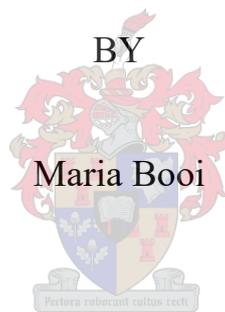


Growing up women and men: Gendered housework in Xhosa households in Langa



Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master's in
Public Sociology in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch
University

Supervisor: Dr Khayaat Fakier

December 2021

Declaration

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December 2021

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“Now to Him who is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly more than all that we dare ask or think [infinitely beyond our greatest prayers, hopes, or dreams], according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory...”

Ephesians 3 verse 20

ABSTRACT

Housework and care work are gendered since men and women are expected to perform different tasks that characterise their gender. This is called the gendered division of labour in household which comprise practices of gender framed within binaries of gender, and where hegemonic masculinity is held superior to femininity and non-hegemonic masculinities. These binaries in the division of labour in the household, show that care continues to be feminised and devalued. Given the gender-based division of labour, women, rather than men, are picking up the added tasks of caring for family members. Furthermore, these binaries perpetuate themselves with the younger generation as children become socialised in gender roles that are aligned with their assigned gender. This research sought to explore how, through housework and care work, gender is understood and constructed by children between the ages of 14 and 17 years old. The research used Xhosa households as the site of research. An outcome of this research is understanding that the construction of gender is influenced by many factors such as, the family, culture, societal norms, and the social environment in which children find themselves. This research demonstrates that these factors influence how the participants construct gender. Furthermore, the research demonstrates that when boys reach manhood, they are free from housework. On the other hand, when girls reach womanhood, they are not afforded that freedom and have a responsibility to continue with housework. The dissimilarity here revolves around the notions of ‘rights’ versus ‘responsibility’, which further highlight how the two genders are constructed differently. However, some of the participants resist the imposition of gender roles and envision a different future for their own households.

Key terms: housework, care work, gender construction, masculinity, femininity, Xhosa, children

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a general overview of what the research entails and the contribution that this research would make to existing knowledge and literature.

1.2. Research Rationale

While there are many studies on the gendered division of labour in which the literature points to the fact that it is predominantly women who do all the housework, the work of children in the household is studied less. In the South African context, the role of children in households are studied predominantly around the HIV/AIDS pandemic and not in terms of what has influenced gender roles, and the extent to which young women take on the burden of care in all households (Yeap et al. 2010; Evans 2013). Moreover, research that has been done on children and housework focuses on households where parents and/or guardians are not present (Richter & Desmond 2008; Meintjies, Hall & Marera 2010; Mogotlane 2010). Furthermore, while literature of racial differences in household work exists, little attention has been paid to specific cultural influences and especially the Xhosa culture.

Essentially, this research aims to study the construction of gender amongst young people through the distribution of chores in a Xhosa household from the perspectives of young people. It explores how young men and women understand femininity and masculinity within the framework of the labour of care in the household, and how they navigate through this understanding. I expected to observe the construction of gender among young people through the narratives that young people provide of the practices of care in which they engage. Young people are the focus for this research, because often identities are constructed, deconstructed and re-constructed critically during teenage years (Pattman 2015). Little research has been done on the construction of gender among young people in Xhosa households and this research seeks to contribute to bridge this gap.

It is important to note that young people are not merely socialised, but they themselves negotiate with the identities that the society around them assigns to them. With this in mind, I am interested in how young people construct gender, and what influences their constructions of gender.

1.3. Literature Review

The literature review fully expanded on in Chapter 2, delves into the themes that emerged from the interactions with the participants, and comprises an expansion of the theoretical themes I considered before I embarked on the fieldwork (See Chapter 3). A strong theme is that gender is performative (Butler 1988), that is, gender is performed in various ways. In this research, the performance of gender is displayed through the practice of the gendered division of household labour. Girls and boys perform certain household tasks which are deemed to be expressive of their respective genders. By observing how household labour is divided, one notices that care work is gendered. Women predominantly carry the burden of care. The literature review engages with Shefer (2014) to unpack the complex definition of care. The meaning of care depends on context, as it serves a certain purpose at a particular time and place. Every individual needs care to survive; it contributes to the daily functioning of the human being. The survival of a household depends on multiple caregivers, some of whom are children. Thus, children both receive and give care (Bozalek 1999). Therefore, it is crucial to recognise their contribution to the functioning of the household. The distribution of household labour amongst children is influenced by gender. Children are socialised to embody certain behaviours, attitudes, ideas, speech that are indicators of their genders. Pattman (2015) states that it is important to recognise children as active agents in the process of socialisation. Socialisation can be studied through the lens of social reproduction.

Social reproduction is behaviours, ideas, attitudes, social systems, activities that contribute the daily life and are reproduced from one generation to another (Leslett & Brenner 1989). In the household, this can be observed in how gender norms that influence the distribution of household labour are passed on from parent/guardian to child. This process can happen through teaching or modelling. Children learn how to 'do' gender and they also model gender by using the adults in the household as role models. The gender dynamics that exist in the Xhosa household show that men and women are positioned differently. In these households, as a result of women being constructed as caregivers, women primarily perform the care work (Helman & Ratele 2016). This perpetuates itself over to the next generation, as daughters find themselves doing most of the household labour.

1.4. Research questions and objectives

Considering the rationale and preliminary review of the literature research, the following research questions were constructed to explore the research topic:

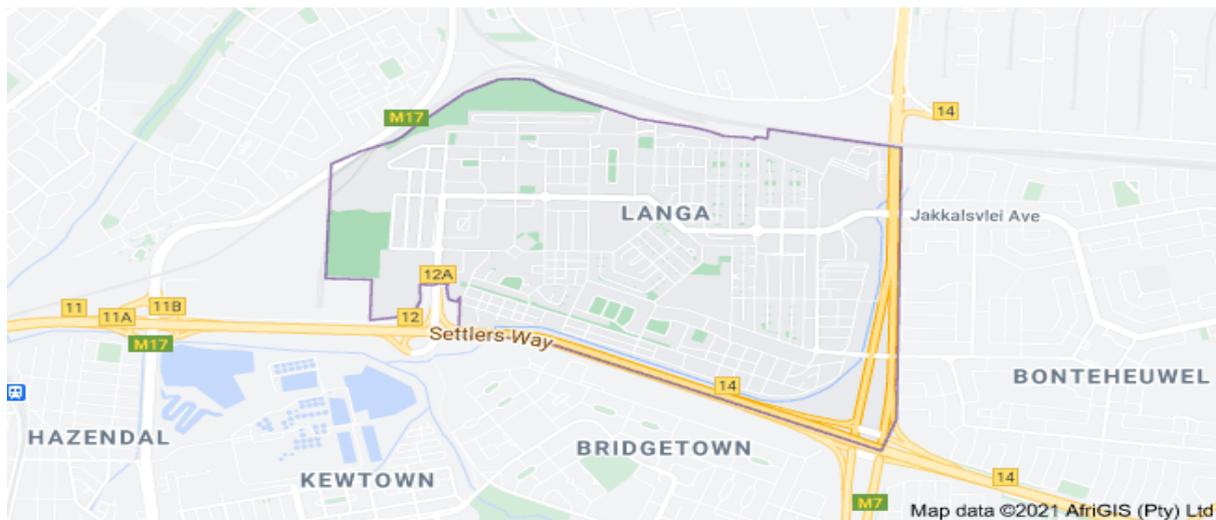
1. How is housework and care work constructed in the household?
 - 1.1. Does gender influence the division of chores within the household? And how?
 - 1.2. How do young people understand their involvement in housework?
2. In which ways do the Xhosa culture shape the perceptions of housework and gender?
 - 2.1. How do adults influence young people's understanding of gender in Xhosa households?
 - 2.2. How do young women and young men experience gender roles in households in relation to Xhosa culture?

1.5. Research Methodology

This research employed a qualitative research approach. Data was collected and analysed using a methodology that was best fitting for this research.

1.6. Research site

Figure 1: Location of Langa Township



This research was conducted in Langa, a township established in 1927. This township is located on the Cape Flats 15km southeast of the centre of Cape Town in the Western Cape Province¹. “Langa township’s history of social life, work, and resistance to the apartheid has contributed to it being a contemporary image of place and community for many Cape Townians and South Africans in general” (Powell 2014: 18).

¹ <https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/langa-township-cape-town>

21). The early residents of Langa were black people who were forcibly removed from Ndabeni and placed in Langa. Gradually, other black individuals from other parts of Cape Town were moved to Langa. The movement of people from Ndabeni, and other parts of Cape Town, to Langa, was controlled by the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 from which the apartheid Group Areas Act of 1950 was stemmed (Field 2012: 23). Thus, Langa was part of a project to control movement and land ownership. The then government had built hostels to house “thousands of so-called bachelors” from Ndabeni, and squatter settlements in Windermere and Blouvillei (Field 2012: 23). At this time Langa became the only formal housing settlement that accommodated black people in Cape Town.

The oldest residents of Langa comprised of working migrants, especially from the Eastern Cape, and a small number of African immigrants (Powell 2014: 18). The language that was spoken was IsiXhosa, the native language of the Eastern Cape, which constitutes the language being predominantly spoken in the township today. Initially, hostels housed bachelors, however gradually families of these bachelors started to migrate from their home villages to Langa. This initiated the building of family houses (Field 2012: 24). What started as a township that was established for (im)migrant workers now accommodated families. Over time Langa became overcrowded as an influx of people started to move into the newly established family houses. In this working-class community, people were forced to turn these overcrowded houses into homes (Field 2012: 25). Langa became a diverse community with the integration of Cape Town dwellers, Eastern Cape migrants, and black African immigrants. This meant that different people, with different cultural backgrounds, came together to occupy a communal space. The result thereof became the development of various cultures and identities that were a mixture of these different people coming together which is the foundation of the cultures that exist in the township today. This also constitutes embracing new traditions and the abandoning of old traditions, which will be discussed later in this study.

1.7. Value of this study

This research contributes to the broader study of gender inequalities. It is valuable to researchers, and institutions, as it helps in understanding the depth of gender inequalities that exist in households. The household is an important site to investigate gender inequalities and how gender roles are continuously reproduced from one generation to another. The disproportionate burden of housework and care work is one among many manifestations of gender inequalities and is one of the causes for the persistence of gender inequalities. Most of the housework and care work, like cooking, taking care of children, cleaning, are performed by

women. This study investigates the inequalities that exist in households and how household tasks are unequally distributed. This study brings into light how gender influences the distribution of housework and care work in the household. Furthermore, as shown in this research, the cultural construction of gender shapes the outcomes of gender roles in the house. Moreover, this study is valuable as it shows that care work is an acquired skill rather than an innate ability. This contributes to the ongoing work done by feminist researchers to recognise care work as a skill, to add value to the work done by care providers and the care providers themselves.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter engages with existing literature that informs the construction of this research. It will engage with key themes that shapes the outcomes of this research. This research is about the construction of gender in Xhosa households through observing the division of household labour and care work. There is an assumption that household labour is women's work, and this work is continuously undervalued and the women who perform the work are continuously marginalised. From a very early age, girls are expected to take on domestic duties in the household; duties that are held as girls' work (de la Rey 1992: 81-82). These duties may encompass assisting adult women in the house with childcare and household duties, such as cleaning and cooking meals for the family. This research aims to explore ways in which young men and young women understand femininity and masculinity within the framework of the division of labour of care in the household. Shefer (2014: 306) found that practices of gender are constantly framed within the binaries of gender, "in which hegemonic masculinity is set up in opposition to femininity and non-hegemonic forms of masculinity". Thus, these binaries are constructed in a manner that places hegemonic masculinity on top of the hierarchal pyramid, non-hegemonic masculinities beneath it, and femininity further beneath that. Furthermore, in households, these binaries are reflected to be powerfully entangled in the division of labour where care is largely feminised and devalued (Shefer 2014: 306). Therefore, it is important to evaluate how gender is constructed in the household to establish new ways of thinking about care and caring practices within the framework of gender transformation. This would challenge gender binaries that continuously exempt and distance men and boys from being involved in practices of care. One trend in the study of housework and care work around children in South Africa has been to study it around the HIV/AIDS pandemic and focusing on households where adults are absent (Bozalek 1999; Yeap et al. 2010; Evans 2013). This research attempts to move away from that trend, by studying housework, care work, and children concerning the construction of gender.

