Black women, this has always been their only option: they must "suck it up," i.e. manifest strength, suppress her emotions, and resist vulnerability: "The parents

and the older generations would just be like, well, this is the way it is, you just gotta, you just gotta suck it up. This is what we've been doing for years."

Siphokazi further reflected on how her work ethic was also a consequence of her grandmother's teaching: "I have my own hopes and dreams of what I want to be, where I want to work, you know, what impact I want to make, how much more educated I want to become. And I know that for me to get to those things, it's not going to be handed to me on a silver spoon. And going back to my grandmother, I know that she's always told us like how she struggled to take care of her kids, you know, aside from like, just not sitting down, I know that you always have to work and make a way."

In essence, for Zintle and Siphokazi, being a superwoman in the workplace is not just about "sucking up" any difficulties that may arise within the office, but also about working while sick (even in the confines of one's own home). That is, even when her physical health was compromised, it was more important to ensure that nobody could consider any incomplete work to be an indicator of incompetence rather than incapacity. With this, Zintle also reflects on her experience of witnessing the different ways her grandmother showed up for her community at the expense of her own rest:

> "My grandma, she's old and retired… she's like forcefully at rest now. But when I was growing up? That girl? See that one? That one never rested. That one was a nurse, that one was a community healer, she was a leader in the church. So she was constantly doing something, constantly attending to some sort of distress in the family or in the community."

During the joint interviews, most participants' accounts further demonstrated how the strong Black woman schema operates within the familial home and the workplace. Tendai

describes how growing up in a 'traditional' home came with the idea that women are stronger. She then highlights that messages like this get internalised, and influence how women perform in the workplace:

> "I suppose in a household, it's always the same as I suppose historically, how we were raised in traditionally, you know. That in as much as people now share chores in homes, there's always the idea that a woman, you know, possesses more strength, that you can actually keep going until you drop dead into bed at night. So I suppose the gender divide also plays a role. But also, I think, also, I realized that some of it is self imposed because of culture, that women take that into the workplace as well."

Tendai seems to speak on this in a general sense. However, it is Thayanda who highlights that she has witnessed her mother's exhaustion and struggles, despite all her assertions that she is 'fine.' Not only does is this another example of how Tendai seems to have internalised the obligation to manifest strength, but Thayanda's accounts also highlights how she may feel obligated to help others: "I think also just witnessing my mother herself, where she's trying to make sure everyone is fine. Even though sometimes she's like I'm fine, I'm fine. I'm just like no, you're not."

In Sinegugu and Siphokazi's joint interview, Sinegugu introduces Black women's mental health by sharing a story about an ex-colleague whose experience of workplace bullying and harassment led to a 'mental breakdown' and three week hospitalization. She not only highlights the economic ramifications of her ex-colleague leaving a job as a result of these difficulties, she also identifies the workplace bullying and harassment as the causes of the breakdown:

> "She, she sort of like had a breakdown, a mental breakdown, right. And we knew about it. But then the thing is, because we don't support each other, what we're supposed to do as

> women, we're supposed to support all of us and make sure that this matter is resolved. Right. But that never happened. It's not about me, it's about her. So if she has a problem, then she has to escalate the issue. It got so bad that she was hospitalized for about three weeks, right. And then when she came out of hospital, the doctor wrote a very long letter to the managers to say my patient is suffering because of ABC. And she had to resign without a job. She's been jobless for the past eight months now. And she's got kids to look after. So you see, such things."

By saying "what we're supposed to do as women, we're supposed to support all of us and make sure that this matter is resolved," she seems to place the responsibility of resolution on herself and other female colleagues, rather than on employers ensuring that there are measures in place to prevent said bullying and harassment in the first place. Siphokazi goes on to express that Black women need to be more "selfish" about tending to themselves. Interestingly, she immediately centres this tending around having more capacity to tend to others and other responsibilities, rather than for the sake of one's own mental health and overall wellbeing:

> "Maybe we're actually not like selfish enough. Which, sometimes we need to be and like, put yourself first and the things that you need to do for yourself to be better for you so you can be better for others, and for your responsibilities. So yeah, I've definitely thought about it. But I'm yet to, or rather, we're both yet to, to make that a priority and a practice."