2.2. Gender Performativity

Gender is not biological, but rather it is a social construct. "Within the post-structural feminist framework, gender is conceptualised not as a fixed biological essence but as a social construct, with man/boy and woman/girl seen a particular kind of polarised social identifications that are constructed and performed in relation or opposition to each other" (Mayeza 2017: 6). Gender

is used as a tool to characterise the differences that exist in human biology and human behaviour. Thus, the categories of gender are an attempt to understand differences. Connell (1995; 2000) states that gender is a consequence of continuous interpretations of and characterisations of the reproductive and sexual capacities of the human body (cited in Pilcher & Whelehan 2004: 83). Particular traits are attributed to a specific gender as an attempt to polarise the genders. For example, this research investigates and illustrates how the participants construct gender in a manner that highlights the difference between boys and girls. Evidently, in the construction of gender, the masculine identity and the feminine identity are constructed in opposition to each other (Holland, Ramazanoglu & Thomson 1998: 171). On the other hand, gender identities are constructed in relation to each other. For example, amongst children, being a girl may be defined as not being a boy, not having the necessary traits to be categorised as a boy (Mayeza 2017). Essentially, there is an emphasis on the difference in the interpretations of personalities and behavioural traits between boys and girls. “Masculinities (and femininities) can be understood, therefore, as the effects of these interpretations and definitions on bodies, on personalities and a society’s culture and institutions” (Pilcher & Whelehan 2004: 83). These interpretations are translated in a way that gender is performed.

This research recognises gender as performative through the performance of household labour. To observe gender as performative is to say that it is a sort of enactment, looking at gender as an action. Feminist theory shapes gender as a pattern of bodily gestures, movements, and enactments rather than a predetermined, natural identity. Butler (1988) illustrates that gender identity is constructed through a set of acts. “Gender is no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts precede; rather is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a stylised repetition of acts” (Butler 1988: 519). This means that the individual develops into their gender through a sequence of acts. These acts are repeated to reinforce the gender of the individual. Thus, the body is gendered through these repeated acts (Butler 1988: 523). Therefore, the acts are expressive of the individual’s gender as these repeated acts are exhibited by the individual per their assigned gender. Therefore, a gender identity is typically expressed through particular kinds of acts and these acts are expressive of a level of conformity to expected gender identity (Butler 1988: 527). Highlighting conformity suggests that the enactments of gender reproduce norms. Thus, the repetitiveness of these acts demonstrates the redoing of norms. These norms are embedded in social institutions, such as the family, which continuously provide the ‘guidelines’ as to how the individual ought to act according to their gender. This research zooms into the family to observe how young

individuals embody their gender and how they observe others' embodiment of their children through the tasks performed within the home.

Butler (1988: 526), highlights that 'the script' has already been written for the act, the individual steps into the role to perform their assigned gender. Children are taught 'the script' that stipulates how they act according to their gender. This script has been acted before, by their parents and other adult individuals in the family. Observing this further, one discovers that 'the script' is rooted in the binary framework which constructs the differences between men/boys and women/girls. Gender as a constructed identity is accomplished through performance in which "the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief" (Butler 1988: 520). Essentially, gender is a performance that puts flesh to bone what it names a 'masculine' man or a 'feminine' woman (Salih 2007: 56). The enactments, the speech, the movements, the gestures breathe life into inanimate labels of being man and woman. This performance constantly reinforces the differences between the man/boy and the woman/girl. Butler (1988) argues that the collective agreement to perform these genders produces and reproduces gender norms, which polarise gender and are embedded in cultural fictions. Thus, it is essential to investigate gender norms that find its roots in culture. This study has chosen to observe gender roles in Xhosa households. The individual's performance of a gender demonstrates the gender identity that they have embodied.

2.3. Care

Care is fundamental in the daily human experience; human beings cannot live without it. The meaning of care is multidimensional and multifaceted. This means that care has different meanings and it exists on different levels. Thus, it is often difficult to conceptually map care. Since early modernity, the concept of care has evolved to capture meanings associated with protection, responsibility, upkeep, maintenance, attentive assistance, and treatment for those in need (Reddy, Meyer, Shefer & Meyiwa 2014: 5). These characteristics of care illustrate that care encompasses looking after the all-around well-being of nature, the individual, and/or any infrastructure. If we bring it here at home, South African languages provide both noun and verb forms of words that describe care as either an act, an attitude, and/or a moral obligation (Reddy et al. 2014: 4). In IsiXhosa, for example, care is denoted as *inkathalo*. In its noun form care would be recognised as a concept; a moral value (Reddy et al. 2014: 4). In its verb form care would be a description of an action; to 'take care of', 'to look after'- *ukukhathalela* - (Reddy et al. 2014: 4). This suggests that responsibility is attached to care. This example shows that

several derivatives can be drawn out from different languages that unpack care. “The conceptual mapping of care in the humanities and social sciences encompasses a broad range of issues including care as a fundamental existential quality; care as action and practice; the emotional dimensions of care; care as a moral, ethical and political value; the relevance of care to interpersonal relations of interdependence; and the entanglement of care with social and economic arrangements” (Reddy et al. 2014: 6). When exploring care, one may consider these layers of care. This research reflects Razavi’s definition of care “which acknowledges both direct care for persons (for example feeding, bathing, changing nappies) and other domestic tasks that facilitate such care for persons (including cooking, cleaning, shopping, maintaining the house and so on)” (Razavi 2007).

Care contributes to the overall well-being of the individual. As denoted above, care not only involves physical nurturing or taking care of people (paid or unpaid), but it also encompasses activities that contribute to the nourishment and survival of the recipients of the care (Bozalek 1999: 86). Caring activities are immensely gendered. Studies have shown that gendering of caring activities was evident in a greater proportion of women (Shefer 2014; Akintola 2006; England 2005; Bozalek 1999). This means that in many households, the caring role is predominantly taken on by women. Furthermore, these studies show that men participate less in care around the household women (Shefer 2014; Akintola 2006; England 2005; Bozalek 1999). When men do participate, it is when circumstances force them to do so, in situations where they are the only ones who can perform the task (Akintola 2006: 241). This suggests that men’s participation in care work only occurs upon request or if there is no woman around to do the work. Time use surveys highlighted how much time men, women, and children spend on care activities. The time-use surveys include categories like sleeping, eating, socialising, housework, caring for children, the elderly, or the ill, daily. These demonstrate how people disperse their time across activities. Bundler’s (2010) time use survey showed that women spent more time on unpaid work, regardless of their employment status. The burden of care remains on the shoulders of women. This study shows that women perform most of the care activities in the household. It is undeniable that households survived through multiple caregivers through the distribution of housework and care work (Bozalek 1999: 90). This study delves into the different types of housework and care work that children may be involved in.

2.4. Children’s involvement in care

Examining the involvement of children in household tasks gives an important insight into the dynamics of housework and care work that exist in the household. Children become involved

in household labour, both unpaid and paid. According to the study conducted by Bozalek (1999) that examined the complexities of care relationships in Black families in South Africa, the students that were involved in the study understood care to “involve not only physically nurturing or looking after people (paid or unpaid), but also those activities that contribute to the sustenance of kin” (86). Typically, children have been constructed as recipients of care and their role as caregivers is not recognised (Bozalek 1999: 86). This means that children are perceived as merely receivers of care, being taken care of by the parents and/or guardians in the family. However, their participation in care, taking care of the needs of family members, and the upkeep of the home demonstrates them as caregivers. Thus, children are both recipients of care, dependants, and as caregivers, providing essential services for the survival of family members.

The table below shows the involvement of children in household tasks in households in South Africa in 2015²:

Table 1: Characteristics of children aged 7–17 years by involvement in household chores in 2015

	Involved in household chores		Not involved in household chores		Total
	000	%	000	%	
Sex	8 867	79,3	2 318	20,7	11 185
Male	4 318	77,2	1 276	22,8	5 594
Female	4 549	81,4	1 042	18,6	5 592
Population Group	8 867	79,3	2 318	20,7	11 185
Black African	7 734	82,4	1 649	17,6	9 383
Coloured	746	76,2	234	23,8	980
Indian	111	53,1	98	46,9	209
White	275	44,9	338	55,1	613
Age group	8 867	79,3	2 318	20,7	11 185
7-10 yrs	2 652	63,5	1 523	36,5	4 174
11-14 yrs	3 389	86,1	545	13,9	3 934
15-17 yrs	2 826	91,9	251	8,1	3 077

² Statistics South Africa 2017

Table 1 shows that there are more children involved in household tasks than those that are not. This means that majority of children in South Africa are involved in household tasks across all social categories. Moreover, the table shows that more girls are involved in household tasks than boys which reflects the influence of gender ideas on the construction of household responsibilities. This is discussed further in the literature review. The table also shows that Black African children are more involved in household tasks than any other race listed on the table. Therefore, this research focusing on the role and practices of children in Black African households is essential

It is evident that “households survive through multiple earners and multiple caregivers” (Bozalek 1999: 90). By being involved in care work and housework, children contribute to the survival as caregivers, making them as essential as the adult caregivers in the household. Homing in on the care activities performed in the household, one can understand the roles children currently perform. Children’s participation in domestic chores occurs within broader patterns of role division within households, and we can therefore expect that the nature and extent of their participation will be affected by both household structure and internal relationships (Bray 2006:20). Additionally, children may perceive care work and housework - in the family to be their responsibility (Bozalek 1999: 90). Not only does this highlight one of the aspects of care, care being a responsibility (a moral value), but also children, in their own capacity, take on this role of care as being an obligation. Therefore, children may not merely engage in household activities because they were assigned, but rather they move on to embrace their roles as caregivers. Their participation in the gendered division of labour reflects social reproduction.

2.5. Social Reproduction

Household care is also explored in the study of social reproduction. According to Young (2004) “social reproduction refers to the ongoing reproduction of the commodity labour power and the social processes and human relations associated with creating and maintaining the social order” (cited in Fakier & Cock 2009: 354). Thus, social reproduction is the maintenance and perpetuation of existing social relations. Laslett and Brenner (1989: 382) state that feminists use social reproduction to describe the activities and attitudes, behaviours and emotions, responsibilities, and relationships which daily contribute to the upkeep of life across generations. According to Marxist theory, social reproduction refers to the continuation of modes of production and the structures of class inequality embedded within them (Laslett & Brenner 1989: 383). However, the feminist concept of social reproduction moves beyond this

by including work that contributes to maintaining existing and the life of the next generation. Thus, social reproduction can be perceived to include various work (mental, manual and emotional) directed at “providing the historically and socially, as well as biologically, defined care necessary to maintain existing life and to reproduce the next generation” (Laslett 1989: 383). Therefore, it encompasses more than production as Marxist theory theorised. Furthermore, feminists use the concept to understand the perpetuation and reproduction of systems that uphold class inequality (Laslett & Brenner 1989: 383). This research observes family strategies that continuously uphold gender norms that maintain and perpetuate gender inequalities. By observing the feminist approach to social reproduction, this research is able to investigate work that is performed in the household, different strategies that ensure this work is done, and the different ideologies that mould them.

Studying social reproduction reveal how ideas, norms, attitudes, responsibilities, and so on, are passed from one generation to another. This becomes important in this study as the relationship between parent/guardian and child influences the types of attitudes and norms that they embody through household labour. “What children learn about the environment and how they use this knowledge in their work and play are fundamental cultural forms and practices, shared in a social matrix and bearing a specific relationship to the prevailing social relations of production and reproduction in the area” (Katz 1991: 489). The socialisation of children is illustrated here. “Recognizing social reproduction as a domain of necessary social labour, and gender as a fundamental dimension around which it is organized, focuses attention on how the work of social reproduction is distributed between women and men within the family and between the family and other institution” (Laslett & Brenner 1989: 383). Social processes and human relations can be observed through the ways in which housework is distributed and it is continuously gendered. In South Africa, as in most societies around the world, social reproduction of households and families is persistently the responsibility of women, that is reproduction is heavily reliant on the unpaid work of women and girls in the family (Fakier 2010: 107). This reveals that there is a gendered nature of social reproduction. Social reproduction is disproportionately dependant on the unpaid labour of women and girls within the family and community, and the paid work of women in workplaces (Elson 2004: 11 cited in Fakier 2009: 20).