Zingce and Zintle's joint interview discussion about mental health provides another opportunity to explore how issues of mental health can be entangled with functions of the strong Black woman schema. For Zingce, even though she hypothesizes that most Black women over the age

of 30 are 'miserable,' she highlights that this misery cannot be expressed when one comes from a generation in which mental health is 'nothing:'

> "I'm from a generation where mental health is nothing. Zintle will tell you. What is that? Because really, thina we are from… sjoe guys, thina we are from, uhm, not a clean slate but adapting stage, you know. We adapt thina, whether it's right or it's wrong, if we can't fix it, we adapt... I adapt to the environment that has already been created. That's what we do. So probably the reason why, maybe I must also raise this: the reason why most ladies, Black ladies from the ages of 30 plus to our age, right? We are miserable. But we can't show."

Not only does this render it unworthy of attention, mental health seems to also have nothing to do with modifying an environment in order to make it healthier or supportive. Rather, by placing the responsibility on her and other Black to simply adapt, comes the inherent demand for them to suppress all emotions, manifest strength regardless of the circumstances, resist vulnerability at all costs, and succeed regardless of any and all barriers that may stand in one's way. In response, Zintle affirms that it is her generation that has introduced conversations about mental health to Zingce's generation. She acknowledges the vulnerability of having to simply adapt, as well as the ways in which adjusting to adversity has functioned as an asset for both her stepmother and her mother. By the same token, Zintle expresses how she too has drawn on this attitude in moments where paying attention to her mental health would have come at the price of her productivity:

> "Yeah, this mental health conversation really came with us hey. And it's sad to see because nyani, especially Black women, this is where it's like Black women are always like u-moody or they're agitated or whatever. It's literally these suppressed things

> manifesting themselves in these ways, so yeah, it's sad to see but I also get it. You know I get it?... For a long time, the Black community and Black women had to be productive, they had to make ends meet, had to raise kids without, you know, so I understand where it comes from. And I can respect it and sometimes I tap into that, especially when I need things to happen because sometimes dude, yoh sometimes when you're like, nakaring your mental health, sometimes you can't do things hey."

Overall, the above results demonstrate that similar to the socialization process of adultification – which stems from necessity - becoming a Superwoman is also often borne of economic and social necessities for survival. Although the roles of mother, nurturer, caretaker, breadwinner etc., are generally celebrated, for the women who take on these roles, their identification with the strong Black woman schema can be both an asset and a vulnerability (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). The participants in this study – particularly the mothers – are all high achieving Black women. This is likely a consequence of the unlauded resilience that comes with being a strong Black woman, and one that has yielded generational benefits for their daughters. Simultaneously, this has also limited their access and ability to engage in rest practices, even when their health demands it.

In light of the above, it can be argued that Black women do not just become strong in adulthood. Rather, they may also be socialized into being strong Black women by first being adultified in childhood. Currently, research on the adultification of Black girls is minimal, and largely focused on punitive judgements and punishments in school and the juvenile judicial system in the US. For the purposes of this study however, what is vital to note is that like the SBW schema, the adultification of Black girls is borne of necessity rather than individual autonomy and self-determination.

Moreover, consistent with Wyatt and Ampadu's (2022) research on self-care as a social justice tool for Black wellness, individual conceptualizations of rest and self—care are mediated by collectivist rather than individualist ideals within Black communities, as well as the historical roots of care-giving roles and responsibilities for Black women. This was highlighted in participants' reports of taking on more responsibility and displaying strength regardless of their circumstances in order to support their families and broader communities. These findings further highlight the importance of supporting Black women's prioritization of rest and self-care by constructing self-care practices a as a form of communal care (Wyatt & Ampadu, 2022).

Ultimately, the participants have reported various challenges related to their racialized, gendered and classed subjectivities as Black women in South Africa. The participants have also described how they had to show up in adultified ways as children, and been expected to always be strong in adulthood. Nevertheless, they went on to also define for themselves what rest does and can look like for them. For interviewees who had not previously dealt with the concept of rest, engaging in intergenerational conversations as a component of their participation in the present study was an important site of reflection, negotiation, and recognition and education. This suggests that intergenerational conversations could be a liberation tool in psychological research with Black women. These intergenerational conversations are discussed in more detail in the final theme below.

Intergenerational Conversations as a Site of Reflection, Recognition and Education

Part of the present study sought to investigate how older and younger Black women understand and negotiate their ideas of rest with one another. In each of the aforementioned themes, key similarities and differences among the participants were outlined and discussed. Contrary to those themes, this final theme does not concern the similarities or differences

between the views expressed by the participants. Rather, it highlights a process of integration that seems to have emerged as a direct consequence of creating a space in which mothers and daughters could discuss a seemingly non-threatening topic like rest. The following excerpts were taken from the joint interviews. Although some may have already featured in the discussion of other themes above, they all demonstrate how the intergenerational conversations themselves served as a site of relational reflection, recognition and education.

When Tendai began participating in the study, she was enrolled for a postgraduate diploma. However, she reports that being a participant in the study inspired her to "take [her] life back" after completing the first semester. She says: "We were not really given the opportunity to rest. Maybe that's what, maybe that's the disruption that should come also in of the generation that I'm in" In this way, she seems to have actioned the 'disruption' she said was needed in her generation:

> "But um, I guess the conversation that we had, I suppose it was God's plan. I guess this process that we're having with you really has helped me to really do a lot of thinking and introspection and hence I've really decided to stop at that first semester and introspect and get my life back because I certainly felt unhappy and that is, that's not what I wanted."

Tendai's daughter, Thayanda, often asserted that her mother could learn a thing or two from her about what it really means to rest. Towards the end of their joint interview however, rather than simply challenge her, Thayanda seemed to more pointedly acknowledge how her mother had had to always manifest strength:

> "I think also just witnessing my mother herself, where she's trying to make sure everyone is fine. Even though sometimes she's like, 'I'm fine, I'm fine.' I'm just like, no, you're not… "It's okay not to worry about what's going on.""

For Sinegugu, who initially centred her definition of rest around material achievement, and her daughter Siphokazi, who asserted that rest was a myth for Black women, their joint interview highlighted an overarching culture of not prioritizing rest practices within their family. They explored a range of structural reasons that limited Black women's access to rest, and the impact that these could have on mental health. However, more explicitly, by the end of their participation in the study, they also interrogated, agreed on and highlighted the importance of creating more spaces for conversation; to check in one another's mental health and in the pursuit of all their individual goals and dreams, to more intentionally offer support to one another if and when it was needed:

> Sinegugu: "I think it's something that we need to really work on, and talk more about these things… I think as a family and being ladies, those are the things that we need to keep checking each other on that. That are you okay, at work, because at times you find that someone is – we are all working, right, but as I say that there's bullying and harassment in the place of work. One could be bullied or harassed, but they are sort of like, we don't talk about it as women, right, but then that at the end of the day, it affects your mental health . You know, because no one ever talks to you about these things, you don't open up to each other to discuss these things."
>
> Siphokazi: "I agree with what she said. I do think like, it's an important point, and it's something that we need to like, always keep checking on for ourselves and, you know, other Black women around us. It's important to have those conversations, and just to

> check like, where are you? What assistance do you need? How can I help? You know? And start normalizing those sorts of conversations."

Candice and her daughter, Courtney seem to have gone through their own process of education, following their individual interviews when Courtney insisted that men need to contribute more to household labour in order for mothers to engage in rest. While neither of them offered any strategies on how they would, in practice, ensure that the household labour became more balanced, they did in their joint interview offer pointed advice to one another. Courtney advised Candice to prioritize her own time even when other responsibilities beckoned, and Candice emphasized the importance of boundaries; to wait even when she thought she could get particular tasks completed more timeously.