2.6. Gendered division of household labour

Women carry the burden of most of the household labour. Certain expectations are attached to being a woman and girl in the household and these expectations contribute to maintaining the social order that exists within the household and in the community. This research explores the gendered expectations that exist in Xhosa households and explores whether the practice of household labour continues to uphold the social order in the family. Even when women leave their households for work (temporarily) to migrate elsewhere (longer-term), there is a transfer of household responsibilities to other women in their households or their communities (Fakier 2010: 107). For example, as will be seen in the findings of this research, the mother transfers her household duties to the daughter when she goes out to work. This illustrates the trend of household labour and care work being transferred from one woman to another, further illustrating the gendered nature of the household labour and care.

In South Africa, in both the private and public spheres, care continues to be gendered with women juggling multiple loads. For instance, women may juggle household responsibilities with their work responsibilities. “In this respect, gender normative practices and divisions of labour – particularly through their intersection with class and age – continue to facilitate an inequitable distribution of labour within homes, workplaces and broader civil society institutions and practices” (Shefer 2014: 308). The division of labour is not always fair, because women are often expected to perform most of the care practices. To challenge gender inequalities at broader social and political levels, Shefer (2014: 308) argues, it is essential to address gender inequalities at the level of interpersonal and domestic relations. Gender is reproduced through care practices where this further reproduces the gender power in the household. “It is imperative to destabilise constructions of what men and women can and should do in the home, and how such divisions of labour represent a rigidity which sustains normative gender roles, ultimately bolstering male power and devaluing women and that which is constructed ‘feminine’”, thus the “revalorisation of practices of care is a key component of such a struggle” (Shefer 2014: 309). Through social interactions in households gender is continually displayed and gender norms are reinforced and through “several potential mechanisms through which parents can influence their children’s household allocation patterns” (Cunningham 2001: 185). This research aims to observe those mechanisms and interactions through a focus on households. Views on gender are passed on to the next generation. This can be observed when children begin to participate in housework and care work. Children begin to contribute to household tasks as soon as they are capable and from a

very early age (Punch 2001: 806). Children embodying practices of care that are aligned with the expectations attached to their gender is often evidence of the process of socialisation.

2.7. Socialisation and family influence in the construction of gender

Researchers have argued that children go through a process of socialisation, daily being moulded into the beings that they are ‘supposed’ to be. Pattman (2015) stipulates that socialisation is “the process through which children are ‘taught’ the social mores pertinent to any particular society or culture”. This means that children are taught to embrace certain identities and to exert particular behaviours that are aligned with those identities in order for them to ‘fit in’ in the society that they are born into. In this sense, children are taught how to ‘do gender’. This relates to Butler’s (1988) argument that states that ‘the script’ has already been written, it is taught to the next generation to perform. The family is one of the essential institutions that provide children with lessons on how to do gender as many behaviours in the family are affected by gender ideology (Davis & Pearce 2007: 1022), which this research explores and demonstrates through the findings. In observing how children conceptualise and do gender it is important to observe the influences around them that guide their conceptualisation. Bourdieu (1984) argues that gendered social and cultural identities are shaped by cultural meaning systems, such as the family and play, which are embedded in social relations. This is seen through how gender is taught to children and how the children embody those teachings. The teaching is both explicit and implicit, meaning it is both intentional and unintentional. Explicitly, children learn values and norms from adults through clear and direct processes of persistent teachings in churches, schools, or households (Pattman 2015). For example, a parent may assign girls more feminised household work, work that they have constructed to be ‘for girls’. Implicitly, children learn values and norms from adults through indirect behaviour ideals that adults set for children (Pattman 2015). For example, mothers and fathers are perceived as role models for ‘gender appropriate’ behaviour, and, in turn, the children model that behaviour. Evidently, parents socialise their children through modelling behaviour and setting expectations for children to conform (Davis & Pearce 2007: 1023). Children identify and learn that certain actions highlight symbolic markers of a particular gender by observing the parental behaviours in the context of the family (Cunningham 2001: 112). Thus, the household becomes an important site in which children learn gender.

Children learn to behave and position themselves in gendered ways. Social learning approaches emphasise the roles of observation, modelling, imitation, and reinforcement in the emergence of gender differences (Galambos 2004: 237). This means that through observation,

reinforcement, and modelling, children begin to decipher the differences between the genders and the behaviours that are attached to the gender. Furthermore, as the children perform their gender, they subscribe and reinforce social expectations (Mayeza 2016: 2). The division of household labour is rooted in these expectations. “The poststructural feminist perspective posits that children’s gendered behaviour are not simply seen as an imitation of the adult world”, rather they are active agents who actively participate in the construction of their own identities (Mayeza 2016: 3). In this context, children learn gender in the household as they interact with family members. Children acquire information about gender roles and norms through their exposure to dynamic family relationships and interactions (Mchale, Crouter, & Whiteman 2003: 126). Essentially, children are not merely socialised, but they actively negotiate with the gender identities that are imposed on them. Taking that into consideration, this research chose to observe household labour and gender from the perspective of children, recognising them as active agents in the gender processes that exist within the household.

2.8. In a Xhosa Household

This research investigates constructions of masculinity and femininity in Xhosa families. The Black African construction of gender constructs men and women in a way that places them in different social positions and attributes certain expectations on that gender. For example, in South African families, the woman is constructed as a caregiver, which is perceived as an innate ability (Helman & Ratele 2016: 3). On the other hand, the man is positioned as the provider and is exempt from caregiving activities (Helman & Ratele 2016: 3). This shows that within the family men and women are constructed and positioned differently, which, consequently, would construct and position the son and the daughter differently. Embedded in many families is gender inequality. Thus, family is a key site where notions of masculinity and femininity are constructed and performed (Helman & Ratele 2016: 1). Therefore, the family is one of the important sites to investigate gender and gender relations. In the family, one observes how gender is constructed, performed, and taught. Gender norms are perpetuated in how things are done in the family, for example in the distribution of household labour. Research done on the constructions of gender in South African families illustrates that children are involved in constructing gender in problematic, unequal ways from a very young age (Ratele et al. 2013; Shefer 2012; Helman & Ratele 2016). This means that beyond socialisation, children reproduce gender norms in their interaction with others. Therefore, it is important to investigate how children construct, negotiate and embody gender.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design and approach

This research takes a qualitative approach, which refers to research that yields descriptive data of participants' own written or spoken observable behaviour (Taylor et al. 2015: 7). Qualitative research helps capture the meaning people attach to things in their lives (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault 2015: 7). Adopting a qualitative approach allowed the participants the freedom to provide the researcher with their own lived experiences of practices of care through the division of labour within the framework of the construction of gender. It allowed them to narrate their stories according to how they perceive the construction of gender, without being confined by rules that are attached to other research methods. Furthermore, using this research approach recognises the young people participating in this research as active agents, allowing them to be the centre of this research. In addition, this approach allows for the development of new concepts, insights, and understanding that contribute to or challenge existing theories (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault 2015: 8). This means that though the researcher would enter the research with existing themes, it would also give room for the development of new concepts and themes pertaining to what is being researched. The themes in the findings of this research show the contributions made by the participants by shedding light on family dynamics and culture in the construction of gender within the household. In addition, qualitative research provides the setting for the researcher to gain insight into the personal, daily experiences of the participants which allow the researcher to observe things and people historically (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault 2015: 9). This was beneficial for this research as it sought to gain insight into the personal and daily experiences of young people in the construction of gender through practices of care.

3.2. Sample and Sampling

The sample of this research consisted of children who are between the ages of 14-17 years old. Research with young people is critical as it can advance the understanding of how they develop and live their lives, simultaneously contributing to theoretical debates (Lewis & Porter 2004: 1). This research sought to involve children because they would make a valuable contribution to this study and broader theoretical understandings of the construction of gender. Thus, this research recognises children as active agents who have a good insight into how they negotiate gender identities through them navigating through family life and interactions. Furthermore, the participants are Xhosa households around Langa.

Langa is a predominantly occupied by Xhosa families. I was born and bred in this township. I am familiar with the geography of the township, the slang and vernacular used by people living there, which reassured the participants as I interacted with them. My residence in, and familiarity with this site ensured my safety and was convenient and affordable for me to conduct the research there. Ritchie (2003: 65) suggests that “sharing some aspects of cultural background or experience may help enrich researchers' understanding of participants' accounts, of the language they use and of nuances and subtexts”. This made it easier for me to interact with the participants and made it easier for them to fully articulate themselves. Furthermore, doing observations of Xhosa households was beneficial for me as it presented no language barrier nor the neglect of the meanings of words as I am also Xhosa and familiar with the formal and informal use of the language and its meanings. Thus, this gave the participants and their families the liberty to interact with each other in their home language without being pressured to speak in English to accommodate me as the researcher.

Six participants, three girls, and three boys, participated in this research. In selecting the participants, I employed purposive (judgement) sampling. This is a non-probability sampling method that selects a sample from a population that is aligned with the objective of the research (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim 2016: 2). This research recruited participants who were able to assist in answering the research question. Therefore, I solely selected young people from Xhosa households. Considering this, I contacted one participant, whom I knew fit the criteria of this research, and contacted their parent who agreed that they would participate in this study. This participant provided me with the names of four other potential participants, of which the first participant was tasked to handover my contact details to them. Therefore, in addition, this research employed Snowball sampling. This involved me using the participants already recruited to refer me to another potential participant who fits the criteria of the desired participants of this research (Parfitt 1979: 117). The criteria being: a child between the ages of 14 to 17 years and who resides in a Xhosa household. This method was helpful because through it I was able to gain more participants. From the four suggested by the first participant, only two contacted me. After the two potential participants contacted me showing interest in participating, I contacted their parents who gave me permission for their children's participation. Thereafter, from those two, I was able to gain two more participants. Snowballing assisted me in building a pool of contacts, and from that, I was able to secure four participants who agreed to participate. “The strength of this technique is that it helps the researcher to overcome one of the main obstacles to recruiting interviewees, gaining their trust. It also allows

the researcher to seek out more easily interviewees with particular experiences or backgrounds” (Parfitt 1979: 117). I had gained the trust of the participants recruited thus far, because their peers were participating in this research. At this point, I had five participants and needed one more to complete my intended sample size. After struggling to recruit the last participant, I was able to find one through a parent that I knew who had a child who fits the criteria. I approached the parent, who introduced me to the child. The child agreed to participate in this study. Finally, I had recruited six participants for this research through a mix of purposive and snowball sampling

**Pseudonyms were used in replacement of all the participants’ real names to protect their identity*

Table 2: General information of the participants and the households they reside in

Participants	Gender	Age	Resides with...	Date of preliminary interview	Date of observation	Date of in-depth interview
1. Thando	Boy	15	Grandmother Mother Older sister	17/12/19	18/12/19	18/12/19
2. Zolani	Boy	16	Mother	21/02/20	22/02/20	24/02/20
3. Lukhanyo	Boy	14	Mother Younger sister	06/02/20	07/02/20	08/02/20
4. Andiswa	Girl	17	Mother Father Younger brother Younger sister	23/01/20	24/01/20	29/01/20
5. Zintle	Girl	15	Mother Father Older brother Older sister	17/12/19	19/12/19	21/12/19
6. Khanyisa	Girl	14	Father Mother Older sister 2younger brothers	14/02/20	15/02/20	17/02/20

Observing the participants and their family members, one can see that half of the participants reside with their mothers and/or grandmothers in a woman-headed family structure, and others reside with both their parents in a nuclear family structure. This table reflects the diversity of the family in South Africa. “The reality is that the composition of households is frequently much more fluid, and their organisation changes as it is affected by the life-cycle of their members (births, deaths, marriages), access to resources such as housing and income, and access to adequate education and healthcare” (Buzar, Ogden & Hall 2005 as cited in Tacoli 2012: 14). Few people live in nuclear families, and more live in households that include extended family members. Statistics South Africa state that 36% of children reside with extended family, 11% reside with one parent and 25% reside in nuclear families (Statistics South Africa 2018). Furthermore, 37.9% of children reside in women-headed households. Observing Table 2 above, the households in which the participants reside reflect these statistics from Stats SA. Half of the participants reside in woman-headed households, with mothers and, in one case, with a grandmother. The other half of the participants reside with both their parents. These families reflect the larger representation of families in South Africa.