> Candice: "As the oldest, have your boundaries, agree with family, your household, everyone, on who the responsibilities is. On everyone. Yeah, and just set the boundaries, and even though you think argh, I'll get it done faster than to wait on people. Wait for them, sisi. Wait for them. Let them."
>
> Courtney: "Yah and my advice to my mother is that you should always prioritize your own time, even when you really want to make time for your children, when you really want to do chores, you wanna catch up on work – prioritize it."

When Zingce and Zintle started their joint interview, they made it quite clear that their notion of rest and worth ethic differed greatly. For Zingce, rest was only a reward for hard work and work was only valid if it was a formal "8 to 5." For Zintle, rest formed an integral part of her mental health because "unless we are working in the ER, or ICU, or the f*cking hospital, nothing is that serious, nothing is that deep." Given the polarities in their ideas, their joint interview offered/created a space for negotiation. For Zingce, participation in the study reportedly taught

her to reflect on how she lives her life. She reported that even though “old school people” only rest when they are ill and have been ordered to stay in bed and medicate by a doctor, she learned the importance of listening to younger people and translating that into how she relates to her own children:

> “But for real, we as old, old school people, we wait until that beep or the doctor, the doctor's notes or whatever… that’s the only time you get to be in bed for three days because you’re on meds and then you’re drinking your medication. That’s why you’re in bed. Not because you’re well, but you’re just resting. So that’s one part that I’ve learned from that conversation. But also it give me another look of saying: the kids are watching. They are watching to say: but MaZingce, you’re working so hard, thank you for everything but we want you.”
>
> “So I think that maybe I should put a gender in this one and say, as women, we need to support each other. Even if we’re working, we shouldn’t work against each other because we draw strength in how we deal with certain issues, whether it’s this issue that Zintle has raised, because for me, to be honest, this conversation has raised a lot of questions in how I live my life and how my kids see how I do things, you know? And then it also give me a chance to reflect because as old people we don’t reflect, and we don’t take the opinion that the kids are giving us as well on certain things.”

Zintle not only acknowledged the privileges that her mothers’ inaccessibility to rest earned her, she also affirmed her mothers’ resilience. In addition, Zintle reported that the conversations that occurred during her participation in the study prompted her to rethink the direction of her life moving forward*:*

> "Funny enough, you might not think this is gonna come from me, but like, it's gonna come from me. Sometimes I see the resilience that both my mom and Zingce have, and I like, if they were in my generation and concerned about their mental health, some of the things that they have achieved, they probably wouldn't have achieved them, especially in the environment that they grew up in… and this is why people always say Black women have raised generations and built homes or whatever… And now that I'm older, I understand that like, you know, my parents or the people that raised me were on survival mode all the time, you know, and they couldn't afford rest. They couldn't rest. And I understand that rest is a luxury, you know, understand that I'm privileged to be able to be freelancing, have a house, have all these things and be able to not do anything and still not lose what I have… So through the conversation that me and MaZingce are having, I've had to rethink and I'm still kind of sort of trying to figure out what I'm doing with my life and having direction."

Overall, for the participants in this study, the joint interview seemed to become a space of integration. A range of similarities and differences of opinion emerged throughout the entire scope of the study. However, it was within a shared space of reflection where participants were able to offer advice to one another, negotiate differences, and form agreements. Further, these interviews also demonstrated the notion of rest as communal care that marries the personal and the social while engaging with the relational. As Morrison and Walker argued (as cited by Melonas, 2021), radical self-care – as an integral part of rest – must incorporate an openness to being loved and affirmed by others, and actively unlearning socialized ideas of Black womanhood as inherently disposable. This openness and unlearning cannot happen in isolation, rather, it seeks to liberate by rooting itself in community care (Moore, 2018).

Below is an excerpt that concluded Zingce and Zintle's joint interview. Asked how they would describe the most rested Black woman they could imagine, this is the image they co-created:

Zintle: "They're peaceful, man. Peaceful. Just like…"

Zingce: "Sjoe, the storm that comes from there, Zintle *giggles*"

Zintle: "From where?"