3.3. Racial categories in South Africa

Table 3: Racial categories in South Africa

Racial categories	Description ³	Population size ⁴
1. White	denoting those of indigenous European background	4 652 006
2. Black African	denoting those of indigenous African background	47 443 259
3. Coloured	denoting those of mixed “race,” usually of “black” and “white”	5 176 750
4. Indian/Asian	denoting those of indigenous Asian background	1 503 007

The racialisation of the population in South Africa reaches back beyond the apartheid era. In the beginning stages of colonisation, racial categories were not established. During this time, the population was loosely divided into two categories, namely “coloured” and “whites” (Posel 2001: 89). These categories were loosely based on “appearance, descent, general acceptance,

³ Szayne 2000: 189

⁴ Statistics South Africa Mid-year population estimates 2019

and repute, as well as mode of living” (Posel 2001: 90). White people were held superior and this was affirmed by the charter of Union, in the mid-nineteenth century, which propelled the white race to the top of the hierarchy (Bowker & Star 1999: 196). Still, the charter was not detailed in highlighting the racial differences. This changed with the formation and the growth of Afrikaner Nationalism which led to the start of the apartheid era. The start of apartheid in 1948 came with different laws and regulations that distinctively identified, defined, and legalised racial differences. One of those laws that were passed was The Population Registration Act passed in 1950. This act “was an attempt to produce fixed, stable and uniform criteria for racial classifications which then be binding across all spheres of a person’s life” (Posel 2001: 98). This was further exacerbated by the Group Areas Act, also passed in 1950, which also highlighted racial differences (Bowker & Star 1999: 196). Under these acts, people were firmly classified by racial group, and those classifications regulated where people could live and work (Bowker & Star 1999: 196). With the passing of the Group Areas Act, many people were uprooted from their homes and planted in areas that were set up for their race. Other apartheid laws included, “political rights, voting, freedom of movement and settlement, property rights, right to choose the nature of one's work, education, criminal law, social rights including the right to drink alcohol, use of public services including transport, social security, taxation, and immigration” (Bowker & Star 1999: 197). The racial classification divided people into four groups: European, Asian, Coloured, and Black or Bantu race (Bowker & Star 1999: 197). The Bantu classification was subdivided to include eight groups, which included Xhosa, Zulu, Venda, Sotho Ndebele, Tswana, Swati, and Pedi people (Bowker & Star 1999: 197). The Xhosa and Zulu people being the largest groups.

The apartheid system suffered heavy resistance from both outside and inside South Africa, which led the apartheid government to enter negotiations with opposition movements, which was led by the African Nation Congress (ANC), to reach an agreement to end apartheid (Whitehead 2013: 4). The fall of apartheid meant the abolition of apartheid laws. One of the things that remained was the racial categories. Table 3 shows how the population is racially divided. According to these constructed categories, Xhosa people are denoted ‘Black African’. In this thesis, I use the terms “black” and “African” interchangeably to denote Black African.

3.4. Data Collection

3.4.1. Participant Observation

This research used participant observation to collect data. This involves researchers playing two roles: participant and observer. The researcher becomes the participant by entrenching themselves into the daily activities and routines of the participants, developing a relationship with the participants and those around who may assist in collecting the data that will contribute to answering the research question (Cook 1978: 167-168). As an observer, the researcher observes the community and/or the participant by placing themselves as an onlooker, watching and recording the activities that occur in front of them (Cook 1978: 167-168). The observation took place in the homes of the participants that were selected for this research. Therefore, observation was done in 6 households. This method was essential for me to participate in the care work and the housework that the participants are involved in, being able to converse with them as we perform the tasks. I immersed myself in the tasks performed, making it easier for me to interact with the participants and making them feel comfortable with the process. In addition, it allowed me to observe the division of housework among young people in the household and how they grapple with the engendered tasks. It was beneficial for this research to employ participant observation because it allowed me to observe the gender dynamics that exist in the household and how young people navigate through these gender dynamics as they perform their tasks. By watching the participants and assisting them with their tasks, I was able to study the situations they ordinarily encounter and how they behave in those situations (Becker 1958: 652). The gendering of housework, care work, and how the participants navigate through these was recorded. There not a set time frame for the observation, because the duration of the observation was dependent on what the parent/guardian of the participants and I agreed on. There was one observation session per participant at a time that was suitable for the participants, and when the participants mostly performed their assigned tasks around the house.

3.4.2. Semi-structured interviews

Data for this study was also collected using semi-structured interviews. “A semi-structured interview is a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions” (Longhurst 2003: 143). The interviews were semi-structured in a way that provided the participants with the platform to freely express themselves and engage in conversation whilst being guided by the questions that are asked. According to Brinkmann (2014: 1), in a semi-structured interview, the researcher structures the

interview based on their study and interview guide but engages flexibly with the guide allowing space for the respondent to share their descriptions and narratives. Two sets of interviews were conducted. The first interview served as an introduction; for the participants to get comfortable with me before the observation phase. This interview consisted of short questions that asked general questions about the participant, such as age and who they lived with. After the observation, there was another interview that served as a reflection of the observation. The questions in the interview incorporated open-ended questions, these are questions that are designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the participants' own knowledge and/or feelings (Brinkman 2014: 2). Using open-ended questions encouraged the participants to answer freely without being restricted by, for instance, choosing an answer from a selection of answers that best suits their experiences. Open-ended questions induced conversation. This directed the interview to be more of a conversation between me and the participants. This was to sufficiently capture the experiences of the participants.

The sequencing of these techniques benefitted the research immensely. Assisting in housework after the introductory questions smoothed relations with the participants. They appreciated my help with their tasks, and this enabled them to open up while doing housework side-by-side and then later in the subsequent in-depth interviews. Participant observation aided in sharpening my questions, while the second interview helped me to delve deeper into the meanings and perspectives of the participants.

3.5. Data Analysis

3.5.1. Narrative analysis

A narrative analysis approach was employed to analyse the data collected. "Narrative analysis is a strategy that recognises the extent to which the stories we tell provide insights about our lived experiences" (Thorne 2000: 69). The participants were asked to share stories about their experiences with the division of household labour. These accounts were observed and related to as narratives, a story that embodies the lived experiences of the participants. Storytellers interpret the world and their experiences in their narratives and they sometimes create moral tales, of how they perceive the world should be (Riessman 2005: 1). Essentially, the stories were to open the door for me to enter the world of the participants as they guide me through their narratives. Thus, through the analysis of the narratives, I was able to identify what the participants deemed to be important by observing what they say and how they say it. By

analysing the responses of these participants in a narrative manner, it assisted in gaining insight into how the participants perceive their lives at home and in identifying the central themes and concepts that they highlight in the stories they tell. Narratives not only reflect their surroundings and the realities out there but also, reflect how identities are constructed. Narratives shared by the young people in this research revealed how they construct gender through the chores that they do in their homes. According to Thorne (2000: 69), how the participants understand and make sense of their lives is uncovered through the analytical process that assists the researcher to identify the main narrative themes within the accounts provided by people concerning their lives. The themes that arose in the narratives that the participants shared were being tracked by using thematic analysis.

3.5.2. Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is “a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (Braun & Clarke 2012: 57). Employing thematic analysis allowed me to draw out patterns from the data which revealed the themes that exist within the data. “A theme is a pattern found in the information that at the minimum describes and organises possible observations or at the maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis 1998: 4). Drawing out themes assisted in describing and organising the data collected from the participants. Furthermore, using this method assisted in identifying the commonalities that permeated throughout the data through the way the topic is discussed by the participants (Braun & Clarke 2012: 57). Thus, thematic analysis allowed me to observe and understand the collective meanings and experiences through the commonalities that arose in the research. Coding is the primary process for developing themes. This process may develop “a complex model with themes, indicators, and qualifications that are casually related; or something between these two forms” (Boyatzis 1998: 4). Before the interpretation of the data, codes were developed during data collection to represent the identified themes then later, in the analysis stage, are applied to the raw data as ‘summary markers’ (Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2011: 10). Encoding the data obtained assisted in quickly identify themes and preventing the potential of losing themes that arose in the research in the transition from data collection into data analysis. Essentially, the focus of this method is to identify and describe the implicit and the explicit ideas within the data (Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2011:10). These were analysed and reported as to capture the themes that are within the data.

However, using thematic analysis was not only a way of tracking the common themes expressed by the participants. Using it in combination with narrative analysis allowed me to draw out exceptions in the data. Thus, I was also able to identify those participants whose perspectives did not ‘conform’ to that of the others.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations for this research are grounded in the Policy for Responsible Research Conduct at Stellenbosch University (2013) and the International Sociological Association Code of Ethics (2001). These policies are entrenched in the fundamental principles for the promotion of responsible conduct of all research. Furthermore, these policies recognise the rights of all research participants and ensures that these rights are observed and protected. Considering this, this study was granted ethical clearance by the Research Ethics Committee (REC).

3.6.1. Informed consent

Before the commencement of the research, the participants were handed an assent form that informed them about the research and all the formalities of the research. This form was translated into IsiXhosa to mitigate any misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Two consent forms were drafted, one for the participants and one for the parents/guardians of the participants, since the participants are under the age of 18. Per the Policy for Responsible Research Conduct at Stellenbosch University, the consent for the participants stipulated what the research is about, giving them enough information, and what is expected of them in a language that they would understand. The consent form for the parents/guardians clearly stated what the research is about and what their children were expected to do in this study. This consent form will further ask for their permission for their children to participate in the study. The parents/guardian were contacted through the participants liaising between the parents and me. I later visited the home to meet the parents face to face. This was to explain to them about the research and provide them with the consent form. Furthermore, since the observation was done in their homes, family members who were present during the observations were also given a form that explained the research and the observation phase of the research. The forms were left at the homes and the signed forms were collected on the day of the observation. Family members who opted not to be included in the observation were excluded in the collection of data and I arranged another time for the observation when they were not present. Both participants and parents/guardians were informed of what was expected of the participants, the

consequences and possible risks, if any, of participating, what would happen with the data and how the results will be used.

3.6.2. Confidentiality and anonymity

Every human being has the right to privacy and that right was respected in regard of all participants and possible bystanders. To ensure the confidentiality of the interviews, the interviews took place in various spots where the participants felt comfortable and could freely share their views and experiences. The interviews did not take place in their homes to prevent the possibility of disturbing the routine of the household or the possibility of others overhearing the interviews. Both the participants and I chose the place where the interviews were conducted, ensuring the participants' comfort and our safety. Before conducting the interviews, I requested the permission of the parents to conduct the interview at one of the public parks in the area or at a nearby restaurant, which I had already identified before the interview process. In addition, the parents/guardians were requested to keep the involvement of the participants in the interviews confidential. This means that they were advised not to inform the other members of the family that the participants would be involved in this study. In terms of the observations, nobody in the participant's street, especially neighbouring households, was informed that the participants' homes were selected for observation in the research. Thus, the preferred tasks that were observed were mainly indoors and if there were tasks outside then they were done in the backyard away from the view of the street. Furthermore, taking their right to privacy into account, the participants were assured that their responses would not be discussed with anyone else involved in the study, nor outsiders except for my supervisor. Pseudonyms were used in the writing of the research report to protect the anonymity of the participants and neither their addresses nor other identifying information is included in my dissertation.

3.6.3. Limitations and reflection of the methodology

The methodology of this research was chosen because it was determined to best fit for obtaining the necessary information that would respond to the research question. As I was engaging in the research, reflecting on my experiences while doing the research, I stumbled upon some limitations. Firstly, I encountered some challenges in the recruitment process. Several potential participants were approached and some expressed discomfort in participating in the research. The common reason was that they perceived this research was too intimidating for them and that they did not think that they had anything to offer that would contribute to my research. In

response to this, I had to reassure them that, although this research is for my education and towards my thesis, their knowledge and experiences are what would make this research successful. After explaining the research and why their knowledge and experiences mattered some still decided not to participate. This led me to pursue other potential participants as described earlier.

Surprisingly, the parents of the participants did not have any issues with their children participating in this study, as long as the children were comfortable. However, in the consent form, I had included contact details of three counselling services that the participant may contact if they needed counselling after participating in the research. Some of the parents were taken aback by that because then the assumption was that this research may result in psychological trauma for their children. I assured them that this is not the case, those contact details were included as a safety precaution because we are dealing with issues of identity since the age range of the participants is 14-17 years of age, which is a critical stage where one forms various aspects of their identity and establishes themselves within that identity. The parents understood and again permitted their children to partake in the study. There were some delays in the data collection process.

The data collection process was set to commence during the December 2019 school holidays. In some of the households, data collection had to be postponed because the families left the province for the holidays. This meant that I had to wait for them to come back. Thereafter, another issue arose. Schools reopened early in January 2020 and the participants had to prepare for that, thus the process was further delayed. The participants and I had to work around their school schedule, ensuring that their schoolwork was not interrupted, and the household routine was not disturbed. Therefore, the participants and I settled on days and times that would be suitable for all parties. A lot of data was collected during the participant observation period. The families were very welcoming and helpful during this process⁵.

The observation process in the households was fun and interactive, with engagements with other family members who were present during the process. From the participant observation, I was able to both observe and participate in the household tasks for which the participants are responsible. This was beneficial for the study because I was able to witness how household labour is distributed in different households and how that is rooted in gender norms.

⁵ Fortunately, I was able to complete my fieldwork before the Covid-19 pandemic took hold of South African society, and other parts of the world.

Furthermore, the different household compositions allowed me to observe the differences in the types of tasks the participants engaged in, either as a result of their gender or regardless of it. I encountered a few challenges. One of the challenges was constant interference from family members. This was expected because fieldwork was conducted in their home. However, the interference came with the family members attempting to direct my engagement with the participants. For example, the participants were tasked with handing me a task according to my gender and one of the mothers attempted to assign the task to me. I dealt with it by kindly requesting the parent to allow the participant to decide on their own. In some cases, I had to remind family members that the research was about the participant and that they should allow the participant to engage independently with me. The second challenge that I had to deal with was my own biases so that I do not impose my views and beliefs into the research process. I dealt with this by allowing the participants to lead the observation, to give the freedom and space to share their experiences. Furthermore, entering the observation process I had formulated a few questions to guide me, however, I found myself not using them as much as I thought. The participants were engaging and from their responses, I was able to maintain a conversation with them.

As I reflect on being a participant in the observation, I realise that I was not only a researcher but also the researched. The participants giving me tasks to do around the house meant that I had to be the focus of the research too. The tasks that the participants gave me and the reasoning behind them reflect their understanding of gender, their understanding of what a woman should do. This was quite interesting because the reasons included statements like “*Because women should do this*” or “*You are a girl and my mother does this*”. These reveal that gender is the reason behind why particular tasks are assigned to a certain person. The participants being Xhosa and me being Xhosa allowed me to understand the gender dynamics that existed in the household of the participants. This was very beneficial in the data collection because sometimes the true meaning of a statement can be lost in translation and my knowledge and understanding of the meaning meant I was able to capture what was being said. Acknowledging the fact that observations lack in-depth engagements, I chose to couple observations with interviews.

The data collected during the interviews expanded on what was collected during the participant observation. During the interviews, I noticed that some of the interviewees became intimidated by the questions or they were not entirely sure what response they should give. I mostly encountered this when I asked the question *What does it mean to be a girl or a boy?* After

asking this, I saw faces of confusion. In some cases, I had to explain the question. I tried to refrain from providing examples to prevent limiting the participants' responses and not shape the answer they gave. At times, I had to help the participants to reflect on the answers they gave by providing follow-up questions. This helped the participants to discover the deeper meaning of what they are saying. Even they started to realise that there is greater meaning to what they say and even greater meaning to their daily experiences. Two of my participants were shy and were not as expressive as others. In this case, I had to provide more guidance, without imposing my thoughts on their experiences. One of these participants was so shy that she asked their sibling to join so that to feel more comfortable speaking to me. The overall experience with the interviews was very fruitful because the data collected was wonderful.

Before the data could be analysed, answers that were provided in IsiXhosa had to be translated to English. For the purpose of this study, quotes provided in the findings chapter were done in English. The terms and phrases that were left in IsiXhosa had a particular meaning. The analysis of this research delved into those meanings to further support the themes that stemmed from this research. As stipulated above, the data was analysed using narrative and thematic analysis. Themes were developed by highlighting patterns within and across the participants' accounts. During the analysis phase of the research, I encountered some challenges when looking for existing literature that would complement my findings. Firstly, there is little research that has been done on the gender dynamics that exist within Xhosa households. Dominantly, available research is research on how the Xhosa culture constructs the boy/man and girl/woman with relation to the performance of certain rituals. The household has barely been used as a site of research. There is extensive research done on the division of household labour, but little that specifically singles out households that embrace a particular culture as I did in this research. Thus, in the analysis, I had to rely on my knowledge. However, my knowledge was also limited because I am not well-informed in some Xhosa practices and the significance behind them. Therefore, I resorted to seeking assistance from a friend who assisted me in understanding the significance of these Xhosa practices. Thereafter, I took that information and assimilated it in my analysis of what the participants shared with me. Secondly, I found few studies that are centred around children and household labour with relation to the construction of gender.

3.7. Conclusion

As shown above, this research took a qualitative research approach, which encompassed methodologies that gave the participants the liberty to engage with me without being restricted

by strict research methods. The sampling method, using purposeful sampling and snowballing, allowed me to collect the sample that was intended for this research. Participant observation, which entails me observing and participating in the household activities that the participants engage in, and interviews, which entailed engaging in conversation with the participants using a set of guideline questions, were used for data collection. These modes of data collection worked well for this research because they helped me collect in-depth and rich data. This data was analysed using thematic analysis and narrative analysis. Thematic analysis involves drawing out the main themes within and across the interviews and observations. These themes are analysed. Narrative analysis involves the analysis of stories that participants share. These methods of analysis assisted me in capturing and documenting the true meaning of the important concepts with the data.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I discuss my findings and analyse the data from my research. I engage with the theory of gender performativity by Butler (1990), Shefer (2012) who discusses how boys and girls construct their identities in relation to each other, Helman and Ratele (2016) who demonstrate the social positioning of men and women in South African families, Blair (1992) who delve into sex-role attitudes and socialisation, and Sotewu (2016) on the gender dynamics that exist within Xhosa families.

4.2. Gender as performative (overarching theme)

This study shows gender is reaffirmed and constantly expressed through particular performances, that include speech and conduct, that follow cultural norms that are attached to “femininity” and “masculinity”. Drawing from Judith Butler’s theory on gender as performative, “gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a rigid regulatory frame which congeal overtime to produce the appearance of substance, of a ‘natural’ kind of being” (Butler 1990: 33). The main argument here is gender is constructed through conduct, the use of the body, associated with that gender. This research, particularly the observations, has shown how the participants attach household tasks to a particular gender. Showing that the process of creating and affirming masculine or feminine (Cahn 1999: 532). Through their specific tasks, the participants perceived that they are doing their gender, that the tasks that they do are in accordance with what it means to them to be a boy or a girl. According to Butler, gender is created and recreated by displaying its attributes. This research focused on the attributes displayed through the participants’ household tasks. “By engaging in housework, individuals hold themselves accountable to normative conceptions of gender and place themselves into the cognitively recognizable categories of men and women” (Shneider 2012: 1030).

4.3. Binary constructions of gender by boys and girls

The views of the participants on each gender are entrenched in gender polarisation. The constant need to create a boundary between the two genders permeates in every report that seeks to differentiate the two genders. The boundary exists as a result of different household tasks being constructed for a particular gender. The children construct these chores to highlight the differences between the two genders. This can be seen in Zolani’s statement about sweeping.

I think sweeping should be done by boys, because when you are sweeping you must move around the couches and the table, which are heavy things. Boys can handle more heavy-weight jobs than girls. For me, I don't do dusting. That's for you guys [indicating that he sees me as a woman]. And laundry [Observation: Zolani, 22 February 2020].

Here, Zolani is constructing a marker of 'normative' masculinity, which refers to men doing the heavy-duty work, and a marker of 'normative' femininity, which is women doing light-duty work. This illustrates his thinking that men and women are not the same and that as a result of that difference they ought to engage in different household activities. "When gender boundaries are activated, the loose aggregation 'boys and girls' consolidate into 'the boys' and 'the girls'" (Thorne 1993: 65). The classification of children into these separate categories provides fuel for the children to construct household activities according to gender roles. However, it is important to note that "the construction and performances of gender are not static or fixed, but they are fluid as they are subject to change and modification depending on context" (Mayeza 2017: 6). The participants in this research constructed being a boy and being a girl essentially different from one another. The construction of men and women function to position them as essentially different from one another, as well as establish them in unequal positions within the family (Helman & Ratele 2016: 8).

4.3.1. Boys construct masculinity in contrast to femininity and non-hegemonic masculinity

The boys in this research constructed their gender in contrast to girls. The main aim seemed to be differentiating themselves clearly from the opposite gender. Shefer (2012) argues that it is a common trend for boys to set up their identities and practices in opposition to girls. This highlights the fact that boys construct their masculinity to not be mistaken to be embodying and/or expressing "feminine" attributes. For example, when assigning me a task during the participant observation stage, Thando said, "I would give you sweeping, washing windows or washing clothes". He explains 'Why?':

Mostly boys don't clean the house, they are always out playing. The girls also play but they usually do chores around the house first. Girls are even expected to come home earlier than the boys [Observation: Thando, 7 February 2020].

His justification of why boys do not perform certain household chores is in comparison to what girls are supposed to do. For him, these are not just ordinary tasks but are tasks that are attached to the mutually exclusive gender performance of girls, and, according to him, girls' tasks are not for boys. The justification for assigning me the task of sweeping is not only because of my

gender as a woman, but also it aims to differentiate himself as a boy and different from me. This reveals that in the presence of the opposite sex, that Thando (and Zolani above) reaffirm their boyhood by highlighting the ‘inherent’ differences between the sexes (Pattman 2007: 32). It seemed as if they were reassuring me that they are boys. Interestingly, Thando and Zolani constructed what they could do by highlighting what girls should do. That is, for boys, masculinity is constructed away from what girls do (Pattman 2007: 32). Zolani shared the same views when asked why he does not do laundry:

I don't think any guy should do laundry. That's not manly. It's something that women should do [Observation: Zolani, 22 February 2020].

These boys distance themselves from “girls” labour as they construct themselves as boys. Zolani distances himself from doing laundry because for him it is not manly. These tasks are imagined to be threatening his masculinity (Shefer 2012: 320). It becomes important to maintain the masculine identity within the household by not performing tasks that are perceived to be “feminine”. Thus, as argued by Pattman (2007), boys work hard to achieve masculinity through demonstrations of behaviour that is attached to their gender. The behaviour includes the types of household chores which they do. In the process, it becomes important to dissociate themselves from girls. Lukhanyo, Zolani, and Thando construct their boy identity to highlight their difference to the other gender. Considering that these boys reside with their mothers, the aim then becomes to move away from roles displayed by the mother, or any other woman present in the household. Zolani and Thando's fathers are active in their lives and they have shared that their fathers guide the ways that they construct their gender. Even in the interaction with the father, the pattern of being seen as being different from the opposite gender is maintained.

When I am at my dad's place I don't do any chores, that's for the girls. My dad always tells me and my cousins that the girls must do most of the work inside the house. We can help around where needed [Observation: Thando, 18 February 2020].

Thando shows that the notions of differences between boys' tasks and girls' tasks are maintained even when he is with his father. In addition, he brings forth boys as ‘helpers’. It is common for boys to display themselves as helpers rather than primary caregivers. The study conducted by Ratele, Shefer, Strebel, and Fouton (2010), showed that boys do not entirely detach themselves from feminine household tasks, but they rather construct themselves as helpers. Constructing themselves as helpers provides them with the safe space to engage in feminine tasks, but still maintaining the masculine identity. Underlining all of this is the

perception that caring practices threaten masculinity. Care work is seen as a women's job and boys do not want to get involved with such (Shefer 2012: 256). The boys stipulated that when they mix with girls and being seen to perform girls' activities, they face the "consequence" of being called 'gay'.

At my father's place, we don't do what girls do. They must cook and clean the house. Like even when growing up we didn't even play with girls. I wouldn't do that, because I don't want to be called gay [Interview: Zolani, 24 February 2020].

The term 'gay' in these instances does not refer to sexuality per se, but rather it refers to the embodiment of feminised activities and a distaste for being associated with a subordinate masculinity. Thus, the household labour that they do not engage in, which they perceive to be for girls, is also a rejection of subordinate masculinities. The fear of being called 'gay' motivates the boys to dissociate from feminised activities and embrace *hegemonic masculinity*, which they believe to be shaped by Xhosa culture discussed later in the paper. The participants, therefore, suggest that the activities that boys are encouraged to engage in are reflections of what it means to be a boy or a man (Ratele et al. 2010: 563).

4.3.2. Girls construct femininity in contrast to what is expected of them

Interestingly, the participants constructed being a girl differently from how boys were constructed. Girls were constructed based on what they are expected to do rather than in relation to the other gender. The meanings of being a girl/woman are rooted in the perception that women have a natural ability and responsibility for caregiving. Thus, similar to Shefer (2012: 320) who argues that femininity is often defined by caring roles and household chores, the participants confirmed that there is an expectation for girls to engage in care work. Khanyisa, in the observation, suggests that girls/women by nature are keepers of the domestic sphere.