Zingce: "From *pauses* from everything. You know, you know when you've, when you've got it. I don't know how to…"

Zintle: "I get it. Like, it's equanimity?"

Zingce: "Yaaaa"

Zintle: "It's whatever happens, you're unbothered"

Zingce: "Ya! You feel like you're an Oprah in Soweto or in Sandton"

all laugh

Zintle: "Yaaa. They're not, they're not reactive"

Zingce: "Ya…"

It is notable how Zintle handed her language over to Zingce when her own could not articulate the thing she was trying to communicate. When Zingce offered her own conceptualization, Zintle held it with understanding. Amidst dominant images of Black womanhood that are mired in negative stereotypes and manifestations of expressing strength above all else, these participants used their conversation to express their softness too.

In their research about Red Table Talk, an intergenerational web series hosted by Jada Pinkett-Smith, her mother and her daughter, Sadler and LaPan (2023) highlighted how this group of women's critical conversations on topics related to health, identity and relationships yielded

two significant results for their viewers: First, the web series offered viewers a glimpse into how three Black woman from different generations describe their experiences about similar topics. Sadler and LaPan found that viewers often felt a sense of catharsis from witnessing these conversations. Secondly, viewers reported that witnessing these intergenerational conversations also served as an example of what authenticity, connection, education, and confronting difficult conversations and emotions within an empowering, safe space can look like.

Mainstream media's depictions of Black women so often contribute to characterizations of Black womanhood in ways that do not recognize their wholeness. However, alternative forms of media like Red Table Talk are an important form of disruption and resistance because they offer counter narratives by specifically centring intergenerational conversations. Similarly, by employing intergenerational conversations as a methodological tool in this study, we see how they can serve as a medium for joint reflection, affirmation, and education.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Summary of Findings

The aim of this exploratory study was to investigate how a group of Black women in Johannesburg, South Africa construct their ideas about rest. Given that there is no scholarly literature which specifically addresses Black women's constructions of rest in South Africa, this research was an opportunity to at the very least, begin to explore how the rest-Black-woman problem might be resolved against the backdrop of a post-apartheid landscape. By engaging the voices of both younger and older Black women, the research has provided insights which could fill the gap in our knowledge of this subject, while also providing a starting point from which further discourse can be engaged, produced and reflected upon.

In order to form some understanding of Black women constructions of rest across generation, the study was grounded on four questions. The first research question explored how participants construct their ideas about rest. The findings have shown that participants' definitions of rest, and the symbols they drew on to articulate these definitions were rooted in the positions they hold as Black women within broader society in South Africa. The participants cited a range of issues related to race, gender and class to articulate various barriers to rest for Black women. These barriers include domestic and gender based violence, single headed households, distribution of household labour, the gender pay gap, and dominant representations of Black womanhood in media. Overall, the findings described within these themes demonstrated that the material and psychosocial realities of a post-apartheid South Africa formed an integral part of participants' constructions of rest.

The second research question sought to establish whether or not constructions of rest differ across different generations of Black women. The findings have shown that there was a

distinct generational difference in how participants constructed their definitions of rest. For a majority of the daughters, definitions of rest were based on cessation of work, while a majority of the mothers defined rest in terms of reaching particular states of mind. Only one mother and one daughter offered alternative definitions of rest, which they described as a myth and a taboo for Black women. Interestingly, where participants' ideas about rest converged was in relation to their birth orders, it was noted in the findings that even though participants were not asked about their birth orders, it was often cited when participants described their personal relationships to responsibilities, work ethic and the concept of rest.

The third research question was concerned with the extent to which participants' constructions of rest was mediated by the strong Black woman schema. It was anticipated that the SBW schema may mediate participants' constructions of rest. While the findings confirmed that the SBW schema did influence participants' constructions of rest, the data strongly suggests that these constructions are not only mediated by the SBW schema, but by adultification in childhood too. This is a notable finding because even though the SBW schema has received substantive attention in scholarly research, the literature on the adultification of Black girls is lagging far behind.

The final research question explored how mothers and daughters understood and negotiated their constructions of rest with one another. The findings have shown that even though several similarities and differences came to the fore during the course of interviewees' participation in the study, the joint conversations with each mother and daughter facilitated a process of integration. Within these shared interview spaces, the participants recognized and affirmed various aspects of each others' lived experiences, offered advice to one another,

negotiated differences of opinions around they formed agreements, and educated each other about the strategies they could employ to access more rest going forward.

Overall, according to the Black women in this study, intergenerational constructions of rest cannot be separated from the historical, socioeconomic and racialized gendered positions Black women hold within society. Some of the literature on Black women's experiences in South Africa has indicated that Black women learn and negotiate their gendered roles within the context of race roles (McRae & Noumair, 2017). The present study's findings contribute to this existing body of work about Black women's experiences. It has demonstrated how Black women's access to rest is influenced by the prescribed feminine traits into which they are socialized (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; Brody et al., 2014; Jordan, 2013; Louw & Louw, 2009), public discourse about women's empowerment (Gqola, 2007), and exclusionary institutional cultures (Canham, 2014; Diale & Carrim, 2022; Dibobo et al., 2022, Kessi, 2018; Maseti 2018).

The findings from this exploratory research also corroborate existing literature on the SBW schema as a strategy Black women employ to survive in the face of historical oppression and ongoing discrimination. Several scholars like have highlighted that the SBW schema is in many ways an asset (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009; Donovan & West, 2015; Harris-Lacewell, 2001; Washington & Hoxmeier, 2021; Woods-Giscombe, 2010). However, they have also shown that identification with this schema can also be detrimental to Black women's physical and psychosocial health. The present study has contributed to this scholarly discussion while also highlighting that access to rest could counter some of the adverse effects of this schema.

Additionally, some authors have written about the adultification of Black girls and its impact on Black girls' experiences at school and in the juvenile justice system (Epstein et al.,

2017; Ngidi & Mayeza, 2023). One of the grave consequences of the adultification phenomena is that it strips Black girls of their childhood and instead makes them vulnerable to being treated as adults based on stereotypes about Black women (Crenshaw et al., 2015). A key gap in the literature that the present study has filled is related to this adultification. Findings in the present study have highlighted that the adultification of Black girls may be linked to identification with the SBW schema. That is, when Black girls are stripped of their childhood, they inadvertently get socialized to become strong black women while they are still children.

Finally, similar to Melonas (2021) who writes about rest as rooted in radical self-care, communal care, and an openness to being loved, affirmed, and collectively unlearning internalized ideas of Black women's lives as centred around hardship, the present study demonstrated these values through the intergenerational conversation findings. The findings in this study have also contributed to Sadler and LaPan (2023)'s findings on intergenerational conversations as a valuable tool to cultivate critical conversations about topics like health, identity and relationships. Respondents in Sadler and LaPan's study reported that witnessing intergenerational conversations offered a useful framework of what safe, authentic, connected, and educational conversations can look like, even when the subject matter is difficult. Participants in this study corroborated this through their own intergenerational conversations about what rest can look like for them.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the sample population. Given the limited scope and time frame of the minor dissertation, ease of access to participants was a central consideration during recruitment. The participants were diverse in age, educational backgrounds and employment positions. However it is possible that participants from more diverse socioeconomic positions

may have different experiences and ideas that could expand on the intergenerational constructions of rest detailed in the findings of this study. This is an especially important limitation to consider in future research given the racial disparities in distributions of wealth and rampant economic exclusion of Black women within the South African context.