Us, women, we can take care of the house. It is in our nature to cook, clean, and take care of the babies. For me, my mother taught me how to cook and clean around the house, so I can do it [Observation: Khanyisa, 15 February 2020].

What is intriguing here is that she had to be taught to conduct household chores even though she claims it is a natural ability. That is, although it is in women's 'nature' and an inherent responsibility, girls need to be taught. This presents a contradiction in Khanyisa's construction of femininity within the household. Therefore, even though she may perceive gender as natural, that is, something one is born with, the ways in which gender is performed are learnt and therefore subject to social construction.

Furthermore, within the context of the household, the nature of the girl is also connected to a particular role performed (girls doing more chores than boys) (Helman & Ratele 2016: 5). The participants listed activities like cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children as an innate trait, as if it is in the genomes of their DNA. The girl identity is constructed around their 'natural' abilities to perform tasks. Essentially, girls and women are denoted as inherently possessing abilities to perform care better and, on the other hand, boys and men are denoted to not possess these abilities but rather they have borrowed this ability (Shefer 2012: 313). Consequently, there is an expectation for the girls to take responsibility for the household tasks. The participants positioned girls as responsible for chores. This is demonstrated by Andiswa's answer in explaining why girls are given such a responsibility:

Mothers are responsible for taking care of children in the house and keeping the house clean. As a girl, I do as she does because it is what is expected of me. As the oldest I take care of most of the chores, like cooking, cleaning. That's what I do as a girl, that's what we are taught that girls do [Observation: Andiswa, 24 January 2020].

Andiswa's statement reveals that the responsibility of household tasks is bestowed on mothers and, subsequently, on daughters, who by implication are future mothers and wives. As the girls and the women are constructed by the participants what is revealed is the unequal positioning of men and women in the family. Studies around household labour show that men and women hold unequal positions in the family where women become responsible for household tasks. For example, Helman and Ratele (2016) stipulate that many South African families position the woman as the primary caregiver of the home and places the responsibility of upkeeping the home on her shoulders. Furthermore, Fakier (2010) states that, within the family, there is an expectation placed on girls and women to ensure that the work around the house is done. Therefore, femininity is closely linked to the embodiment of household activities. The girl identity is constructed around this form of femininity. It is important to note that most of the household activities are feminised while little is ascribed to boys/men. Subsequently, as the girls engage in these activities it is seen as them expressing and performing their gender. "Women continue to perform housework as a means of producing gender or reinforcing their own identity as women" (Cahn 1999: 532). This normative behaviour was transmitted to me by the participants when I asked the girls what tasks they would assign to me and Zintle answered, "I would make you cook, clean, sweep do the laundry, all that stuff." Her explanation as to why followed:

Because that is what girls do around the house. My mom does that and my sister does that too [Observation: Zintle, 19 December 2019].

Assigning feminised activities to me also illustrates how “girls and women assist in reproducing the stereotypic notions of what each should do – how they play a role in constructing gender divisions of labour” (Shefer 2012: 320).

4.4. Parental influence and power over gender socialisation

Parental influence in gender socialisation resonated throughout this research. Observing and participating in the household tasks with the participants the linkage between parental influence and children’s tasks was very visible. From the early stages of life, men and women are socialised into specific gender identities, and the essential elements of the process of socialisation are dividing men and women into household labour that is ‘appropriate’ of their gender (Baxter 1992:167). The way parents model their gender, through speech and conduct, for example, contributes to the ways in which the participants construct their gender. Khanyisa saw her mother as a role model in how womanhood, and motherhood, are performed. In the same way, her brothers use her father as a model of how manhood, and fatherhood, are performed.

Well, my mother cooks, takes care of things. We, as girls, follow what our mother does. Then the boys copy what our father does. Girls should be responsible for things in the house. For example, when the house is not clean or something breaks around the house, us girls are shouted at. Not the boys. My mother taught us how things should be [Observation: Khanyisa, 15 February 2020].

This answer shows that, because of their assigned gender, children are held responsible for the household labour which is assigned to the parent of their gender. If they are seen to be slacking in their responsibility they are verbally reprimanded and coerced to comply with these gendered roles. In this research, I found that in households with both parents are present, that mothers are assisted by girls in the domestic arena whilst boys assist their fathers with household maintenance. This is highlighted in Zintle’s answer when describing the household labour at her home:

My sister does what my mom does, like cooking, cleaning. She’s like a deputy mother. My older brother, wooh! he only washes his car. He and my father are the same [Observation: Zintle, 19 December 2019].

There is a distinction between what boys and girls do around the house, which is clearly identified by the participants. Girls are at first, deputised as their mothers’ assistants until they

reach adulthood and takes on the responsibilities of a mother. Evidently, the tasks that boys and girls take up are influenced by their parents; how their parents model their gender through the performance of certain tasks around the house.

Khanyisa speaks of this influence when asked *Why don't men cook?* She answered, “Men don't do that because they are under the *influence* that men don't cook” [Khanyisa, 17 February 2020]. The ‘influence’ that she refers to is the values and norms that have been instilled by their parents. Khanyisa also provides insight into how men in the household are portrayed. The traditional attitudes about men in the household are of them “providing support” rather than being a primary caregiver or equally responsible for domestic labour. (Cahn 1999: 542). Consequently, boys are seen as ‘assisting’ the girls in household tasks as discussed above.

Furthermore, Zintle's conceptualisation of mothers as primary caregivers resonated with the responses from the other participants and suggests that their mothers conduct most of the care practices such as emotional care, cooking for them, and managing the upkeep of the household. Thus, they rely on their mothers for the provision of such care. The expectation, thereafter, is girls ought to follow suit, when they are old enough to perform household labour, they take on tasks done by their mothers, taking on the identity of a “deputy mother”, illustrating that gendered stereotyping is centred around the allocation of roles that are linked to ‘mothering’ (Shefer 2012: 311). Thus, girls who reside in households with both parents construct themselves and their sisters as young women who are being groomed into mothering their mothers. “Captured by these gendered allocations of roles is a normative assumption of women as inherently and naturally nurturing and able to mother powerfully embedded in traditional and persistent ideologies of motherhood” (Kruger 2006: 195). In households with both parents, the children's work is clearly gender divided because the household composition allows them to fulfill stereotypical gender norms. The father stands as a role model for the boys to mimic manhood or fatherhood. The presence of both parents in the house paints a picture of how both parents model and teach their gender with relation to each other.

Blair (1992) argues that the impact of parents on the division of children's labour has two main sources. Firstly, “parents may affect children's division of labour *directly* through the application of their own sex-role ideologies and attitudes” (Blair 1992: 183). The participants highlighted these sex-role ideologies and attitudes through what they perceived to be “feminine” work and “masculine” work. Thando shared that cleaning the house is a woman's job. This was a thought that he learnt from his grandmother, saying:

My grandmother always tells me that I must grow up to be the man of the house. I think that's why I don't sweep and do dusting [Observation: Thando, 18 December 2019].

Thando as a boy learns gender role ideologies from his grandmother. The boys in this research reside with women, whether mother or grandmother or both. Interestingly, the boys learn how to be boys from women. Despite residing with women, they still maintain sex role ideologies and attitudes that maintain that women ought to be the primary caregivers. Contributing to this is the fact that they live mainly with their mothers who provide primary care. Even when that is the case, the boys still attribute roles to different genders. The question would be then: Where do these young men learn how to be men when they reside with their mothers and/or their grandmothers? Thando provides insight. His response suggests that it is because his grandmother upholds traditional beliefs of gender roles. According to Blair (1992), a parent who maintains traditional sex role attitudes will be more likely to assign their sons to certain tasks that are perceived to be manly. This case suggests that sex roles can still be maintained even when a father figure is not present in the house.

Secondly, "parents can affect children's division of household labour via *indirect* routes" (Blair 1992: 183). In this case, parents may serve as role models for their children. For instance, Zintle suggests that her brother models their father's behaviour since he replicates the household roles and tasks of his father. Thus, her father's behaviour and the tasks he performs in the house provides a blueprint for her brother, made possible by the perpetuation of gender norms. Children observe their same-sex parent embodying behaviours and distinct set of household tasks, and consequently, they reproduce these behaviours (Blair 1992: 183). The boys in this sample do not reside with their fathers, thus they did not have a father figure who modelled manhood in the household. Zolani, for example, stays with his mother and he relies on his mother to teach him how to do his gender. That is, a woman teaching a boy how to be a boy. Even so, Zolani still visited his father on the weekends, and during that time he gains knowledge of manhood.

My dad's family is very traditional. Like, even during Xhosa events the women cook, and men would mainly sit outside and drink *umqombhothi* (translation: African beer). That family is very strict about women doing home stuff and men being the heads of the house and must provide financially. My mom is not like that. With my mom's family, there is no such. We all do everything, whether you are a boy or a girl. We all do the chores [Interview: Zolani, 24 February 2020].

Zolani learns how to do his boyhood and manhood from his father and his interactions with his father's family. Furthermore, Zolani presents a contradiction to how the other young men learn and perform gender. He learns traditional forms of doing gender with his father and that side of his family, but he returns to his mother's home where gendered performance is not upheld. His father may be his role model in the performance of gender, however, what he learns is not performed when he is with his mother. This gives rise to another pattern, where parents may facilitate the disruption of normative gender constructions of masculinity and femininity (Helman & Ratele 2016: 8). This can be observed in the tasks that the parent, most frequently the mother, assigns to the children. This is demonstrated by Lukhanyo, where his mother encourages him to participate in household tasks that are perceived to be "feminine".

I love cooking. My mom taught me how to cook. I cook about 3 times a week. It's my favourite chore to do [Observation: Lukhanyo, 7 February 2020].

Lukhanyo boldly goes against the gender norms that are upheld by the other boys. For him, it is not a feminine task, it is what he loves to do. Performing a task that is constructed as 'a girl's job' singles him out in comparison to the other participants. Moreover, observed in these households is that the responsibility of dividing household labour amongst siblings is bestowed upon mothers while the structure of power within the household is patriarchal. When Cahn (1999: 526) says that "within this patriarchal space, women may exercise some power" he recognises the power that women have in the process of socialisation in the household. The power that she possesses refers to the decision making and management of the household labour. The participants iterated the phrase "my mother told me to do chores" or "my mother taught me how to do chores" which highlight the power that women have within the area of household labour. Intriguingly, the observation of the households with both parents revealed that with this power most women upheld traditional norms of gender roles.

4.5. Transitioning from child to adult: what it means to be a Xhosa man and a Xhosa woman

This research brought to light the transitioning from one stage to another of the child within Xhosa households in Langa. These households reveal the intersecting categories of age and gender (Helman & Ratele 2016: 5). Firstly, what was evident in the households with siblings is the recognition of birth order and the symbolisms of age transitioning. Birth order and sibling composition influence the distribution of children's household labour (Punch 2001: 804). The

observations showed how labour is distributed according to age, with consideration of gender. Andiswa shared how her responsibilities around the house increased with age:

My mother told me that I must do these tasks. I started when I was in grade 7, *ndincedisa pha na pha* (translation: I assisted here and there). But then as I grew older, I was given more to do. I do all the chores because I am the oldest, but my younger sister helps me sometimes [Observation: Andiswa, 24 January 2020].

Her statement reveals that age is a signifier of how many tasks one will be given or whether one will be doing tasks. It also shows the ‘modelling phase’ and how she learns through first assisting and later doing. From a very young age, children are socialised into their gender through household labour (Punch 2001: 805). “Xhosas, like every other African nation, adhere to certain norms and values in the upbringing children or in overseeing childhood training and education” (Sotewu 2016: 14). The families in this research are no different. It is quite evident in the interviews that parents or adults within the family instil norms and values that the participants embrace and negotiate. Confirming Andiswa’s statement, Mcimeli (1995) states that when boys enter puberty and girls experience menarche (their first menstruation), parents embark on a journey of teaching their children about their identities and roles as they transition from one stage to another. The interactions with the participants have shown that their cultural identity plays an important role in establishing gender roles. As children are being socialised into their gender, the interviews revealed that these constructions of gender document how the individual transitioning from one stage to another.

4.5.1. From boys to men: playing at ulwaluko

Ulwaluko is a Xhosa customary rite of passage from boyhood to manhood. It entails, but is not limited to, ritual ceremonies around circumcision and staying in an *ibhoma* (lodge), secluded from society for a certain period (Mfecane 2016: 204).