Another limitation within the sample population was the lack of LGBTQI women. Gendered constructs, archetypes and expectations affect all women. As such, it is possible that LGBTQI participants may also have different experiences, ideas and perceptions of intergenerational constructions of rest which may have yielded different results or enriched the findings of this study. This too is vital to consider in future research given ongoing discrimination and violence against LGBTQI people in South Africa – despite constitutional protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Recommendations

The strong Black woman schema has received extensive attention in research literature. However, the research on the adultification of Black girls is lagging behind. It is important to not only investigate the link between the adultification of Black girls and identification with the strong Black woman schema, but to approach research on Black womanhood from a longitudinal lens. One that pays attention to Black girlhood, and addresses issues related to how Black women are groomed into womanhood from a young age.

The present study has demonstrated the potential of intergenerational conversations to be spaces that can facilitate collective education, affirmation and liberation. With the emergence of new generations, attention is paid to the similarities and differences between them through comparison, while research literature on integration is sparse. As such, we do not know how pivotal a role this could play in addressing issues that have plagued Black women generation

after generation, while each may assume that certain problems are unique to their particular time. Future research might be focused on more closely investigating intergenerational conversation as a liberation tool.

The reviewed literature has shown that Black women being strong may have some benefits, but there are a range of mental, emotional and relational prices to pay for it, all of which seem to collect their fees physiologically. Additionally, given the heightened sense of childhood responsibility expressed by participants, further studies on rest should also explore childhood studies relating to intergenerational trauma, child-rearing, as well as knowledge transfer from mothers to daughter. While there is more mainstream literature on why then rest is a form of resistance against historical trauma and marginalization, future research could further, and more deeply explore this topic with the aim of systemic change, inclusion, and policy development.

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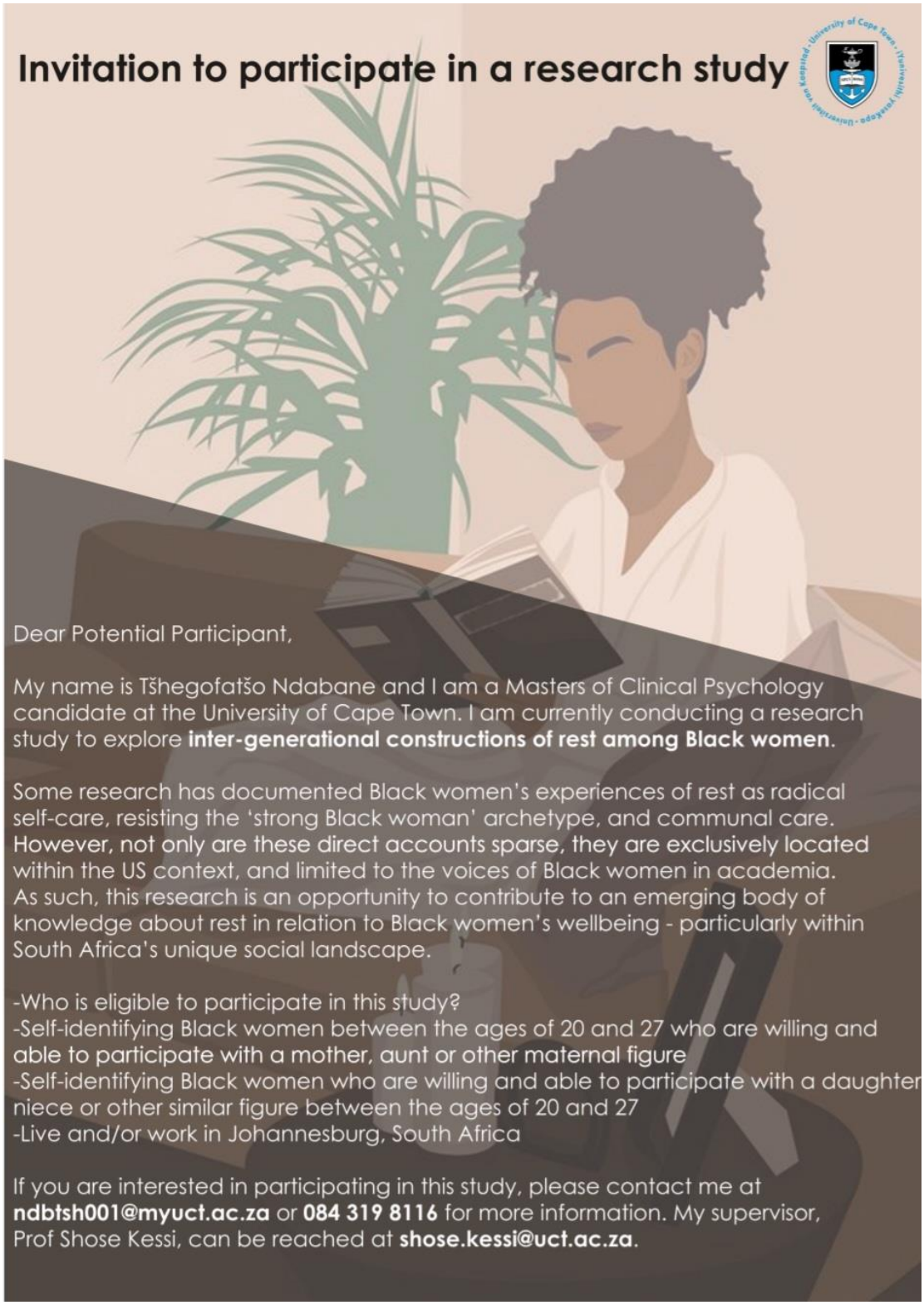
Appendices