The interview with the boys revealed that the boys undergo a transition from boyhood to manhood; a journey that each boy in the study desired to undertake. As young boys they are socialised to embody their boyhood through play. During his interview, Lukhanyo (8 February 2020) shared that growing up his mother bought him cars and a scooter so that he could play with other boys. He also plays soccer with other boys. For him, playing soccer, playing with these toys, and with other boys were an expression of his boyhood. Amongst other boys, playing with cars, and playing soccer are attached to dominant forms of masculinity, *hegemonic masculinity*, the embodiment of the most valued way of being a boy (Ratele et.al 2010: 558).

Hegemonic masculinity is the celebrated form of masculinity in society, as the boys showed that playing sports and playing with masculinised toys is their embodiment of masculinity. This also entailed distancing themselves from feminised toys as an aim not to be perceived as anything else other than a boy. For instance, Zolani always played with “boy toys”, as he put it, separating himself from being “girly” or ‘gay’. These stories about play further emphasise gender polarisation. Mayeza (2017: 6) argues that there is a ‘boundary’ between the children when engaging in play. The boundary exists as a result of differentiating different types of games and toys being constructed for a particular gender. For instance, Lukhanyo playing with cars, scooters and playing soccer with other boys helped him being recognised as a boy amongst other boys. Children construct these games to exclude the other gender from playing with them. These activities are constructed as a key symbolic marker of ‘normative’ gender identity on the playground (Mayeza 2017: 6). Within the household, this is translated through the household activities that the boys engage in, as shown above.

The interviews illustrated that boys abandon certain household activities when they enter manhood. This act is symbolic of the shift from childhood, as boys, and into adulthood, as men. Intriguingly, the notion of men not doing household tasks is not explicitly taught, but rather, through observation and women taking on the majority of the household work, the new men learn that they are no longer responsible for certain tasks in the house. When boys become men, they are not given any home chores, but they are mostly taught accountability and responsibility. Ramphele (2002: 51) highlights that being initiated into manhood is about responsibility. The responsibility encompasses performing the duties of a man, which include financial care for the family and being present in the decision-making of important family matters (Ramphele 2002: 51). “So, circumcision provides a cultural medium in which young men leave behind their previous notions of adolescent selfhood and learn to take on an adult identity based on notions of responsibility and some discipline” (Ramphele 2002: 51). Thus, it gives them an adult status within the family and the community at large.

Childhood is a theme that is used to identify the early stages of human life (Prout & James 1997: 7). The border that separates childhood and adulthood is often difficult to identify, as the lines are sometimes blurred. However, the Xhosa culture, through rituals and traditions, attempts to make the border clear. This is observed through looking at masculinity as a “set of social practices and cultural representations associated with being a man” (Pilcher & Whelehan

2004: 82). Zolani displayed these cultural representations when playing different games with his friends. One particular game stood out:

“What do you call that game where you pretend you’re going to the bush? I can’t remember, but we played that too. We pretended *ukuba senza ulwaluko* (translation: that we are doing ulwaluko). We would create *ibhoma* with cardboard boxes...Even though we really didn’t know what really happens there, but we played from our imagination” [Interview: Zolani, 24 February 2020].

Ulwaluko, and even the imagining of it, constructs Xhosa masculinities. It is an essential rite of passage in the Xhosa culture. Attaining manhood is aspired by boys as shown by the boys in this research. Zolani and his friends idealise this ceremony to the extent that they created a game that mimics the events that unfold. The teachings and rituals that are conducted in ‘the bush’ are considered to be sacred and, boys who have not gone through the rites of passage, as well as women, are not afforded the privilege of access to this sacred knowledge (Mfecane 2016: 206). Therefore, Zolani and his friends were re-enacting only what they could imagine or, possibly, what they heard. What is clear from the boys in the interview is that they aspired to be men. In his interview, Thando highlighted that he is impatient and eager to become a man.

Ndifuna ukuba yindoda mna. Like *uyahlonitshwa xa uyindoda* (translation: I want to be a man. You gain respect when you are a man) [Interview: Thando, 18 December 2019].

Xhosa notions of masculinity are entrenched in the concept of *indoda*, which refers to a man who has undergone traditional circumcision rites conducted as part of the Ulwaluko tradition (Mfecane 2016: 204). *Indoda* denotes the most honoured form of Xhosa masculinity, culturally sanctioned, and it is affording men certain rights and privileges (Mfecane 2016: 204). Thando’s statement above provides us with one of those privileges; respect from others for being a man. Thus, being a man would allow him to enjoy these privileges and rights that comes with being a man. Men in the household model *ubudoda* (translation: manhood) for young boys. As I stated before, the boys in this study do not co-reside with any men, thus their perpetuation of manhood is fostered by their interactions with the women in the house. It could be that the boys who reside in women-only households over-identify with becoming *indoda*. However, the limitations of this study do not allow for further examination of this suggestion.

For the boys being a man transcends the ritual ceremony, it is an identity that bestows them recognition within the family. Thus, whatever the boys do, especially inside the household, contributes to them shaping their identity as boys who would later be *indoda*.

For me, I don't do dusting. That's for you girls. And laundry. What kind of man does laundry? [Observation: Zolani, 22 February 2020].

What is seen in this dialogue with Zolani is that he underlines the importance of men not being engaged in certain tasks, because “the performance of such tasks may undermine and even in some ways corrupt and defile their status as men” (Shefer 2012: 31). The notion of abandoning tasks because of manhood is demonstrated in Zintle's statement referring to her older brother.

... because my brother is a man, and men don't wash dishes. My brother used to do those chores but he stopped when he returned from the bush [after initiation and circumcision]. He doesn't do anything [Observation: Zintle, 19 December 2020].

This statement captures the transition from boyhood to manhood that unfolds within the household, after *ulwaluko*. Once the boy becomes a man, amongst the rights that they attain is the right not to participate in household tasks any longer. Within the household, the new man is excused from performing household labour, not only feminised activities, but also activities that are for boys.

4.5.2. “I am a woman now”: taking over from mothers

The transitioning from girlhood to womanhood is not as clear-cut as is the transitioning from boyhood to manhood. Drawing from the participants, being a girl seems to be equivalent to being a younger woman. The participants show that not much attention is given to the transitioning of young girls from girlhood to womanhood. The girls engaging in the household tasks seems to be girls being prepared for independence as women and for future marriage. Sotewu (2016) stipulates that from a very early age girls are trained to adopt the feminised and motherly roles which include the performance of care work and housework. “A girl child is taught by her mother certain norms and values such as caring for the entire family and domestic duties” (Sotewu 2016: 14). The accounts of Zintle, Andiswa, and Khanyisa all indicate that they embody norms and values that were passed down from their mothers. Andiswa shares:

Everything that I know about house chores I learnt from my mom. I learnt how to cook, clean, and take care of my younger siblings from my mother. She is a role model of how a ‘mother’ and a woman should be [Observation: Andiswa, 24 January 2020].

Andiswa's statement shows that lessons of how to be a woman and mother were received from her mother. It is evident that in these Xhosa homes, the responsibility of teaching girls how to be women is bestowed on the mother. The teachings are perceived as preparing girls for womanhood. Interestingly, in these households, womanhood is not authenticated through the

performance of a rite of passage. This is different from boys having to undergo *ulwaluko* to achieve manhood, as mentioned above. However, in the past, the Xhosa people used to practice a ceremony that initiated girls into womanhood called *intonjane*, which girls were traditionally expected to partake in once they experienced their first menstruation. (Sotewu 2016: 2).

Intonjane, means that their first menstruation (menarche) is the indicator that the girl is now ready to become a woman. “In the past, girls experienced their first menstruation at about 14 to 16 years of age”, but “in this present era, most girls begin menstruation as early as 11 to 12 years of age” (Sotewu 2016: 2). This introduced a dilemma in conducting the practice. In the past, *intonjane*, a girl entering the stage of womanhood also meant that a young woman is eligible to get married (Sotewu 2016: 2). Considering these ages, the South African Constitution clearly specifies that girls under the age of 16 cannot have a consensual sexual relationship (Sotewu 2016: 2); a sexual relationship which would come with the marriage if an *intonjane* initiate enters marriage. There now lies a tension between cultural practices and the law. Evidently, what is seen here is the interaction of modern practices and principles with cultural practices and principles (Sotewu 2016). This contributed to the decline of the ceremony. Another reason for the decline of the ritual is the socioeconomic position of the family.

“Expenses associated with this ritual such as animals to be slaughtered or sacrificed for each girl who attends *intonjane* constitutes another problem of financial commitment to the parents” (Sotewu 2016: 2). *Intonjane* is more costly than *ulwaluko*. During the ceremony of *ulwaluko*, a goat is slaughtered or sacrificed for the boy who partakes in it. Whereas in *intonjane* a cow is slaughtered for the girl. A goat costs approximately one eighth that of a cow. Therefore, the practice of *intonjane* requires more funds, which are not always attainable by the family.

Moreover, in highlighting the decline of the ceremony, it is important to note the *intonjane* is culturally constructed as *isithethe* (translation: culture) and *ulwaluko* is culturally constructed as *isiko* (translation: ritual). “*Isithethe* is the common practice of the particular cultural group in a given community and is not only what brings the Xhosa together but also a practice that is accepted in a given social context” (Ntombana 2011: 633). The way *intonjane* is performed, and whether it is performed or not, depends on the family. Therefore, in the Xhosa culture *intonjane* is not a compulsory obligation, it depends on the family whether it will be done. *Isithethe* “is not related to spirituality or worship; it is rather an understanding and behaviour that becomes accepted in the particular culture (Ntombana 2011: 634). Therefore, there are no

negative cultural implications for a girl who does not undergo intonjane. On the other hand, “isiko (custom or rite) is a religious and spiritual practice, which connects African people to God and the ancestors” (Ntombana 2011: 634). Ulwaluko is one of the customs that are categorised as isiko. “*Isiko ngumiselo osisigxina* (the rite is a permanent covenant), which implies that isiko does not and cannot change, and, if not obeyed properly, this results in wrath and retribution for those who are guilty, which may also affect their homes and family” (Ntombana 2011: 634). Therefore, ulwaluko is seen as compulsory for Xhosa men. Evidently, intonjane and ulwaluko are set to a different standing; one is compulsory while the other is not. Which would explain the decline of intonjane and sustaining of ulwaluko from one generation to another. Thus, this would explain the absence of intonjane in the families involved in this research. Given that the families in this research do not practice intonjane, the passing of womanhood knowledge from one generation to another comes in a different form.

As mentioned previously, the intonjane ceremony is a time where girls learn how to become women. “Xhosa people believe that the knowledge passed to the girls during the intonjane period is crucial because it prepares them to be responsible mothers and loving wives” (Sotewu 2016: 3). Without this practice, how then does this knowledge get passed on? The girls in this interview indicated they receive this knowledge from their mothers. Like Khanyisa, Zintle shared:

I learnt everything that I do around the house from my mom and older sister. Like our mother teaches us everything, from cooking to cleaning [Observation: Zintle, 19 December 2019].

Thus, the absence of intonjane in these families does not stop the traditional womanhood teachings in these households. The girls still receive the teachings that they would receive during intonjane. The fundamental social values of womanhood are still maintained in these families. However, the transition from girlhood to womanhood becomes unclear. There is no specific age where a girl may now be categorised as a woman. Andiswa considers herself as a woman as she states, “I am a woman now” [Interview: 29 January 2020]. When asked what makes her a woman, she provided this answer:

I am grown and I take responsibility for taking care of the house duties and taking care of my younger siblings [Interview: 29 January 2020]

Andiswa attributes womanhood to maturity, responsibility, providing care, and the performance of household tasks. Thus, for her, a girl reaches the stage of womanhood when they attain these attributes, modelled on the practice of their mothers and older woman.

An important implication, I infer, from the differences in the transition from boyhood to manhood, compared to the transition from girlhood to womanhood, is that the former involves a process of attaining rights, while in the latter women attain responsibilities. Rights confer on men the freedom to relegate household labour to women and boys, while women's responsibility ties them even closer to gendered divisions of labour in the household.

4.6. Deviation from the normative views of gender

The participants in this study have also shown that not everyone conforms to the gender norms that have been defined by culture. There are those who act outside the norms of their gender. Lukhanyo, in his observation session, shared his enjoyment of cooking:

My favourite chore to do is cooking. I cook most of the time when my mom is unable to do it. Everybody enjoys my cooking [Observation: Lukhanyo, 07 February 2020].

The dialogue with Lukhanyo shows him taking a different path than the other boys. The other participants imposed feminine qualities on tasks like cooking, presenting it as “a woman's thing to do”. The boys in this study consistently set themselves and their practices up against feminised tasks, except for Lukhanyo who shifted away from normative views of his gender in his enjoyment and practice of cooking. The other boys did not engage in feminised tasks because of the fear of being labelled as ‘gay’. The answers that the boys provided reveal that not all men experience masculinity in the same way. Ratele (2014: 116), argues that the fear of being perceived as ‘gay’, troubles hegemonic African men and masculinities. This demotivates young boys from engaging in tasks that are perceived as feminine. As a result, as in this study, we see boys continuously distancing themselves from these tasks. Demonstrated here is that norms are often policed by both adults and children through this language of classification. Therefore, practices and language play a significant role in the social reproduction of hegemonic African masculinity (Ratele 2014: 116). However, Lukhanyo resists the normative forms of gender perpetuated by the other boys and also brings to light that hegemonic masculinities can be resisted. Masculinity, for Lukhanyo, is not a fixed and linear identity. In the interaction with Lukhanyo he acknowledges cooking as a feminised task, however he has no fear of being labelled as ‘gay’ because that notion does not exist in his family, thus showing the importance of family norms and values.

Another form of resisting hegemonic gender identity can be seen when the participants were asked: ‘If you had your own household how would you divide the household tasks amongst

your children?’. The answers that the participants provided were engaged with notions of an *equal division of labour*.

In my house, I would divide the work *equally*. Everybody must do the same amount of work. Girls can’t do more than boys. We are equal [Interview: Thando 18 December 2019].

Things must be *equal*. We must all do the same things. The work should be divided amongst men and women. I think that is how it should be. By doing that men and women will be able to think of themselves as equal. Right now we are not, because boys and girls, men and women, do different tasks. As it is now girls do more work at home and boys do less. I see it with my friends around her. I have a friend, her brother doesn’t do much around the house, but my friend she does most of the chores. I think it is unfair [Interview: Andiswa, 29 January 2020].

The participants imagine a household established upon equality, where both genders perform an equal number of tasks. Thando paints a picture of a household where girls and boys are equal. Andiswa on the other hand notes that the two genders are not considered to be equal. An interesting implication arises here. In my interaction with Thando and the other boys, girls have been constructed as being more burdened with household tasks, as a result, boys and girls should be doing the same tasks in the house to be equal in the allocation of such tasks. However, firstly, the two genders are constructed differently, as illustrated in the first theme above. Secondly, these constructions are not on the same footing. The boys constructed themselves as superior to girls. It is quite interesting that the boys imagine equality if they had their own households and yet they construct the two genders unequally.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1. Chapter overview

This chapter concludes the findings of this research by offering final remarks of what this study sought to research. The important themes and concepts are summarised here, to further highlight the important concepts of this research.

5.2. Conclusion

The participants in this study have demonstrated that household labour is highly gendered. The division of household labour is influenced by gender norms that construct gender roles. To understand the gender dynamics which exist in households, this research moved from the premise of gender as performative. Literature shows that gender is reaffirmed and embodied through particular performances, activities, behaviours, and speech. One behaves in a certain way or engages in certain activities that are attached to their gender. Certain attributes are attached to a particular gender, which is used to distinguish between the two genders. Furthermore, cultural norms of femininity and masculinity are attached to these performances. In the findings, gender is performed through the engagement of household activities. Boys and girls engage in tasks that are aligned with what is expected of their gender. The household tasks that girls and boys are instructed in, engage in, and allowed not to practice become expressive of their gender. As a result, household labour is divided according to how the two genders are supposed to do their gender. This is clearly seen in the findings when the participants share how tasks in their households are distributed. Examining this deeply, what comes to light is that men/boys and women/girls are constructed differently within the household.

The findings show that the boys construct masculinity in contrast to femininity and non-hegemonic forms of masculinity. The main objective in doing so is that it distinguishes men from the opposite gender and other men. Literature shows that it is common for boys to shape their identities and mannerisms in opposition to girls. This is an attempt of boys to distance themselves from the feminine identity. Thus, it becomes important for boys to engage in household tasks that are indicators of masculinity. The continuous efforts to maintain the divide, highlighting the differences between girls and boys, influence children to shape household tasks according to gender roles. Furthermore, distancing themselves from feminised household tasks was an attempt to reassure themselves as boys. This is highlighted by constantly emphasising the different tasks that boys and girls should do. This is also highlighted by the constant fear of being labelled as 'gay'. Here the term does not refer to sexuality, but it

refers to a boy engaging in feminised household and an aversion to being associated with non-hegemonic forms of masculinity. This reflects that the household tasks that boys refuse to engage in are also a rejection of subordinate masculinities. This encourages boys to embrace hegemonic masculinity, which is shaped by the Xhosa culture. On the other hand, femininity is constructed differently.

The construction of femininity is shaped by expectation. The girls were constructed based on what is expected of them rather than in comparison to the opposite gender. The feminine identity is shaped by the notions that women have an innate ability to provide care, perceiving women as natural caregivers. Literature states that femininity is often described in relation to care work and housework. This sets an expectation on women in the household to engage in care work. The notion of care being a woman's natural ability becomes elusive as the girls share that household labour is taught. They have this ability, but they still must be taught. This reflects the contradiction in the construction of femininity. The construction of femininity, like masculinity, is not fixed. It shifts and changes to align with a particular context. The essential point here is that the way gender is performed is taught and learnt. The adult being the teacher and the child being the learner. Moreover, femininity is attached to specific tasks. These include cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children. Meaning, women have the natural ability to perform these tasks. What is interesting here is that boys can also do these tasks, and like girls, they are taught. However, for boys, these are not considered innate. Presented here is an interesting dilemma. Both girls and boys are taught, only for one is this a natural attribute. This provides the foundational reasoning of care work being undervalued. The innate nature assumption links to the perception of care work, especially performed by girls and women, being undervalued. Care being undervalued often leads to it being unpaid and taken for granted. The data above demonstrates that the ability to perform care work and housework is an acquired skill, rather than innate. This is shown by the participants, both girls, and boys, stipulating that they developed the skill through constant training from their parents. Thus, care work ought to be standardised as a skill. Recognising care work as a skill leads to it being valued.

The findings of this research demonstrate how parental influence and socialisation come into play in the distribution of household tasks amongst siblings. Literature states that boys and girls are socialised into their gender from the early stages of life. Socialisation continues as the individual grows and is maintained through household activities. The adults in the household teach the children how to do their gender. The men become role models for boys and the women become role models for the girls. As stipulated above, the parental influence of the gendered

distribution of household work among children can be divided into two main ideas. Firstly, parents can affect this distribution directly by imposing their own gender role beliefs and attitudes. This is seen in how parents overtly teaching the gender differences between children and perpetuating those teachings when they assign tasks. The perceptions of feminine work and masculine work are derived from these ideologies. Secondly, parents can affect this distribution indirectly by serving as role models. An interesting dilemma presents itself in the findings: who becomes the role model for boys who do not reside with their fathers? Here we see the mother and/or the grandmother stepping up to teach the boy how to do their gender. Interestingly, even in this case, boys still attach roles to a specific gender. This is because the mother and/or grandmother still upholds the traditional beliefs of gender norms. The findings further show children constantly negotiating with these gender ideologies. Children are not merely socialised into gender roles, but they themselves are active agents in the upholding of these gender norms. As stated above these gender norms are rooted in culture.

The findings show that the Xhosa culture provides traditional set of gender norms that are upheld in these households. These helped the participants shape their construction of gender. The Xhosa culture provides set features that are indicators of femininity and masculinity. Moreover, these indicators underline the transitioning of children from one stage of life to the next. These transitions are memorialised through a rite of passage. The most clear-cut is the transitioning of boys into manhood. Boys undergo *ulwaluko* as a signifier of them exiting boyhood and entering manhood. With this transition comes the abandoning of certain behaviours and embracing new behaviours, which are attached to manhood. This shift can be seen in the household. In the household, the 'new man' may no longer engage in certain household activities as they are not aligned with their new identity. This means that the girls/women in the household would then take over the boys' tasks while continuing with their own. Transitioning is not as clear-cut in girls as it is for boys. Although there is a culturally traditional ritual, *intonjane*, that signifies girls entering womanhood, it is not as fixed as *ulwaluko*. *Intonjane* is not a compulsory ritual, there are no negative implications if a girl does not go through it. Therefore, the performance of household tasks becomes consistent from girlhood to womanhood.

Importantly, though what the differences in transitioning to manhood and womanhood imply is the attainment of rights for men and the imposition of responsibilities for women. Thus, while in asserting the right endowed to men by manhood, men can walk away from household work, women in taking on 'their' responsibility, become even more entangled in housework.

The findings also show that there is resistance that is displayed in the construction of gender. The resistance is displayed when an individual decides not to conform to gender norms and expectations. This is demonstrated in the findings when participants perform tasks that are constructed as an expression of the opposite gender. In other instances, this is displayed when the participants shared their desire for equal distribution of household tasks between girls and boys. The resistance shows fluidity and also contradiction. The findings illustrate that gender is not fixed, but it is rather fluid. The way that an individual expresses their gender changes over time. The identity does not change, the change is in the expression. For example, a boy may choose to perform feminised tasks, which is frowned upon by hegemonic masculinity, but that does not change the fact that he considers himself as a boy. This may be fostered by the household in which the boy resides.

From the data above, the boys participating in this study reside with their mothers and, in one case, with a grandmother. The women in the house thus would influence the boy in participating in feminised tasks as taught by these women and at the same time still recognising his masculine identity. This then means that masculinity, like femininity, can be expressed in different ways. These identities are not fixed, but they change in meaning and shape over time depending on context. This research only focuses on one aspect, the household. Outside influences such as peers, schooling, television programmes were not studied here. Thus, future studies can expand on this study by exploring how these outside influences contribute to how children construct and perform gender. Another element to consider is that the sample size of this study is small, this does not invalidate the findings of this study, because this research generated rich, meaningful, in-depth data that contributes to existing understandings of gender construction. However, future research can expand the sample size to include boys that reside with both their parents, girls who reside with their and/or grandmothers, and boys and girls who reside with their fathers. These are household situations that are not explored in this study. Thus, it may generate data that would further expand, complement, or contradict the findings of this research.

The findings of this study were generated by using interviews and participant observations. Observing the participants in their environment enabled me to see how the distribution of household tasks unfolded within these households. Observations helps the researcher to witness behaviour and interactions that contribute to answering the research question, rather than just

the word of mouth from the participants. What was also beneficial for this research was that I also participated in the activities that I was observing. Thus, I was both the observer and the observed. By allowing the participants to assign me tasks around the house gave insight to how these children thought about household labour. This illustrated that children were not simply doing certain tasks because they were told, but also because they themselves thought this was appropriate tasks that their gender ought to perform. Which then translated to the types of tasks they assigned to me as a woman researcher. The interview sessions allowed me to engage in depth with what I observed during the observation sessions to probe, for instance, why they assigned particular tasks to me. The interviews allowed for in-depth investigation of the observations, which allowed for me to obtain rich data that helped answer the research question. In addition, allowing them to instruct me, provided the participants an opportunity to see themselves as experts in their social worlds.

This research has shown that doing research on children is valuable. In the process of socialisation, as stipulated throughout this research, children do not simply conform to what they are socialised into, but they also actively participate in shaping their own identities. Research on children is important because they advance understanding of how children understand, develop and live their lives, which contribute to the theoretical understanding of how gender identities developed and are performed in our society. As stated earlier in this research, the teenage years is a crucial period for the development of gender identity. Their input on how gender is understood in society is important, because they juggle with two things: first, they deal with what they are being taught by adults around them and, secondly, they negotiate with what they are being taught. This recognises that children are not just puppets in the process of socialisation, but active agents. For this research, children have shown to be extremely valuable because they, through the activities they perform and the things they said, highlighted the gender inequalities that exist in the households. It is also through the lens of children that this research documents that these inequalities are passed down from generation to generation.

In essence, this research demonstrates that gender is performative and that there is a constant negotiation of the expected or normative performance. Children actively participate in this negotiation, displaying themselves as active agents in the construction of their own gender. Exploring gender construction in children highlights the fluidity and flexibility of gender, and that normative forms of gender are sometimes rejected and resisted. This research is important

because it highlights the fluidity and the flexibility of rigid. Gender norms are ever-shifting to accommodate the context in which they unfold.

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