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in Research Study



Appendix B: Ethics Approval

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

University of Cape Town Rondebosch 7701 South Africa
Telephone (021) 650 3417
Fax No. (021) 650 4104

30 May 2023

Tshegofatso Ndabane
Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch 7701

Dear Tshegofatso

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been given by an Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your study, *Intergenerational constructions of rest among Black women in Johannesburg, South Africa*. The reference number is PSY2023-035.

I wish you all the best for your study.

Yours sincerely

Lauren Wild (PhD)
Associate Professor
Chair: Ethics Review Committee

Appendix C: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
Department of Psychology

Inter-generational constructions of rest among Black women in Johannesburg, South Africa

1. Invitation and purpose

You are invited to participate in a research study which explores inter-generational constructions of rest among Black women in Johannesburg, South Africa. I am an MA Clinical Psychology student from the Department of Psychology at the University of Cape Town.

2. Procedures

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to participate in two interviews of about 45 and 60 minutes each. The interviews will explore your ideas and experiences of rest as a Black woman. The interviews will be audio recorded but I will make sure that your identity is protected in any of the information that I use from the discussion.

3. Inconveniences

I do not expect that you will be distressed by the interviews but should it become uncomfortable you may stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.

4. Benefits

It is my hope that this research study gives you an opportunity to share your opinions and experiences of accessing rest as a Black women. It is also my hope that the insights gained in this study will contribute toward growing a body of knowledge that encourages and supports the strategies that Black women employ to access rest and overall wellness within contexts that do not easily grant it.

5. Privacy and confidentiality

While all data will be analysed and written up in a final report, your identity will remain anonymous. In the joint interview, what you say will be heard by your family member, however all participants will be required to sign a commitment to the confidentiality of these interviews. The interviews will all be digitally recorded and stored in password protected files and these files will only be accessible by myself and my university supervisor.

Some of this research may be published in academic journals but your identity will be protected at all times.

6. Money matters

The researcher will be travelling to your preferred location for the interviews, as such, you will not incur any travel costs for your participation in the study. As a token of gratitude for your participation, you will receive a rest journal at the end of the joint interviews.

7. Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns about the study please contact Tshegofatso Ndabane on 084 319 8116 or ndbtsh001@myuct.ac.za. All queries about your rights as a research participant can be directed to Rosalind Adams on 021 650 3417 or Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za.

If you understand all of the procedures and the risks and benefits of the study and you would like to participate in the project, please sign below:

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Agreement for Tape-Recording

I agree to have my voice tape-recorded in the interviews:

Participant Signature: _____

Commitment to Confidentiality

I agree not to disclose the identities or personal information of other participants to people who were not present at the interviews.

Participant Signature: _____